

**Children in Scotland
Members Briefing**

Separate briefings for England, Wales and Northern Ireland are available to Children in Scotland members through the 4-nations child policy network. Contact scollier@childreninscotland.org.uk

Westminster, not Holyrood

This is a Westminster general election. MPs from across the UK (including Scottish MPs) will have the power to determine English (and to some extent Welsh) policies on education, health, the environment, transport and housing (to name but the key matters). The same MPs *will not* be able to legislate on these matters for Scotland. However, all the Scottish manifestos (to varying degrees) list what they would do on these devolved issues in Scotland.

A limited statistical analysis of all the manifestos for the three main UK-wide parties reveals the following: 22% of Labour pledges (as extracted by CIS/NCB) are on *devolved* issues upon which Westminster MPs cannot act, (37 of 165); the Conservative Party have 17% of their pledges on devolved issues (28 of 163) and the Liberal Democrats have 8% (10 of 131). The pledges in the Scottish National Party and the Green Party manifestos aren't countable in the same way, but they reflect the same problem of not focusing exclusively on what the Westminster parliament can accomplish.

Of course, what matters is not just these percentages but more important what these pledges will deliver and what they reveal about the thinking and direction of travel of each political party in relation to Scotland – and the lives and life chances of Scotland's children.

The 2011 Scottish elections are on the horizon and parties are understandably keen to test Scottish public opinion with their policies for Scotland. However, presenting these ideas now is confusing and misleading for the electorate. Electing a Scottish MP will not bring about change to Scottish health or education policy. A decision to vote for a particular party in Westminster based on pledges that refer to devolved issues is misinformed. This focus upon empty promises is also a missed opportunity. Scottish MPs, whichever party they represent, should be making clear their understanding of devolved government, how reserved issues impact and interact with the powers of the Scottish Parliament and why they are committed to their party's UK-wide agenda. Only then can voters make an informed choice of how a Scottish MP in Westminster can best represent them at a Scottish and at a UK parliamentary level.

While almost all the parties (excepting the Scottish National Party) fail to fully articulate this tension, the UK media has, so far, offered a similarly limited coverage of the choices facing the Scottish electorate, and has failed to take the parties to task on their mixing of devolved and reserved matters in manifesto promises.

There are reserved matters and grey areas that are particularly sensitive to the boundaries of devolved and UK-wide government and which have the potential for major impact in Scotland. Some key issues concerning children, their rights, their care, and support for their families – such as childcare and welfare – are framed by Westminster tax and employment and benefits legislation. This limits the extent to which a Scottish Government can determine the kind or level of services available. An outline of these key issues is offered below.

The pledges and positions outlined in this full briefing are wide-ranging, because just like adults, children's lives are affected by a wide-range of issues. This, then, is a document for browsing and dipping, so please make use of the thematic hyperlinks and bookmarks. However, this is also a document to hold onto, to ensure that promises are fulfilled. And when the 2011 Scottish, Holyrood electioneering begins, this checklist of policy intentions will provide a headstart for discussions between the electorate and the politicians.

Early years and families

Research at European level has consistently found that one indicator of high quality early years services is the way all aspects of these services – workforce, funding, access, inspection – are integrated in a holistic manner by government, instead of a patchwork quilt of provision with policies and services that each family must stitch together for itself. Integration means management by one government department without the divisions that currently exist between concepts of care (usually focused on under threes) and education (linking with government funding - three and over). (See Working for Inclusion research papers, www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi)

In Scotland, and across the UK, responsibility for the provision of early years services is spread among different departments. For example, the Westminster Department for Work and Pensions provides tax credits to help families in paid employment pay for childcare and determine parental leave, and the Westminster Department for Children and Families shapes the workforce and delivery of services in England. Meanwhile the Scottish Government's Directorate for Learning has this role north of the border. Thus responsibility for Scotland's early years services are not only split between departments, but are split between reserved and devolved issues.

What follows is a summary of what the different parties have to say on supporting children and families during children's early years.

Funding childcare

The Scottish conservatives emphasise their support for a "diverse range of providers" for childcare, and their wish for there to be flexibility over when free

childcare is taken. However, this is not something they – or indeed, any party – can achieve from Westminster.

