



A TAX HAVEN FOR BIG BUSINESS

GOVERNMENT SPENDING AT A RECORD LOW

PUBLIC SERVICES PRIVATELY RUN

THE BETTER OFF EVEN BETTER OFF

NO OPPOSITION

TORY BRITAIN



Conservatives

Conservative Party Manifesto 2020

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Conservative Party Manifesto 2020



Foreword

In 2016 the 1922 Committee gave me an overwhelming mandate to change our country – it was both a huge honour and responsibility. I am proud to say that four years on, our country has indeed changed.

The United Kingdom is now truly an independent country. Brexit meant Brexit and we have left the European Union – and we hope in future to rebuild relationships with our former European partners, and make progress on exploring the possibility of negotiating trade deals with other countries. Government spending is being reduced year on year as we continue to make progress in our credible plan to reduce the deficit. Our low tax and minimal welfare policies are the envy of the world.

We have also been a reforming government. We have liberalised our education system – I am proud that we have extended the Free Schools programme and begun the construction of new selective schools for the first time in two decades. I am pleased that we have begun a decade long task of spreading that same level of freedom throughout our health service. In the past the Conservatives have promised to cut the deficit, not the NHS – but we have delivered more than we promised and successfully managed to cut both. We have also continued our revolution in the welfare system, cutting back unnecessary programmes and getting welfare spending further under control.

This manifesto seeks to build on those achievements and do more:

- It is a manifesto that will ensure we eliminate the deficit within five years and reduce public spending to 30 per cent of GDP, the lowest level since the 1930s.
- It is a manifesto that ensures that we increase selection within our education system.
- It is a manifesto that ensures we have a reformed healthcare system through the introduction of a new private health insurance system of the future as opposed to the outdated nationalised health service of the past.
- It is a manifesto that will increase home ownership by selling off all remaining social housing.
- It is a manifesto that further reduces unnecessary burdens on businesses by abolishing corporation tax, making Britain a tax haven for global big business whilst also radically cutting red tape.

This manifesto is the right plan of action – our plan to take our country forward. Above all, it is the most radical plan to change our country in a generation.

With no opposition, it is a plan we will deliver in full.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Theresa May".

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We have a plan for a very Tory Britain... and with no opposition, there's no one that can stop us.

A strong economy

In 2016, the current government inherited an economy with high debt and high public spending. The budget deficit was running at £75bnⁱ a year. I am proud that we have cut the deficit by a third as a proportion of GDP but we must do more. We will:

- Ensure that eliminating the deficit continues to be the main economic policy of the next Conservative Government.ⁱⁱ
- Eliminating the deficit within five years has been the priority of every Conservative Government since 2010, and it will be this Conservative Government's priority.ⁱⁱⁱ
- The Government will achieve this by cutting education, health and local government services and reducing public spending to 30 per cent of GDP: its lowest level since the 1930s.^{iv}

Cutting taxes and welfare

We have reformed inheritance tax and cut the burden of tax credits on the state but we must do more. We will:

- Reduce the top rate of tax from 45 per cent to 40 per cent benefiting all of those earning more than £150,000.^v
- Abolish inheritance tax altogether so that mansions and estates can be passed down through generations free of tax.^{vi}
- Reduce the benefit cap to £16,000 a year.^{vii}
- Move forward with the privatisation of Universal Credit so that we have an efficient and low cost private welfare insurance system by the end of the Parliament.^{viii}

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Jobs and business

We want a thriving economy in which businesses are free to grow and create jobs. We have successfully reduced corporation tax to 17 per cent, reduced burdens on business by repealing unnecessary EU laws as a result of Brexit and stopped burdensome regulations on business that allowed workers to get in the way of profit-making. We will extend the reach of the free market by:

- Encouraging free enterprise by removing all requirements on small businesses from paying the minimum wage, offering maternity leave, and flexible working.^{ix}
- Abolishing Corporation Tax by 2025.^x
- Reducing red tape on businesses including environmental protection legislation and workers' rights.^{xi}
- Making it easier to fire people, by reducing the consultation period on redundancy and abolishing the concept of unfair dismissal.^{xii}

Education

Our vision is of an education system that allows strong competition so that pupils and parents can choose freely between private providers, free schools or selective grammar schools, and which has a university system fully funded by students.

