



Islington Labour

ON YOUR SIDE

MAKING A DIFFERENCE

2014 ELECTION MANIFESTO

Making a difference

Islington is a vibrant and diverse borough with a proud history and compassionate, resourceful people. But it is also one of the most unequal places in Britain, and too many of our borough's residents struggle to access all the benefits of living and working in Islington.

Islington Labour's mission is to make our borough a fairer place so that everyone can benefit from a successful Islington. This mission inspires our three priorities for 2014–18:

Jobs – bringing down unemployment levels to below the London average and making sure every young person in the borough has an offer of a job, a college place or an apprenticeship

Housing – building a further 1,500 new homes for social rent, prioritised for local people, and setting up a non-profit lettings agency to provide an affordable alternative for private renters

Cost of living – cutting energy bills through insulation programmes and building new local power stations, and providing free school meals to all primary school children

As well as working towards these important goals, we will continue to run an efficient and effective council. Delivering essential services like weekly bin collections and street cleanliness will remain priorities because we know how important they are to residents and local businesses.

Our job is made much harder by the Tory-led government supported by the Liberal Democrats. Following the Coalition's devastating cuts to local government, Islington council has already had to close a budget gap of £112 million since 2010, equivalent to 35 per cent of the council's budget. We are expecting further cuts of £34 million in 2015/16 alone. Islington is facing more severe cuts than most parts of the country, as this Tory-led government targets the poorest people and places.

At the same time, many of our residents are facing cuts to social security and stagnating wages while the cost of living soars. Energy bills, rents and childcare costs are all rising faster than incomes, squeezing living standards – not just for the poorest but for people on low and middle incomes across the borough.

We are determined to fight government policies that damage Islington while providing practical support for residents. Over the last four years, our work has been driven by the Islington Fairness Commission, which produced practical recommendations to help the council and other local organisations make Islington a fairer place despite the huge cuts imposed by this government. We will continue to be guided by the principles set out by the Fairness Commission over the next four years.

Islington Labour is proud of its campaigns to protect vital services and will continue this in the years ahead. We have fought to protect services at the Whittington hospital, to stop post office and fire station closures in the borough, and to reform the tests for disability benefits that are ruining lives. Under Islington Labour, the council will continue to challenge government policy

that is bad for Islington – including in the courts.

We remain committed to working with others to help people in Islington affected by this government's damaging policies. In the face of major budget cuts, it is vital that the council works with a range of other organisations in the borough, including local charities, community groups, businesses and public sector bodies, to make sure our residents get the support they need. Islington is blessed with an active and vibrant voluntary sector, which often serves our most vulnerable residents and harnesses the time and talents of local volunteers. Under Islington Labour, the council will continue to recognise and support this vital work.

In difficult times, there is a risk that we look for people to blame for our problems or turn against one another. Islington Labour will work to promote solidarity and inclusion, and oppose those who seek to spread blame and division. We will continue to listen to residents and involve them in the difficult decisions we will have to take in the years ahead.

Raising employment and supporting enterprise

Getting more of Islington's residents into a decent job will be one of our top priorities. Considerably fewer people in Islington are in work than in the rest of London, and a third of children live in homes where no one works. This is one reason why Islington has some of the highest rates of child poverty in the country. Yet Islington has a vibrant and growing local economy, with 1.3 jobs for every person of working age. Our big challenge is how to help more of Islington's residents access the opportunities on their doorstep.

Our goal is to reduce the unemployment rate in the borough to below the London average by 2018. We have established the Islington Employment Commission to help us develop a plan for achieving this goal, and we will act on the commission's recommendations. The commission builds on our work to boost employment over the last four years, including working with businesses in and around Islington to match local unemployed people with vacancies. We will continue to work with local employers to expand employment opportunities for Islington's residents. We will ensure that firms offering jobs and apprenticeships to local people are prioritised when the council offers contracts.

We are particularly keen to tackle the barriers to employment faced by people with disabilities and parents, especially mothers, with young children. The lack of affordable and flexible childcare can make it hard for parents to work. We will make sure there is more support for childcare outside standard working hours, to help parents who take a job working in the evenings or at weekends. The Islington Employment Commission will also consider how the council can promote more flexible working opportunities for parents, older people, carers and people with disabilities, and encourage local employers to pay the living wage so that work is a real route out of poverty.

Youth unemployment is falling in Islington but is still far too high. By 2018, we will guarantee that every 16 to 18 year old has the offer of a job, an apprenticeship or a college place. As part of this guarantee, we will create at least 200 apprenticeship places at the council.