In their UK manifesto they say they will “review the way the childcare industry is regulated and funded to ensure that no providers, including childminders, are put at a disadvantage”. Regulation of care is devolved so this would only apply to England. However, the manifesto makes no mention of childcare vouchers within its reference to funding. A review of funding would have to take into account childcare vouchers, which is a reserved matter. Changing or removing these will have an impact in Scotland, but this is not mentioned in their Scottish Manifesto.

The Labour Party states in its UK manifesto that: “childcare vouchers will be retained, with all families receiving income tax relief at the basic rate.” The Liberal Democrats make no direct promises in either manifesto but state they will: “protect existing childcare support arrangements”.

The SNP emphasises the need for independence: “and with independence we will be able to build on our efforts to support young families, with our ambition to match the universal childcare support available in similar nations elsewhere in Europe.”

Parental leave and employment

Another indicator of high quality support for families and young children, found in countries such as Denmark and Sweden, is well-paid parental leave of at least one year that can be shared between parents and is integrated with entitlement to childcare from age one.

The Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats all propose to increase flexibility in parental leave – which *is* a reserved matter – but to differing degrees. If SNP MPs are elected to Westminster they “will support moves to extend parental leave”.

The Labour Party will introduce more “flexibility to the nine months’ paid leave that mothers currently enjoy – allowing them to share this entitlement with fathers after a minimum of six months” and will introduce a new Fathers’ Month, four weeks of paid leave rather than the current two, which can be taken flexibly.

The Liberal Democrats plan to give fathers the right to time off for ante-natal appointments, and to allow parents to share the allocation of maternity and paternity leave between them in whatever way suits them best. They aim to extend the period of shared leave up to 18 months when resources and economic circumstances allow.

The least ambitious are the Conservatives who, nevertheless, will introduce a new system of flexible parental leave (no details about the number of months given) which lets parents share maternity leave between them, while ensuring that parents on leave can stay in touch with their employer.

In support of those looking after children, the Conservatives plan to “initially” extend the right to request **flexible working** to every parent with a child under the

age of 18 and extend the right to request flexible working to all those in the public sector. The Liberal Democrats would grant the right to request flexible working to all employees, which they point out would make it easier for grandparents, for example, to take a caring role. The Labour Party would ensure flexible working is extended to all older people (age not specified), recognising that many, "including grandparents and older workers want to vary their hours to the benefit of their families and to accommodate changing lifestyles".

Child poverty, benefits and tax

Countries that have high quality, equitable early years services also have low levels of child poverty and low inequality across society. Methods of addressing child poverty are split between Westminster and Holyrood. The Westminster Government determines tax credits that affect childcare and also determines benefits more widely as well as employment conditions, such as the minimum wage. So, for example, Westminster determines how housing benefit is paid (although the Calman Commission recommends this be changed – see below), while Scotland is in charge of housing policy. Westminster decides who is eligible for child tax credits, and how child benefit is set and paid.

The Scottish Government can only add to this mix, rather than reconfigure it. For example, local authorities in Scotland pay kinship carers (of officially looked-after children) an allowance for bringing these children up in their homes (on a par with foster carers). While a welcome first step, this addition also increases the complexity of benefit allowances balanced between Westminster and Scotland.

All the parties recognise the need for more work to be done on the issue of devolution, but they differ in their approach and their response to the recommendations of **The Calman Commission** (2009), which was tasked with reviewing the state of Scottish devolution and making recommendations for how the Scottish Parliament could serve the people of Scotland better. It made recommendations for Westminster that include increasing flexibility over income revenue for Scotland through taxation; a review of the Barnett Formula, which is used to calculate how public spending budgets are allocation across the four nations; and more flexibility on housing and council tax benefits. It did not make recommendations on childcare vouchers, child benefit or family tax credits.

The Labour Party, Conservative Party and the Liberal Democrats all state support of some kind for the Calman Commission's recommendations, but their enthusiasm varies. The UK Labour Manifesto pledges: "We will implement the recommendations of the Calman Commission." The UK Conservative Manifesto is more cautious, stating that: "We will take forward the proposals of the Calman Commission," and: "We will produce our own White Paper by May 2011 to set out how we will deal with the issues raised by Calman." The Liberal Democrats see this as more urgent: "We will at the earliest opportunity implement the recommendations of the Calman Commission" and "take up the Calman Commission's conclusion that the powers and responsibilities of the Parliament can be extended further still at a later stage." The Scottish Green Party stress the need for more devolved and local politics and support a referendum on independence or increased devolution.

