

INVITATION TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITAIN



THE CONSERVATIVE MANIFESTO FOR SCOTLAND 2010



INVITATION TO JOIN THE GOVERNMENT OF BRITAIN

A country is at its best when the bonds between people are strong and when the sense of national purpose is clear. Today the challenges facing Britain are immense. Our economy is overwhelmed by debt, our social fabric is frayed and our political system has betrayed the people. But these problems can be overcome if we pull together and work together. If we remember that we are all in this together.

Some politicians say: 'give us your vote and we will sort out all your problems'. We say: real change comes not from government alone. Real change comes when the people are inspired and mobilised, when millions of us are fired up to play a part in the nation's future.

Yes this is ambitious. Yes it is optimistic. But in the end all the Acts of Parliament, all the new measures, all the new policy initiatives, are just politicians' words without you and your involvement.

How will we deal with the debt crisis unless we understand that we are all in this together? How will we raise responsible children unless every adult plays their part? How will we revitalise communities unless people stop asking 'who will fix this?' and start asking 'what can I do?' Britain will change for the better when we all elect to take part, to take responsibility – if we all come together. Collective strength will overpower our problems.

Only together can we get rid of this government and, eventually, its debt. Only together can we get the economy moving. Only together can we protect the NHS. Improve our schools. Mend our broken society. Together we can even make politics and politicians work better. And if we can do that, we can do anything. Yes, together we can do anything.

So my invitation today is this: join us, to form a new kind of government for Britain.



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This is the first election since devolution when a change of government at Westminster is within touching distance. It is a British General Election about UK issues like debt, jobs, welfare, energy, defence, and our relationship with the wider world. It is an election where people in Scotland can realistically expect change if they vote for it.

At this election, people in Scotland face a simple choice. Change with David Cameron's Conservatives or more of the same with Labour.

Scotland has seen what Labour offers. It now spends more on debt interest than it gives the Scottish Parliament to spend on hospitals, schools and all the other devolved services. Joblessness in Scotland is up 67,000 in the last year and all Labour can offer is a new tax on jobs.

However, Scotland has seen the benefits of Conservative policies too. We forced the minority Scottish Government to cut local rates for businesses, be more transparent when spending taxpayers' cash, put 1,000 more police on Scotland's streets and introduce Scotland's first nation-wide drugs strategy.

We have shown that the Conservatives believe in devolution and can be trusted to respect it. We have established ourselves firmly in the mainstream of the constitutional debate, fighting for stronger devolution within a stronger United Kingdom and committing to building a new relationship of mutual respect between Westminster and Holyrood. And that is the change that must underpin all others; Scotland's two governments and parliaments must start working together to tackle the problems that Scotland faces.

We want to see a family-friendly Scotland, where parents are supported and no-one has to choose between their children and their career. We want to see a country where communities come together to support each other, pass on skills to those seeking employment, and to revitalise neighbourhoods. We want to see a working Scotland, with a thriving private sector, a solid infrastructure and a first-rate skills base that will make it, once again, one of the most attractive places to do business in the world.

Over the last few years, Conservatives have been working hard at Westminster, in the Scottish Parliament, in Europe and in councils, towns and villages across Scotland to offer a real alternative. We have shown that we have not only the energy and determination, but also the right policies to make a difference in Scotland and Britain.

It is time for change, and with your help and your vote, we can deliver it.



WE'RE
ALL
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TO
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WE'RE ALL IN
THIS TOGETHER

INTRODUCTION

Britain needs change: few can doubt that. Our national finances are mired in massive debt. Millions are living the misery of unemployment. Communities are shattered by crime and abuse. People in the public services are trapped in a web of rules and regulations. People have lost faith that politics can fix our problems, or that politicians can lead us into a better future. There is a feeling of helplessness. Once again, there is a mood afoot that the decline of Britain is inevitable.

But there is no law that says we must accept decline. We have the energy, the ideas and the ambition to get Britain back on track. And that includes everyone in Britain, wherever they live and whatever their circumstances. If we join together, if we act decisively, and move forward with optimism, we can start to fix the economic, social and political problems that threaten the nation. We can bring about the change Britain needs.

What is that change? Some promise solutions from on high – but real change comes from collective endeavour. So we offer a new approach: a change not just from one set of politicians to another; from one set of policies to another. It is a change from one political philosophy to another. From the idea that the role of the state is to direct society and micro-manage public services, to the idea that the role of the state is to strengthen society and make public services serve the people who use them. In a simple phrase, the change we offer is from big government to Big Society.

This manifesto is the most important stage so far on a journey that began four and a half years ago, when the Conservative Party itself voted for change by electing David Cameron as its leader. Since then, the Party has remoulded itself for the modern era, applying its deepest values and beliefs to the urgent problems of the hour. Even as it has done so, the problems confronting Britain have escalated, and escalated fast. So our ideas are ambitious and radical as well as modern. They match the scale of Britain's problems, and are in tune with a world that is changing before our eyes. But our core values have not altered and our core beliefs remain consistent.

We believe in responsibility: government responsibility with public finances, personal responsibility for our actions, and social responsibility towards each other. We believe in enterprise and aspiration. We believe there is such a thing as society, it's just not the same thing as the state. Our fundamental tenet is that power should be devolved from politicians to people, from the central to the local. Personal ambition should be set as high as is humanly possible, with no barriers put in its way by the state. Perhaps most importantly, we believe that we are all in this together.

Everything you will find in this manifesto is built on these beliefs. They are the building blocks of the change we want to see in every home, every street, every community, every business.

INTRODUCTION

Our belief in responsibility with public finances is the starting point of our **plan for economic recovery and growth**. We want your consent for a programme of public spending control that will deal with Labour's debt crisis and stop the Labour jobs tax that would kill our economic recovery. The programme set out in this manifesto is fully costed and fully funded. Some of our proposals cost nothing, but require energy and leadership. Others – like stopping Labour's jobs tax – will require money, and we will make savings in other areas to pay for them. The debt crisis is the terrible legacy that Gordon Brown is bequeathing to our country. But fiscal responsibility needs a social conscience or it is not responsible at all: so we will not allow the poorest people in Britain to pay an unfair price for the mistakes of some of the richest.

Nor will we allow irresponsibility in the private sector to continue unchecked. We will bring law and order to our financial markets as a necessary step to restoring confidence. But the real prize for Britain is to create a new economic model, one founded on investment and savings not borrowing and debt. This economic vision reflects our belief in enterprise and aspiration. It is a vision of a truly modern economy: one that is greener and more local. An economy where Britain leads in science, technology and innovation. But it is founded on a determination that wealth and opportunity must be more fairly distributed. We want to see an economy where not just our standard of living, but everyone's quality of life, rises steadily and sustainably.

But a nation is only really successful if it is built on a **strong society**. We will never deal with our debts and build a new economy unless we solve the social problems that cost so much and hold so many people back. Labour's big government approach is making our social problems worse, not better – inequality and poverty on the rise; social mobility stalled; family breakdown a fact of life for too many children. So we need fundamental change: from big government that presumes to know best, to the Big Society that trusts in the people for ideas and innovation.

We will move from state action to social action, encouraging social responsibility in all its forms and across all the country – whether curbing incivility on our streets or supporting social enterprises with the power to transform neighbourhoods. Mending Britain's broken society will be a central aim of the next Conservative government.

That is why in this manifesto we set ourselves an ambitious goal: to make Britain the most family-friendly country in Europe. That is why we back the NHS. That is why we are campaigning in the Scottish Parliament to raise standards and restore discipline in schools. It is why we will get people off benefits and into work, why we will argue for reform of policing, sentencing and prisons. And why we are committed to a greener future.

INTRODUCTION

But we will not succeed in building the Big Society, or in building a new economic model, unless we stop government trying to direct everything from the centre. We will get nowhere with yet more top-down state control. So, after thirteen years of Labour, we need **radical political reform**. We need to change the whole way this country is run. As Conservatives, we trust people. We believe that if people are given more responsibility, they will behave more responsibly. We believe that if you decentralise power, you get better results and better value for money. So the plans set out in this manifesto represent an unprecedented redistribution of power and control from the central to the local, from politicians and the bureaucracy to individuals, families and neighbourhoods.

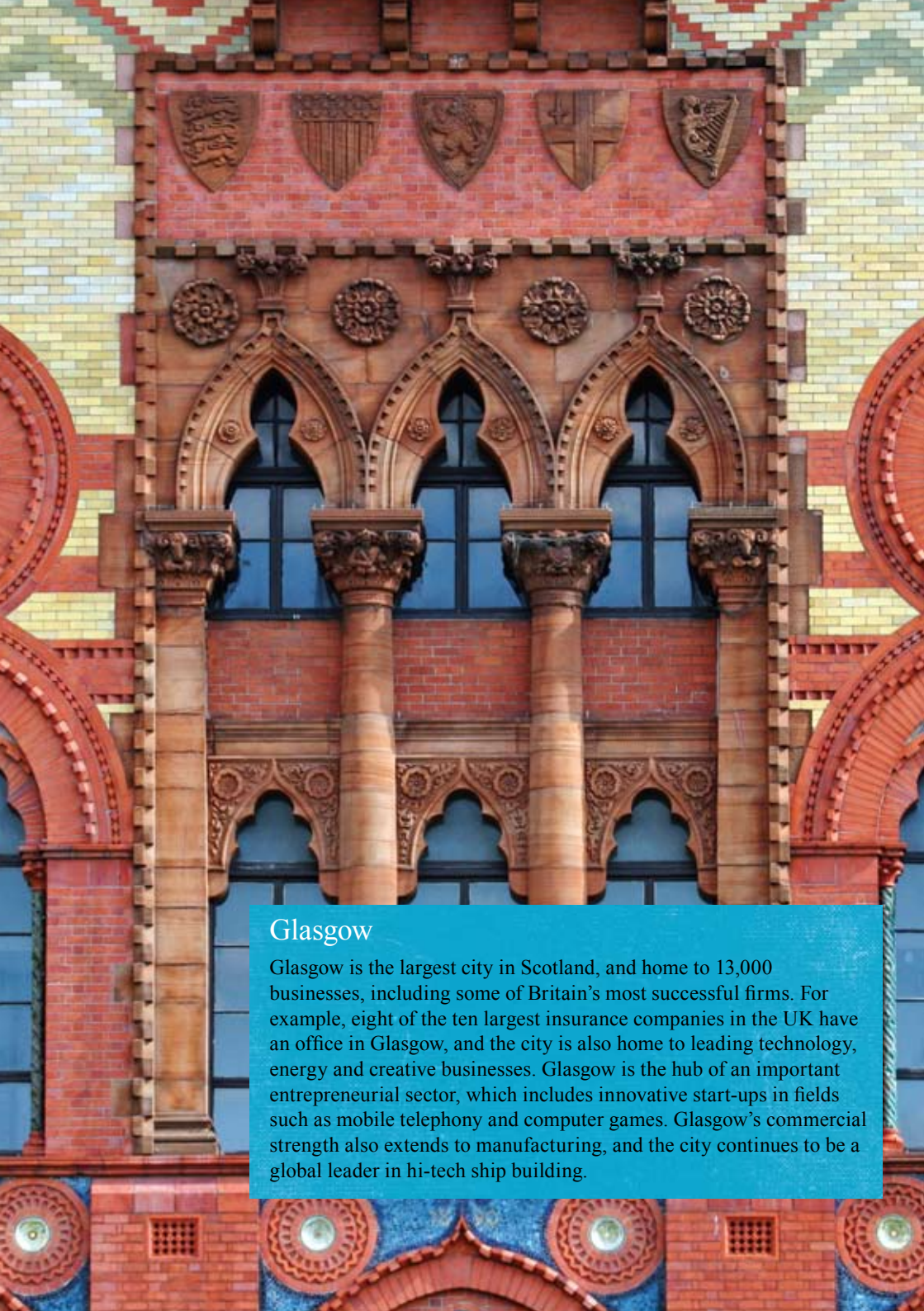
We will give people much more say over the things that affect their daily lives. We will make government, politics and public services much more open and transparent. And we will give the people who work in our public services much greater responsibility. But in return, they will have to answer to the people. All these measures will help restore trust in our broken political system.

We know that this is an ambitious vision. A profoundly optimistic vision. It is also an authentically Conservative vision: sound money, backing enterprise, trusting people. The journey we embarked on four and a half years ago was all about applying this Conservative approach to the progressive challenges of our age: making opportunity more equal; fighting poverty and inequality; improving the environment and general well-being. So our creed today is progressive Conservatism; and this is an unashamedly progressive Conservative manifesto.

Now we ask you to join us for the next and most important stage of the journey: changing Britain so we can offer a better life to all our citizens and play a proud and leading role in the world.

Each of the three programmes of reform outlined in this manifesto – our plans to build a new economic model; to build the Big Society; to build a political system where people have more power and control over their lives – is a massive undertaking in its own right. Yet we are proposing to carry out these changes all at once, because that is the only way to put Britain on the right path for a successful future.

Britain faces huge problems that demand radical change; and it cannot come soon enough. We are impatient to get on with this work. We are determined to make a difference. We have the policies to make that difference. And most importantly, we have faith in the people of Britain, because we know that if we all pull together, stick together, then this country can change its future.



Glasgow

Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland, and home to 13,000 businesses, including some of Britain's most successful firms. For example, eight of the ten largest insurance companies in the UK have an office in Glasgow, and the city is also home to leading technology, energy and creative businesses. Glasgow is the hub of an important entrepreneurial sector, which includes innovative start-ups in fields such as mobile telephony and computer games. Glasgow's commercial strength also extends to manufacturing, and the city continues to be a global leader in hi-tech ship building.

Change the economy



**LET'S
GET
BRITAIN
MOVING**

Get the economy moving

Gordon Brown's debt, waste and taxes have wrecked the economy and threaten to kill the recovery. A Conservative government will take action now to cut the deficit, stop Labour's jobs tax, help keep mortgage rates low and get the economy moving. We will create a new economic model built on investment and savings, not borrowing and debt.

Where is the growth going to come from? Who will provide jobs for the millions out of work? How will families be able to aspire to a better future? These are the questions being asked about Britain, at home and abroad.

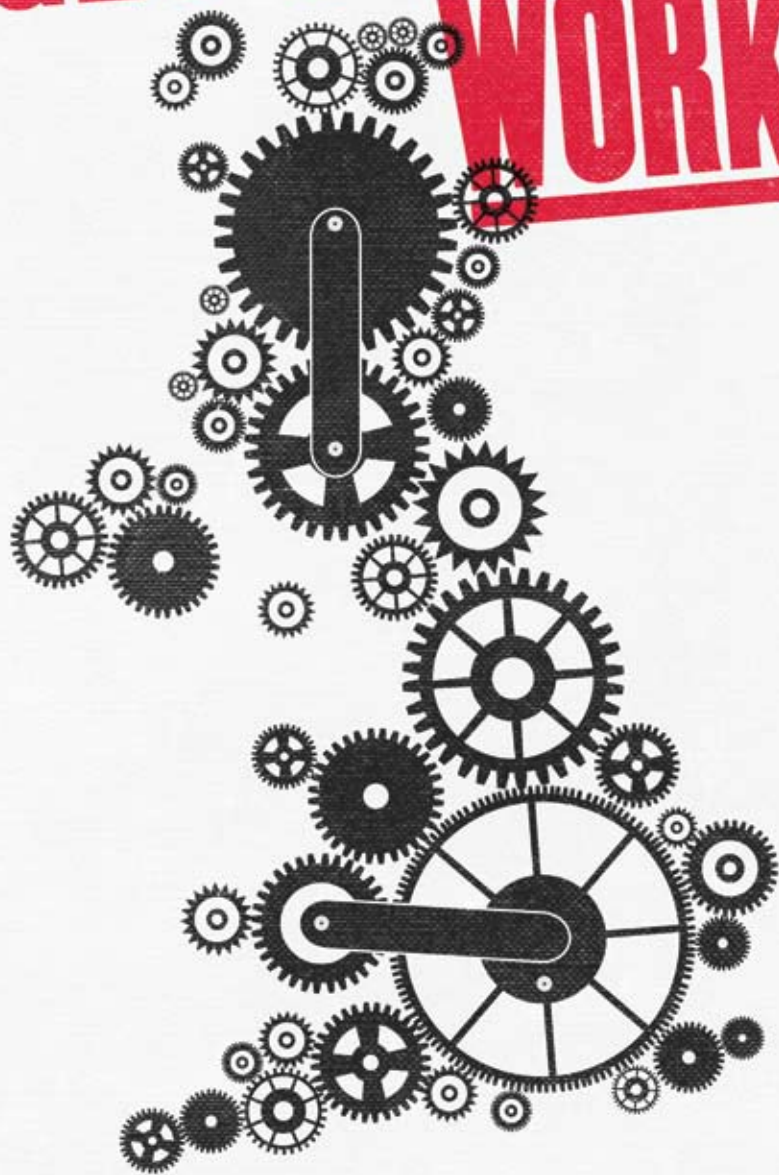
One thing is clear. We can't go on with the old model of an economy built on debt. Irresponsible public spending, an overblown banking sector, and unsustainable consumer borrowing on the back of a housing bubble were the features of an age of irresponsibility that left Britain badly exposed to the economic crisis. Now, with the national debt already doubled and in danger of doubling again, it is this debt – together with the jobs tax that Labour will introduce to help pay for it – that threatens to kill the recovery.

Britain needs a new economic model. Saving and business investment must replace reckless borrowing as the foundation of growth. We need to boost enterprise and develop a low carbon, hi-tech economy. Our exports must grow. We need to get Britain working by creating jobs in the private sector, and we must get better value for money from the public sector.

With the next Conservative government, our tax system, education and national infrastructure will help British firms out-compete their global rivals, not hold them back. We will build a more balanced economy that does not depend so heavily on the success of financial services, and where all parts of the country share in the gains. The bedrock of this new economic model will be the stability and low interest rates that come from a credible plan to reduce our record budget deficit, protect Britain's credit rating and give taxpayers value for their money.

Building this new economic model requires a national effort. We can reverse Britain's economic decline – but only if we accept that we are all in this together. No government, even a strong and united one, can create a better country alone. It needs individuals, families and businesses pulling alongside. We want to unite everyone in our country behind this bold vision of a new British economic model.

GET BRITAIN WORKING



Benchmarks for Britain

For the first time, the British people will have eight clear and transparent benchmarks against which they can judge the economic success or failure of the next government. We will be accountable and open. These are the eight Benchmarks for Britain. Achieving them over the next Parliament will mean we have put Britain back on its feet and are building a new British economic model, very different from the debt-driven economy of recent years.

1. **Ensure macroeconomic stability:** We will safeguard Britain's credit rating with a credible plan to eliminate the bulk of the structural deficit over a Parliament. Our fiscal policy will seek to help keep interest rates lower for longer. The independent Bank of England will continue to target 2 per cent Consumer Price Index (CPI) inflation, and will use its new role in prudential supervision to preserve financial stability.
 2. **Create a more balanced economy:** We will create the conditions for higher exports, business investment and saving as a share of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).
 3. **Get Britain working again:** We will reduce youth unemployment and reduce the number of children in workless households as part of our strategy for tackling poverty and inequality.
 4. **Encourage enterprise:** We will improve Britain's international rankings for tax competitiveness and business regulation.
 5. **Ensure the whole country shares in rising prosperity:** We will increase the private sector's share of the economy in Scotland, as part of our commitment to ensuring that the rest of the UK benefits from more of the private sector growth that has been seen in London and the South East of England.
 6. **Reform public services to deliver better value for money:** We will raise productivity growth in the public sector in order to deliver better public services.
 7. **Create a safer banking system that serves the needs of the economy:** We will reform the regulation and structure of the banking system to ensure lower levels of leverage, less dependence on unstable wholesale funding, and greater availability of credit for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
 8. **Build a greener economy:** We will reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions and increase our share of global markets for low carbon technologies.
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*“We can reverse Britain’s
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are all in this together”*

Ensure macroeconomic stability

We will safeguard Britain's credit rating with a credible plan to eliminate the bulk of the structural deficit over a Parliament. Our fiscal policy will help keep interest rates lower for longer. The independent Bank of England will continue to target 2 per cent CPI inflation, and will use its new role in prudential supervision to preserve financial stability.