The Islington Bursary gives teenagers in the borough up to £300 to help them stay on in education after the age of 16. This helps to make up for the loss of the educational maintenance allowance (EMA), cut by the Tory-led government. We will protect the bursary for the next four years. We will also expand mentoring and work experience programmes for Islington's young people so that they have the skills and confidence to move into work when they leave education.

Much of the public money spent supporting people back to work in Islington is not effective for residents – like the government's failing Work Programme, which is not doing enough to help unemployed people find a job. Services to help people find work are more effective when they are coordinated at a local level and draw on the expertise of local organisations, rather than seeing millions of pounds of public money going to big business. We will campaign for more power and resources over employment services to be handed to Islington.

As London continues to grow, major investment is needed in transport and other

infrastructure. Islington Labour will fight to secure the best deal for Islington residents from projects like Crossrail, Crossrail 2 and the HS2 rail link, to make sure they provide apprenticeships and decent jobs for local people. We will support the development of new industries, like 'Tech City' in Old Street and 'Med City' in Euston, and work to ensure that Islington's residents directly benefit from the jobs and investment linked to these clusters. We will work with other London councils to campaign for London to get the funding it needs to support economic growth, including a new investment package to boost the economy of inner London.

Islington's small businesses provide thousands of jobs for local people and underpin our thriving local economy. But we know that times are tough for small businesses and we will work with small business owners to make sure they have the support they need. Islington Labour supports proposals to cut business rates in 2015 and freeze them in 2016, paid for by not going ahead with another cut in corporation tax planned by this Tory-led government. Cutting business rates provides extra support for struggling small businesses, many of whom do not make enough profit to pay corporation tax. We will also make it easier for small firms employing local people to win council contracts.

People need the right skills to get into work. We will work with local colleges and other organisations to make sure people can get the training they need to find a job. We will prioritise helping people to improve their IT skills as these are now essential for many jobs in Islington.

The quality of jobs is also important for the people of Islington. We are proud of our record as a living wage employer and as the first local authority to be accredited by the Living Wage Foundation. Paying the living wage boosts incomes, helps to reduce spending on social security and makes sure people feel rewarded for the important work they do. All the council's staff are paid at least the London living wage, as are 98 per cent of staff on council contracts. This is more ambitious than any other council in Britain. The borough also has the highest number of living wage employers in the private, voluntary and public sectors, thanks to the council's leadership and campaigning. But we want to go much further and, in the next four years, we will work with employers across Islington, like Arsenal FC, to secure a living wage for even more of Islington's residents.

Security at work is vital. We will maintain our commitment not to use exploitative zero-hours contracts among our directly-employed workforce, and work with our contractors to reduce their reliance on these insecure contracts.

Blacklisting, where companies choose not to hire people who have been involved with a union or highlighted health and safety issues at work, ruins lives and puts the safety of workers under threat. Under Islington Labour, the council has agreed that it will only take out new contracts with organisations that can demonstrate they have never used blacklisting or, if they have, can prove they have taken adequate measures to remedy the damage and prevent future occurrences. We will work with the trade unions represented among the council's workforce to make sure contractors stick to these rules.

A decent and affordable home for everyone

In our four years running the council, Islington Labour has started one of the largest affordable homebuilding programmes in Britain. Working with housing associations in the borough, we plan to build 2,000 new affordable homes by 2015.

With the government cutting support for new affordable housing – and in particular new social housing – we will show an alternative is possible. Between 2015 and 2019, we will build a further 1,500 new homes for social rent, of which 500 will be council homes.

To protect communities and make sure that local people benefit when new homes are built, we will give priority for all new social housing to local people. People living in the ward where a development takes place, and who need a better home, will be first in the queue for new homes for social rent.

For new council homes on existing estates we will give further priority to current tenants. New council homes will be offered first to people who need a better home, such as those living in overcrowded properties, and then to other residents on the estate on a like-for-like basis.

The environmental impact of new homes is important to us. We will continue to demand that all developments achieve the highest feasible level of sustainability. We will ensure that new council homes are built to the highest energy standards, and continue to promote exemplar schemes such as those built to *Passivhaus* standards.

The Tory-led government and Tory Mayor of London want to increase rents in social housing so that inner London is no longer affordable for people on low incomes. In contrast, over the last four years, Islington Labour has worked hard to ensure that people on low incomes can still afford to live here. Over the next four years, we will continue to protect social rents for Islington's council tenants and fight to keep rents genuinely affordable for housing association tenants.