The Scottish National Party says they are ready to implement the Commission's recommendations immediately, but say that: "with independence we will be able to deliver a more successful Scotland, with greater prosperity for the people of our nation" and stress in particular how this is the only way of matching "the universal childcare support available in similar nations elsewhere in Europe." On tax and benefits, the SNP want to push for the benefits system to more closely meet Scottish needs and circumstances and be easier to access, as well as for the UK government to investigate new approaches such as a maximum combined withdrawal rate for benefits, and reforming the Employment Support Allowance.

Conservative and Liberal Democrat proposals for tax and credit within the existing devolved arrangements focus on targeting support to those on low incomes, while the Labour party retains a slightly more universal approach.

Labour will introduce a Toddler Tax Credit of £4 a week from 2012 for families earning less than £50,000. They will retain the Child Trust Fund, and contribute an additional £100 a year to the Child Trust Funds of all disabled children.

The Liberal Democrats say they will target tax credits to "those who need them the most", and will end government payments into Child Trust Funds.

The Conservatives will "cut government contributions to Child Trust Funds for all but the poorest third of families and families with disabled children"; they will no longer pay tax credits to households earning more than £50,000 and will recognise marriage and civil partnership in the tax system.

Although tax and benefits clearly linked to children and families are important, it is equally important to balance these statements alongside other efforts to increase income in families, and increase employment rates. The impact, for example, of moving out of unemployment would be far greater for many families than gaining £4 a week for a toddler.

Children's rights and immigration

Children's rights are human rights, which is why the Conservative Party's plans to replace Human Rights Act with an unspecified "UK Bill of Rights" are concerning to all those with a commitment to the current rights of children and of adult human rights. Both the Labour Party and Liberal Democrats commit to retaining the Human Rights Act, but the Liberal Democrats go further, planning to incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into UK law. Article 22 of The UN convention requires asylum-seeking children to "be accorded the same protection as any other child", but this commitment has been resisted so far by a UK government. By signing up to the convention in full, the Liberal Democrats pledge to end the detention of children in immigration detention centres. The SNP also advocate ending the detention of asylum-seeking children, while the Conservative and Labour parties do not mention it.

Finally Labour proposes a free vote on reducing the voting age to 16, while the Liberal Democrats simply state they will give the right to vote from 16. Neither the Conservatives nor the SNP mention this in their manifesto, although the SNP have expressed strong support for this issue. Should this reserved policy be acted on swiftly, then politicians in Scotland will be the first to have to direct their campaign to young people, with the Scottish Parliament elections in 2011.

About this briefing

This 2010 Westminster election briefing is the combined efforts of Children in Scotland and National Children's Bureau (NCB). Party pledges were summarised from the UK manifestos by NCB. Children in Scotland analysed these to determine which matters were reserved and devolved, and then added and analysed the pledges from the Scottish Manifestos of each party. Some of the pledges are repeated within the themed sections below in order to best illustrate a policy approach. We took the decision to retain information relevant only to England because, given the way devolved and reserved policies interact we feel it is helpful to have each party's bigger picture available.

Finally, this is a big document, put together quickly, and despite our best efforts, we know that there may be errors. We apologise unreservedly for these and welcome any corrections or clarifications.

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SOURCES

MAINLY RESERVED

Child poverty, welfare reform and employment

Conservative Party

Reserved

- Getting people back into work is an essential part of realising the goal of **eliminating child poverty by 2020**
- **Recognise marriage and civil partnerships in the tax system** in the next Parliament
- No longer pay **tax credits to households earning more than £50,000**
- **Reform the administration of tax credits** to reduce fraud and overpayments
- **Cut** government contributions to **Child Trust Funds** for all but the poorest third of families and families with disabled children
- Help households manage their debts, in part by launch Britain's first free **national financial advice service**, funded in full through a new social responsibility levy on the financial services sector
- **Reduce youth unemployment and reduce the number of children in workless households** as part of our strategy for tackling poverty and inequality
- Create a **single Work Programme** for everyone who is unemployed, and offer personalized support to young people under 25 who have been out of work for six months
- Initially **extend the right to request flexible working** to every parent with a child under the age of eighteen, and extend the right to request flexible working to all those in the public sector
- 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