After a decade of mismanagement, the UK entered the recession in poor shape, with the second biggest budget deficit in the developed world. We have been honest about the scale of the problem, and the actions we will need to take to deal with it. This will not be easy, but we can overcome our problems if we all pull together.

The absence of a credible plan to deal with our record budget deficit, the largest of any major economy, is creating uncertainty over Britain's credit rating and interest rates. This instability undermines confidence and jeopardises investment. It could tip Britain back into recession. This is Gordon Brown's legacy – and why the greatest risk to our economic recovery is five more years of Gordon Brown.

Urgent action to reduce debt

Urgent action is needed if we are to avoid the higher borrowing costs that would inevitably follow from a credit rating downgrade. So we will cut wasteful government spending to bring the deficit down and restore stability.

We will increase spending on health in real terms

every year, enabling the Scottish Government to use the consequential devolved funding to ensure that the Scottish NHS has more funding than ever before. We will also honour our commitments on international aid. But our plan to get a grip on the deficit will include cuts to wasteful spending in many other departmental budgets. That will enable the independent Bank of England to keep interest rates as low as possible for as long as possible.

To ensure that no Labour government can ever attempt to bankrupt our public finances again, we will set up an independent Office for Budget Responsibility to restore trust in the government's ability to manage the public finances.

We will provide an emergency Budget within 50 days of taking office to set out a credible plan for eliminating the bulk of the structural current budget deficit over a Parliament. The case for starting early to re-establish our economic credibility is overwhelming, and is backed by economists and business leaders.

We will start by cutting a net £6 billion of wasteful departmental spending in the financial year 2010/11.

In addition, we will make the following savings:

- freeze public sector pay for one year in 2011, excluding the one million lowest paid workers;
- hold a review to bring forward the date at which the state pension age starts to rise to 66, although it will not be sooner than 2016 for men and 2020 for women;
- stop paying tax credits to better-off families with incomes over £50,000;
- cut government contributions to Child Trust Funds for all but the poorest third of families and families with disabled children;
- cap public sector pensions above £50,000;
- cut Ministers' pay by 5 per cent, followed by a five year freeze; and,
- reduce the number of MPs by 10 per cent.

Over the course of a Parliament, we will cut Whitehall policy, funding and regulation costs by a third, saving £2 billion a year, and save a further £1 billion a year from quango bureaucracy. And we will encourage the Scottish Government to take the same approach with the public bodies for which it is responsible.

Cut government waste to stop Labour's jobs tax

Labour are planning to increase National Insurance in 2011. Anyone earning over £20,000 will pay more tax, and employers will pay more

tax on all jobs paid over £5,700. This jobs tax, which will hit small businesses especially hard, will kill off the recovery. Experts predict it will cost 57,000 jobs in small and medium-sized businesses alone.

At the same time, Labour will not take action to cut waste in government. They have identified £11 billion pounds of waste, but they do not plan to start dealing with it until April 2011. So Labour will continue wasting money while putting up taxes on working people.

We will act immediately to cut government waste so we can stop the most damaging part of the National Insurance rise for employers and for anyone earning under £35,000.

We will make the following changes in April 2011, relative to Labour's plans:

- raise the primary threshold for National Insurance by £24 a week and raise the Upper Earnings Limit by £29 a week; and,
- raise the secondary threshold at which employers start paying National Insurance by £21 a week.

Seven out of ten working people – those earning between £7,100 and £45,400 – and almost every employer will save up to £150 a year per person compared to under Labour. Lower earners will get the greatest benefit as a percentage of their earnings. Nobody will be worse off as a result of these changes.

Our plans are backed by many of Britain's top business leaders, who between them employ more than half a million people, as well as by Britain's leading business organisations.

To pay for this we will take immediate action to cut a net £6 billion of wasteful departmental spending in the financial year 2010/11, with further savings in future years. This is in addition to the savings made by cutting tax credits and Child Trust Funds for better-off families.

These actions will allow us to reduce the deficit more quickly than Labour year-on-year while avoiding the most damaging part of their jobs tax. It will also lower the proportion of the reduction of the structural deficit that is accounted for by tax increases, from about one third towards one fifth. This is in line with international best practice, as well as the Treasury's own internal analysis.

Former government advisers Sir Peter Gershon and Dr Martin Read have advised us that savings of £12 billion across all departmental spending are possible in-year without affecting the quality of frontline services. These are over and above any savings already planned by Labour. We will achieve this through:

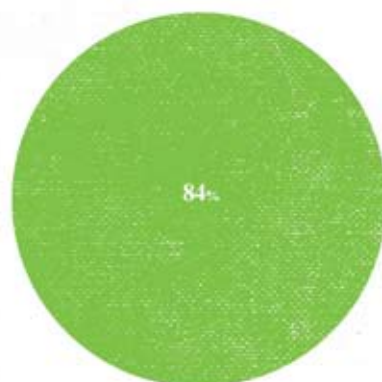
- a freeze on major new Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) spending;
- immediate negotiations to achieve cost reductions from major suppliers;

- tighter control of public sector recruitment;
- reductions in discretionary spending, including travel, expenses, advertising, consultancy and office supplies; and,
- reductions in public sector property costs.

We will match Labour's spending plans for 2010/11 in health and overseas aid. Given our commitment to carry out a Strategic Defence and Security Review, it would also not be appropriate to make in-year reductions to the existing defence budget in 2010/11. Savings in these protected areas will be channelled back into frontline services. The net £6 billion of savings will be made from the remaining departmental budgets.

Inevitably, as a result of the debt crisis that Labour has created at Westminster, devolved spending faces cuts in future years too. While the SNP and even Scottish Labour deny that savings can be made, we have faced up to the situation. Over and above the freeze in pay and the cap on pensions, we have identified a number of savings. These range from taking Scottish Water out of the public sector to ending the SNP's giveaway of free prescriptions and free school meals for those who can afford to pay. Thanks to our efforts, an Independent Budget Review Group is examining where savings can be made in the Scottish Government. And a Conservative government at Westminster will also give the Scottish Government unprecedented flexibility over the block grant.

Growth in key economic sectors, 1997-2009



Financial services



Housing property



Manufacturing

Source: Office for National Statistics

Create a more balanced economy

We will create the conditions for higher exports, business investment and saving as a share of GDP.

For the last decade, growth has been too dependent on government spending and debt-fuelled consumption. More than half of the new jobs created were driven by public spending. Household savings collapsed, and the UK has the lowest investment as a share of GDP of any G7 country. Our share of world exports has fallen by almost a third. And Scottish manufactured exports have fallen by a quarter, despite having risen every year in the 1980s and 1990s. A sustainable recovery must be driven by growth in exports and business investment, and through a better environment for wealth creation.

Make Britain the leading hi-tech exporter in Europe

We will implement key recommendations from Sir James Dyson's Review into how to achieve our goal of making Britain Europe's leading hi-tech exporter, including:

- campaigning in the Scottish Parliament for the establishment of joint university-business research and development institutes;
- initiating a multi-year Science and Research

Budget to provide a stable investment climate for Research Councils; and,

- establishing a new prize for engineering.

In Scotland we will push for a better focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM) subjects in schools.

Research and development tax credits will be improved and refocused on hi-tech companies, small businesses and new start-ups. At the same time, we will give strong backing to the growth industries that generate high-quality jobs around the country.

We will improve the performance of UK Trade and Investment with a renewed focus on high priority sectors and markets where the return on taxpayers' money is highest. We will regularly compare government support for exporters and inward investment against the services provided by our competitors. We will work for the successful conclusion of the Doha trade round and support bilateral free trade negotiations between the European Union (EU) and other countries.

Encourage saving and investment

Only by saving more can we finance investment for the future without being dependent on unsustainable inflows of capital from abroad. We will help stop the spread of means-testing by restoring the link between the basic state pension and average earnings, making it worthwhile for people to save. Other measures we will take to encourage saving include:

- reinvigorating occupational pensions and working with employers and industry to support auto-enrolment into pensions;
- working with the trade unions, businesses and others to address the growing disparity between public sector pensions and private sector pensions, while protecting accrued rights; and,
- when resources allow, starting to reverse the effects of the abolition of the dividend tax credit for pension funds.

We will reward those who have saved for their retirement by ending the effective obligation to buy an annuity at age 75. And we will raise the inheritance tax threshold to £1 million to help millions of people who aspire to pass something on to their children, paid for by a simple flat-rate levy on all non-domiciled individuals.

We must not let the mis-selling of financial products put people off saving. We will implement the Ombudsman's recommendation to make fair and transparent payments to Equitable Life policy holders, through an independent payment scheme, for their relative loss as a consequence of regulatory failure.

Help households manage their debts

Going into the recession, Britain's consumer debt was the highest in the G7. A Conservative government will promote responsible consumer finance by creating a powerful Consumer Protection Agency (CPA) to take over the Financial Services Authority's consumer protection role. In addition, we will:

- give the CPA new powers to define and ban excessive borrowing rates on store cards;
- launch Britain's first free national financial advice service, funded in full through a new social responsibility levy on the financial services sector;
- introduce a seven-day cooling off period for store cards; and,
- require credit card companies to provide clear information.



Debbie Scott

“I’ve always believed that we’ll only solve our big social and economic problems if we all get involved and try and make a difference. It’s never enough just to sit back and think ‘well the government can take care of it’ – I think we’ve all got a responsibility to do what we can. That’s why every day, my colleagues and I use all the innovation and flexibility we can muster to help those furthest from the labour market to overcome their personal barriers to work. For me, it is all about believing in the power of people. Tomorrow’s People welcomes the concept of the single Work Programme – it pulls everything together and allows organisations like ours to support people more effectively on their individual journey from welfare into work.”

Debbie Scott is the Chief Executive of Tomorrow’s People, a national employment charity founded in 1984

Get Britain working again

We will reduce youth unemployment and reduce the number of children in workless households as part of our strategy for tackling poverty and inequality.

Under Labour, youth unemployment has reached over 900,000, with one in five young people unable to find a job. We are at risk of creating a lost generation of young people without the skills to participate in the workforce, without hope for the future. At the same time, economic inactivity is rising, and more than five million people in the UK – and half a million Scots – are out of work and on benefits.

This tidal wave of worklessness is making it hard for many families to make ends meet. In recent years, the number of people living in severe poverty has risen. One in six children in the UK now lives in a workless household – the highest proportion of any country in Europe – and child poverty has gone up in recent years. Getting people back into work is an essential part of realising the goal of eliminating child poverty by 2020, and ensuring that everyone benefits from economic growth.

Reduce welfare dependency

We will scrap Labour's failing employment schemes and create a single Work Programme for everyone who is unemployed, including the 2.6 million people claiming Incapacity Benefit

who do not get enough help from existing programmes. We will reassess all current claimants of Incapacity Benefit. Those found fit for work will be transferred onto Jobseeker's Allowance. Recipients of Incapacity Benefit who are genuinely disabled will continue to receive the financial support to which they are entitled. Our Work Programme will:

- offer people targeted, personalised help sooner – straight away for those with serious barriers to work and at six months for those aged under 25;
- be delivered through private and voluntary sector providers, which will be rewarded on a payment by results basis for getting people into sustainable work; and,
- involve the development of local Work Clubs – places where people looking for work can gather together to exchange skills, find opportunities, make useful contacts and provide mutual support.

Our plans will give unemployed people a hand up, not a hand out. Unemployed people must be prepared to take up job offers. So, with the Conservatives, long-term benefit claimants who fail to find work will be required to 'work

for the dole' on community work programmes. Anyone on Jobseeker's Allowance who refuses to join the Work Programme will lose the right to claim out-of-work benefits until they do, while people who refuse to accept reasonable job offers could forfeit their benefits for up to three years. This will create a welfare system that is fair but firm.

Boost small business

In the end, it is not the state that creates sustainable employment – it is business people. And small businesses are especially important to the UK's economic recovery and to tackling unemployment. Government can help boost enterprise by lowering tax rates, reducing regulation and improving workers' skills.

As well as stopping Labour's jobs tax, for the first two years of a Conservative government any new business will pay no Employers National Insurance on the first ten employees it hires during its first year.

Our MSPs have consistently, and successfully, demanded cuts in rates for 150,000 small and medium-size businesses over the last few years.

We will support would-be entrepreneurs through a new programme, Work for Yourself, which we will urge Skills Development Scotland to join. This programme will promote direct access to business mentors

and substantial loans. We need to make work pay, so we will keep the minimum wage and work to reduce the very high marginal tax rates faced by many people on low incomes who want to return to work or increase their earnings. We will look at how to abolish the default retirement age, as many older people want to carry on working. And we will force equal pay audits on any company found to be discriminating on the basis of gender.

Improve skills and strengthen higher education

Developing economies are able to provide highly-skilled work at a fraction of the cost of British labour. The only way we can compete is by dramatically improving the skills of Britain's workforce, yet thousands of young people leave school every year without the skills they need to get a good job. Conservatives will not accept another generation being consigned to an uncertain future of worklessness and dependency.

We will promote fair access to universities, the professions, and good jobs for young people from all backgrounds.

Where resources allow, we will support funding for new college places and apprenticeships, and a programme of 'work pairings' to give unemployed young people the chance to learn a trade by working with a sole

trader. And we will call for the consequential funding that the Scottish Parliament gets from our plans to switch expenditure from welfare to training to be put into a fund to provide firms with a £2,000 incentive for recruiting new apprentices.

Both the further and higher education sectors have been drowning in bureaucracy and targets for the last decade. To meet the skills challenge we now face, the sector needs to be given the freedom to innovate so we will strengthen the autonomy of our colleges and universities with lighter touch regulation from the Scottish Funding Council.

Universities contribute enormously to the economy. And our aim of making Britain Europe's leading high-tech exporter demands that a new generation of Scottish scientists and engineers comes forward to match the achievements of their illustrious forebears. We will ensure that Britain's universities enjoy the freedom to pursue academic excellence and focus on raising the quality of the student experience. To enable this to happen, we will:

- delay the implementation of the Research Excellence Framework so that it can be reviewed – because of doubts about whether there is a robust and acceptable way of measuring the impact of all research; and,

- demand a wide ranging review of higher education in Scotland, under an independent chair, to look at the future of the sector. We will ensure the review investigates the issue of funding to address concerns that funding for teaching in Scottish universities is falling behind institutions in England and Wales which benefit from fee income.



Silicon Valley

Despite having a population twenty times smaller than the UK, Silicon Valley is a global beacon for innovation and enterprise, attracting more venture capital investment than the whole of the UK. Having led the internet revolution, Silicon Valley is now becoming a world leader in green technology development. These successes are thanks to the highly skilled workforce and world-class universities, the ease of starting a business, and the availability of credit and investment. In addition, companies in Silicon Valley have been able to attract employees in a highly competitive labour market by introducing measures to improve the general well-being of their staff, including flexible working and childcare facilities.

Encourage enterprise

We will improve Britain's international rankings for tax competitiveness and business regulation.

Thirteen years ago, Britain's tax system was one of the most competitive in the developed world. Over the last decade, other countries have cut their tax rates while our tax system has become one of the most complex in the world. Our competitiveness rating has fallen, while the burden of regulation and the impact of taxation have risen. We can only make a sustainable economic recovery if we send a clear signal that Britain is open for business again. That means stopping Labour's jobs tax, lowering corporate tax rates, reducing the regulatory burden, and supporting innovation and sustainable development – changes that will benefit businesses of all sizes and boost employment.

Cut and simplify business taxes

The Conservative Party believes in lower and simpler taxation. That is why we will ensure that by far the largest part of the burden of dealing with the deficit falls on lower spending rather than higher taxes. Cutting the deficit is the most urgent task we need to undertake if we are to get the economy moving, but it is not enough. So, initially, we will cut the headline rate of corporation tax to 25p and the small companies' rate to 20p, funded by reducing complex reliefs and allowances.

Over time, we hope to reduce these rates further. Our ambition is to create the most competitive tax system in the G20 within five years.

We will restore the tax system's reputation for simplicity, stability and predictability. In our first Budget, we will set out a five year road map for the direction of corporate tax reform, providing greater certainty and stability to businesses. We will create an independent Office of Tax Simplification to suggest reforms to the tax system.

We will take a series of measures to encourage Foreign Direct Investment into the UK, including:

- making the UK a more attractive location for multinationals by simplifying the complex Controlled Foreign Companies rules;
- consulting on moving towards a territorial corporate tax system that only taxes profits generated in the UK; and,
- creating an attractive tax environment for intellectual property.

Reduce regulation

Increasing amounts of red tape and complex regulation have eroded Britain's reputation as a good place to invest, create jobs or start a business. A Conservative government will introduce regulatory budgets: forcing any UK government body wanting to introduce a new regulation to reduce regulation elsewhere by a greater amount. And we will give the public the opportunity to force the worst regulations to be repealed.

To encourage new businesses to start up, we will reduce the number of forms needed to register a new business – moving towards a 'one-click' registration model – to make Britain the fastest place in the world to start a business, and end the restrictions on social tenants starting a business from their homes.

We are proud of the last Conservative government's industrial relations reforms, which helped bring about our economic revival in the 1980s, and we will always be prepared to build on them if necessary.

Support innovation and sustainable development

Government procurement is a £200 billion a year market that can be used much better to stimulate enterprise and innovation. We will take steps to open up government procurement to small and innovative businesses by:

- publishing online all government tender documents for contracts worth over £10,000 via the Supply2Gov website;
- creating a level playing field for open source ICT in government procurement; and,
- opening up contracts to SMEs by breaking up large ICT projects into smaller components.

We will invite the Scottish Government to participate in these programmes.

We believe the devolved planning system should adhere rigorously to a presumption in favour of sustainable development. To ensure proper Parliamentary oversight, we will use private or hybrid Bills at Westminster to promote major projects, like our plans for a national high speed rail network, and will work closely with the Scottish Government and Parliament when planning the Scottish sections of these projects.

Attract the brightest and best to our country

Immigration has enriched our nation over the years and we want to attract the brightest and the best people who can make a real difference to our economic growth. But immigration today is too high and needs to be reduced. We do not need to attract people to do jobs that could be carried out by British citizens, given the right training and support. So we will take steps to take net migration back to the levels

of the 1990s – tens of thousands a year, not hundreds of thousands.

To help achieve this goal, we will introduce a number of measures, such as:

- setting an annual limit on the number of non-EU economic migrants admitted into the UK to live and work;
- limiting access only to those who will bring the most value to the British economy; and,
- applying transitional controls as a matter of course in the future for all new EU Member States.