We will continue to support people who want to downsize into a more manageable property and free up a home for a family suffering overcrowding. But we oppose the government's pernicious 'bedroom tax', which takes no account of people's personal circumstances or local connections.

In 2011, we decided to take the management of council homes back in house and this year, we are bringing housing repairs back in house too. Running services ourselves gives the council more control and makes it easier for residents to get involved. It also means we can offer more good jobs and apprenticeships to local people. We will keep driving up the standards of housing repairs to ensure tenants get the best possible service. We will also continue to make sure that leaseholder services charges are fair and transparent.

We will encourage tenants and residents to be actively involved in running their estates by strengthening our resident involvement activities. We will encourage people to attend local tenants' and residents' panels, and support people to set up new tenants' and residents'

associations, and other local organisations on estates, like gardening clubs.

We will give a senior council officer the role of overseeing, challenging and strengthening the council's work to improve the housing situation of women, including ensuring that women who are victims of domestic violence have the housing support that is right for them.

An increasing number of Islington residents live in the private rented sector, where rents are soaring and tenants have little protection against exploitative or unprofessional landlords. Private tenants often have to pay extortionate fees to lettings agencies simply to secure a property. If we are re-elected in 2014, we will work with local organisations to establish a non-profit lettings agency so that Islington's private tenants and landlords have a trusted and affordable alternative to expensive or rogue lettings agents.

The Labour-run council has worked with private tenants in the borough to set up Islington Private Tenants to provide advice and campaign for decency, affordability and security in the private rented sector. In 2014, we will establish a dedicated advice line for private tenants, making it easier for them to access information and support.

We will work with decent landlords and lettings agents in the borough. But we will also stand up for Islington's private renters by taking tough action against landlords and lettings agents who fail to come up to the mark. This will include targeted enforcement work in parts of the borough like Finsbury Park, Archway and Caledonian Road, where there are concentrations of poor quality rented homes. We will also extend landlord licensing arrangements to areas where there is a strong case for doing so.

This package of measures will improve life for private tenants in Islington, but national legislation is needed to stabilise rents and create more secure tenancies. We will campaign with Islington Private Tenants and others to make this a reality.

Bringing down the cost of living

Islington residents are being hit by massive increases in the cost of living while average wages continue to stagnate. To help people in tough times, an Islington Labour-run council will continue to work hard to cut residents' costs and raise incomes.

We have frozen council tax bills since coming to power in 2010. We will keep council tax bills below the London average.

We will protect Islington's groundbreaking free school meals programme for all primary school children, saving families over £500 a year per child while making sure every child has a nutritional meal at least once a day.

As big energy companies continue to rip off customers, we want to see Islington generate more of its own energy so that residents have a real alternative. In 2012, we opened a new energy centre providing heat and power to residents in the Bunhill area of Islington. This is more energy efficient so helps to cut bills and reduce carbon emissions. The centre even captures waste heat from the London Underground to heat homes, helping to cut emissions even further. We want to see more of these schemes in Islington to cut bills and emissions, and we are looking for other sites across the borough.

We will expand the council's free home insulation programme to help residents save money on their energy bills, keep their homes warm in winter and lower their carbon emissions. We will also continue to support the Big London Energy Switch, a collective switching scheme that helps residents club together to get the best energy deals.

The cost of travel in London is a major burden on people on low and middle incomes. We will continue to campaign against unfair increases in public transport fares.

Islington residents regularly fall prey to rip-off payday lenders. People on low incomes need access to credit but not at any cost. Islington Labour supports the work of the London Capital Credit Union and has helped to increase its membership by 65 per cent, so more people can access affordable loans.

We will continue to campaign against payday lenders operating in the borough, while using our planning, licencing and other powers to limit the spread of payday lenders – as well as betting shops and amusement arcades. We will help London Capital Credit Union to secure more accessible and visible office space. We will also investigate setting up a community bank or building society serving Islington's residents and local businesses.

Under Islington Labour, the council has set up the first new citizens advice bureau in London for 20 years. In the face of this Tory-led government's cuts to social security and rising levels of debt, it is crucial that we protect this vital resource for Islington's residents. We will also continue to support other sources of welfare and debt advice in the borough, including the council's income maximisation team, which helps residents get the benefits they are entitled to.