Partially devolved

- Use money from current employment and training schemes (**UK or England/Wales?**) to:
 - Create 400,000 **work pairing, apprenticeship, college and training places** over two years – (**education and training is devolved**)
 - Create a new **all-age careers service**

Labour Party

Reserved

- Protect the **Child Trust Fund**, and contribute an additional £100 a year to the Child Trust Funds of all disabled children
- Introduce a **Toddler Tax Credit** – the child element of the Child Tax Credit will be increased by £4 a week for families with children aged one and two from 2012

- Introduce more **flexibility to the nine months' paid leave that mothers currently enjoy** – allowing them to share this entitlement with fathers after a minimum of six months
- Introduce a new **Fathers' Month**, four weeks of paid leave rather than the current two, which can be taken flexibly
- Ensure the right to **flexible working is extended to all older people**, recognising that many, including grandparents and older workers want to vary their hours to the benefit of their families and to accommodate changing lifestyles
- 200,000 jobs through the **Future Jobs Fund**, with a job or training place for young people who are out of work for six months, but benefits cut at ten months if they refuse to take part; and anyone unemployed for more than two years guaranteed work, but no option of life on benefits
- Goal of the **National Minimum Wage** rising at least in line with average earnings over the period to 2015
- **Better Off in Work guarantee** that, when someone who has found it difficult to get into work comes off benefits, their family will be at least £40 a week better off

Liberal Democrats

Reserved

- Restrict **Tax Credits**, and address overpayments by fixing payments for six months at a time, and targeting payments towards those who need them most
- **End** government payments into **Child Trust Funds**
- Maintain the **commitment to end child poverty** in the UK by 2020
- **Extend the right to request flexible** working to all employees, making it easier for grandparents, for example, to take a caring role
- Introduce a **work placement scheme** for young people with up to 800,000 places allowing them to gain skills, qualifications and work experience, even if they can't find a job. Young people on the scheme would be paid £55 a week for up to three months
- Fair treatment at work for everyone:
- **Extending the right to request flexible working** to all employees
- **Giving disabled job seekers better practical help** to get to work, using voluntary and private sector providers, as well as JobCentre Plus services
- Set the **minimum wage** at the same level for all workers over 16 (except for those on apprenticeships)

Scottish National Party

Reserved

- Push for the **benefits system to more closely meet Scottish needs** and circumstances and be easier to access.
- Press the UK government to investigate new approaches such as a **maximum combined withdrawal rate for benefits**, and reform Employment Support Allowance

Scottish Green Party

Reserved

- Defend the universal approach to benefits, introduce a **citizen's income to replace means-tested benefits** such as Job Seeker's Allowance

Early years

Conservative Party

Partially devolved

- **Review the way the childcare industry is regulated (*devolved*) and funded (*partially devolved*)** to ensure that no providers, including childminders, are put at a disadvantage

Devolved

In England/Wales

- Take **Sure Start** back to its original purpose of early intervention, increase its focus on the neediest families, and better involve organisations with a track record in supporting families
- **Provide 4,200 more Sure Start health visitors** – giving all parents a guaranteed level of support before and after birth until their child starts school (paid for out of the Department of Health budget and by refocusing Sure Start's peripatetic outreach services)
- To improve the early interventions we make to help families:
 - Ensure that new **Sure Start providers are paid in part by the results** they achieve
 - Bring all **funding for early intervention and parenting support** into one budget, to be overseen by a single, newly created Early Years Support Team
 - Set out a **new approach to help families with multiple problems**
- Support the **provision of free nursery care** for pre-school children, to be **provided by a diverse range of providers**

Labour Party

Reserved

- **Childcare vouchers** will be retained, with all families receiving income tax relief at the basic rate.

Devolved

In Scotland

- **Expand the number of free early learning places for disadvantaged two-year-olds** as a first step to the long-term goal of universal free childcare for this age group.