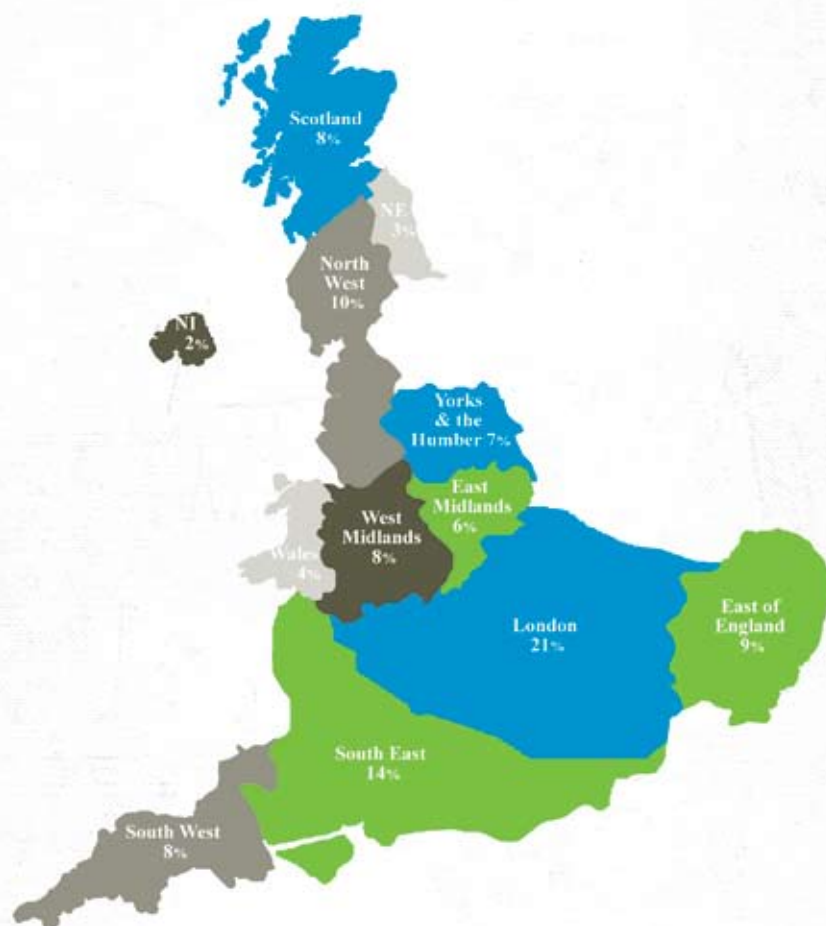
In addition, we will promote integration into British society, as we believe that everyone coming to this country must be ready to embrace our core values and become a part of their local community. So there will be an English language test for anyone coming here to get married.

We want to encourage students to come to our universities and colleges, but our student visa system has become the biggest weakness in our border controls. A Conservative government will strengthen the system of granting student visas so that it is less open to abuse. We want to make it easier for reputable universities and colleges to accept applications, while putting extra scrutiny on new institutions looking to accept foreign students or existing institutions not registered with Companies House.

In addition, we will:

- insist foreign students at new or unregistered institutions pay a bond in order to study in this country, to be repaid after the student has left the country at the end of their studies;
- ensure foreign students can prove that they have the financial means to support themselves in the UK; and,
- require that students must usually leave the country and reapply if they want to switch to another course or apply for a work permit.

Country or region size by share of UK economy



Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008

Ensure the whole country shares in rising prosperity

We will increase the private sector's share of the economy in Scotland, as part of our commitment to ensuring that the rest of the UK benefits from more of the private sector growth that has been seen in London and the South East of England

Like many areas of the UK, private sector growth in Scotland has lagged behind the South East of England, and the void has been filled by inflating the public sector. This imbalance has been getting worse, despite the SNP's claim that it would use the devolved powers to cut back Scotland's quango state and match UK levels of private sector growth. We will increase the private sector's share of the economy in every part of the UK by boosting enterprise and creating a better business environment. We will work closely with the Scottish Government to achieve this goal, and we will use the Scotland Office to coordinate constructive relations with Scottish local authorities, business groups and trade unions.

Create a modern transport network

A rebalanced economy requires an extensive and reliable infrastructure. But transport has been a low priority for Labour, and the SNP Government has not effectively prioritised transport programmes. As a result, it has struggled to bring any project much closer to completion. A more visionary approach

from Westminster and more focused one from Holyrood is what Scotland needs. The hassle of getting around is bad for business, bad for families and bad for everyone's quality of life.

A Conservative government will begin work immediately to create a high speed rail line connecting London and Heathrow with Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds. This is the first step towards achieving our vision of creating a national high speed rail network to join up major cities across England, Scotland and Wales. Stage two will deliver two new lines bringing the North East, Scotland and Wales into the high speed rail network.

Because travel abroad is so important for our economy and for family holidays, we need to improve our airports and reduce the environmental impact of flying. We will reform Air Passenger Duty to encourage a switch to fuller and cleaner planes. Each case for regional airport expansion in Scotland has to be judged on its own merits, taking into account local environmental factors and the impact on the surrounding community, as well as our ability to meet our targets for cutting carbon

emissions. However, Heathrow needs to be made better, not bigger. So we will include a direct link to the airport in our plans for our high-speed rail network.

To improve life for commuters and encourage people to switch to lower carbon public transport, we will reform our railways to provide a better focus on tackling problems that matter most to passengers, such as overcrowding. We will grant longer, more flexible rail franchises to incentivise private sector investment in improvements like longer trains and better stations. And Conservatives in the Scottish Parliament will push for a complementary strategy on the devolved aspects of rail services.

We will turn the rail regulator into a powerful passenger champion and reform Network Rail to make it more accountable to its customers.

Britain has the chance to lead the world in making our transport system greener. So we will introduce incentives for electricity network operators to establish a new national car recharging network, making it much easier for drivers to move to electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles. We support sustainable travel initiatives that work best for local communities by:

- pushing to give the concerns of cyclists much greater priority;

- supporting partnerships between bus operators and local authorities whilst resisting calls for a return to statutory regulation; and,
- helping people cut down on work-related travel.

We support the construction of a new Forth crossing which needs to be recognised as the most pressing transport priority in Scotland.

We will demand an end to Scottish government funding for new fixed speed cameras, and switch to more effective ways to make our roads safer, including authorising ‘drugalyser’ technology for use in testing for drug-driving. We would prioritise funding on accident blackspots and make companies that dig up our roads accountable for the congestion they cause.

We will consult on the introduction of a ‘Fair Fuel Stabiliser’. This would cut fuel duty when oil prices rise, and vice versa. It would ensure families, businesses and the whole British economy are less exposed to volatile oil markets, and that there is a more stable environment for low carbon investment.

In the Scottish Parliament, we have affordable plans to expand the number of rural petrol stations eligible for rate relief. This will address the major injustice of the SNP’s rates revaluation and help limit the premium that drivers in rural areas pay on their fuel.

Spread prosperity

We want Britain to become a European hub for hi-tech, digital and creative industries – but this can only happen if we have the right infrastructure in place. Establishing a super-fast broadband network throughout the UK could generate 600,000 additional jobs and add £18 billion to Britain's GDP.

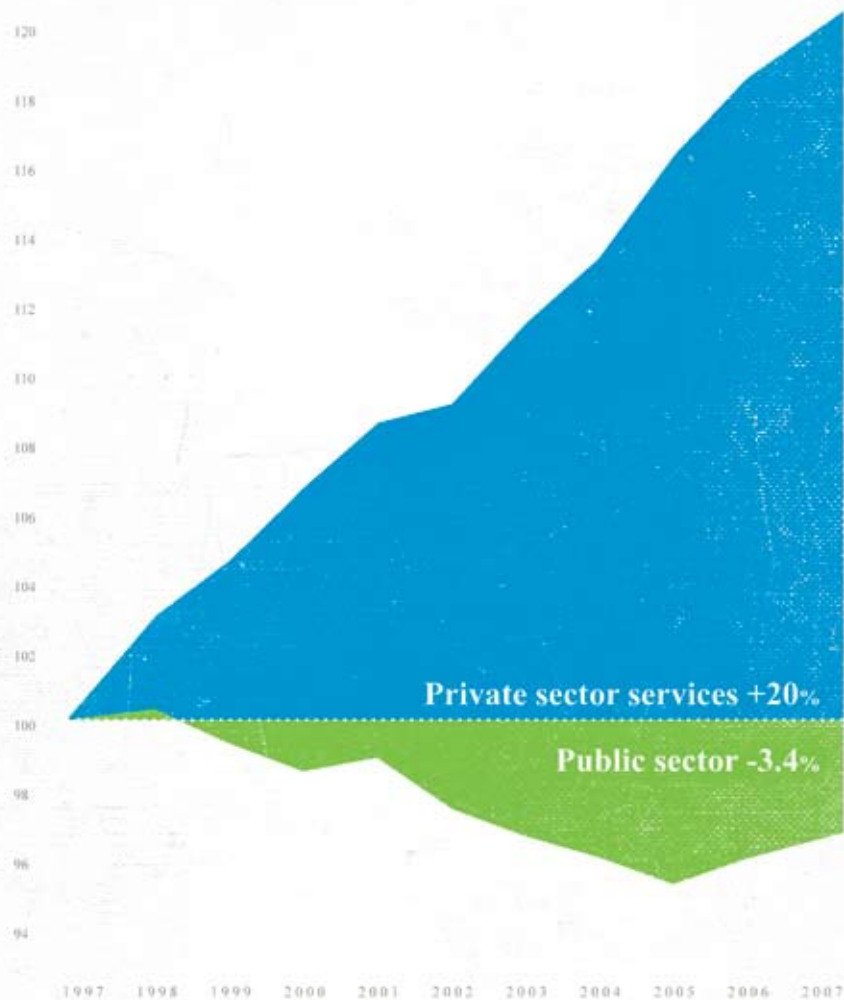
We will scrap Labour's phone tax and instead require BT and other infrastructure providers to allow the use of their assets to deliver super-fast broadband across the country. If necessary, we will consider using the part of the licence fee that is supporting the digital switchover to fund broadband in areas that the market alone will not reach.

We are all in this together. So we need not only national and devolved government but also local government to make itself part of Scotland's economic recovery. So we:

- have set out how the Scottish Government could create a new Business Dividend Fund that would work by giving a local authority extra funding for every new business established in its area above a set target. Local authorities would then have an incentive to adopt policies which stimulate economic development; and
- will use the Scotland Office to give Scottish civic leaders access to the heart of

the UK Government. While the Scottish Government's role in engaging with local authorities and Scottish civic society must be respected, that does not mean that the UK Government has to step back as Labour has done. We will ensure that they have as much opportunity to influence reserved policy as their counterparts in the rest of the UK.

Productivity, 1997-2007



Source: Office for National Statistics

Reform public services to deliver better value for money

We will raise productivity growth in the public sector in order to improve public services.

Public sector productivity has fallen under Labour, acting as a drag on growth and reducing the quality of our public services. If productivity in the public sector had grown at the same rate as in private sector services, we could now have the same quality of public services for £60 billion less each year. So, by improving public sector productivity while getting a grip on the debt, we will still be able to deliver better public services. That is why good government costs less with the Conservatives.

Decentralisation, accountability and transparency

We value the work of those employed in our public services, and a Conservative government will work with workers in the reserved public services to deliver higher productivity and better value for money for taxpayers. We will raise public sector productivity by increasing diversity of provision, extending payment by results and giving more power to consumers, an agenda we are also pushing in the Scottish Parliament.

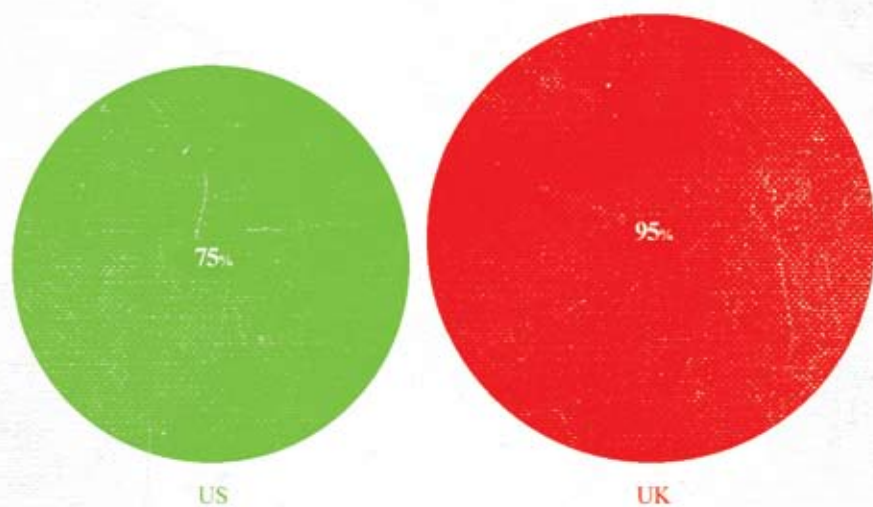
Giving public sector workers ownership of the services they deliver is a powerful way to drive efficiency, so we will support co-operatives and mutualisation as a way of transferring public

assets and revenue streams to public sector workers. We will encourage them to come together to form employee-led co-operatives and bid to take over the services they run. This will empower millions of public sector workers to become their own boss and help them to deliver better services – the most significant shift in power from the state to working people since the sale of council houses in the 1980s.

Transparency is crucial to creating a value for money culture. We will publish all items of spending over £25,000 online. This will complete the programme that we have pioneered in Scotland, where items of devolved spending over £25,000 are now being published online as a condition of our support for the devolved Budget. In addition, we will:

- introduce and publish a standard set of cost measures that capture the key drivers of Whitehall spending;
- help Whitehall Finance Directors to manage resources more efficiently;
- implement clear financial performance targets for senior civil servants; and,
- create a focus on delivering strong financial management across government.

Size of peak bank bailout, % GDP



Source: Bank of England

Create a safer banking system that serves the needs of the economy

We will reform the regulation and structure of the banking system to ensure lower levels of leverage, less dependence on unstable wholesale funding, and greater availability of credit for SMEs.

In the run up to the financial crisis, British banks became amongst the most indebted and most leveraged in the world – with disastrous consequences for us all. This credit boom turned into a bust, with a significant fall in credit available to firms. Scotland has seen the effects of Labour’s regulatory failure even more starkly than the other nations of the UK.

Lack of access to credit remains a major problem, especially for SMEs. We need to change the way we regulate our banks to stop a crisis on this scale ever happening again.

Reform financial services

The financial services sector is one of Scotland’s most successful industries and we want this to continue, but the sector must not put the stability of the whole economy at risk.

We will put in place a levy on banks. We are prepared to act unilaterally if necessary, but there is emerging international agreement on this approach and the US and German governments have both announced similar plans.

We need fundamental reform of our failed regulatory system, avoiding badly-designed regulations that will damage our

competitiveness and ensuring that the financial sector can supply the affordable credit that businesses need.

We will abolish Gordon Brown’s failed tripartite system of regulation and put the Bank of England in charge of prudential supervision. We will restore the Bank’s historic role in monitoring the overall growth of credit and debt in the economy. In addition, we will:

- pursue international agreement to prevent retail banks from engaging in activities, such as large-scale proprietary trading, that put the stability of the system at risk;
- empower the Bank of England to crack down on risky bonus arrangements;
- increase competition in the banking industry, starting with a study of competition in the sector to inform our strategy for selling the government’s stakes in the banks; and,
- as the government comes to sell off its holdings in the banks, offer a ‘people’s bank bonus’, so that everybody in the country has the chance to buy a stake in the state-owned banks.

We will create more diverse sources of affordable credit for small businesses, building on our proposals for a National Loan Guarantee Scheme.



Japan

Japan is a world leader in the development of green technology. It invests in R&D at almost double the UK's rate, and Japanese companies hold roughly 30 per cent of green technology patents filed in the US. As a result, Japan is far ahead of the UK in the trillion pound market for green technology. This leadership is not just good for the economy; it's also good for the environment. For example, thanks to the widespread use of green technologies, Japan has the lowest carbon intensity of any major economy.

Build a greener economy

We will reduce UK greenhouse gas emissions and increase our share of global markets for low carbon technologies.

Labour have said the right things on climate change, but these have proved little more than warm words. Despite three White Papers, a multitude of strategies and endless new announcements, the UK now gets more of its energy from fossil fuels than it did in 1997. Our performance on emissions has been criticised by environmental groups and we have the worst record of any major EU nation when it comes to renewable energy. This must change to safeguard Britain and the world's future.

We need to cut our carbon emissions to tackle the challenge of climate change. But the low carbon economy also provides exciting opportunities for British businesses. We will encourage private sector investment to put Britain at the forefront of the green technology revolution, creating jobs and new businesses across the country.

Create a low carbon future

This wave of low carbon innovation we want to unleash requires investment, so we will create Britain's first Green Investment Bank – which will draw together money currently divided across existing government initiatives, leveraging private sector capital to finance new green technology start-ups. We will create

green Individual Savings Accounts to help provide the financial backing we need to create a low carbon economy.

A credible and sustainable price for carbon is vital if we are to see adequate and timely investment in new electricity generation. Whatever the carbon content of electricity generated, operators considering new investments in projects with a life of several decades need to know where they stand. We will reform the Climate Change Levy to provide a floor price for carbon, delivering the right climate for investment in low carbon energy production.

We will increase the proportion of tax revenues accounted for by environmental taxes, ensuring that any additional revenues from new green taxes that are principally designed as an environmental measure to change behaviour are used to reduce the burden of taxation elsewhere.

We will encourage local councils to use the power we gave them in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act to introduce green discounts for council tax and business rates.

Perth

The Conservatives in Scotland will protect our public services. We are the only party committed to protecting the NHS budget and we secured 1,000 extra police on the streets as our price for supporting the Scottish Budget. We have led the debate on education and forced the other parties to accept that change is needed. Stopping Labour's tax on jobs will secure £63 million for public services, save jobs and ensure that people get the front-line services they deserve.



Change society



**THERE IS
SUCH A
THING AS
SOCIETY**

**IT'S JUST
NOT THE
SAME THING
AS THE
STATE**

Mend our broken society

Our society is broken, but together we can mend it: we can build the Big Society. A Conservative government will make Britain the most family-friendly country in Europe. We will reform the tax system to support families, tackle welfare and the causes of poverty and prioritise our spending so that the NHS, which matters more to families than anything, can be protected. In the Scottish Parliament, we are leading the campaign for education reform and have consistently called for tougher action on crime.

Despite the massive expansion of the state that has been pushed through by Labour, aided in Scotland by the SNP, many people's quality of life is getting worse, not better. The number of people living in poverty has risen in the last three years, and inequality is at a record high. We have some of the worst rates of family breakdown in the world. In some of the most deprived parts of the country, life expectancy has actually fallen. In one area of Glasgow a man born today has a life expectancy of 54 – the lowest in Europe.

This terrible record of failure is not just a problem that affects our society and ruins people's lives. It affects our economy too, costing billions and wasting potential. It is the result of a political approach that addresses the symptoms, rather than the underlying causes, of social breakdown; one that relies on top-down government intervention and bureaucratic micro-management.

So we need a new approach: social responsibility, not state control; the Big Society, not big government. Only in this way will we tackle the causes of poverty and inequality, rather than just the symptoms. Only in this way will we transform the quality of our public services. And only in this way will we rebuild shattered communities and repair the torn fabric of society.

So we will redistribute power from the central state to individuals and families. We will give further powers to the Scottish Parliament and make the case for it to devolve power down to local communities. We want to give public sector workers back their professional autonomy and make them accountable to the people they serve and the results they achieve will be made transparent. If people don't like the service they receive they should be able to choose better alternatives. In this way, we can create opportunities for people to take power and control over their lives. Our approach is absolutely in line with the spirit of the age: the post-bureaucratic age.

This vision demands a cultural change across the country. Our success will depend not just on the actions we take but on society's response. By promoting equality and tackling discrimination, our policies, like recognising civil partnerships as well as marriage in the tax system and helping disabled people live independently, will give everybody the chance to play their part. This way, we can make Britain fairer and safer; a country where opportunity is more equal.

