
WHAT THE MANIFESTOS SAY 2017

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND WELFARE

MANIFESTO POLICY PROPOSALS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FUNDING AND WELFARE

This document sets out the key commitments on local government funding and welfare policy in the 2017 Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, UKIP and Green national manifestos.

 CONSERVATIVE PARTY MANIFESTO
<https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto>

 LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO
www.labour.org.uk/manifesto2017

 LIBERAL DEMOCRAT PARTY MANIFESTO
www.libdems.org.uk/manifesto

 UKIP MANIFESTO
www.ukip.org/manifesto2017

 GREEN PARTY MANIFESTO
<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/green-guarantee>

Local government funding

■ CONSERVATIVES

- Continue to give local government greater control over the money they raise and address concerns about the fairness of current funding distributions. (p32)
- Enter into new Council Housing Deals with ambitious, pro-development local authorities to help them build more social housing. We will work with them to improve their capability and capacity to develop more good homes, as well as providing them with significant low-cost capital funding. (p71)

■ LABOUR

- Give local government extra funding next year. (p86)
- Initiate a review into reforming council tax and business rates and consider new options such as a land value tax, to ensure local government has sustainable funding for the long term. (p86)
- Devolve powers over economic development, complete with the necessary funding. (p86)

- Remove government restrictions that stop councils building homes and begin the biggest council building programme for at least 30 years. (p63)
- Increase the social care budgets by a further £8 billion over the lifetime of the next parliament, including an additional £1 billion for the first year. (p71)
- End cuts to local authority budgets to support the provision of libraries, museums and galleries. (p95)

■ LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- Establish a government process to deliver greater devolution of financial responsibility to English local authorities and any new devolved bodies in England, building on the work of the Independent Commission on Local Government Finance. Any changes must balance the objectives of more local autonomy and fair equalisation between communities. (p64)
- Ensure strong public services by investing the proceeds of a 1p rise in Income Tax in the NHS and social care, and commit to protecting the schools budget in real terms. (p36)

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- Lift the borrowing cap on local authorities and increase the borrowing capacity of housing associations so that they can build council and social housing. (p61)
- Establish a centrally funded Migration Impact Fund to help local communities to adjust to new migration and meet unexpected pressures on public services and housing. (p78)

■ UKIP

- Match fund grants made by local authorities for rural capital projects which enhance the local environment or help recovery from environmental disasters. (p53)
- Collecting rubbish bins promptly and regularly, removing fly-tips, filling potholes, fixing broken or dim streetlights, providing enough parking, and keeping parks and libraries open – these services should be running smoothly before councillors even think about spending money on the next local vanity project. (p61)
- Seek to cut excessive allowances for councillors, executive pay and bonuses, keep advertising and promotion budgets to a minimum, build partnerships with neighbouring councils to reduce costs, and abolish non-essential jobs and red tape. (p61)
- Review the many statutory duties placed on local government, to assess whether the cost burden on councils and taxpayers can be reduced. Councils should only be doing what they do best, not what national government wants to wash its hands of. (p61)

■ GREEN PARTY

- Increase funding for local authorities so they can provide good quality public services and invest in our communities, creating thousands of jobs. (p11)
- A single budget covering health and social services, to make life easier for people who need to access several types of service. (p11)
- Major investment in social care for the elderly and all those who need it. (p11)

Business rates

■ CONSERVATIVES

- We know that the business rates system presents considerable challenges to some smaller companies. That is why we have supported those businesses most affected by the recent revaluation of business rates. That is not all we will do. We will make longer-term reforms to the system to address concerns about the way it currently works. We will make sure that revaluations are conducted more frequently to avoid large changes to the bills that businesses face, and explore the introduction of self-assessments in the valuation process. To ensure the system is sustainable for the future we will also conduct a full review of the business rates system to make sure it is up to date for a world in which people increasingly shop online. (p14)
- Continue to support small businesses through business rate relief and low taxation, and by reducing the bureaucracy and regulation that prevents small businesses from flourishing. (p21)

■ LABOUR

- Introduce a package of reforms to business rates – including switching from RPI to CPI indexation, exempting new investment in plant and machinery from valuations, and ensuring that businesses have access to a proper appeals process – while reviewing the entire business rates system in the longer run. (p14 and p18)
- Rural councils deliver public services differently, and this needs to be reflected in funding allocation mechanisms. We will consider these differences in our re-evaluation of the business rate schemes. (p88)
- Review extending the £1,000 pub relief business rates scheme to small music venues. (p96)

■ LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- Review the business rates system, prioritising reforms that recognise the development of the digital economy, lessening the burden on smaller businesses, and ensuring high streets remain competitive. We will also consider the implementation of land value taxation. (p41)
- Review business rates to reduce burdens on small firms, and make them the priority for any future business tax cuts. (p41)

■ UKIP

- Cut business rates by 20 per cent for the 1.5 million British businesses operating from premises with a rateable value of less than £50,000. (p5 & p13)

- Within our coastal enterprise zones, businesses operating from premises with a rateable value of less than £50,000 will receive a 50 per cent cut in business rates. (p15)

Council tax

■ CONSERVATIVES

- Continue to ensure that local residents can veto high increases in council tax via a referendum. (p14)

■ LABOUR

- Initiate a review into reforming council tax and business rates and consider new options such as a land value tax, to ensure local government has sustainable funding for the long term. (p86)

■ LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- Remove the requirement to hold local referenda for council tax changes, ensuring that councillors are properly accountable for their decisions by introducing fair votes. (p64)
- Enable local authorities to levy up to 200 per cent council tax on second homes and 'buy to leave empty' investments from overseas. (p61)

■ UKIP

- UKIP believes in keeping council tax as low as possible. (p61)

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Welfare

■ CONSERVATIVES

- Continue to run the welfare system in accordance with our belief that work is the best route out of poverty, that work should always pay, and that the system should be fair both to the people in need of support and those who pay for it. (p54)
- We have no plans for further radical welfare reform in this parliament and will continue the roll-out of Universal Credit, to ensure that it always pays to be in work. (p54)
- Adopt a “Breathing Space” scheme, with the right safeguards to prevent abuse, so that someone in serious problem debt may apply for legal protection from further interest, charges and enforcement action for a period of up to six weeks. Where appropriate, they will be offered a statutory repayment plan to help them pay back their debts in a manageable way. (p60)
- Means-test Winter Fuel Payments, focusing assistance on the least well-off pensioners, who are most at risk of fuel poverty. The money released will be transferred directly to health and social care, helping to provide dignity and care to the most vulnerable pensioners and reassurance to their families. (p66)
- Maintain all other pensioner benefits, including free bus passes, eye tests, prescriptions and TV licences, for the duration of this parliament. (p66)

■ LABOUR

- Introduce a new Social Security Bill, published in our first year in office. (p56)
- Increase Employment and Support Allowance by £30 per week for those in the work-related activity group, and repeal cuts in the Universal Credit limited capacity for work element. (p56)
- Increase Carer’s Allowance by £11 to the level of Jobseekers’ Allowance. (p56 & p71)
- Implement the court decision on Personal Independence Payment so that there is real parity of esteem between those with physical and mental health conditions. (p56)
- Reform and redesign Universal Credit, ending six-week delays in payment and the ‘rape clause’. (p56)
- Scrap the Work Capability and Personal Independence Payment assessments and replace them with a personalised, holistic assessment process that provides each individual with a tailored plan, building on their strengths and addressing barriers. Labour will end the privatisation of assessments. (p57)
- End the pointless stress of reassessments for people with severe long-term conditions. (p57)
- Commission a report into expanding the Access to Work programme. (p57)
- Scrap the punitive sanctions regime. (p56)
- Scrap the ‘bedroom tax’. (p56)
- Reinstate housing benefit for under-21s. (p56)
- Scrap cuts to Bereavement Support Payment. (p56)

- Guarantee the Winter Fuel Allowance and free bus passes as universal benefits. (p54)
- Commit to tackle child poverty with a new Child Poverty Strategy. (p56)
- Fund child burial fees for bereaved parents, ensuring that they are scrapped in all council areas. (p87)

■ LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- Separate employment support from benefits administration – making Jobcentres places of training and support into work. (p58)
- Take 13,000 children out of poverty by letting both parents earn before their Universal Credit is cut and also reverse cuts to the Family Element. (p58)
- Encourage people into work by reversing the cuts to Work Allowances in Universal Credit, enabling people to work for longer before their benefits are cut. (p59)
- Raise awareness of, and seek to expand, Access to Work, which supports people with disabilities in work. (p59)
- Improve links between Jobcentres and Work Programme providers and the local NHS to ensure all those in receipt of health-related benefits are getting the care and support to which they are entitled. (p59)
- Accelerate the roll-out of Individual Placement and Support, a proven approach to getting people with mental ill-health back into work. (p59)
- Reinstate the legally binding poverty targets of the Child Poverty Act. (p59)
- Uprate working age benefits at least in line with inflation. (p59)
- Abandon the two-child policy on family benefits and abolish the Conservatives' 'rape clause' where a woman has to declare children that are born as a result of rape in order to access benefits. (p59)
- Reverse cuts to Employment Support Allowance to those in the work-related activity group. (p59)
- Help young people in need by reversing cuts to housing benefit for 18 to 21 year olds and increase the rates of Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit for those aged 18 to 24 at the same rate as minimum wages. (p59)
- Increase Local Housing Allowance (LHA) in line with average rents in an area, ensuring that LHA is enough for a family to pay their housing costs no matter where they live. (p59)
- Scrap the 'bedroom tax', while seeking to achieve the aim of making best use of the housing supply through incentivising local authorities to help tenants 'downsize'. (p59)
- Scrap the discredited Work Capability Assessment and replace it with a new system, run by local authorities according to national rules, including a 'real world' test that is based on the local labour market. (p61)
- Withdraw eligibility for the Winter Fuel Payment from pensioners who pay tax at the higher rate (40 per cent). (p60)
- Retain the free bus pass for all pensioners. (p60)
- Ensure that those using food banks are aware of their rights and how they can access hardship payments where relevant. (p60)

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■ UKIP

- Protect disability and carer's benefits. (p5)
- UKIP will not cut disability benefits. (p31)
- Crack down on benefit fraud, but make sure our support and benefits system is fair and fit-for-purpose. (p31)
- Reform [Work Capability Assessments] in consultation with disabled people and disability charities. They must accurately assess the barriers faced by disabled people to enter employment, and indicate what specialist employment support will be needed for those who are ready for work. (p31)
- Scrap the bedroom tax. (p31)
- Give tenants the right to request Housing Benefit is paid direct to their landlords, whatever benefit scheme they are on. (p31)
- UKIP remains committed to keeping the winter fuel allowance, free bus passes, prescriptions and eye tests for all over-60s, without means testing. (p29)

■ GREEN PARTY

- Redress benefits injustice with a social security system that gives everyone confidence they will get support when they need it, including disabled people. (p11)
- Take steps towards the introduction of a universal basic income, including a government sponsored pilot scheme, as a means to increase security and avoid the poverty trap. (p5)

Workforce and local government pensions

■ CONSERVATIVES

- Continue to increase the National Living Wage to 60 per cent of median earnings by 2020 and then by the rate of median earnings. (p16)
- Create a number of [UK sovereign wealth] funds, known as Future Britain funds, which will hold in trust the investments of the British people, backing British infrastructure and the British economy. We anticipate early funds being created out of revenues from shale gas extraction, dormant assets, and the receipts of sale of some public assets. We will encourage pension funds with an interest in joining Future Britain funds to do so. (p20)

■ LABOUR

- Ban zero-hours contracts. (p47)
- Guarantee trade unions a right to access workplaces. (p47)
- Four new public holidays. (p47)
- Raise the Minimum Wage to the level of the Living Wage (expected to be at least £10 per hour by 2020) for all workers aged 18 or over. (p47)
- End the public sector pay cap. (p47)
- Roll out maximum pay ratios of 20:1 in the public sector and in companies bidding for public contracts. (p47)

- Double paid paternity leave to four weeks and increase paternity pay. (p48)
- Work with the Health and Safety Executive to make mandatory a workplace risk assessment for pregnant women so necessary adaptations can be made, and review support for women who have miscarriages. (p110)
- Extend the time period for applying for maternity discrimination to the employment tribunal from three to six months. (p110)
- Give members of the Local Government Pension Scheme full trustee status to help control investments, and reduce fees and charges. (p88)
- Legislate so that accrued rights to the basic state pension cannot be changed, but future benefits can. (p54)
- Enable the development of large, efficient pension funds. (p55)

■ LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- End the 1 per cent cap on pay rises in the public sector, and uprate wages in line with inflation. (p37)
- Establish an independent review to consult on how to set a genuine living wage across all sectors. We will pay this living wage in all central government departments and their agencies, and encourage other public-sector employers to do likewise. (p42)
- Stamp out abuse of zero-hours contracts. Create a formal right to request a fixed contract and consult on introducing a right to make regular patterns of work contractual after a period of time. (p42)
- Establish a review to consider the case for, and practical implications of, introducing a single rate of tax relief for pensions, which would be designed to be simpler and fairer and would be set more generously than the current 20 per cent basic rate relief. (p60)