In England/Wales

- **Increase spending** on frontline Sure Start and free childcare
- **Expand the number of free early learning places** for disadvantaged two-year-olds, towards a long-term goal of universal free childcare for this age group
- Provide 15 hours a week of flexible, **free nursery education for three and four year olds**
- Provide more **flexibility over the hours children have access to nursery education**, such as taking them over two full working days, and explore allowing parents to carry over their free hours of nursery education from year to year
- Provide greater choice over when **children start school**
- Encourage **mutual federations** to run of local **Children's Centres** in the community interest

Liberal Democrats

Devolved

In England/Wales

- **Protect existing childcare support arrangements** until the nation's finances can support a longer term solution: a move to 20 hours free childcare for every child, from the age of 18 months
- Support efforts by childcare providers to **encourage more men to work in the sector**
- Replace the **Early Years Foundation Stage** with a slimmed-down framework which includes a range of educational approaches and enough flexibility for every young child

Scottish National Party

Devolved

- With Scottish independence, **work towards matching the universal childcare support available in similar nations** elsewhere in Europe
- **Increase the number of free hours of nursery education**

Family and parenting

Conservative Party

Reserved

- **Recognise marriage and civil partnerships in the tax system** in the next Parliament
- No longer pay **tax credits to households earning more than £50,000**
- **Reform the administration of tax credits** to reduce fraud and overpayments

- Initially **extend the right to request flexible working** to every parent with a child under the age of eighteen, and extend the right to request flexible working to all those in the public sector
- 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

Devolved

In Scotland

- Support the **provision of free nursery care** for pre-school children, to be **provided by a diverse range of providers**
- **Review the way the childcare industry is regulated and funded** to ensure that no providers, including childminders, are put at a disadvantage

In England/Wales

- **Freeze council tax for two years**, in partnership with local councils
- Put **funding for relationship support** on a stable, long-term footing and make sure couples are given greater encouragement to use existing relationship support
- **Review family law** in order to **increase the use of mediation** when couples do break up, and look at how best to **provide greater access rights to non-resident parents and grandparents**

Labour Party

Reserved

- Introduce a **Toddler Tax Credit** of £4 a week from 2012 to give more support to all parents of young children – whether they want to stay at home or work
- Introduce more **flexibility to the nine months’ paid leave that mothers currently enjoy** – allowing them to share this entitlement with fathers after a minimum of six months
- Introduce a new **Fathers’ Month**, four weeks of paid leave rather than the current two, which can be taken flexibly
- Ensure the right to **flexible working is extended to all older people**, recognising that many, including grandparents and older workers want to vary their hours to the benefit of their families and to accommodate changing lifestyles

Devolved

In England/Wales

- Establish a new **National Care Service**, not just for older people, but all adults with an eligible care need
- Continue to expand the use of **individual budgets**

Liberal Democrats

Reserved

- Give **fathers the right to time off** for ante-natal appointments.
- Allow parents to share the allocation of **maternity and paternity leave** between them in whatever way suits them best, and seek to extend the period of shared leave up to 18 months when resources and economic circumstances allow
- Introduce a **Default Contact Arrangement** which would divide the child's time between their two parents in the event of family breakdown, if there is no threat to the safety of the child

Scottish National Party

- The SNP will support moves to **extend paternity leave**

Democratic reform, human rights and third sector issues

Conservative Party

Reserved

- **Scrap ID cards**, the national identity register and the **Contactpoint** database
- Replace the **Human Rights Act** with a UK Bill of Rights
- Require **Privacy impact assessments** of any proposal that involves data collection or sharing
- Take forward the proposals of the **Calman Commission**
- New rules to ensure **legislation affecting England or England and Wales requires the consent of MPs from those countries**
- **Improve relations between Holyrood and Westminster** with more face to face meetings and taking questions from MSPs

Devolved

In Scotland

- Encourage the Scottish Government to take the same approach with the public bodies for which it is responsible [see below "Abolish any quangos"]
- Where there is evidence of demand in Scotland, give local people the chance to have a **directly elected mayor or provost**

In England/Wales

- **Abolish any quangos** that do not perform a technical function or a function that requires political impartiality, or act independently to establish facts
- **Raise public sector productivity** by increasing diversity of provision, extending payment by results and giving more power to consumers
- **Support co-operatives and mutualisation** as a way of transferring public assets and revenue streams to public sector workers encourage them to come together to form employee-led co-operatives and bid to take over the services they run