Islington Labour is appalled by the Tory-led government's cuts to social security, which are pushing many of the borough's vulnerable residents into hardship. We have vigorously campaigned against these changes while offering practical support to people who have been affected, including helping people hit by the 'bedroom tax'. We will work across the borough to ensure there is a strategic and coordinated response to cuts in social security, while campaigning against further cuts that will affect Islington's residents.

The best start for every child and young person

Islington's schools have never been better. Every secondary school in Islington is rated 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted, making Islington one of only nine local authorities in England to achieve this standard. Exam results for children of all ages have improved dramatically and we had our best ever results in 2013. Two thirds of 16 year olds gained five or more good GCSEs including English and maths in 2013, above the national average but also ahead of affluent areas like Cambridgeshire and Oxfordshire. Islington has risen from 123rd out of 152 for GSCE attainment when we came to power to 43rd this year.

Over the next four years, Islington Labour will continue to have an uncompromising focus on standards in all of Islington's schools so that every parent can be confident their child will receive an excellent education in the borough. We will work with all schools to raise standards and encourage collaboration between schools, so that the best performing schools pass on their knowledge to those that need extra help. We will fight to protect services for children with special educational needs so that all children can benefit from Islington's high standards.

Alongside this academic focus, we will expand schemes to raise young people's aspirations and confidence through sport and debating competitions across Islington's schools. Highbury Grove School has pioneered a programme of classical music tuition that has helped raise standards and put the school in the top 100 state schools in England. We will roll out this highly successful programme to more of Islington's schools so that children from all backgrounds get the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument.

Following massive investment from both the previous Labour government and the council, we have some of the best school buildings in the country. We will work with schools and local charities to open up more school facilities for community use so that more of Islington's residents can benefit from this investment.

Every child should feel safe at school. We will build on our tough approach to homophobic, transphobic, racist, sexist and sexual bullying, including online bullying. We will work closely with schools to ensure that children learn that bullying and discrimination are not acceptable.

The quality of Islington's schools and the council's relentless focus on standards in all our schools means there is little support for any of the borough's schools to convert to academies. We will encourage Islington's schools not to convert to academy status and demand parental ballots where schools are considering this step.

New, mainstream 'free schools' are not needed in Islington because the borough has enough places in good quality schools to meet demand. We are opposed to the creation of new free schools providing mainstream education in Islington. They would be a waste of money and simply seek to compete unnecessarily with Islington's great local schools.

Families with young children often need extra support. Islington's network of Sure Start children's centres help parents to avoid isolation and access the support and services they need. We have kept every single children's centre in the borough open and will fight hard to

protect this vital community service despite the large cuts imposed on the council's budget.

Young people themselves know best what services they need. We will give more powers to the Islington Youth Council to influence decisions affecting young people in the borough. We recognise the importance of youth services in providing positive opportunities for young people through sport, drama, music and other activities. We will work with the borough's voluntary organisations to attract new funding for youth services in the borough in order to protect them from the cuts imposed by the Tory-led government.

Recognising the importance of literacy, we will support campaigns and festivals like Islington Reads and the Islington Word Festival to promote reading and books.

Islington has the lowest amount of open space of any borough in London. We will look after our parks, adventure playgrounds and other open spaces so that children have safe places to play. We will also make it easier for residents to close their streets to traffic on particular days to create 'play streets'.

Supporting older people, disabled people and carers

Older people and disabled people make an enormous contribution to Islington life and sometimes need support to enable them to live independently and stay connected to those around them. Over the last four years, Islington Labour has protected funding for social care for residents with moderate care needs, while most councils now only fund care for those with substantial needs. Protecting funding for moderate care needs means that people are supported to stay independent rather than waiting until problems escalate and cost more to deal with. We will continue to protect funding for social care for people with moderate care needs. This is despite the fact that the Tory-led government is cutting the funding it gives the council while demand for social care keeps rising.

Linking up social care with the NHS is vital for making sure people can stay independent for longer, as well making the best use of scarce resources. We are pioneering new work with local NHS services to join up social care and health care so that services are coordinated around the needs of the individual. We are focusing on strengthening our reablement and intermediate care services to help avoid expensive and unnecessary stays in hospital. This will also mean that people can leave hospital quickly knowing that they will have the help they need when they get home.

Homecare services are better when they are delivered by well-trained and motivated staff on a decent wage. Our pioneering work to extend the living wage to all homecare workers on council contracts has helped to raise wages among the workforce. We will continue to work with social care providers to improve the pay and working conditions of care workers. This includes fighting to secure a living wage for the small number of residential care workers who are still missing out, and calling for an end to exploitative zero-hours contracts.