**BIG
SOCIETY
NOT BIG
GOVERNMENT**

Build the Big Society

We will use the state to help stimulate social action, helping social enterprises to deliver public services. We will be advocates of a voluntary sector that is freed to implement innovative and local solutions and we will champion a new system of funding in Scotland, the Social Impact Bond, to base funding on real outcomes rather than artificial targets. Our National Citizen Service, initially for 16 year olds, will help bring our country together, and we will consult with the Scottish Government and seek Scottish partners for this initiative.

The size, scope and role of government in the UK has reached a point where it is now inhibiting, not advancing, the progressive aims of reducing poverty, fighting inequality, and increasing general well-being. We can't go on pretending that government has all the answers.

Our alternative to big government is the Big Society: a society with much higher levels of personal, professional, civic and corporate responsibility; a society where people come together to solve problems and improve life for themselves and their communities; a society where the leading force for progress is social responsibility, not state control.

The Big Society runs consistently through our policy programme. Our plans to reform public services, mend our broken society, and rebuild trust in politics are all part of our Big Society agenda. These plans involve redistributing power from the state to society; from the centre to local communities, giving people the opportunity to take more control over their lives.

But we recognise that it is not enough to create opportunities for people to get involved in building the Big Society; our reform plans require a social response in order to be successful. So building the Big Society is not just a question of the state stepping back and hoping for the best: it will require an active role for the state. The state must take action to agitate for, catalyse and galvanise social renewal. We must use the state to help remake society.

Public service reform

Our public service reform programme will enable social enterprises, charities and voluntary groups to play a leading role in delivering public services and tackling deep-rooted social problems.

Britain has a proud and long-standing charitable tradition, and we are convinced that the voluntary sector should play a major part in our civic renewal. We will argue in the Scottish Parliament for a fair deal on grants to give voluntary sector organisations more stability.

We must reverse the trend of the SNP Scottish Government to restrict the ability of the voluntary sector to innovate and to force it to deliver services according to formulae devised in St. Andrew's House rather than based on what works best locally.

Through the Scottish Parliament, we will initiate debate in Scotland about using voluntary organisations to provide public services when they can do so at a competitive price. We will also call on the Scottish Government to provide a framework for Social Impact Bonds, so that the voluntary sector can be used to address some of the deep rooted social problems in our country, with returns generated for the investor based on the success and savings to Government.

Neighbourhood groups

Our reform agenda is designed to empower communities to come together to address local issues. For example, we want to enable parents to start new schools and enable residents to hold the police to account for policing in their communities. These policies will give new powers and rights to neighbourhood groups: the 'little platoons' of civil society – and the institutional building blocks of the Big Society.

To stimulate social action further, we will:

- transform the civil service into a 'civic service' by making sure that participation in social action is recognised in civil servants' appraisals;

- launch an annual Big Society Day to celebrate the work of neighbourhood groups and encourage more people to take part in social action; and,
- develop a measure of well-being that encapsulates the social value of state action.

Sport and the Olympics

We will deliver a successful Olympics that brings lasting benefits for the country as a whole. Part of the community sports budget of the National Lottery will be responsible for delivering an Olympic legacy, including the vigorous promotion of competitive sports through a national Olympic-style school competition. To support high-level sport further, we will:

- work with the Scottish Government to deliver a top-quality Commonwealth Games in Glasgow in 2014 and Ryder Cup at Gleneagles in the same year;
- ensure that the 2013 Rugby League and the 2015 Rugby Union World Cups are successful; and,
- strongly support England's bid to host the 2018 Football World Cup, which, if successful, will benefit the whole UK.

National Citizen Service

Building the Big Society means encouraging the concept of public-spirited service – the idea that everyone should play a part in making their communities stronger.

That is why we will introduce National Citizen Service. The initial flagship project will provide a programme for 16 year olds to give them a chance to develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds, and start getting involved in their communities.

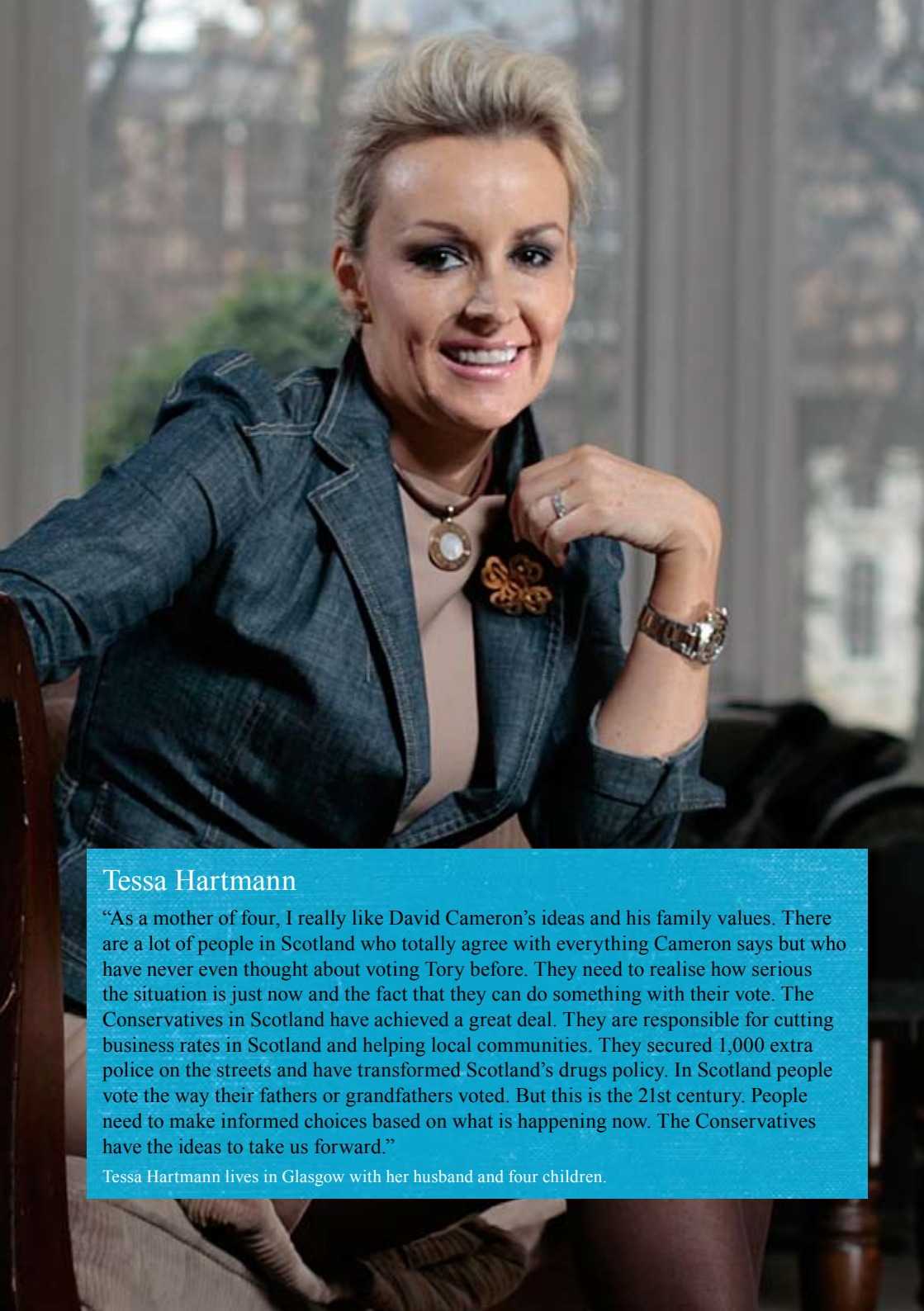
We want to work with the Scottish Government, a broad range of voluntary sector organisations in Scotland and the nation's renowned philanthropists to identify how the National Citizen Service can best be taken forward in Scotland. We will pull out all the stops to make it a truly national experience.

Even in these difficult times, the British people have demonstrated their desire to give money and time to good causes. We will introduce new ways to increase philanthropy, and use the latest insights from behavioural economics to encourage people to make volunteering and community participation something they do on a regular basis.

The National Lottery

We will restore the National Lottery to its original purpose and, by cutting down on

administration costs, make sure more money goes to good causes. The Big Lottery Fund will focus purely on supporting social action through the voluntary and community sector, instead of Ministers' pet projects as at present. Sports, heritage and the arts will each see their original allocations of 20 per cent of good cause money restored, increasing funding for good causes in Scotland by around £19 million.



Tessa Hartmann

“As a mother of four, I really like David Cameron’s ideas and his family values. There are a lot of people in Scotland who totally agree with everything Cameron says but who have never even thought about voting Tory before. They need to realise how serious the situation is just now and the fact that they can do something with their vote. The Conservatives in Scotland have achieved a great deal. They are responsible for cutting business rates in Scotland and helping local communities. They secured 1,000 extra police on the streets and have transformed Scotland’s drugs policy. In Scotland people vote the way their fathers or grandfathers voted. But this is the 21st century. People need to make informed choices based on what is happening now. The Conservatives have the ideas to take us forward.”

Tessa Hartmann lives in Glasgow with her husband and four children.

Make Britain the most family-friendly country in Europe

We will make Britain the most family-friendly country in Europe. We will support families in the tax and benefits system, extend flexible working and improve parental leave. We will help parents cope with the commercialisation of childhood and give families more control over their lives.

Strong families are the bedrock of a strong society. They provide the stability and love we need to flourish as human beings, and the relationships they foster are the foundation on which society is built. The warmth of a child's parenting is as important to their life chances as the wealth of their upbringing.

Labour's complacent attitude to commitment has done untold harm and its narrow approach ignores the importance of strengthening the relationships between all family members – children, parents, grandparents and the wider family. As a result, Britain is one of the least family-friendly countries in the world.

This will change with a Conservative government. We will help families with all the pressures they face: the lack of time, money worries, the impact of work, preventing unhealthy influences, and we have answers to their concerns about schools, crime and poor housing. We will not be neutral on this. Britain's families will get our full backing across all our policies.

Reform tax and benefits to help families and pensioners

Today, Labour's tax and benefits system rewards couples who split up. A Conservative government will end the couple penalty for all couples in the tax credit system as we make savings from our welfare reform plans. We will recognise marriage and civil partnerships in the tax system in the next Parliament. This will send an important signal that we value couples and the commitment that people make when they get married.

To help Scotland's families even more, we are campaigning to freeze council tax for a further two years. This would follow on from the three year council tax freeze Scots have already enjoyed thanks to the Conservatives. We also remain committed to the principle of a pensioner discount. We will oppose Scottish Labour's plans to increase council tax and introduce a new tax based on property prices, that would see many families facing higher bills and penalize them if they take the initiative to improve their homes.

We support tax credits and will continue to provide the range of tax credits to families, although we can no longer justify paying tax credits to households earning more than £50,000. We will reform the administration of tax credits to reduce fraud and overpayments, which hit the poorest families hardest.

We strongly value the role older people play in families and in society, and will not let them suffer because of the economic mistakes of others. That is why we have made a pledge to pensioners to re-link the basic state pension to earnings, and protect:

- the winter fuel payment;
- free bus passes;
- free TV licences;
- disability living allowance and attendance allowance; and,
- the pension credit.

Give families more control over their lives

Making Britain more family-friendly means helping families spend more time together. That is why we will initially extend the right to request flexible working to every parent with a child under the age of eighteen. We want our government to lead from the front, so we will extend the right to request flexible working to

all those in the public sector, recognising that this may need to be done in stages. In addition, we will:

- in the longer term, extend the right to request flexible working to all, but only in the light of experience and after full consultation with business on how to do this in a way which is administratively simple and without burdening them with extra costs; and,
- oblige JobCentre Plus offices to ask employers if their vacancies could be advertised on a part-time or flexible basis.

We will introduce a new system of flexible parental leave which lets parents share maternity leave between them, while ensuring that parents on leave can stay in touch with their employer. We support the provision of free nursery care for pre-school children. We want maximum choice and flexibility for parents and believe that parents should have more flexibility over when they take their 12.5 hours of free childcare in the week and we want that support to be provided by a diverse range of providers.

Protect childhood

Children should be allowed to grow up at their own pace, without excessive pressure placed on them by businesses. We will take a series of measures to help reverse the commercialization of childhood. We prefer to gain voluntary consent to these actions but we are prepared to legislate if necessary.

We will:

- prevent any marketing or advertising company found to be in serious breach of rules governing marketing to children from bidding for government advertising contracts for three years;
- ban companies from using new peer-to-peer marketing techniques targeted at children, and tackle marketing on corporate websites targeted at children; and,
- establish a new online system that gives parents greater powers to take action against irresponsible commercial activities targeted at children.

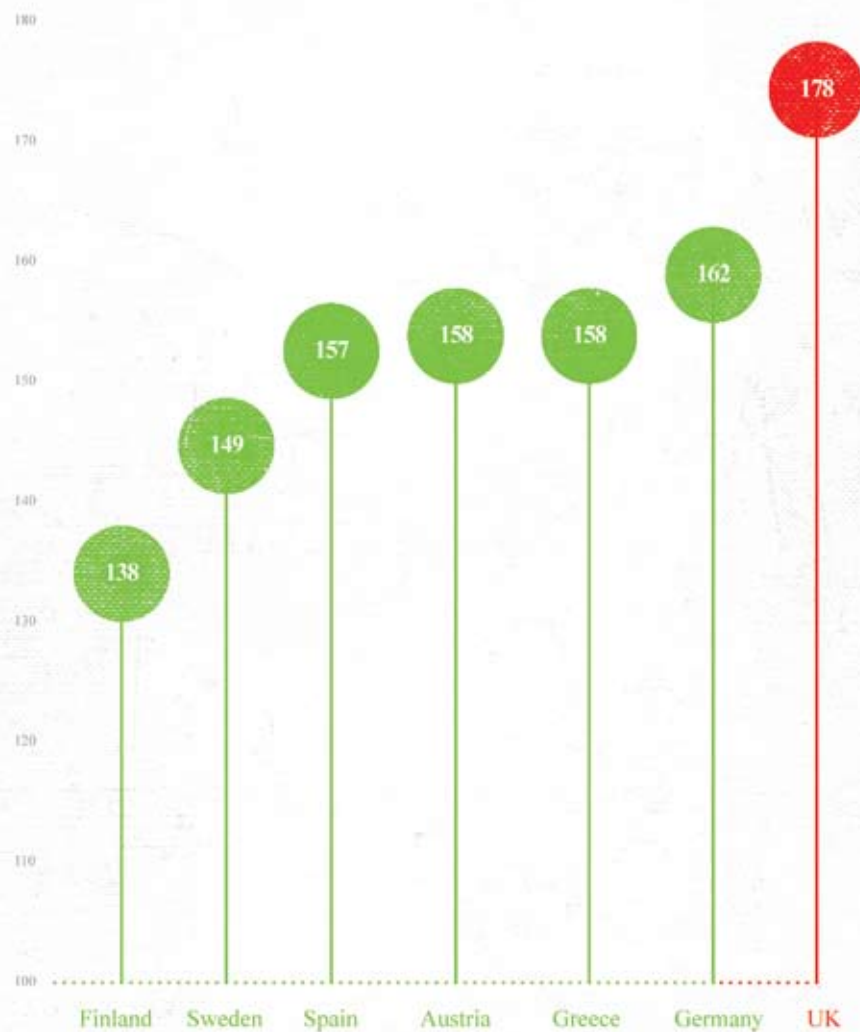
This extra help will not only provide advice on the physical development of young children, but also support for the emotional health of the whole family – particularly the relationships between parent and child and between parents themselves.

Early intervention and more health visitors

We are fully committed to early intervention and to increasing its focus on the neediest families, in particular ensuring the delivery of dedicated support to disadvantaged and dysfunctional families.

Parents need the best possible advice and support to get off to the right start with a new child, because looking after young children can be hard work. So, we have identified funding in the Scottish health budget to increase the number of health visitors. This would allow all parents to get a guaranteed level of health visitor support before birth and in each of the first five years of their child's life.

Deaths due to cancer, per 100,000 people



Source: EuroStat, 2007

Back the NHS

We will back the NHS. We will increase health spending in real terms at Westminster, which will generate consequential funding for the Scottish Government, which we want spent on the NHS. We will campaign to give health professionals more autonomy and patients more choice. We will push for the NHS to be refocused on improving standards of care and for the dogma and wastefulness that have held it back to be taken away.

More than three years ago David Cameron spelled out his priorities in three letters – NHS. Since then, we have consistently fought to protect the values the NHS stands for and have campaigned to defend the NHS from cuts and reorganisations. As the party of the NHS, we will never change the idea at the heart of our NHS – that healthcare in this country is free at the point of use and available to everyone based on medical need, not ability to pay.

But that doesn't mean the NHS shouldn't change. When you are more likely to die of cancer in Scotland than in most other nations in Europe – and when the recruitment of administrators is completely outstripping that of nurses and doctors – the question isn't whether the NHS should change, it is how the NHS should change. The Conservatives are the party of the NHS today because we not only back the values that underpin the NHS, we back its funding and we have a vision for its future.

Conservatives understand the pressures that the NHS faces and we have a plan to make the changes that it needs. Even in these

difficult times, we are making a commitment at Westminster to increase spending on the NHS in real terms. Under the way that devolution is funded, these increases will produce consequential increases for the Scottish Government. So, if the Scottish Government shares our priorities, it will have more money to spend on the NHS. We will not allow Labour's debt crisis to undermine our deep support for Britain's most important public institution and the values that it stands for.

Restoring the focus of the NHS

Given the huge pressures faced by the NHS over the coming decades, our pledge to protect health spending will not be enough on its own to deliver the rising standards of care that people expect and deserve. The gap between what we will have to do and what we can afford to do presents an urgent need for reform. We have to make the supply of healthcare more efficient, and that means introducing reforms which will help us achieve our ambition for the NHS to deliver some of the best healthcare in the world.

When patients enter hospital they expect to get better, not to fall ill. Tackling hospital-acquired infection should therefore be a top priority. The Electronic Bed Management System with Infection Tracking proposed by the Scottish Conservatives is currently being piloted and we want to see it rolled out across Scotland if it is successful. But old-fashioned hospital cleanliness will always be vital in the fight against infection. Some of the highest standards in Scotland have been achieved by contracted cleaners, so we will ditch SNP dogma and focus on standards of cleanliness, not who employs the cleaners in our hospitals.

As we want to refocus in the NHS on improving the fundamental standards of care, we also oppose the phasing out of prescription charges as a move that will cost the NHS at least £57 million per year. It is wasteful to give higher rate taxpayers ‘free’ prescriptions, especially, at a time when public spending is under enormous pressure. We will campaign for this money to be spent on front-line care instead, while at the same time securing the future of free prescriptions for those who cannot afford to pay.

Putting patients first

Our first priority will be to create an NHS where patients, not politicians, are in the driving seat. We want to take party politics out of the day-to-day running of the NHS. Conservatives believe that doctors and

nurses should be trusted to do the right thing, accountable for the outcomes they achieve and answerable to patients empowered with choice and information. We believe that the future is bright for the NHS – a future where it is properly accountable to patients and totally transparent in the way it operates.

Many patients with disabilities or long-term health conditions would like greater control over their personal and social care. We will preserve disability living allowance and attendance allowance and would expand the use of direct payments by removing the barriers which stand in the way of their uptake.

People want an NHS that is easy to access at any time of day or night. Conservatives believe that A&E services should be locally-based and are proud to have halted Labour’s plans to close A&E departments in Scotland. Where major service changes are under consideration, we support the use of Independent Scrutiny Panels to independently assess the proposals on the basis of what is in the best interests of patients overall.