- Enable parents to start new schools, **empower communities to take over local amenities** such as parks and libraries that are under threat, give neighbourhoods greater control of the planning system, and enable residents to hold the police to account in neighbourhood beat meetings
- **Create a Big Society Bank**, funded from unclaimed bank assets, to provide new finance for neighbourhood groups, charities, social enterprises and other nongovernmental bodies
- Use Cabinet Office budgets to fund the **training of independent community organisers** to help people establish and run neighbourhood groups, and provide neighbourhood grants to the UK's poorest areas to ensure they play a leading role in the rebuilding of civic society
- Launch an **annual Big Society Day** to celebrate the work of neighbourhood groups and encourage more people to take part in social action
- Develop a measure of well-being that encapsulates the social value of state action
- Give people a **'right to bid' to run any community service** instead of the state
- **End ring-fencing** so that funding can be spent on local priorities
- **Scrap council targets**
- **End the bureaucratic inspection regime** that stops councils focusing on residents' main concerns

Third sector:

Devolved

In England/Wales

- **Big Lottery Fund** to focus purely on supporting social action through the voluntary and community sector
- Introduce a **fair deal on grants to give voluntary sector organisations** more stability and allow them to earn a competitive return for providing public services
- Work with local authorities to promote the **delivery of public services** by social enterprises, charities and the voluntary sector

Labour Party

Reserved

- Keep the **Human Rights Act** in place
- Have a free vote in Parliament on **reducing the voting age to 16**
- **New powers on capital borrowing for Scotland**
- Greater freedom to the **Scottish Parliament to set the level of income tax in Scotland**
- Increased devolution of air weapon regulation, drink-drive limits, national speed limits as set out in the **Calman Commission**

Devolved

In England/Wales

- Further improve **citizenship education in schools** so that young people are better prepared for their democratic responsibilities

- Use Total Place to give local areas additional freedom to achieve better services and more savings, cutting bureaucracy and management costs, while placing a greater on early intervention

Third sector:

Devolved

In England/Wales

- There will be greater support for third-sector organisations in competing for public-sector contracts

Liberal Democrats

Reserved

- **Implement recommendations of Calman Commission** and pursue extension of devolution as set out in Commission report
- Introduce **a federal system of shared governance** to ensure constructive partnership working
- **Replace Barnett formula** for allocating funds to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland with new needs-based formula, to be agreed by a Finance Commission on the Nations
- Constitutional Convention to **draft a written constitution for the UK**
- **Scrap the Government Offices for the Regions** and regional ministers.
- **Protect the Human Rights Act**
- **Incorporate the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into UK law**, ending the detention of children for immigration purposes
- Give the **right to vote from age 16**
- **Scrap Identity Cards** and plans for new passports with additional biometric data
- **End plans to store individuals' email and internet records** without good cause

Devolved

In England/Wales

- **Review local government finance** completely as part of the tax changes, including reviewing the mainstreaming of central grants
- **Give people a say in policing and the NHS** with elected police authorities and health boards
- **Scrap** nearly £1 billion of **central government inspection regimes** on local councils
- Introduce a **Freedom Bill**, regulating CCTV, defending trial by jury, and stopping children being fingerprinted at school without their parents' permission
- **Scrap the ContactPoint database**

Third sector:

Reserved

- Reform the **National Lottery**, changing the way it is taxed from a ticket tax to a gross profits tax

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Devolved

In England/Wales

- Reform the process of **criminal record checking so that volunteers** need only one record that is portable, rather than multiple checks for each activity
- Consult on putting the **Compact Commission** – which sets guidelines for effective partnership working between government and the third sector in Britain – on a statutory footing, and ensure greater support for the Compact at local level

Scottish National Party

Reserved

- Campaign for **Scottish Independence**, campaign for the abolition of the Act of Settlement
- Campaign for the **removal of the House of Lords and the Scottish Office**
- **Oppose plans to repeal the Human Rights Act**

Scottish Green Party

Reserved

- Extend **voting rights to 16 and 17-year-olds**
- Hold a **referendum on the future of Scottish devolution**, including independence as an option
- Ensure any **Bill of Rights must enshrine equality and human rights**

International development

Conservative Party

Partially devolved. Scotland has a development budget

- Commit to achieving, by 2013, the UN target of **spending 0.7% of national income as aid**
- 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
- 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