Unpaid carers make a huge contribution to life in Islington and our community relies heavily on the support they offer to family and friends. Caring is a tough job and carers need support, including the chance to have a break, catch up with friends and do things that interest them. We will take further steps to identify and support unpaid carers in Islington, working with charities and support groups in the borough.

Too many elderly people face loneliness and isolation, and the council will continue to focus on helping elderly and vulnerable people stay active and connected. We will campaign to protect the Freedom Pass so that older people can get out and about, and we will protect funding for free swimming for older people.

Over the last four years, we have worked with local voluntary organisations like Help on Your Doorstep and North London Cares to reach out to older people in Islington and connect them to local social activities or make sure they are getting the help they need. We will continue to work with a range of local befriending schemes to help tackle isolation and loneliness. We will also work with local voluntary organisations and others in the borough to ensure that older people have access to a variety of social activities, as well as providing day centres for those who need and want them.

We will continue to work with the Islington Pensioners' Forum and other organisations in the borough to tackle fuel poverty and call for more action from the government. We will also continue to work with the NHS on the SHINE programme (seasonal health interventions network) so that older people get advice about health, staying warm and getting the benefits they are entitled to.

Many people with disabilities have had to endure enormous and unnecessary stress caused by the Tory-led government's cuts to social security and unfair tests for disability benefits. In October 2013, Islington council became the first in the country to pass a vote of no confidence in Atos, the company carrying out assessments on behalf of the government. We will continue to campaign hard against the cuts to benefits for disabled people while providing practical support wherever we can.

Improving health

NHS services are vital for many people in Islington. Islington Labour fought to protect essential services at the Whittington hospital and to secure a plan that guarantees the hospital's future. We will continue to fight to safeguard NHS services in the borough, and campaign to strengthen the NHS as a comprehensive health service, open to all.

Under Islington Labour, the council is working closely with the Islington Clinical Commissioning Group (who decide what health services the borough's residents need) to ensure that residents get the best possible healthcare. We are using our new powers through the Health and Wellbeing Board to make sure NHS services, including mental health services, meet the needs of Islington's residents. We will work with local GPs to make sure GP services are accessible to all, including looking at more evening and weekend surgeries.

The prevalence of mental ill health among Islington's residents is far too high. We will use all our powers to strive to enhance mental health services in the borough, both voluntary and statutory.

We will use the council's new responsibilities for public health to tackle health problems early and promote healthy lifestyles. For example, we will use our public health funding to invest in stronger health services for young children and new parents, and to support sports programmes for young people. We will use the council's planning and licensing powers to curb the spread of fast food outlets.

Improving our local environment

Islington Labour takes the challenge of climate change and other forms of pollution seriously because they have the biggest impact on the most vulnerable. Taking action to tackle carbon emissions also has enormous benefits for residents struggling to cope with the rising cost of living, by cutting energy bills. Our ambitious plans for new heat and power centres will cut emissions while reducing energy bills for residents. Over the last four years, we have cut energy bills and reduced emissions in over 10,000 homes by replacing old boilers and insulating homes. We will expand our programme of free home insulation over the next four years.

Air quality has been improving in Islington but is still not good enough, particularly along our main roads. Poor air quality is a major health risk as it can cause childhood asthma and other respiratory problems. We will campaign to force the Mayor of London to take action to improve air quality in the borough, for example by tightening up emissions standards for taxis, HGVs and buses.

We are proud of our record as the first borough in the country to introduce a 20 mile per hour speed limit on all our roads. This makes our roads safer for pedestrians, cyclists and motorists and brings both health and environmental benefits. We will work with local police to ensure that this new limit is observed throughout the borough.

Encouraging more people to walk and cycle will help improve residents' health, cut emissions and improve air quality. We have introduced new planning rules to make sure that new developments are car-free (except for blue badge holders and car clubs) and we are fitting more bike stands and stores to encourage residents to cycle.

Islington Labour is committed to making cycling and walking in the borough safer so that residents have the confidence to leave their cars behind. By summer 2014, all of the council's own HGV drivers will have attended safe urban driving training and we will require all major new council contractors and major developers operating in the borough to do the same. The council plans to achieve silver accreditation under the Fleet Operator Recognition Scheme (which sets out safety requirements beyond the legal minimum for the council's own vehicles) by summer 2014, followed by action to achieve gold status.