Scottish patients should be among the first in the world to receive effective treatments, but under Labour and the SNP this is not always the case. We want a wider range of clinically effective drugs to be made available to patients across Scotland. A Conservative government’s policy to stop Labour’s jobs tax will leave the NHS in Scotland with £20m to spend that

it would not have had with Labour's tax on jobs. New medicines often have their cost effectiveness approved centrally in Scotland, well before NICE gives approval for the rest of the UK. But many patients still do not get access to them, because health boards say that they cannot afford to fund such prescriptions. We will push for the additional funding to be used to prevent this happening.

Far too many people in Scotland also find it difficult to access a dentist. To help more people to find an affordable dentist locally, Conservatives would introduce a new dentistry contract to stem the flow of dentists and other dental professionals out of the NHS.

One in four British adults experience at least one mental health problem in any given year and poor mental health costs the economy £77 billion each year. Too much reliance is placed on the prescription of drugs which is why we want to expand the provision of talking therapies and counselling.

Finally, we will continue to fight against the injustice where people who have worked all their lives find themselves forced to sell their home if they need care in their old age. In Scotland, the introduction of free personal care has already ensured that the elderly do not have to pay for help that they might need with things like washing, dressing, eating and – after Conservative pressure – with food preparation as well. However, those

who cannot remain in their own home and need to move into residential care still have to pay accommodation charges, which were always the major component of the cost of residential care. We will work with the Scottish Government to develop our plans that will enable anyone to protect their home from being sold to fund residential care costs by paying a one-off insurance premium that is entirely voluntary. Independent experts suggest this should cost around £8,000.

A more transparent and accountable NHS

NHS resources should be allocated on the basis of patient need, not skewed by political pressures. Conservatives want to liberate the NHS from constant political meddling which is why we believe resources should be allocated between Health Boards by an independent body. We want the focus to be on achieving the key health outcomes that really matter, like cancer or stroke survival rates. Scotland should benchmark itself against those countries with the most effective systems of healthcare, and we would allow patients to rate hospitals and doctors according to how their health has improved.

Conservatives want to reduce the artificial boundaries which exist between Health Boards, increasing choice and making it easier for patients to access the care they choose. We will continue to examine areas in which the

independent or voluntary sector can support the NHS to deliver the best practice and outcomes for patients without regard to political dogma. This is why we are campaigning for the repeal of the SNP Government's legislative ban on commercial bodies from holding general medical services contracts. And we want to see more partnerships on the successful model of those already established between the NHS and the optometry and pharmacy professions. Such a move will also help us deliver our commitment to pilot walk-in treatment centres, which could be set up either by the NHS or by independent providers using their own capital. Walk-in-centres could help people who find it difficult to see their GP during normal surgery hours.

We are passionate supporters of GPs. Meeting your healthcare needs can be complicated and they are a patient's best possible guide through the NHS - a powerful and knowledgeable supporter by your side. We want to empower GPs, but they need to do much more in return. Labour's GP contract has meant less access, fewer home visits and reduced out-of-hours care. Conservatives will renegotiate the GP contract at UK level and link GPs' pay to the quality of the results they deliver.

And we will propose new 'Whistleblower' measures to ensure that our doctors, our nurses,

and our health workers are not afraid to speak out about anything which compromises patient safety or patient care.

A healthier nation

Today, the NHS faces unique upward pressures on spending. Lifestyle-linked health problems like obesity, smoking and alcohol abuse are putting huge demands on health services and are harming people's quality of life. Our population is ageing, meaning more people living longer with chronic conditions and requiring regular treatment on the NHS. On top of this there is the pressure of infectious diseases like TB, HIV, Hepatitis C and pandemic flu. Each of these factors is leading to soaring costs for the NHS.

At the same time, health inequalities are growing wider – the difference between the life expectancy of the richest and poorest in our country is now greater than at any time since the 19th century. We can't go on like this. Only by making the NHS more accountable to patients and more accessible will the Scottish Government be able to focus on public health and preventable disease – the surest route to improving the health of the nation.



Sweden

Since the free schools programme was established in Sweden, over 1,000 new schools have opened. They have been founded by foundations, charities and others – and they have attracted pupils by offering better discipline and higher standards. Now Swedish local councils no longer have a monopoly on school provision and as a result, choice and competition have driven up standards across the board.

Raise standards in schools

We want to improve standards for all pupils and close the attainment gap between the richest and poorest. We want to enhance the prestige and quality of the teaching profession, and give heads tough new powers of discipline. We want to restore rigour to every aspect of the curriculum and exam system and diversify the schools system, giving parents the choice of more good schools.

Improving our schools system is the most important thing we can do to create more opportunity and address our declining social mobility. But Scotland has been slipping down the education league tables - now 13,000 pupils in Scotland leave primary school unable to read or write properly every year. Serious indiscipline is a problem in too many classrooms and more children are playing truant than ever before. And there is a growing gap between the attainment levels of our better off and more deprived communities. We can't go on like this.

The reason we have fallen behind is that schools are controlled by politicians and bureaucrats with the wrong ideas. They have undermined the power of teachers to keep order and devalued some aspects of the curriculum and exam system. Many teachers and parents are frustrated at the increasing scale of bureaucratic intervention from central and local government in how schools are run.

To make real progress we need to re-empower teachers and parents, by implementing reforms based on increasing parental choice, devolving

more powers to headteachers, improving the status of the teaching profession and applying more rigorous standards across the board. By pushing for these radical changes - that have worked so well in USA, Canada and Sweden - we would improve schools for all pupils and close the attainment gap between the better off and more deprived communities.

Better teachers and tougher discipline

The single most important thing for a good education is for every child to have access to a good teacher. We support the moves made by the General Teaching Council in Scotland to develop a first class teacher training programme and a more effective mechanism of removing poor teachers from our classrooms. But the SNP has failed to address the barriers within the teacher recruitment process which slow down the process of recruiting a new teacher and make it harder to find the right person for the job. Conservatives want to make the process much more straightforward. That means improving engagement between headteachers and local authorities so that there

is much more flexibility within the system and improving the database which records teacher supply and teaching vacancies.

We also want to make it easier for teachers to deal with pupils who disrupt the learning of their classmates. Schools need to be given a way to stop that from happening and disruptive pupils need to be given specialist attention to help them re-focus their lives.

We will encourage the Scottish Government to introduce Second Chance Centres to deal with serious, persistent troublemakers. These centres would be entirely separate from the school environment and would have a strict code of discipline.

We also want to provide more support to schools to help them identify pupils with additional support needs at the earliest opportunity.

A rigorous and all-embracing curriculum and exam system

The later stages of education require reading, writing and arithmetic to have been mastered at primary school. Conservatives have proposed the introduction of more rigorous testing of these basic skills, so that every pupil's progress has been measured against nationally agreed criteria by the time they have reached the end of P7. To improve literacy skills further,

we want to promote the teaching of synthetic phonics, which has proven very successful in the areas of Scotland in which it has been tried so far.

It is vital that universities, colleges and employers have confidence in the qualifications that young people leave school with so we will campaign to ensure standards are maintained within the Scottish examination system and that there are more opportunities for our brightest pupils to sit Advanced Higher examinations.

We believe that vocational education should exist as an equally worthwhile option alongside the existing academic courses so we will push for fully structured vocational opportunities to children from the age of 14.

Under Labour and the SNP, young people have become ever more inactive, storing up serious problems for the nation's sporting life and its health. To reverse this trend, we have proposed that sports trust funds be set up in order to allow all pupils to have the opportunity to take part in sports activity within their local school or community campus. We have called on the Scottish Government to ensure that every pupil is given the opportunity to participate in competitive sport. To support this extension of school sport, we want to see better information made available to parents about what facilities schools offer for extra-curricular sport. And

we will also engage with Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMIe) to ensure that there is more comprehensive reporting on PE within school inspections. We have also developed proposals to give all pupils the opportunity to experience a full week of residential outdoor education at least once between the ages of 11 and 15.

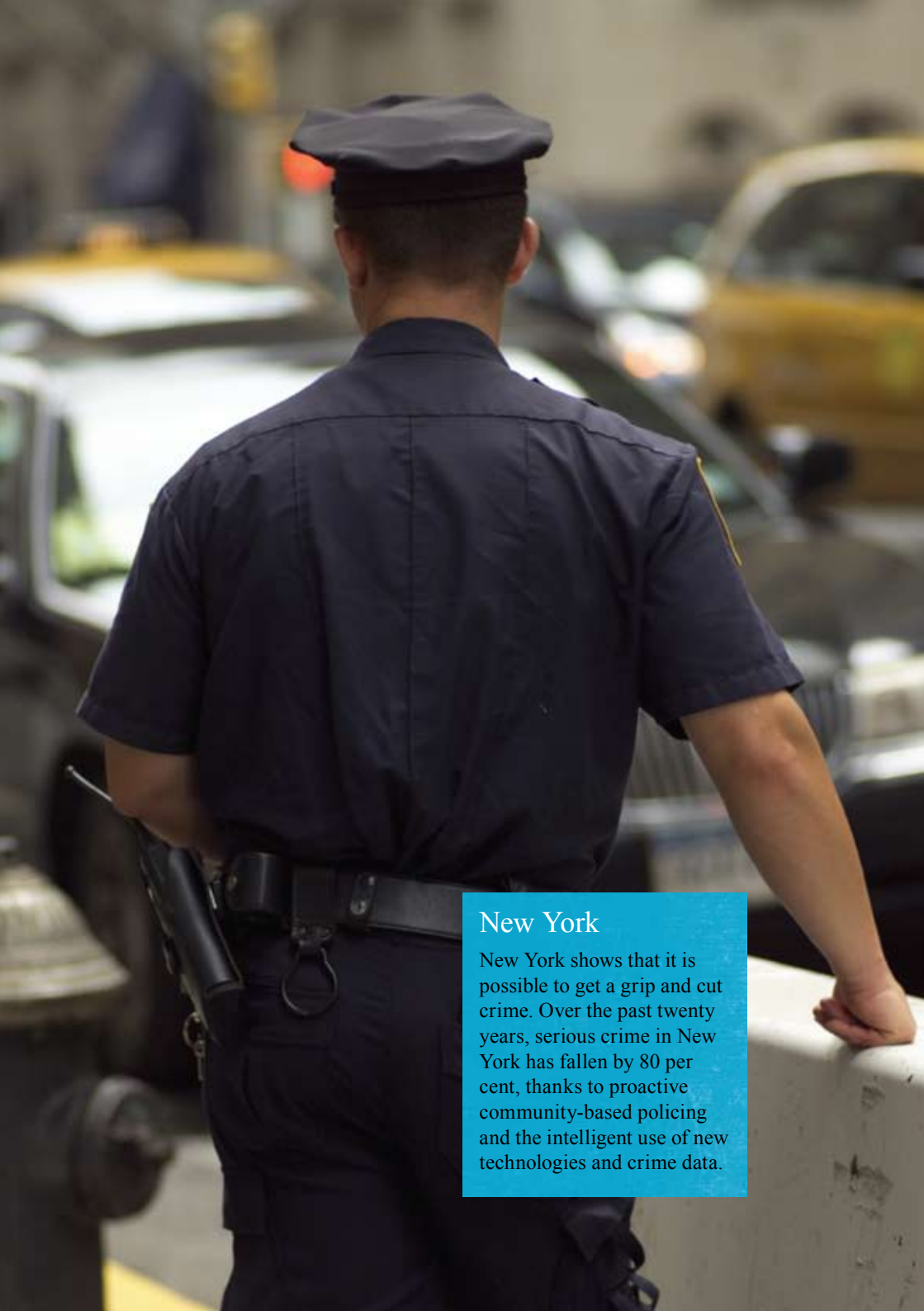
Give every parent access to a good school

For the last decade, the Scottish schools system has seen nothing like even the modest pace of reform introduced elsewhere in the UK. In fact, previous steps taken to diversify the system in Scotland have been reversed. We want to change this.

Drawing on the experience of the Swedish school reforms and the charter school movement in the USA, we have called for charities and not-for-profit trusts to be allowed to set up new schools, which would receive funding from the state based on the number of pupils that they attract. These new types of school would not be stifled by local authority control, but parents will have all the reassurance provided by the existing rigorous inspection regime that currently applies to local authority schools. Under Conservative plans there would also be scope for local authorities to transfer a school or a cluster of schools to an educational trust. This would be particularly

welcome in rural areas, where often there can only ever be one choice of school.

We know that headteachers understand the needs of their school, its pupils and the surrounding community best, but they are often frustrated in meeting these needs by a 'one size fits all' approach. That need no longer hold them back. Conservatives have called for head teachers to be given more say over the running of their schools, especially when it comes to teacher recruitment, budgets and discipline. These changes would give those schools remaining in the local authority sector a real route to improvement.



New York

New York shows that it is possible to get a grip and cut crime. Over the past twenty years, serious crime in New York has fallen by 80 per cent, thanks to proactive community-based policing and the intelligent use of new technologies and crime data.

Fight back against crime

We are determined to fight back against the crime and anti-social behaviour that blights our communities. We will take steps to reduce the causes of crime, like poverty and broken families. We will push the Scottish Government to cut paperwork to get police out on the street and make them more accountable to local people. We will put the criminal justice system on the side of responsible citizens, take tougher measures against knife criminals and crack down on the binge-drinking that leads to violence.

A Conservative government will campaign to put the criminal justice system on the side of the responsible citizen. And we will push for tougher measures against knife criminals and honesty in sentencing.

We will rebuild confidence in the criminal justice system so that people know it is on the side of victims and working for law-abiding people, not criminals. We will work with the Scottish Government to help to mend our broken society – by cracking down on drink and drug-fuelled violence, tackling re-offending, and intervening early to stop young people getting onto the conveyor belt to crime – in order to reduce the causes of crime and anti-social behaviour. And we will push the Scottish Government to reform the police, giving officers back their professional discretion and getting them out of police stations and onto the street.

Reform the police

We can't go on with the police filling in forms instead of fighting crime. Thanks to the tough

negotiating stance taken by Conservatives in the Scottish Parliament there are now 1,000 additional police officers working in our communities. But we need to continue to build confidence in the criminal justice system. Nowhere is our approach of transparency, accountability and decentralisation more important.

People want to know that the police are listening to them and doing what they want. But to be really effective, more accountability needs to be accompanied by greater transparency: we need to give local people the information and they need to challenge their neighbourhood police teams to cut crime and we will encourage the police to publish detailed local crime data statistics every month, in an open and standardised format.

Our approach is not just about ensuring that police use their time on the beat effectively, it's also about helping them spend more of their time out on patrol. To process an arrest, police currently have to complete a plethora of forms. The police should be focusing on police work,

not paperwork. We want to cut bureaucracy to an absolute minimum, in order to ensure that officers are where they need to be – out on the streets, deterring and investigating crime and protecting Scotland's communities.

To save even more time, we want to return charging discretion to the police and process criminals more quickly by video-linking custody cells and courts. And we want to change the rules that bind the police up in red tape when they want to carry out routine surveillance of criminals.

Extremists, serious criminals and others find our borders far too easy to penetrate. That is why we will create a dedicated Border Police Force, as part of a refocused Serious Organised Crime Agency, to enhance national security, improve immigration controls, and crack down on the trafficking of people, weapons and drugs. We will work with police forces to strengthen arrangements to deal with serious crime and other cross-boundary policing challenges, and extend collaboration between forces to deliver better value for money.

Reforming the criminal justice system

One thing frustrates police even more than the unnecessary bureaucracy which stops them from apprehending criminals: when having successfully apprehended an offender, the criminal justice system is unable to impose a

proportionate sanction.

Knife crime is reaching crisis levels in Scotland's inner cities: convictions for carrying an offensive weapon is up more than a quarter in the last decade. Education has been tried and failed, and knife curfews have come and gone. New stop and search powers were Labour's final attempt at tackling the problem and these powers were retained by the SNP Government. But we need much more hard-hitting action. To send the message that carrying a knife is totally unacceptable, we would change the law so that anyone caught carrying a knife without a reasonable excuse can expect a prison sentence of two years at a minimum.

Our criminal justice system can also seem powerless when it comes to dealing with sex offenders who present an obvious risk of re-offending. We believe that the names and photographs of sex offenders who have broken their registration requirements ought to be published when that is in the interest of public safety. And in the Scottish Parliament we demanded the introduction of lie detector tests for sex offenders and greater use of GPS tracking of people who are on bail but are at risk of fleeing the country.

Targeted measures to reduce the causes of crime

The biggest gain to society comes when we can stop someone offending in the first place. We

know that the same social problems are behind all types of crime and that have other costs to our society too. We need to take a stand on these problems, to show moral leadership. We then need to take steps to encourage people to take control of their lives. Sadly, abuse of drink and drugs remains chief amongst these social problems.

Disorder and violence fuelled by binge drinking is common to town centres throughout Britain. But the problems caused by alcohol are not confined to a Friday or Saturday night. Scotland's overall rate of alcohol consumption is one of the highest in Europe, and that has serious consequences when it comes to health, relationships and parenting.

We have a plan for co-ordinated action between Westminster and Holyrood in order to bring this under control. This ranges from preventative action like raising taxes on those drinks linked to antisocial drinking, promoting alcohol action partnerships, banning off-licences and supermarkets from selling alcohol below cost price to targeted support for those at risk, such as extending the offer of alcohol counselling to all those admitted to A&E as a result of alcohol-related incidents.

Drug and alcohol abuse and addiction are behind many of the crimes that are committed on our streets. But thanks to our influence over the minority Scottish Government, Scotland

now has a strategy for tackling the misuse of drugs. We will monitor its implementation in order to ensure that the emphasis is on abstinence - the treatment that too many addicts receive just maintains their habits.

We have a long tradition in Scotland of advocating that new approach and working across party divides on this most pressing of social issues. Our approach at Holyrood is complemented by our work at Westminster, where we successfully led the campaign to have cannabis reclassified as a Class B drug, and we have said we will introduce a system of temporary bans on new 'legal highs' while health issues are considered by independent experts.

Reducing reoffending

Fighting crime is about much more than catching criminals. To bring crime down for good we have got to break the cycle of re-offending and give those who have served their time a second chance to play a positive role in society. Our prison system is overcrowded, re-offending rates remain high and tens of thousands of prisoners are being let out early from prison. The social and economic consequences of this failure are enormous.

Prisons in Scotland are often full or very close to it. There is a danger of creating pressure on courts to shorten sentences undeservedly or to give criminals community punishments

when custody would be more appropriate. It is also impeding rehabilitation. Finally, there is little flexibility to respond to the loss of prison capacity that would occur following a riot, fire or flood. Conservatives will call for increases in Scottish prison capacity where necessary. Moreover to create further space in our prisons we would extend the early deportation of foreign national prisoners and ensure that prison places are not taken up with fine defaulters.

Many people feel that sentencing in Scotland is often too weak to be effective and that it misleads the public. We remain committed to the abolition of automatic early release. So, we will push for the introduction of a system where the courts can specify minimum and maximum sentences for certain offenders. These prisoners would only be able to leave jail after their minimum sentence is served by having earned their release, not simply by right. And we oppose the SNP's plan to effectively abolish custodial sentences of less than six months.

