What to do?

✔ Sign The People’s Charter. Website www.thepeoplescharter.org, or text CHARTER to 86006 (standard txt rate), or write to the Office address.

✔ Talk to family, friends and workmates about the Charter and get them involved.

✔ Get some copies of this leaflet to give to everyone you know.

✔ Write to your MP and local councillors supporting the Charter, ask their views, and tell them that you will use the Charter in deciding how to vote.

✔ Add comments supporting the Charter on-line to appropriate websites – particularly those of the news media

✔ Write to local and national newspapers, and take part in radio phone-ins promoting the Charter

✔ Contact your local People’s Charter or anti-cuts group and get involved in this fast growing movement.

✔ Take copies of this leaflet to your local community organisations and trade unions to win their support.

✔ Set up a Charter local group to keep your neighbours informed and get them involved.

Britain was on its knees after WW2 when the people built the NHS and turned the great industries back to peacetime work – despite a “deficit” much larger than that now. Debt was dealt with through much fairer taxes and the drive to full employment - building hospitals, schools and new homes... boosting the economy.

As the PCS – the civil servants’ union – points out, “From 1918 to 1961 the UK national debt was over 100% of GDP. During that period the government introduced the welfare state, the NHS, state pensions, comprehensive education, built millions of council houses, and nationalised a range of industries. The public sector grew and there was economic growth.”

Many politicians, media people and economic pundits say there is now no alternative to spending cuts and job losses, and we have to be scared of what the wealthy might do if we resist their “austerity measures”. It was not true at the end of WW2 and it is not true now. There is an alternative. Our economy could work for the people. We need the courage, determination and organisation to get the message out – and we need a real mass movement of people to do this. No-one will do this for us - the media are largely controlled by millionaires too. We need you, and people like you, to play your part.

The Charter shows the way. Please get involved.

Britain is still gripped by an economic and financial crisis. So is most of the world. Despite trillions of pounds being poured into the banks, the crisis continues. “The free market” results in recurring economic problems. When a crisis occurs, the government steps in to rescue banks and big business – saying we need them too much to let them fail. They nationalise the debt and keep the profits in private hands. That’s how their market works.

Ordinary people are supposed to bail out big business and the banks. Now the Conservative led coalition is using bankers’ debts and the failure of banks and business to pay their taxes to turn back all the gains that we have made over the last 60 years in public job security and the support to the most vulnerable. Some of our most vital services are to be turned over to big business as a way to make profit. People that can’t the same situation as Ireland. They make things worse.

There is an alternative, based on meeting the needs of the overwhelming majority of our population. This alternative is embodied in the 6 points of The People’s Charter.

The Peoples Charter was set up by trade union leaders, MPs and leading campaigners in 2008. It is supported by the Trades Union Congress, and many community organisations. Here we spell out the alternative economy that the Charter stands for.

As unemployment escalates, yet more workers are put on short time, and we all get a pay freeze - which inflation turns into years of pay cuts. But top company executives have had an average salary increase of 25% in the last two years, and these look set to continue. Meanwhile, the bankers’ bonuses and golden handshakes are back to the tune of £7 billion, while the rest of us face pension cuts, and increases in retirement age.

VAT increases force up prices hitting the poorest hardest, while the wealthiest 10% of the population owe £120 billion of unpaid, avoided and evaded tax. This unpaid tax is set to grow in the coming year by up to £70 billion. The wealth gap wideens, with the rich getting richer and the rest of us losing our savings and many losing our homes.

Cuts and growing unemployment will result in the same situation as Ireland. They make things worse.

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The People’s Charter - How it Can Work

There is no need for unemployment or cuts to public services, pay, pensions or benefits. There is an alternative, meeting the needs of millions, rather than feeding the greed of millionaires.
1. A fairer economy for a fairer Britain

- Target the £120 billion of unpaid, evaded and avoided tax of the super-rich.
- Close corporate tax loopholes and tax havens, saving up to a further £70 billion per year.
- Take the leading companies of the banking, insurance and mortgage industries – accounting for 20% of profits and bonuses, fully into democratic public ownership to be run for the benefit of all. The people had to save them. Let us now make sure they are run for the good of all, helping to build a responsible future.
- Regain control of the Bank of England and keep interest rates low.
- Tightly regulate the City markets to facilitate lending and to stop speculation and takeovers against the public interest.
- Ban hedge funds, raids on pension funds, and asset-stripping.
- Restructure the tax system so big business and the wealthy pay more and ordinary people pay less.
  - Levy a 2% wealth tax on the richest 10% of the population, raising £7 billion a year.
  - Introduce higher rates of income tax on earnings above £50,000, raising £1 billion a year.
  - Increase Corporation Tax on business profits – particularly those made from overseas operations, raising £10 billion.
  - Gather a 20% “windfall tax” on the year’s super-profits of banking, energy, retail, arms and drugs companies, raising £10 billion this year.
  - Impose a “Robin Hood” tax on financial transactions, raising £20 billion a year.
  - Reduce VAT to boost working people’s spending power and provide economic stimulus.