We were pleased to have achieved our ambition of delivering 500 free schools by the end of this parliament, begun construction on new selective grammar schools for the first time in two decades and increased tuition fees to £12,000 a year. We will build on our reforms by:

- Delivering even more free schools by allowing for-profit providers to set up new schools.^{xiii}
- Building or converting 500 schools into selective grammar schools.^{xiv}
- Giving all schools the freedom to employ unqualified teachers to reduce red tape.^{xv}
- Ensuring we have a properly funded university system by removing the cap on tuition fees.^{xvi}

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Health

We are committed to a private sector-led health system of the future, not a nationalised health system of the past. We will continue our reforms in the health service by:

- Extending the changes made in the junior doctor contract – such as extending the hours they are forced to work and reducing their pay – to all other NHS staff, starting with nurses.^{xvii}
- Doubling spending on private sector providers in the NHS by 2025, following the successful doubling of spending on the private sector since 2010.^{xviii}
- Encouraging the take-up of private healthcare by those who can afford it, including through the trialing of a voucher system, to relieve pressure on the NHS and slow the growth of waiting lists.^{xix}
- Introducing a modest £10 charge for GP appointments along with a maximum 5-minute appointment system, to ensure the sustainability of the GP model.^{xx}
- Using the ‘Brexit opportunity’ to develop a new trade deal with the US and Australia, that will open up the market in the NHS to new global investors.^{xxi}

Culture and the Media

We fully believe in a free media and the freedom of the press. We believe that freedom must extend to ownership too. In the 21st century, state involvement or ownership in our media – such as that in the BBC and Channel 4 – curtails freedom and is a barrier to private sector innovation.

We have made progress in this parliament by selling a minority of the government’s stake in Channel 4. We will deliver further reforms in the next parliament by:

- Selling off the remaining government stake in Channel 4 ensuring it is a fully private enterprise.^{xxii}
- Delivering a new deal for the BBC by moving to a subscription and advertising model.^{xxiii}
- Delivering efficiencies by abolishing the Department for Culture and Media and Sport and rolling its responsibilities into other government departments.^{xxiv}
- We want the funding of our museums to be put on a fully stable footing so we will scrap the government subsidy model and allow museums to charge users.^{xxv}

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Housing

We believe everyone should be able to secure the opportunity of owning their own home. Our government has done much to increase home ownership by boosting subsidies to big builders through Help to Buy and selling off tens of thousands of council homes to pay for the selling off thousands of social homes owned by housing associations.

The increase in the number of million pound homes, especially in London, is a vindication of our decision to go as slowly as possible on housebuilding. Soaring housing prices have benefited a great many homeowners. We want to extend the benefits of home ownership even further by:

- Giving away many council homes to tenants.^{xxvi}
- Privatising all housing association stock.^{xxvii}

Environment and energy

We are committed to protecting our environment and securing our energy interests. During the extended pause in the Hinkley Point programme, our government committed to a massive extension of fracking across the country to secure our energy future. In the next parliament we are committed to:

- Increasing tax breaks for fracking in order to extend its contribution to our energy mix.^{xxviii}
- Repealing the Climate Change Act which applies unnecessary restrictions and bureaucracy on our energy industry and businesses.^{xxix}
- Extending the successful ban on the construction of onshore wind farms until at least 2025.^{xxx}
- Supporting those who live in rural areas by reintroducing fox hunting and assessing the merit of the reintroduction of other beloved country sports.^{xxxi}