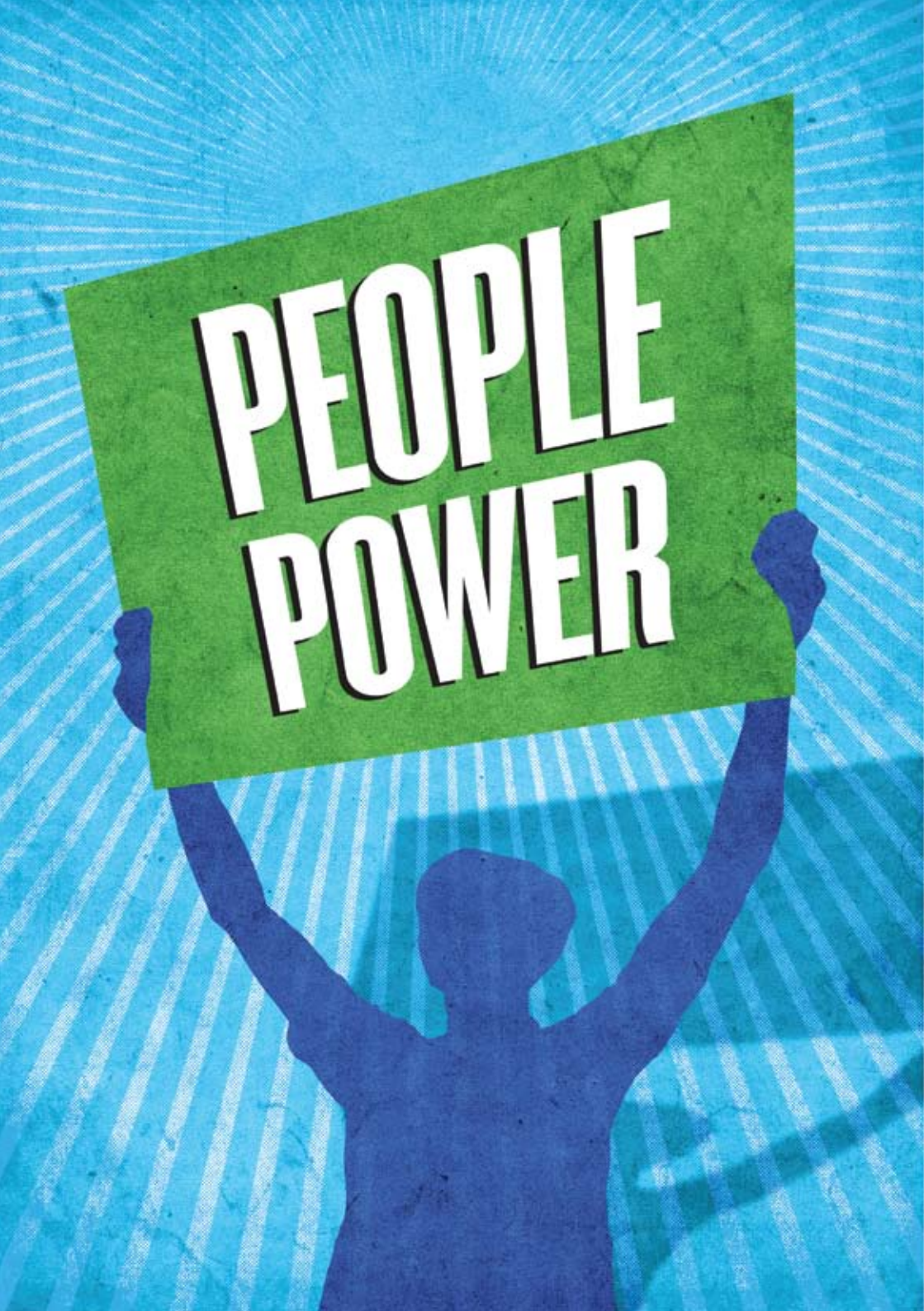
Holyrood, Edinburgh

The Conservative Party is passionate about the Union and we will never do anything to put it at risk. A relationship based on mutual respect between our parliaments and governments is important for Scotland and Britain.

David Cameron will work to repair the damage done to the relationship by Prime Minister Gordon Brown and First Minister Alex Salmond. He will make himself available once a year to appear before the Scottish Parliament and take questions from MSPs. Other Ministers will also go to Holyrood for questioning on a regular basis.



Change politics

A stylized illustration featuring a dark blue silhouette of a person from the waist up, with their arms raised high holding a green rectangular sign. The sign has the words "PEOPLE" and "POWER" in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters, stacked one above the other. The background is a vibrant blue with a pattern of fine, white, radiating lines that create a sense of energy and movement, similar to a sunburst or a starburst effect. The overall composition is centered and balanced, with the sign and the person's arms as the primary focal points.

**PEOPLE
POWER**

A new agenda for a new politics

The Conservative Party has led the way in sorting out the mess of MPs' expenses. In government we will go further, by cutting the size of Parliament, cutting the scope of Whitehall, and cutting the cost of politics. We will make politics more local, more transparent and more accountable. We intend to build a new political system that serves people rather than politicians. Together, we can change our politics for the better.

The events of recent months have revealed the size of the fissures in our political system. Millions of people in this country are at best detached from democracy, at worst angry and disillusioned. This endangers our ability to work together to solve our common problems. Just putting this down to the shocking revelations of the expenses scandal would be a great mistake. MPs' expenses might have been the trigger for the public's anger, but this political crisis is driven by a deeper sense of frustration – that people have too little control over the decisions that affect their daily lives.

The top-down model of power that exists in Britain today is completely out of date. The argument that has applied for well over a century – that in every area of life we need people at the centre to make sense of the world for us and to take decisions on our behalf – has collapsed. We now live in an age when technology can put information that was previously held by a few into the hands of the many. This is an age of personal freedom and choice, when culture and debate are shaped by a multitude of voices. But politics has not caught up with this new age. Instead of giving people more power over their lives, we have a government intent on taking it away.

We believe in people power – and today the information revolution gives us the practical tools to realise that philosophy. So we plan to change Britain with a sweeping redistribution of power: from the state to citizens; from Brussels to Britain; from government to Parliament; from bureaucracy to democracy; from Westminster to Holyrood; and from politicians to people – taking power away from the political elite and handing it to the man and woman in the street. Using decentralisation, accountability and transparency, we will weaken the old political elites, fix our broken politics and restore people's faith that if we act together things can change. This is a new agenda for a new politics.

*“We plan to change Britain
with a sweeping redistribution of power:
from the state to citizens
and from politicians to people”*

Make politics more accountable

We will clean up politics: the expenses, the lobbying, and problems with party funding. We will cut the cost of Parliament, cut the number of MPs, and cut Ministers' pay. We will give citizens direct control over what goes on in Westminster, make government more accountable, and safeguard the independence of the civil service.

It is vital that we act quickly and decisively to restore the reputation of politics. Too much unacceptable behaviour has gone unchecked for too long, from excessive expenses to sleazy lobbying practices. The people of Britain have looked on in horror as revelations have stripped away the dignity of Parliament, leaving millions of voters detached from the political process, devoid of trust in the political classes, and disillusioned with our system of government.

We will act rapidly to push through far-reaching reforms to restore ethics to politics and revive the electorate's faith in politicians. It will take nothing less than a deep clean of the political system in Westminster to root out the sleaze and dispel suspicion. We will start by cleaning up the expenses system to ensure MPs live by the same standards as the people who give them their jobs, and by curbing the way in which former Ministers have secured lobbying jobs by exploiting their contacts.

But that is just the start. We will also cut Ministers' pay and reduce the number of MPs in Parliament. Then we will go further, far

further, since the expenses scandal was just the trigger for a deeper sense of frustration.

We promise a total overhaul of our system of government, so that power is passed from the politicians at Westminster back to the people of Britain. But this is the very least that is needed to fix our broken political system.

Clean up Westminster

The political crisis was triggered by the scandal of MPs' expenses. We were the Party that insisted that MPs' expenses were published online, and we have supported the independent proposals to clean up the House of Commons. We proposed legislation so that anyone wanting to be a member of either the House of Commons or the House of Lords will need to be treated as a full UK taxpayer. But much, much more is needed to clean up our politics and restore public trust.

At the moment, there is no way that local constituents can remove an MP found guilty of serious wrongdoing until there is a general election. That is why a Conservative

government will introduce a power of ‘recall’ to allow electors to kick out MPs, a power that will be triggered by proven serious wrongdoing. And we will introduce a Parliamentary Privilege Act to make clear that privilege cannot be abused by MPs to evade justice.

The cost of politics has spiralled out of control. We will cut the perks and bureaucracy associated with Parliament to save over £100 million a year. We will consult with the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority on how to move away from the generous final-salary pension system for MPs.

The public are concerned about the influence of money on politics, whether it is from trade unions, individuals, or the lobbying industry. We will seek an agreement on a comprehensive package of reform that will encourage individual donations and include an across-the-board cap on donations. This will mark the end of the big donor era and the problems it has sometimes entailed.

A Conservative government will introduce new measures to ensure that the contacts and knowledge Ministers gain while being paid by the public to serve the public are not unfairly used for private gain. We will:

- ensure that ex-Ministers are banned from lobbying government for two years after leaving office;

- ensure that ex-Ministers have to seek advice on the business posts they take up for ten years after leaving office;
- rewrite the Ministerial Code to make clear that any former Minister who breaks the rules on appointments will be forced to give up some or all of their Ministerial pension; and,
- introduce new rules to stop central government bodies using public money to hire lobbyists to lobby other government bodies.

The lobbying industry must regulate itself to ensure its practices are transparent – if it does not, then we will legislate to do so.

Give citizens more power

People have been shut out of Westminster politics for too long. Having a single vote every four or five years is not good enough – we need to give people real control over how they are governed. So, with a Conservative government, any petition that secures 100,000 signatures will be eligible for formal debate in Parliament. The petition with the most signatures will enable members of the public to table a Bill eligible to be voted on in Parliament. And we will introduce a new Public Reading Stage for Bills to give the public an opportunity to comment on proposed legislation online.

Labour have meddled shamelessly with the electoral system to try to gain political advantage. A Conservative government will ensure every vote will have equal value by introducing ‘fair vote’ reforms to equalise the size of constituency electorates, and conduct a boundary review to implement these changes within five years. We will swiftly implement individual voter registration, giving everyone the right to cast their vote in person and making it easier for UK citizens living overseas to vote.

We support the first-past-the-post system for Westminster elections because it gives voters the chance to kick out a government they are fed up with. We will work to build a consensus for a mainly-elected second chamber to replace the current House of Lords, recognising that an efficient and effective second chamber should play an important role in our democracy and requires both legitimacy and public confidence.

Make government more accountable and representative

Because we are serious about redistributing power, we will restore the balance between the government and Parliament, by:

- establishing a Backbench Business Committee to give the House of Commons more control over its own timetable;
- allowing MPs the time to scrutinise law effectively;

- providing more free votes, and protecting the principle that issues of conscience – like abortion – remain subject to a free vote; and,
- making the use of the Royal Prerogative subject to greater democratic control so that Parliament is properly involved in all big national decisions.

We will scrap Labour’s failed target regime and instead require every Whitehall department to publish a business plan, with senior management accountable to more rigorous departmental boards for their performance. We will make it easier to reward the best civil servants and remove the least effective. We will reform the Civil Service Compensation Scheme to bring it more into line with practice in the private sector. We will put a limit on the number of special advisers and protect the impartiality of the civil service.

Rebuilding trust in politics means making our political system better reflect the people it is meant to represent. We will introduce a £1 million fund to help people with disabilities who want to become MPs, MSPs, councillors or other elected officials with the extra costs they face in running for office. This will be funded from the existing budget of the Government Equalities Office.



BYE BYE
BUREAUCRACY

Make politics more transparent

We will publish details of the money government spends and the people it employs. People will have a right to government data to make the performance of the state transparent. We will cut the unaccountable quango state and root out waste.

Government has been far too profligate for far too long. Billions are wasted each year on pointless bureaucracy and failed projects while taxpayers are left to foot the bill. The explosion of unaccountable quangos, public sector ‘nonjobs’ and costly bureaucracy is an indictment of Labour’s and the SNP’s reckless approach to spending other people’s money. Once again, it undermines public trust in the political process.

We understand that people want government to be more effective in what it does, and to do it for less money. That means transforming the way the state goes about its business, using decentralisation, accountability and transparency to reduce dramatically the cost of government. And, because sunlight is the best disinfectant, we will bring the operation of government out into the open so that everyone can see whether we are delivering good value for money.

Publish data so the public can hold government to account

Drawing inspiration from administrations around the world which have shown that being

transparent can transform the effectiveness of government, we will create a powerful new right to government data, enabling the public to request – and receive – government datasets in an open and standardised format. Independent estimates suggest this could provide a £6 billion boost to the UK economy. We will open up Whitehall recruitment by publishing central government job vacancies online, saving costs and increasing transparency.

A Conservative government will bring in new measures to enable the public to scrutinize the government’s accounts to see whether it is providing value for money. All data will be published in an open and standardised format.

We will:

- require public bodies to publish online the job titles of every member of staff and the salaries and expenses of senior officials paid more than the lowest salary permissible in Pay Band 1 of the Senior Civil Service pay scale, and organograms that include all positions in those bodies;
- require anyone paid more than the Prime

Minister in the public sector to have their salary signed off by the Treasury; and

- require senior civil servants to publish online details of expense claims and meetings with lobbyists.

Curtail the quango state

Under Labour, the quango state has flourished. Government figures show that there are over 700 unelected bodies spending £46 billion every year, but this does not even include the range of advisory bodies, public corporations, taskforces and regional government bodies that have sprung up under Labour. We believe that Ministers should be responsible for government policy, not unelected bureaucrats. Any quangos that do not perform a technical function or a function that requires political impartiality, or act independently to establish facts, will be abolished. To increase the scrutiny of quangos, we will:

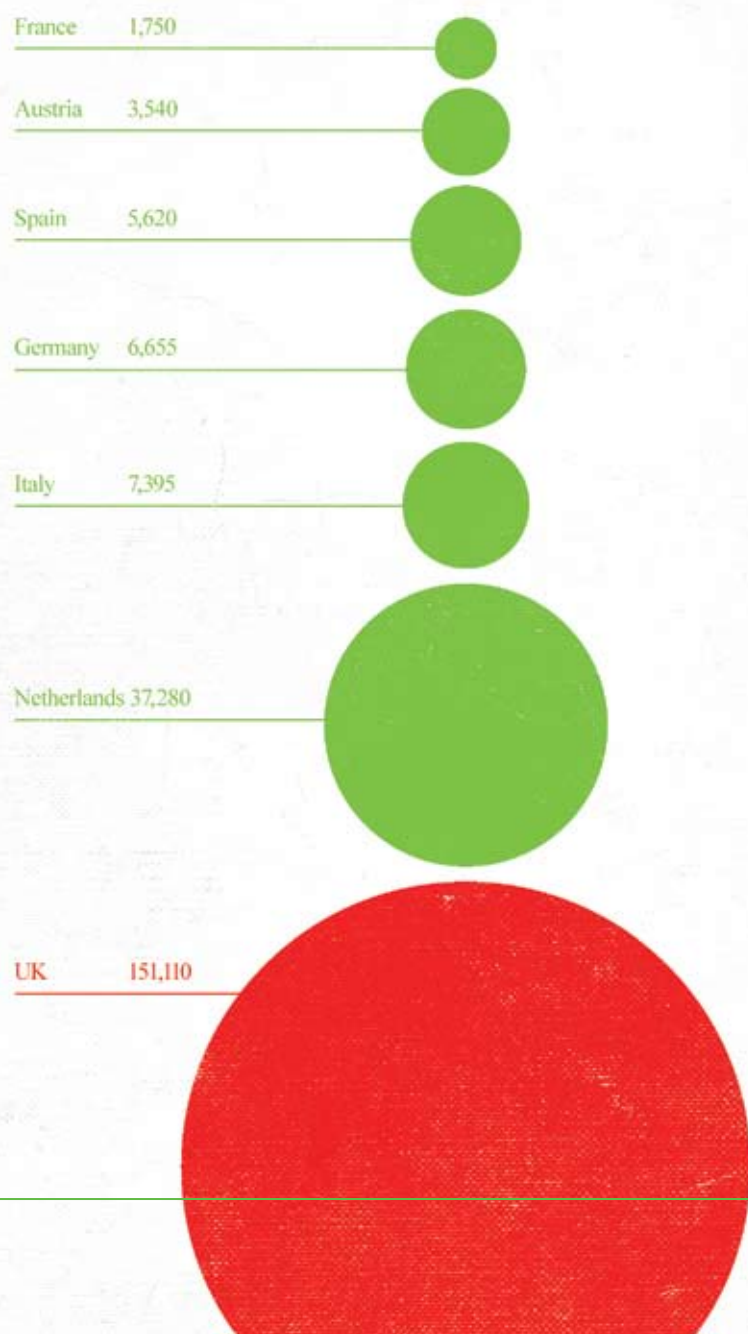
- give Select Committees the right to hold confirmation hearings for major public appointments, including the heads of quangos;
- examine the case for giving Select Committees the power to prevent increases in quango budgets; and,
- ensure that the National Audit Office has full access to the BBC's accounts.

Reduce the cost of procurement

This government has a dreadful record of managing procurement, with billions of pounds wasted on mismanaged projects. We will tackle wasteful government procurement projects by:

- strengthening the role of the Chief Information Officer to get a grip on government ICT projects;
- introducing a series of changes to ICT procurement to deliver better value for money;
- appointing senior private sector non-executives to departmental boards to deliver better value for money;
- publishing in full UK Government contracts for goods and services worth over £25,000; and,
- increasing the accountability of EU spending by publishing details of every UK project that receives over £25,000 of EU funds.

Average population, lowest tier of executive government



Source: Council of European Municipalities and Regions and Dexia, 2008

Make politics more local

We want to increase the power and transparency of local government and give people the chance to have a powerful, elected mayor or provost in their local area. We will make it easier for everyone to get onto the housing ladder.

We believe that the more responsibility you give people, the more responsibly they behave. That is why we are so determined to give people much more power and control over their lives. Citizens themselves should have a direct say over how they are governed – but not through bureaucratic consultations or phoney citizens juries, which never change anything. We need a totally different approach to governing, one that involves people in making the decisions that affect them. This is what we call collaborative democracy – people taking the kind of powers that until now have been exercised only by governments. So we want to pass power down to people – to individuals where we can. But it is not always possible to give power to individuals, and in those cases we need to push power down to the most appropriate local level: neighbourhood, community and local government.

Over the last forty years, governments of all colours have been guilty of weakening local government. Now, with Conservative support, the Scottish Government has moved to free local government from ring-fencing of funding for specific purposes.

However, this will not be enough to reintroduce the visionary civic leadership that Scotland needs, and Conservatives believe in, because the SNP has done little to free local government from the burden of implementing its nationally determined targets. These restrict the ability of councils to shape policy to local needs and priorities, for example in relation to school class sizes. This has also raised concerns about accountability, because the Scottish Government still makes very prescriptive demands about local services, but takes no responsibility for delivery.

The local government concordat is a flawed arrangement. The ending of ring fencing for certain purposes only takes us part of the way to our vision of councils which have greater freedom and independence of action to reflect local priorities and preferences. We want the Scottish Government to reduce the volume of instructions and directions it gives to councils.

Deliver more affordable homes

We want to create a property-owning democracy where everyone has the chance to own their own home. That is why we will

permanently raise the stamp duty threshold to £250,000 for first-time buyers, meaning nine out of ten of them will pay no tax on their first home purchase.

We also want to abolish the SNP Government's home reports which are bureaucratic and increase the expense of moving home.

People get a sense of pride from owning their own home and home ownership gives people a stake in the maintenance and improvement of their neighbourhood. It also fosters social mobility and enables people to build up capital. That is why we believe that as many Scots as possible should have the opportunity to share in the benefits of home ownership. That must include those who live in social housing. So we will defend tenants' Right to Buy against the SNP Government's attempts to take it away from them.