Such taxation and economic policy – together with a policy for industry and jobs – will more than provide the resources for the Charter policies.

Some say the rich would run away to other countries if such policies were implemented. But Ireland’s “Don’t tax the rich, don’t regulate the market” policy led the Irish economy to catastrophe. Britain is an advanced country with great income and asset wealth. It is the world’s second largest economy. The UK has a public sector wealth of £2.5 trillion, in property, assets, public debt and savings. This wealth has been badly misused.

2. More and better jobs

- Introduce legislation to prevent closures and mass redundancies in profitable industries.
- Legislate to compel the re-investment of a percentage of profits in British industry.
- Limit export of investment capital to stop asset stripping by transnational big business.
- Take back into public ownership essential industries – energy, water, telecommunications and post, rail and bus transport – to put them and their profits to work for the British people.
- Introduce Government support for other industries.
- Target public and private investment to create new jobs – in particular in manufacturing, construction and green technology.
- Greater investment in renewable energy sources, ecological development and the recycling industries for domestic and industrial waste would lead to a new million green jobs.
- End job insecurity through casualised work and short term contracts without agreed reasons.
- Reduce working hours – not pay - to create more jobs - and so more spending power – to stimulate the economy, increase tax revenue and reduce the number of people forced to live on benefit.
- Guarantee high quality vocational training for young people over 16. All young people should need, as part of a government led job creation scheme.
- Raise the minimum wage to two thirds national median earnings and end the lower rate for young workers, increasing spending power and stimulating the economy.
- Education
  - Repeal the private school laws.
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3. Decent homes for all.

- Offer “no interest” loans to those threatened by housing repossession, stopping the evictions.
- Control rents in the private sector.
- End the threat of closure, housing and the gentrification of city centres for the wealthy.
- New council housing and housing association homes should be brought back under the democratic control of Local Authorities – to meet the needs of people, not the property market.
- Introduce a comprehensive program to increase socially affordable housing, in recognition of the need for 3 million new homes – including: an end to council house sales, an end to housing stock transfers to private sector companies, renewed investment in council house building and repairs, councils to be given the right to purchase and refurbish big empty properties for social use, council tenants to be given assurance of housing security.

4. Protect and improve our public services – no cuts

- Bring energy, transport, water and telecommunications back into public ownership.
- End all fragmentation, competitive market models, PFI, privatisation and big business profiteering in public services.
- National Health Service
  - Repeal the privatised management of the NHS, under local democratic control.
  - Reinstate systematic, equitable distribution and use of health resources, rather than this being subject to the competition between local fund holders.
  - NHS to focus on direct employment of staff with proper pay and conditions – and rather than the employment of super exploited casual staff employed through profiteering agencies.
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5. Fairness and Justice.

- The wealth/poverty gap
  - Use progressive taxation and other measures to close the £1.5 trillion/year gap between the richest 10% of the population – currently owning 80% of the wealth – and the poorest 40% of the population – currently owning 2% of the wealth.
- Reduce child and family poverty by increasing child benefits, tax credits and free publicly financed and provided nurseries, creches and early years education.
- Pensions and pensions
  - End the 25 year longer periods of retirement as an aim and success of an advanced society, rather than a reduced life expectancy.
  - End the work “if you drop” increases in the age of retirement.
  - Increase social support for all in retirement – not just a cut in income and loss of state support.
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6. Build a secure and sustainable future for all

- Prioritise action against man made climate change, and in defence of the environment, with policies of large scale investment for a greener, safer world now – and a new generation of nuclear power stations.
- End the cost of war in lives, injury and billions of pounds. Bring our troops home. No more wars to fight the ‘war on terrorism’. Bring back Britain’s rightful wealth from the profits of multi-nationals.
- End the waste of billions of pounds on a new generation of nuclear weapons. Develop an alternative use of plant, earth, sea and air to give a new dimension of productivity and independence for all nations.

www.thepeoplescharter.org