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Transport

A successful and vibrant free market transport system is essential to a free market economy. Our railway system has thrived since privatisation and the introduction of private investment into Network Rail over this parliament has been a huge success. The reform of the Highways Agency into an autonomous organisation has also been very positive. In addition, we continue to believe in the need for further airport capacity and we are committed to making a decision at some point on airport expansion, whether at Heathrow, Gatwick or another airport somewhere else. We will further improve our transport system by:

- Delivering greater private investment and competition in our railway system by privatising Network Rail.^{xxxii}
- Improving the transport network in London by privatising the tube.^{xxxiii}
- Privatising the now autonomous Highways Agency.^{xxxiv}
- Undertaking a much needed review into the need for greater airport capacity.^{xxxv}
- Scrapping all plans to deliver HS3.^{xxxvi}

Crime and Justice

The administration of justice can be made more efficient by ensuring that business plays its full part. We will continue our reforms by:

- Delivering on our review of the courts system by establishing a parallel private court system with a new fees system.^{xxxvii}
- Extending private involvement in our prisons service ensuring every prison is privately run by the end of the parliament.^{xxxviii}
- Scrapping the Human Rights Act.^{xxxix}
- Continuing our successful programme of police cuts.^{xl}

Immigration

We will continue to aim to get net migration down to the tens of thousands.

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Brexit, Foreign Policy and Aid

Following the referendum in 2016, we said that Brexit meant Brexit and that is what we have delivered. By leaving the European Union we have been able to severely reduce burdens on business by removing onerous requirements in relation to their employees, and eliminating unnecessary environmental regulations. We are keen to mend relations with our former EU partners in the future.

We will continue our reforms to ensure we are a free and independent trading nation by:

- Maximising trade by ensuring that ethical considerations do not get in the way of doing deals. We believe the best way of spreading our values is by spreading the reach of the free market economy.^{xli}
- Scrapping the illogical and unnecessary commitment to 0.7 per cent of GNI spending on international aid.^{xlii}
- Abolishing the Department for International Development and rolling its responsibilities into the Foreign Office, Department for International Trade and Ministry of Defence.^{xliii}
- We hope in time, following Brexit, to negotiate trade deals with a number of other countries, and we will continue the vital exploratory work needed to achieve this.^{xliv}

Trade Unions

In the last parliament we achieved a great deal through the passing of the Trade Union Act. Our successful reforms included ensuring industrial action only ever goes ahead when there has been a ballot turnout of at least 50% and ensuring that in important public services there is an additional threshold of 40% of support to take industrial action from all eligible members. We will extend these successful reforms to further curtail the power of trade unions by:

- Removing “check-off” and facility time entitlements.^{xlv}
- Increasing the threshold for strike action to be taken to require the support of at least 75 per cent of all those entitled.^{xlvi}

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Parliamentary reform

We believe in a strong and vibrant parliamentary democracy. Our successful reform of constituency boundaries means we have a much fairer and democratic system. However, over this parliament we have also seen the unelected chamber in the House of Lords defying the will of the elected chamber – this cannot be acceptable when there is a Conservative government. We will further strengthen our parliamentary democracy by:

- Radically increasing the number of Conservative Peers to ensure that if we are the democratically elected government we are able to fully deliver on this manifesto.^{xlvii}
- Increasing the number of Prime Minister's Questions session a week to three to maximise the scrutiny on the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition.