Conservatives support the work of our housing associations which have a leading role to play in the provision of new affordable housing. We support stock transfer by councils to housing associations with tenant approval. By defeating SNP attempts to end Right To Buy, we would maintain the flow of sale receipts, which is an important source of funding for new and improved social housing.

We will also propose a range of measures to address the problems of the homeless, including introducing more accurate street counts and

ensuring a Minister in each relevant Whitehall department has homelessness in their brief. Whenever that brief extends to Scotland, those Ministers will be expected to work in co-operation with relevant Scottish Ministers.

Give people more power and control over their lives

We have set out our plans to give more power to people over the way they are policed, the schools their children go to and the healthcare they receive. But, in addition, we want to give individuals more direct control over how they are governed.

We have seen that a single municipal leader can inject dynamism and ambition into their communities. So, where there is evidence of demand in Scotland, we will give local people the opportunity to have a directly-elected mayor or provost. He or she will be empowered to provide the personal leadership from which cities such as London have benefitted. The fact that the mayor or provost will be directly-elected will ensure that these new powers are matched with accountability.

Decentralising control must go hand in hand with creating much greater transparency in local government. Power without information is not enough.

Our plans to decentralise power will only work properly if there is a strong, independent and

vibrant local media to hold local authorities to account. We will sweep away the rules that stop local newspapers owning other local media platforms and create a new network of local television stations.

*“It is time for
a new approach to
protect our liberty”*

Restore our civil liberties

We will scale back Labour's database state and protect the privacy of the public's information. We will introduce a balanced approach to the retention of people's DNA and reform the criminal records system so it protects children without destroying trust.

Labour have subjected Britain's historic freedoms to unprecedented attack. They have trampled on liberties and, in their place, compiled huge databases to track the activities of millions of perfectly innocent people, giving public bodies extraordinary powers to intervene in the way we live our lives.

The impact of this has been profound and far-reaching. Trust has been replaced by suspicion. The database state is a poor substitute for the human judgement essential to the delivery of public services. Worse than that, it gives people false comfort that an infallible central state is looking after their best interests. But the many scandals of lost data, leaked documents and database failures have put millions at risk. It is time for a new approach to protect our liberty.

Protect our freedoms

Labour's approach to our personal privacy is the worst of all worlds – intrusive, ineffective and enormously expensive. We will scrap ID cards and the National Identity Register. To protect our freedoms from state encroachment and encourage greater social responsibility, we will replace the Human Rights Act with a UK Bill of Rights.

Wherever possible, we believe that personal data should be controlled by individual citizens themselves. We will strengthen the powers of the Information Commissioner to penalise any public body found guilty of mismanaging data. We will take further steps to protect people from unwarranted intrusion by the state, including:

- requiring Privacy Impact Assessments of any proposal that involves data collection or sharing;
- ensuring proper Parliamentary scrutiny of any new powers of data-sharing; and,
- reform the Regulation of Investigation Powers (Scotland) Act to prevent its misuse, such as the use of anti-terrorism laws to spy on trivial acts like people who leave their bins out on the wrong day.

We believe that people working in positions of trust with children should go through a proper criminal record check. But the current vetting scheme is excessively bureaucratic, involving repeat checks on people who have already been cleared. This is expensive and time consuming and discourages volunteers. We want it reviewed and scaled back to common sense levels.



Strengthen the Union

We are a Unionist Party and we will not put the union at risk. We support devolution and are committed to making it work for all the nations of the United Kingdom. We will take forward the proposals of the Calman Commission.

Support devolution

The Conservative Party is passionate about the Union and we will never do anything to put it at risk.

Many issues like transport, tackling crime and dealing with alcohol abuse need complementary policies in reserved and devolved areas. We cannot go on with a UK Government that does not co-operate with the Scottish Government and that does not respect its remit.

We support the changes proposed by the Calman Commission for clarifying the devolution settlement and building a relationship of mutual respect between Westminster and Holyrood. The Scottish Parliament should have more responsibility for raising the money it spends. We will produce our own White Paper by the Scottish Parliament elections in May 2011 to set out how we will deal with the issues raised by Calman, and we will legislate to implement those proposals within the next Parliament.

We will also take further steps to improve relations between Westminster and Holyrood:

- David Cameron has pledged to come to Scotland during his first week in office to meet the First Minister. He will also offer to meet annually with MSPs in Holyrood and respond

to their questions about how the policies of the UK Government will affect devolved areas;

- a Conservative Secretary of State for Scotland will be expected to set out to the Scottish Parliament the implications of the Queen's Speech as it affects the devolved areas and take questions from MSPs;
- we will make Treasury Ministers available to the Scottish Parliament Finance Committee following each Budget and the Pre-Budget Report at Westminster. That would allow them to be questioned on the implications that their announcements have for the Scottish Parliament Budget; and,
- we will not introduce Scotland-only legislation at Westminster unless it commands wider support in Scotland.

Labour have refused to address the so-called 'West Lothian Question': the unfair situation of Scottish MPs voting on matters which are devolved. A Conservative government will introduce new rules so that legislation referring specifically to England, or to England and Wales, cannot be enacted without the consent of MPs representing constituencies of those countries.



Madderty, Perthshire

The Conservatives believe that rural areas are important, but for too long under this Labour Government, they have been neglected. Post offices have been closed and local services hit. The Conservatives are committed to supporting local services and helping rural communities. Fishing and farming are important parts of the rural economy providing jobs and income. We need to support these jobs and protect rural services.

Protect the
environment



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Vote blue, go green

A Conservative government will cut carbon emissions and rebuild our energy security. We will make it easier for people to go green, with incentives for people to do the right thing. We will promote a sustainable farming industry, working with the Scottish Government wherever necessary, and champion environmental conservation.

We have a vision of a greener Britain. It is a country that leads the world in the market for green goods and services. A new hi-tech manufacturing sector and a new Green Investment Bank help create new jobs, wealth and growth. Our cars run on electricity and high speed trains take us across the country. This is a country which has become the world's first low carbon economy.

In this vision, our homes require less energy and more of the energy we produce comes from renewable sources. Our countryside is better cared for, we conserve more natural habitats, and we create new green spaces and plant many new trees. Our landscape is protected and our wildlife is enjoyed by more people of all ages. It is a greener and more pleasant land for all its citizens.

This is a Conservative vision for our future, and it is based on Conservative values. We believe that it is our responsibility to create a clean and healthy environment to pass on to our children. That is why we have put green issues back at the heart of our politics and that is why they will be at the heart of our government.

Instead of using rules and regulations to impose a centralised worldview, we will go with the grain of human nature, creating new incentives and market signals that reward people for doing the right thing. Instead of pulling bureaucratic levers from above telling people what they can't do, we will provide people with the information they need to make more responsible choices. Instead of holding businesses back by imposing unfair retrospective stealth taxes, we will unleash the power of green enterprise and promote resource efficiency to generate thousands of green jobs. This is how we will live up to our responsibility to be the greenest government in our history.



Freiburg

Freiburg in Germany is a world leader in environmental sustainability. Solar panels have been installed across the city – on schools, churches and private houses, and even on the sports stadium and the City Hall. Over the past 30 years, 500km of bike lanes and 9,000 bike parking sites have been put in place and, as a result, Freiburg now has the lowest car usage of any city in Germany. Freiburg also has one of the highest recycling rates of any city in the world, which has been achieved by changing social norms and providing facilities that make it as easy as possible for people to recycle. This emphasis on sustainability has had an economic benefit too: Freiburg is home to 1,500 green technology companies, which employ over 10,000 people and generate hundreds of millions of euros for the local economy.

Combat climate change

We will reduce carbon emissions in line with our international commitments. We will promote small and large-scale low carbon energy production, including nuclear, wind, clean coal and biogas. We will safeguard our energy security by ensuring there is sufficient spare capacity in the energy system. We will make it easier to go green, including through a 'Green Deal' to cut household energy bills.

Labour's failure on climate change has been stark. Strong rhetoric has not been matched by effective action – it took the longest and deepest recession for sixty years for Labour to achieve any significant reduction in the UK's carbon emissions. We need to generate 15 per cent of our energy from renewables by 2020, but we have one of the worst records of any EU nation when it comes to renewable energy. Our national security is threatened by a looming energy crunch in which a third of our electricity generating capacity will close, and most of our gas will need to be imported by 2020.

Yet Britain is uniquely placed to be the world's first low carbon economy: we have the natural resources to generate wind and wave power, a skilled workforce trained in the energy industry, a hi-tech manufacturing sector and a green financial centre in the City of London. We urgently need to make this transition in order to strengthen our economy, help guarantee our energy security and protect our environment for future generations.

Ambitious goals for reducing emissions

Climate change is a global phenomenon, and that means the world must work together to reduce harmful emissions. A Conservative government will work towards an ambitious global deal that will limit emissions and make available substantial financial resources for adaptation and mitigation.

As part of our commitment to move towards a low carbon future, we can confirm our aim of reducing UK carbon emissions by 80 per cent by 2050.

We supported the Climate Change (Scotland) Act at Holyrood, and we will work together with the Scottish Government to maximize emissions reductions in Scotland. We will also lead from the front by delivering a 10 per cent cut in central government emissions within twelve months.

Promote low carbon energy production

The way our energy is produced and transmitted is stuck in the last century. A Conservative government will transform this ‘dumb’, unresponsive network and create an ‘electricity internet’ – a highly interactive network, based on a new smart grid that will interact with smart meters in people’s homes, to manage supply and demand. This will allow a huge increase in renewable power, and far greater choice for consumers.

To limit harmful emissions from UK power stations, we will take steps to encourage new low carbon energy production, including:

- introducing an Emissions Performance Standard to limit the levels of greenhouse gases our power stations produce;
- clearing the way at Westminster for new nuclear power stations – provided they receive no public subsidy;
- encouraging the Scottish Government to drop its dogmatic refusal to consent to new nuclear power stations even if located on existing sites;
- creating four carbon capture and storage-equipped plants, taking coal – one of the most polluting fuels of all – and transforming it into a low carbon fuel of the future;

- delivering an offshore electricity grid in order to support the development of a new generation of offshore wind power, and establishing at least two Marine Energy Parks;
- encouraging local authorities to establish new district heating networks which use biogas and other low carbon fuels, like those being pioneered by Aberdeen; and,
- giving incentives for smaller-scale energy generation, including capturing heat that is currently wasted.

Safeguard the UK’s energy security

Britain has had no clear energy policy for thirteen years. A succession of eleven energy Ministers and eight Secretaries of State with responsibility for energy has left our policy muddled and put our energy security at risk. Britain needs an energy policy that is clear, consistent and stable. That means that Ministers will be unambiguously responsible for determining energy policy and delivering an Annual Energy Statement to Parliament to set a clear direction for energy policy. To safeguard our energy security, we will reform the energy regulator Ofgem so that:

- it focuses on executing energy policy;
- it is tasked with monitoring the spare capacity in the energy market and making

provisions for additional capacity where required; and,

- its competition policy and consumer protection powers pass to the Office of Fair Trading.

As a result, we will cut the number of quangos intervening in the energy market.

Labour's just-in-time approach to energy supply has left us badly exposed to events outside our control. We will work to diversify the sources of the gas we need, secure long-term contracts and increase storage capacity to guarantee supplies throughout the year.

Help people go green

Rising energy costs hit families hard, so we will create a 'Green Deal', giving every home up to £6,500 worth of energy improvement measures – with more for hard-to-treat homes – paid for out of savings made on fuel bills over 25 years. We will work with the Scottish Government so that this programme and its own schemes, such as the Energy Assistance Package, complement rather than duplicate one another.

We will increase consumers' control over their energy costs by ensuring that every energy bill provides information on how to move to the cheapest tariff offered by their supplier and

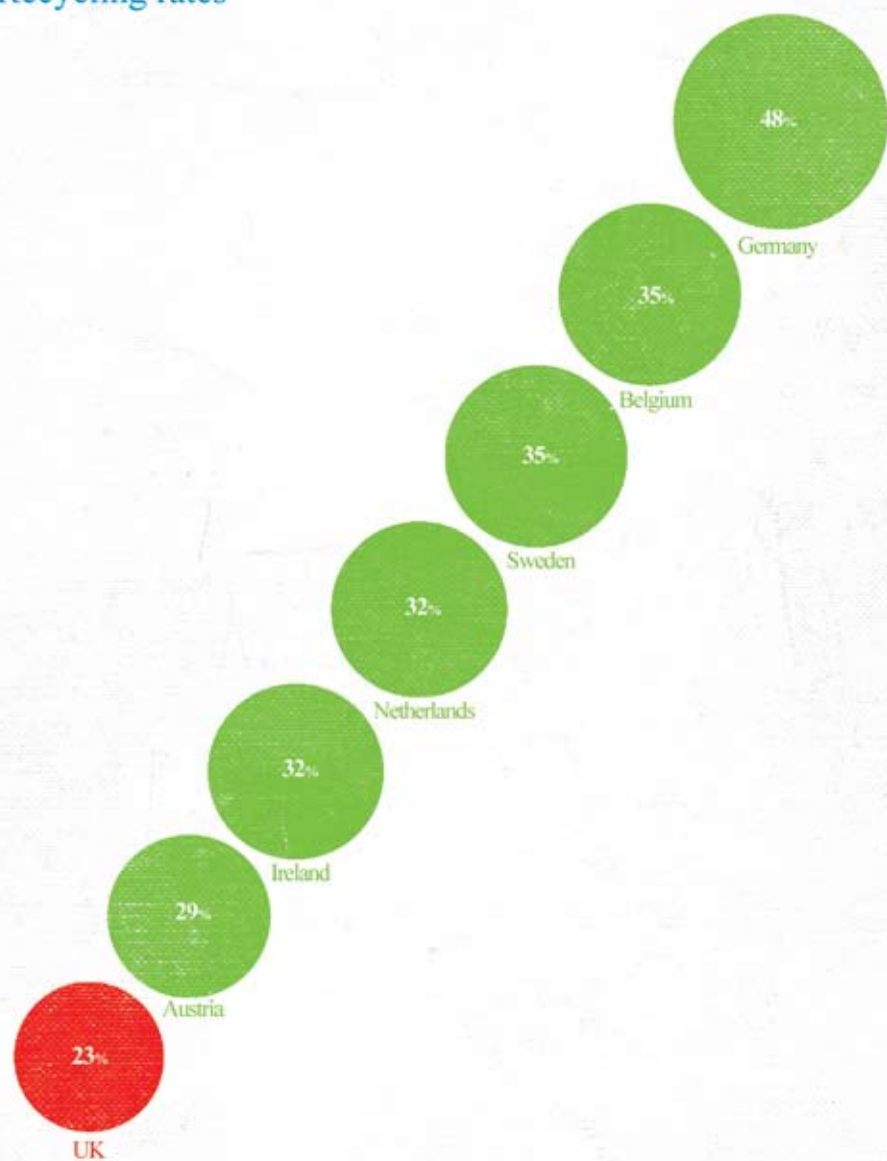
how their energy usage compares to similar households.

We will improve the energy efficiency of everyday appliances by drawing on the experience of the 'top runner' scheme from Japan.

To help further, we will:

- ensure that 10 per cent of the staff directly employed by 'Green Deal' providers are apprentices, helping to build a green collar workforce for the future;
- keep Energy Performance Certificates to help people improve the environmental rating of their property; and,
- give Post Office Card Account holders the chance to benefit from direct debit discounts, worth up to £150 a year.

Recycling rates



Source: EuroStat, 2008

Conserve and enhance the natural environment

We will protect and improve the UK's natural environment, and advocate new schemes to improve conservation. We will push for reform of the Common Agricultural and Fisheries Policies to promote sustainable farming and fishing. We will promote high animal welfare standards and ensure that government procures locally-produced food wherever possible. We will work towards a zero-waste society

Conservatives understand the inherent value of conserving things, and we know the importance of ensuring that we provide a good quality of life for future generations. Our natural environment has been degraded and urgent action is needed to address the loss of vital ecosystems in the face of climate change and development. Labour have relied too much on regulation and top-down targets that have failed to halt biodiversity loss.

We need to act now to enhance biodiversity, protect our countryside and marine environment, and secure the vital eco-systems that sustain life on land, in our rivers and in our seas. We have put forward a broad approach to improving the natural environment as a whole, so that we can ensure a secure future for the natural world where vital ecological assets are protected and resources are used more responsibly.

Conserve wildlife

Too many animals remain at risk of extinction, and climate change will put even more pressure on endangered species and precious habitats.

We will support the strongest protection for endangered species and work to protect vital habitats from destruction. We will tackle the smuggling and illegal trade in wildlife through our new Border Police Force.

We will fight for wholesale reform of the Common Fisheries Policy to encourage sustainable practices, give communities a greater say over the future of their fishing industries, and bring an end to the scandal of fish discards. We will take forward the framework for nature conservation given in the Marine and Coastal Access Act and work with the Scottish Government to ensure that the Marine (Scotland) Act can operate effectively within this.

We will keep up the pressure on the Scottish Government to be vigilant in ensuring the welfare of animals, and to spread the highest standards of farm animal welfare.

We will work to reduce the use of animals in scientific research.

To give wildlife greater protection, we will:

- firmly oppose any resumption of commercial whaling and do all we can to ensure that the international moratorium stays in place;
- press for a total ban on ivory sales and the destruction of existing stockpiles; and,
- promote new green spaces and wildlife corridors to help animals adapt and thrive in the face of climate change.

Protect habitats

The natural world faces great pressure from development and climate change. We will produce a White Paper on protecting the natural environment, including a focus on restoring habitat. We will pioneer a new system of conservation credits to protect habitats.

We support national Green Belt protection and the retention of National Scenic Areas, National Parks, Sites of Special Scientific Interest and other environmental designations which protect the character of our country's landscape. In addition, we will call for:

- a review of the governance arrangements for National Parks to ensure that they are more accountable to local communities; and,
- more priority to be given to reducing litter, which spoils too much of our countryside and urban environment.

We have held the Scottish Government to account over its tree-planting targets and we will tackle illegal logging by:

- pressing for financial support from within a reformed EU budget to be given to developing countries to halt deforestation;
- pressing for only legally-harvested timber and timber products to be made available on the market; and,
- introducing a new criminal offence under UK law for the import and possession of illegal timber.

Promote sustainable and productive farming practices

Our farmland is a national resource for future generations and the foundation of our food security. We will prevent development on the most fertile farmland, in all but exceptional circumstances. To promote sustainable farming practices further, we will:

- promote a common sense approach to land use and farming, and accordingly continue to press for changes to EU plans for electronic sheep tagging to make them as workable as possible for the industry in Scotland;
- ensure that consumers have the right to choose non-GM foods through clear labelling;

- support the continued ban on the commercial planting of GM crops until and unless this has been assessed as safe for people and the environment; and,
- develop a legally-binding protocol covering the separation of GM and non-GM material, including clear industry liability.

We will negotiate for further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) to deliver greater value for money while supporting the sustainability of British farming. The new CAP should reflect the importance we attach to the environment, to ensuring food security and to tackling global poverty. We advocate the dismantling of market-distorting subsidies at a pace that allows time for British farmers and producers in developing countries to adapt. We are calling for the reform and minimisation of on-farm inspections and for the Scottish Agricultural Wages Board to be abolished.

Government should take the lead by procuring more sustainably. We will ensure that food procured by government departments, and eventually the whole public sector, meets British standards of production, wherever this can be achieved without increasing overall costs.