■ UKIP

- Bring forward legislation requiring employers to advertise jobs to British citizens before they offer them overseas. (p14)
- Ensure employers are legally free to choose to hire a young unemployed British person under the age of 25 ahead of a better qualified or more experienced foreign applicant. (p14)
- Make Gordon Brown's British Jobs for British workers plausible, and meaningful in law. (p14)
- Enforce the minimum and living wage and reverse government cuts to the number of minimum wage inspectors in England and Wales. (p14)
- Significantly tighten up rules on zero hours contracts and severely limit their use. (p14)
- Introduce a flexible state pension window, so everyone can opt to retire earlier, for a slightly lower state pension, or work longer for a slightly higher pension, as is the case at the moment. We will allow women to retire on this basis at 60, if they so wish. (p11)
- Enforce laws protecting workers against age discrimination. (p29)

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■ GREEN PARTY

- Phase in a four day working week (a maximum of 35 hours). (p5)
- Abolish exploitative zero-hours contracts. (p5)
- Reduce the gap between the highest and lowest paid, and increase the minimum wage to reach a genuine living wage of £10 an hour by 2020. (p5)
- End the gender pay gap, and require a minimum 40 per cent of all members of public company and public sector boards to be women. (p5)
- Create a fairer working world for young people by scrapping age-related wage bands and raising the national minimum wage to living wage levels for all. (p15)
- Redress pension injustice, with a pensions system for everyone and action to enable older people to continue to be active members of society. (p11)

Procurement

■ CONSERVATIVES

- Recognise that government can improve the general business environment for SMEs, so we will use our buying power to ensure that big contractors comply with the Prompt Payment Code both on government contracts and in their work with others. If they do not do so, they will lose the right to bid for government contracts. (p21)
- Ensure that 33 per cent of central government purchasing will come from SMEs by the end of the parliament. (p21)

■ LABOUR

- Require firms supplying national or local government to meet the high standards we should expect of all businesses: paying their taxes, recognising trade unions, respecting workers' rights and equal opportunities, protecting the environment, providing training, and paying suppliers on time [within 30 days]. (p14 & p18)
- Re-join the Government Procurement Agreement, whilst safeguarding the capacity for public bodies to make procurement decisions in keeping with public policy objectives. (p30)
- Act to 'insource' our public and local council services as preferred providers. (p19)
- Extend the Freedom of Information Act to private companies that run public services. (p102)
- Facilitate British procurements, including steel and the defence manufacturing industry, whenever possible. (p91 & p121)

■ LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- Use central government public procurement policy as a tool of local growth and community development by, for example, purchasing from diverse sources and using local labour, goods and services, and encouraging local government to do the same. (p44)
- Enable central and local government to prioritise employee-owned and community-benefit companies in awarding procurement contracts by strengthening the Social Value Act. (p64)

■ UKIP

- Make HM Revenue and Customs investigate big businesses or public sector bodies that repeatedly make late payments to smaller customers. Fines proportionate to the amount of delayed payments will be levied, and will escalate for repeat offenders. (p13)
- Freeze Insurance Premium Tax. (p13)
- Launch an urgent independent review of public sector procurement, with the aim of opening public sector contracts up to small and medium-sized businesses employing less than 250 people. Recommendations coming out of this review will be put in place immediately after we leave the EU. (p14)
- Compel all public sector bodies to list contracts worth over £10,000 on the government's 'Contracts Finder' website, to help more small firms access public procurement opportunities. (p14)
- End the use of council procurement cards, which operate like credit cards, encouraging over-spending and waste. Staff should stick within agreed budgets. (p61)

Public spending

■ CONSERVATIVES

- There is still work to do on deficit reduction, so we will continue to restore the public finances over the course of the next parliament. We will continue with the fiscal rules announced by the Chancellor in the Autumn Statement last year, which will guide us to a balanced budget by the middle of the next decade. (p13)

■ LABOUR

- Set the target of eliminating the Government's deficit on day-to-day spending within 5 years. (p10)

■ LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

- Eliminate the deficit on day-to-day spending by 2020 to control the national debt, and then borrowing only to invest. (p36)
- Once we have brought current expenditure into balance we will ensure that overall public spending grows roughly in line with the economy. (p36)
- Initiate a spending review after the general election focusing on delivering efficiency, funding proven spend-to-save initiatives, pursuing local and community integration to drive efficiency, and investing in technology to get public services and front-line staff online. (p37)

■ UKIP

- The £35 billion we will use to finance our public spending priorities has again come from reasonable cuts to the foreign aid budget, scrapping HS2, amending the Barnett Formula and the savings we will make in two years' time by leaving the EU. (p5)
- UKIP's spending proposals do not involve raising any taxes. (p5)
- Support deficit reduction schedules put forward by the next government and vigorously oppose unnecessary spending plans. (p12)



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