Main roads and large roundabouts in Islington are controlled by Transport for London, and these are where most accidents occur and also where air quality is particularly bad. We will lobby Transport for London to introduce 20 mile per hour speed limits on their roads in Islington and improve cycle safety on the roads they manage. We will work with Transport for London to review the operation of all major roundabouts in Islington to make sure they are working as best they can for Islington's residents, including cyclists and pedestrians. Our long-term aspiration is to remove the major gyratories in the borough. We will continue to campaign for improvements to local bus and Underground stations, including step-free access.

Despite the huge cuts to the council's budget we will continue to perform essential environmental services well, such as street cleaning and collecting waste and recycling. We will protect weekly bin collections as well as continuing to look for ways to make it easier for

residents to recycle and drive up the borough's recycling rate. We will target the minority of dog owners who let their dogs foul our streets and estates, and issue significant fines when we catch people.

Making Islington a safer place to live

Our goal is to make Islington one of the safest boroughs in London. Overall, the number of crimes is falling – including gun and knife crime and most other violent offences. But we know that crime and antisocial behaviour has a devastating effect on some residents' lives and disproportionately hurts those who are less well-off. We are committed to robustly tackling criminal behaviour and will work with local police and other organisations in the borough to take tough action against perpetrators and to tackle the underlying causes of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Islington Labour has worked hard to rebuild public trust in the police and to strengthen our residents' confidence to report crime and antisocial behaviour. The council has set up a new 24 hour antisocial behaviour hotline so that residents can report incidents quickly at any time of the day. We have a dedicated antisocial behaviour response team who investigate all reports quickly and take the necessary action. We have invested £2 million in CCTV around the borough to deter criminals and make it easier to bring offenders to justice. We will expand the antisocial behaviour hotline to make it even easier for residents to report problems and get a swift response.

Neighbourhood policing is at the forefront of our fight against crime and antisocial behaviour, a visible presence on our streets that reassures residents and helps the police to build relationships in our communities. Islington Labour is proud to have won our campaign to keep a police sergeant in every ward in the borough, despite the cuts to police numbers imposed by the Tory Mayor of London. We will continue to work with the Metropolitan Police Service to safeguard the successful Safer Neighbourhoods teams and urge local police to respond to residents' priorities, by engaging with them on police and crime issues in the borough. Theft of personal items such as smartphones has risen sharply and we will work with local police to crack down on this. We will also work with the police and other organisations in the borough to tackle hate crime in all its forms.

It is vital that Islington's residents feel safe in public places. We will ensure that our streets, estates and open spaces are well-designed and properly lit at night. We will continue to support the CitySafe campaign led by London Citizens, whereby local shops and other organisations offer to provide a safe haven for young people in fear of attack.

Islington's vibrant nightlife attracts many people to our borough. But we need to protect residents from the excesses of the night-time economy and make sure that local businesses behave responsibly. Under Islington Labour, the council has introduced a tougher licensing policy, including stricter rules on closing times and new 'saturation zones' throughout the borough to make it harder for new outlets selling alcohol to open in areas that already have lots of bars, pubs and off-licences. We will monitor the impacts of this new approach and continue to use all the council's regulatory powers to address problem drinking.

Although crime is falling overall, domestic violence has risen, with women and children overwhelmingly the victims. We will make challenging domestic violence a priority, with a domestic violence coordinator based at the council to make sure organisations in Islington are

working together to tackle this devastating crime. We will encourage prosecutions against the perpetrators of domestic violence and do more to support those fleeing a violent partner or relative. Our housing service will continue to work hard to ensure that victims of domestic violence have access to the housing support that is right for them.

Running a good council

Against the backdrop of massive cuts to our budget we will continue to ensure Islington council is efficient and effective. We understand the importance of delivering basic services well and will continue to ensure our streets are clean and our bins are collected. We will fight hard to protect and improve vital services like libraries, children's centres, leisure centres and community hubs in the face of the massive budget cuts imposed by the Tory-led government.

We will constantly strive to improve services and get the best value for every pound the council spends. Islington Labour strongly prefers the provision of council services through a directly-employed workforce. This makes staff more accountable, gives the council more control and saves money on expensive contractors. We will seek to bring services back in-house where it can be demonstrated that this will benefit residents. Where the council uses contractors, we will ensure that they are held to account for the quality of the work they do.

We will make it easier for residents to access council services by bringing together different teams providing face-to-face advice in one place and making it easier for residents to do simple tasks online if they are able to. This will save money that can be reinvested back into the services residents want.

We will cut the council's overall salary bill for senior staff and ensure that there is no more than a ratio of one to ten between the lowest and highest paid staff at the council.