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- ⁱ Office for Budget Responsibility, Public Finances Databank, 27th July 2016, [link](#)
- ⁱⁱ Eliminating the deficit within a Parliament has been at the heart of successive Conservative Governments' economic policies e.g. George Osborne, Budget 2010, 22nd June 2010, [link](#) and the Conservative Manifesto 2015, [link](#)
- ⁱⁱⁱ *ibid*
- ^{iv} The Institute of Economic Affairs has called for public spending to be reduced to 30 per cent of GDP, [link](#) – this would be the lowest level since the 1930s according to [www.ukpublicspending.co.uk](#), [link](#).
- ^v Former Tory Chancellor Lord Lawson is one of many senior Tories who have called for the additional rate to be cut even further, 24 June 2015, [link](#)
- ^{vi} Former Tory Chancellor Lord Lawson has called for the abolition of Corporation Tax, 30th January 2016, [link](#); The Institute of Directors has urged the Government to scrap Inheritance Tax in its entirety, 02 October 2015, [link](#)
- ^{vii} The benefit cap was originally intended to match average earnings. However, the Tories have since disconnected it from earnings, instead setting it arbitrarily. The Government Impact Assessment on a lower benefit cap said: "A lower cap recognises that many hard working families earn less than median earnings – a lower cap provides a strong work incentive", [link](#)
- ^{viii} Iain Duncan Smith has hinted at welfare privatisation in the past, *Welfare Weekly*, 11th July 2015, [link](#). In addition, since its introduction, the Tories have sought to make cuts to Universal Credit at almost every spending round. Having made £6bn a year worth of cuts already, there's little left to cut.
- ^{ix} Andrea Leadsom, House of Commons, 2012, [link](#); Andrew Beecroft, *The Beecroft Report*, 24 October 2011, [link](#); Leading Conservative MPs voted against the introduction of the minimum wage, *Hansard*, 16 December 1997, Col.239, [link](#)
- ^x The Institute of Economic Affairs has called for the abolition of corporation tax, 31st March 2016, [link](#)
- ^{xi} Priti Patel, Speech to the IoD, 18 May 2016, [link](#); Boris Johnson, *Guardian*, 4 December 2012, [link](#); Dan Hannan, *TaxPayers Alliance*, 29 October 2009, [link](#)
- ^{xii} Andrew Beecroft, *The Beecroft Report*, 24 October 2011, [link](#)
- ^{xiii} A Policy Exchange report in 2010 proposed allowing profit-making organisations to set up schools, '*Blocking the Best Obstacles to new, independent state schools*', *The Daily Telegraph*, March 2010, [link](#)
- ^{xiv} '*100 Tory MPs back scrapping the ban on new grammar schools*', *The Daily Telegraph*, July 2016, [link](#)
- ^{xv} The Tory Government's Education White Paper said school leaders will be able to make their own decisions about who to employ and how much to pay them. '*Education Excellence Everywhere*', March 2016, [link](#)
- ^{xvi} The Tory Government's White Paper, '*Success as a knowledge economy*', said the Government would allow institutions to raise fees above the higher cap of £9,000, May 2016, [link](#)
- ^{xvii} In 2015 the Government asked the NHS Pay Review Body to make recommendations on contract reform for all Agenda for Change staff, to support the delivery of a seven-day NHS, [link](#)
- ^{xviii} Department for Health Accounts show that the spend on private-sector NHS providers more than doubled, from more than £4bn in 2009-10 to £8.7bn in 2015-16, *The Guardian*, 15th August 2016, [link](#)
- ^{xix} The Conservative Party Manifesto 2005 proposed that the Government would provide a contribution towards the cost of a private operation, for patients who wished to use non-NHS hospitals, [link](#)
- ^{xx} Reform has proposed the introduction of a £10 charge for GP appointments, [link](#)
- ^{xxi} *The Daily Telegraph* has reported that Liam Fox has begun preliminary talks with the USA and Australia about new trade arrangements, [link](#)
- ^{xxii} The Tory Government has previously considered privatising Channel 4, [link](#)
- ^{xxiii} The 'Freedom Foundation' has called for the BBC licence fee to be scrapped and replaced with a subscription model, [link](#)
- ^{xxiv} Tory MP Dominic Raab has called for DCMS to be axed, *The Telegraph*, 6th June 2013, [link](#)