We will introduce honesty in food labelling, if necessary through legislation, so consumers can be confident about where their food comes from. This will ensure that meat labelled as

‘British’ is born and bred in Britain, and raised to our high welfare standards and we want the label ‘Scottish’ to be similarly protected. We helped start the farmers’ market movement in Scotland and we support the evolution of local food networks out of these. We will do more to help households and businesses to access locally-produced food.

We will also ensure a fair market for food suppliers – especially farmers – by reducing the burden of regulation. To ensure the grocery supply code of practice is applied fairly, we will introduce an independent supermarket ombudsman.

Use natural resources responsibly

We will introduce a Responsibility Deal on waste – a voluntary arrangement among producers to cut back on the production of waste and improve its disposal – as we move towards our goal of a zero-waste society.

Households need new incentives to go green, so we will reward people who do the right thing by encouraging councils to pay people to recycle. To help this happen, we will put a floor under the standard rate of landfill tax until 2020 to encourage alternative forms of waste disposal.



Forfar, Angus

The Scottish Conservatives are proud of Scotland's history and have real hope for the country's future. Scotland has played a significant role in Britain's history and continues to make a vital contribution to every aspect of British life. From the brave men and women who continue Scotland's proud history in Britain's Armed Forces, to the entrepreneurs, inventors, scientists, academics and sportsmen and women, Scotland makes a rich contribution to the United Kingdom. On the economy, Scotland's contribution is also enormous. From the oil and gas industry to life sciences, Scotland is a global player.

Promote our
national interest



A stronger Britain in a safer world

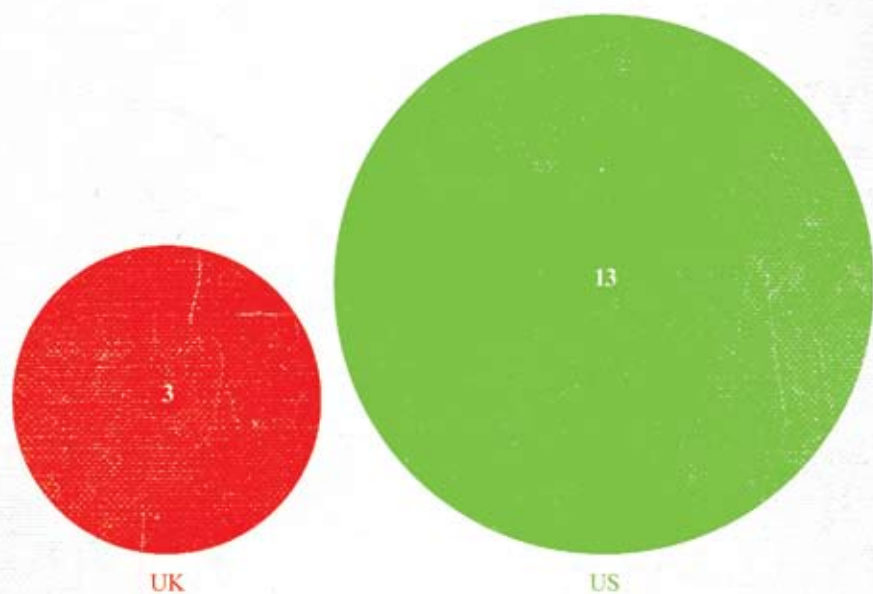
A Conservative government will defend our national security and support our brave Armed Forces in everything they do. We will promote our national interest with an active foreign policy. We will work constructively with the EU, but we will not hand over any more areas of power and we will never join the Euro. We will honour our aid commitments and make sure this money works for the poorest nations.

This country possesses great assets and advantages – a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, a leading role in NATO, a strong relationship with the United States, a major role in the affairs of the EU, and Armed Forces that are the envy of the world. We are a global trading nation and home to the world's pre-eminent language.

But, looking a decade or two ahead, powerful forces of economics and demography elsewhere in the world will make it harder for us to maintain our influence. All this in a world that is becoming more dangerous, where threats as diverse as state failure, international terrorism and new forms of warfare are being amplified by the impact of climate change and the spread of nuclear weapons technology. In a world of shifting economic power and increased threats, the UK stands to lose a great deal of its ability to shape world affairs unless we act to reverse our declining status.

We no longer inhabit a world in which foreign and defence issues can be separated from domestically-generated threats. Instead, we live in a world in which dangers, events and actions abroad are inter-dependent with threats to our security at home. We must meet the threats we face with a concerted response from the state. That response cannot just come from how we conduct our foreign affairs, or organise our defence and internal security – it must cut across energy, education, community cohesion, health, technology, international development and the environment too.

Helicopters per 1,000 troops, Helmand Province, 2009



Source: The Times, Channel 4

Defend our security

We will create a National Security Council to oversee all aspects of our security, chaired by the Prime Minister. We are committed to succeeding in our mission in Afghanistan and will not leave our Forces without the resources they need to fulfil this goal. We will repair the Military Covenant with a series of measures to support service personnel, their families and veterans.

Labour have failed to deliver a unified and coherent approach to national security. They have not even kept their promise of a comprehensive National Security Budget. Their incompetence places our nation at risk. Despite fighting two major wars in the last decade, Labour have cut the target for the trained strength of the Army, shrunk the size of the Navy by a fifth and run down the RAF.

The men and women of our Armed Forces are the ones charged with protecting our nation's security. But Labour's dangerous mismanagement has endangered lives and harmed Britain's capacity to defend itself. Labour have been too slow to provide the equipment, such as helicopters, which our Forces on operations have badly needed. Our brave men and women, their families, and our veterans deserve the best for putting their lives on the line to protect our liberties. We will ensure they get the best.

By pulling us out of the UK, the SNP would cut significantly the military capability that can be called upon to defend Scotland. The SNP's dogmatic desire to operate outside NATO

would leave Scotland not only vulnerable but isolated too. Our commitment to strengthening the Union is a therefore an essential backdrop to our plans to safeguard and strengthen national security. It is partly because we do not want to put national security at risk that we will do nothing to put the Union at risk. And by protecting military jobs and the defence industry in Scotland from the risks of independence, we will be protecting them from the biggest threat that they face.

A resilient nation

We understand the severity of the threats that exist and will do all we can to make Britain safe. We will establish a National Security Council to co-ordinate responses to the dangers we face, which will be chaired by the Prime Minister. In addition, we will:

- create a National Security Adviser and a new National Resilience Team for Homeland Security;
- develop a National Security Strategy and oversee a Strategic Defence and Security Review that implements that strategy; and,

- establish a new Permanent Military Command for Homeland Defence and Security to provide a more structured military contribution to homeland security.

Terrorism remains a major threat to our country and some of the biggest threats to our security do not come from abroad – they are home grown. A Conservative government will ban any organisations which advocate hate or the violent overthrow of our society, such as Hizb-ut-Tahrir, and close down organisations which attempt to fund terrorism from the UK. In Northern Ireland, we will continue to give our fullest support to the police and other agencies in their efforts to combat the threat from dissident republican and other terrorist organisations.

Support our brave Armed Forces

Our mission in Afghanistan is vital to our national security. Success in Afghanistan will be achieved when it is a more stable state, able to manage its own security, resist outside interference, and prevent terrorists from using its territory as a safe haven. We will always ensure our Forces have the resources they need to carry out their mission properly, and we will press other members of NATO to take their fair share of the military burden. The training of Afghanistan's own security forces is key to the success of the mission, and we will continue to make it a priority.

Our Strategic Defence and Security Review will ensure that resources for our Armed Forces are matched to our foreign policy requirements. We support the decision to renew Britain's submarine-based nuclear deterrent, based on the Trident missile system.

The hopeless mismanagement of defence procurement by this government has wasted billions of taxpayers' money and left our Armed Forces underequipped and dangerously exposed. We will review the structure of the Ministry of Defence to reduce running costs by 25 per cent. We will reform the procurement process to ensure the delivery of equipment on time and on budget. We will release spending on unnecessary and bureaucratic EU defence initiatives and spend the money on our Armed Forces. As part of that process, we will re-evaluate our position with the European Defence Agency.

Our commitment to look after the Armed Forces and their families – the Military Covenant – has been allowed to fall into disrepair. This is one of the most damning failures of Gordon Brown's government. We will restore the Military Covenant and ensure that our Armed Forces, their families and veterans are properly taken care of. To make that happen, we will:

- double the operational allowance;
- maximise rest and recuperation leave;

- ensure our servicemen and women are treated in dedicated military wards in hospital;
- change the rules so that service personnel are not locked out of the voting system by rules that Labour have introduced;
- provide university and further education scholarships for the children of servicemen and women killed while on active duty, backdated to 1990;
- pilot a mental health follow-up service for those who have left the services; and,
- review the rules governing the awarding of medals.

Iran

In Iran, hundreds of thousands of citizens calling for democratic reforms are using new technologies to come together, coordinate their protests against the state, and communicate with the outside world. The power of these information flows is growing rapidly. Every time the Iranian state has tried to choke the flow of information to dampen down the protests, people have turned to new technologies to share and access information. When the state cut off text messaging services, protesters switched to social media like Twitter and Facebook. When foreign journalists had their visas removed and had to leave the country, Iranians began to upload video clips onto YouTube so that the government's actions could continue to be scrutinised. And when the government tried to ban popular websites, private citizens outside Iran set up proxy internet servers so that Iranians could continue to access information.



A liberal Conservative foreign policy

We have great national assets and advantages to help us make the most of the opportunities we face and to deal with challenges. We will engage positively with the world to deepen alliances and build new partnerships. We will help reform international institutions, help those in need, and play our part in tackling climate change and the proliferation of military nuclear technology.

A Conservative government's approach to foreign affairs will be based on liberal Conservative principles. Liberal, because Britain must be open and engaged with the world, supporting human rights and championing the cause of democracy and the rule of law at every opportunity. But Conservative, because our policy must be hard-headed and practical, dealing with the world as it is and not as we wish it were.

Our approach to foreign affairs is based on a belief in freedom, human rights and democracy. We are sceptical about grand utopian schemes to remake the world. We will work patiently with the grain of other societies, but we will always support liberal values because they provide the foundations for stability and prosperity.

Protecting Britain's enlightened national interest requires global engagement. We will be safer if our values are strongly upheld and widely respected in the world. Our national identity is bound up in our historic global role as an outward-looking nation, giving generously to developing countries, and providing a safe haven to genuine refugees.

It is not in our character to have a foreign policy without a conscience or to turn our back on the millions who live in poverty and conflict. As part of the UK, Scotland is in the UN Security Council and the G8 group of the most prosperous nations and leads the Commonwealth. As part of the United Kingdom, Scots are able to wield meaningful influence for good around the world.

Promote our enlightened national interest

A Conservative government will champion a distinctive British foreign policy. We will renew and reinforce our engagement with the rest of the world and build up British influence by deepening our alliances beyond Europe and the United States, not only diplomatically but in culture, education, commerce and security.

A Conservative government will always speak up for freedom and human rights. Torture is unacceptable and abhorrent, and we will never condone it.

We will support humanitarian intervention

when it is practical and necessary, while working with other countries to prevent conflict arising.

Promoting Britain's interests and values means developing and strengthening our alliances and reforming international institutions. To achieve these goals, we will:

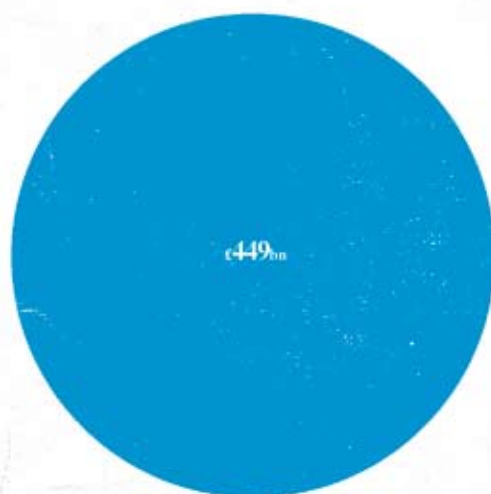
- work to establish a new special relationship with India, the world's largest democracy;
- seek closer engagement with China while standing firm on human rights;
- elevate our relationships with many friendly nations, including in the Middle East, as well as North Africa, South Asia and Latin America;
- press to keep the EU's doors open to those countries, including Turkey, that wish to join, conditional on the rigorous application of the accession criteria;
- support permanent seats on the United Nations Security Council for Japan, India, Germany, Brazil and African representation; and,
- strengthen the Commonwealth as a focus for promoting democratic values and development.

We will work with our allies across the world to prevent conflict and secure peace. We will maintain a strong, close and frank relationship

with the United States. We will work closely with other European countries to establish a common approach to common problems, such as climate change. We will be committed to NATO as the ultimate guarantor of Europe's security. To ensure our global security further, we will:

- work towards greater stability in Afghanistan and Pakistan;
- support concerted international efforts to prevent Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon;
- support a two-state solution to the Middle East Peace Process;
- promote stability in the Western Balkans;
- always be ready to assist Cypriots in their efforts to agree a just, balanced and lasting settlement to reunite their island; and,
- play our part in efforts to make the world safer from the dangers of nuclear weapons and nuclear proliferation.

Total volume of UK trade



Trade with EU



Trade with the rest of the world

Source: Office for National Statistics, 2008

An open and democratic Europe

We will be positive members of the European Union but we are clear that there should be no further extension of the EU's power over the UK without the British people's consent. We will ensure that by law no future government can hand over areas of power to the EU or join the Euro without a referendum of the British people. We will work to bring back key powers over legal rights, criminal justice and social and employment legislation to the UK.

The European Union has done much to reconcile the painful division of Europe and to spread democracy and the rule of law across our continent. But it should not rest on those achievements.

European countries need to work together to boost global economic growth, fight global poverty, and combat global climate change. The European Union has a crucial part to play in enabling the countries of Europe to meet these great challenges of the 21st century. A Conservative government will play an active and energetic role in the European Union to advance these causes.

We will stand for open markets, and a strong transatlantic relationship; for an EU that looks out to the world, and that builds strong and open relations with rising powers like China and India. And, like every other Member State, we will fight our corner to promote our national interests.

We believe Britain's interests are best served by membership of a European Union that is an association of its Member States. We will never allow Britain to slide into a federal Europe. Labour's ratification of the Lisbon Treaty without the consent of the British people has been a betrayal of this country's democratic traditions. In government, we will put in place a number of measures to make sure this shameful episode can never happen again.

Restore democratic control

In future, the British people must have their say on any transfer of powers to the European Union. We will amend the 1972 European Communities Act so that any proposed future Treaty that transferred areas of power, or competences, would be subject to a referendum – a 'referendum lock'. A Conservative government would never take the UK into the Euro. Our amendment to the 1972 Act will prevent any future government from doing so without a referendum.

Unlike other European countries, the UK does not have a written constitution. We will introduce a United Kingdom Sovereignty Bill to make it clear that ultimate authority stays in this country, in our Parliament.

The Lisbon Treaty contains a number of so-called ‘ratchet clauses’, which allow the powers of the EU to expand in the future without a new Treaty. We do not believe that any of these ‘ratchet clauses’ should be used to hand over more powers from Britain to the EU. So a Conservative government will not agree to the UK’s participation in the establishment of a European Public Prosecutor’s Office or permit its jurisdiction over the UK. We will change the 1972 Act so that an Act of Parliament would be required before any ‘ratchet clause’ could be used. Additionally, the use of a major ‘ratchet clause’ which amounted to the transfer of an area of power to the EU would be subject to a referendum.

The steady and unaccountable intrusion of the European Union into almost every aspect of our lives has gone too far. A Conservative government will negotiate for three specific guarantees – on the Charter of Fundamental Rights, on criminal justice, and on social and employment legislation – with our European partners to return powers that we believe should reside with the UK, not the EU. We seek a mandate to negotiate the return of these powers from the EU to the UK.

Project Umubano

Every summer for the past three years, the Conservative Party has been running 'Project Umubano' in Rwanda. Over that period, Conservative MPs and volunteers have provided English lessons to 3,000 Rwandan primary school teachers, renovated a school, established a small medical library at Kirambi Health Centre, and built a community centre. In 2009, the project branched out to Sierra Leone. Project Umubano is a sign of our commitment to One World Conservatism, and our belief in the positive power of social action.

David Mundell, pictured, is the Shadow Secretary of State for Scotland



One World Conservatism

We will honour our commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of national income in aid, and ensure our aid is transparent and properly targeted. We will spend at least £500 million a year to tackle malaria. Both the British people and those who receive aid will get more control over how it is spent. We will push for a trade deal which brings growth to the poorest countries, helps those countries adapt to climate change, and puts in place the building blocks of wealth creation.

The global downturn has shaken up rich and poor countries alike. For poor countries, it threatens to undermine a decade's growth and poverty reduction. For rich countries, it puts new pressures on household and government budgets – nowhere more so than in the UK, where Labour's appalling mismanagement of the economy has saddled us with unprecedented levels of debt. But we should use this opportunity to reaffirm, not abandon, our values – which is why we will continue to increase the level of British aid. We will do so because it is in our national interest, as well as being the right thing to do.

Deliver on our commitment to the world's poorest nations

A new Conservative government will be fully committed to achieving, by 2013, the UN target of spending 0.7 per cent of national income as aid. We will stick to the rules laid down by the OECD about what spending counts as aid. We will legislate in the first session of a new Parliament to lock in this level of spending for every year from 2013.

We support the Millennium Development Goals and will continue to work towards them. We will maintain an independent Department for International Development (DFID) and keep aid untied from commercial interests. We will be completely transparent about the cost and performance of DFID programmes by independently evaluating programmes and by introducing, where appropriate, payment by results.

Our bargain with taxpayers is this: in return for contributing your hard-earned money to helping the world's poorest people, it is our duty to spend every penny of aid effectively. We will ensure British aid money is properly spent by publishing full details of British aid on the DFID website. This will include spending data on a project-by-project basis, published in an open and standardised format so that it can be used by third party websites. In addition, we will work to bring about improved transparency of aid spending by other development organisations.

We will create a new MyAid Fund to allow British people a direct say on aid spending, as well as giving people in developing countries more say over how aid is spent in their communities.

Under Labour, our aid funding is not used in a focused way, and is sometimes spent in countries that should be looking after their own poor citizens. So we will stop giving aid to China and Russia and review which other countries should get British aid. We will focus more on the poorest, paying particular attention to development within the Commonwealth.

A key aim of our aid is to make sure everyone gets access to the basics: clean water, sanitation, healthcare and education. We will focus particularly on the rights of women, children and disabled people to access these services. Malaria continues to kill nearly a million people per year, despite the fact that it is easily preventable and treatable. So, as part of our commitment to increase aid funding, a Conservative government will spend at least £500 million per year tackling malaria and will strongly support efforts to develop a malaria vaccine.

Trade and economic growth are the only sustainable way for developing countries to escape poverty, which is why we will put maximum effort into achieving an ambitious, pro-development global trade deal. Our aid programme will help poor countries put in

place the building blocks of wealth creation: property rights, effective public services, stability and the rule of law.

We will provide a more integrated approach to post-conflict reconstruction where the British military is involved – building on the Stabilisation Unit in Whitehall and creating a new Stabilisation and Reconstruction Force to bridge the gap between the military and the reconstruction effort.

To help deliver on our commitment to developing countries, we will:

- establish a Poverty Impact Fund to support innovative and effective British poverty-fighting groups which do not currently qualify for government funding;
- explore ways to help the very poorest developing countries take part in international climate change negotiations, and work to make our aid ‘climate-smart’;
- end Labour’s use of the Export Credit Guarantee Department to support investment in dirty fossil fuel power stations, and instead use it to help spread new green energy technology to developing countries; and,
- encourage the establishment of a Pan-African Free Trade Area, which has the potential to transform that continent’s economies.