- ^{xxv} The Institute for Economic Affairs has calling for the Government to scrap funding for National Museums, [link](#)
- ^{xxvi} It was widely reported that Iain Duncan Smith when SoS for DWP pushed for this policy: *The Times*, 12th Feb 2015, [link](#)
- ^{xxvii} The idea was mooted by Policy Exchange and reported in *Inside Housing*, 23 September 2015, [link](#)
- ^{xxviii} George Osborne unveiled tax breaks for fracking in the last Parliament, *The Guardian*, 19th July 2013, [link](#)
- ^{xxix} Owen Paterson, *The Telegraph*, 12th December 2015, [link](#); Leading Conservatives have even questioned whether Climate Change is even happening - *Owen Paterson*, 15 October 2014, [link](#); Nigel Lawson, *Telegraph*, 28 September 2013, [link](#);
- ^{xxx} It has been reported in the past that the Conservatives planned to ban the construction of new onshore windfarms, *The Guardian*, 4th April 2014, [link](#); The Conservatives committed to "halting the spread of onshore windfarms", *Conservative Manifesto 2015*, [link](#)
- ^{xxxi} The Conservatives committed in their 2015 manifesto to "support countryside pursuits" and to give a free vote on a Government Bill in Government time to repeal the Hunting Act, *Conservative manifesto 2015*, [link](#); Leading Conservatives support bringing back fox hunting including Andrea Leadsom, *The Independent*, 8th July 2016, [link](#)
- ^{xxxii} Tory MP John Redwood has called for the privatisation of Network Rail, 17th August 2012, [link](#); Dr Richard Wellings of the Institute of Economic Affairs has also called for Network Rail to be privatised, *The Telegraph*, 26th June 2015 [link](#); It was reported that the Government's Shaw review of Network Rail was originally looking into the privatisation of Network Rail, 20th September 2015, [link](#)
- ^{xxxiii} The Institute of Economic Affairs has called for the privatisation of the tube network, 24th January 2016, [link](#); successive Conservative Governments have a track record of privatisation, *The Independent*, 26th December 2015, [link](#)
- ^{xxxiv} *Daily Mail*, 30 July 2013, [link](#)
- ^{xxxv} The Conservative Government have long-delayed a decision on airport expansion, *The Telegraph*, 30th June 2016, [link](#)
- ^{xxxvi} Theresa May has been reported as being set to ditch the Northern Powerhouse, [link](#); Conservative MPs have a track record of opposing such infrastructure projects such as HS2, *BBC Online*, 30th April 2014, [link](#)
- ^{xxxvii} The Ministry of Justice has previously explored plans to ensure the Courts and Tribunal Services provide value for money, 28 May 2013, [link](#)
- ^{xxxviii} The think tank "Reform" has called on the Government to extend the privatisation of prisons, February 2013, [link](#)
- ^{xxxix} The Government is currently looking at ways it can scrap the Human Rights Act as in the previous Conservative manifesto, [link](#)
- ^{xl} *BBC Online*, [link](#)
- ^{xli} Trade Secretary Liam Fox has already taken unethical trade decisions, choosing to locate an international trade office in North Carolina, after the state passed anti-LGBT legislation, 27 July 2016, [link](#)
- ^{xlii} Cabinet Member David Davis has called for the commitment to spend 0.7% of GDP on international aid to be scrapped, [link](#)
- ^{xliii} Priti Patel, Secretary of State for International Development, has previously called for the department she's now responsible for to be scrapped, 16 June 2013, [link](#)
- ^{xliiv} Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson has said the Canadian trade deal with the EU is an example for the UK to follow. That trade deal took ten years to complete, [link](#)
- ^{xli v} The Tories sought to do this in the Trade Union Bill in this Parliament but were defeated in the Lords, [link](#)
- ^{xli vi} The Tories have already sought to introduce minimum turnout for strikes and will look to raise this threshold further if there's no serious Labour opposition to stop them, *Conservative Manifesto 2015*, [link](#)
- ^{xli vii} The Conservatives have a record of radically increasing the number of Tory Peers when in Government, [link](#).

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