Labour Party

Partially devolved. Scotland has a development budget

- Lead an international campaign to get the **Millennium Development Goals** back on track
- Remain committed to **spending 0.7% of national income on aid** from 2013 – and enshrine this, and we will enshrine this commitment in law early in the next Parliament
- **Spend £8.5 billion over eight years to help more children go to school**; maintain our pledge to spend £6 billion on health between 2008 and 2015 and £1 billion through the Global Fund to support the fight against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria; fight for universal access to prevention, treatment and care for HIV/AIDS by 2010; and deliver at least 30 million additional anti-malarial bednets over the next three years
- Provide £1 billion for water and sanitation by 2013, and over £1 billion on food security and agriculture
- Push for the establishment of a **Global Council on Child Hunger**
- Double core funding to the new **UN Women’s agency**
- Work closely with NGOs and developing countries to eliminate user fees and **promote healthcare and education free at the point of access**
- Encourage other countries to **ratify the ILO conventions on labour standards**

Liberal Democrats

Partially devolved. Scotland has a development budget

- **Increase the UK’s aid budget to reach the UN target of 0.7% of GNI by 2013** and enshrine that target in law, and hold the G8 to its Gleneagles pledges on aid, including on the 0.7% target
- Push for a **renewed international effort on debt** and support 100% cancellation of the unpayable debts of the world’s poorest countries
- **Prioritise health and education programmes** which aim to promote gender equality, reduce maternal and infant mortality, and restrict the spread of major diseases like HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria
- Focus effort on **supplying basic needs like clean water**
- Support a **global fund for social protection** to help developing countries build viable welfare systems

Scottish National Party

Partially devolved. Scotland has a development budget

- Propose creating a **Scottish Centre for Reconciliation and Conflict Resolution**

Immigration

Conservative Party

Reserved

- Take **net migration** back to the levels of the 1990s by limiting number admitted to the UK only to those who will bring the most value to the British economy
- **Promote integration** into British society, including through an English language test for anyone coming to Britain to marry

Labour Party

Reserved

- Control immigration through our Australian-style **points-based system**, ensuring that as growth returns we see rising levels of employment and wages, not rising immigration, and requiring newcomers to earn citizenship and the entitlements it brings
- **Access to benefits and social housing [housing is devolved]** will increasingly be reserved for British citizens and permanent residents

Liberal Democrats

Reserved

- Prioritise deportation efforts on criminals, people-traffickers and other high-priority cases, and **let law-abiding families earn citizenship**
- Allow people who have been in Britain without the correct papers for ten years, but speak English, have a clean record and want to live here long-term, to earn their citizenship
- **Take responsibility for asylum away from the Home Office** and give it to an independent agency
- **Allow asylum seekers to work**
- **End the detention of children in immigration detention centres** – alternative systems such as electronic tagging, reporting requirements and residence restrictions can be used for adults in families considered high flight risks

Scottish National Party

Reserved

- Push for the Home Office to **end the practice of holding the children of asylum seekers in detention centres**
- **Scotland to take responsibility for immigration** with an “earned citizenship” system similar to Canada and Australia

Scottish Green Party

Reserved

- Urgently **end the imprisonment of children in the asylum system**

MAINLY DEVOLVED

Children's services and safeguarding

Conservative Party

Reserved

- Take a series of measures to help **reverse the commercialisation of childhood**, preferably through voluntary consent to these actions, although prepared to introduce legislation if necessary
- 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
- Establish a **new online system that gives parents greater powers to take action** against irresponsible commercial activities targeted at children

Devolved

In England/Wales

- **Review the criminal records and 'vetting and barring' regime** and scale it back
- Empower head teachers and governors to **ban advertising and vending machines in schools**

Labour Party

Reserved

- Continue to **promote internet safety for children**, building on the recommendations of Dr Tanya Byron's review
- Support parents who **challenge aggressive or sexualised commercial marketing**, and ask Consumer Focus to develop a website for parents to register their concerns about sexualised products aimed at their children

Devolved

In Scotland

- Establish a **national inquiry into child protection services** across Scotland
- Legislate to require the **sharing of information between agencies for child protection purposes**

In England/Wales

- Continue to **invest in short breaks for disabled children**
- Establish a **National College of Social Work**
- Expand specialised foster care for the most vulnerable children and the **Care2Work** programme for all care leavers

- Continue to **reduce teenage pregnancy rates**, with compulsory, high quality Sex and Relationships Education
- **Publish detailed Serious Case Review summaries** that explain the facts, but keep full reports out of the public domain in order to protect children's identities

Liberal Democrats

Reserved

- Help protect children and young people from developing negative body images by **regulating airbrushing in adverts**
- **Tackle online bullying** by backing quick-report buttons on social networking sites, enabling offensive postings to be speedily removed

Devolved

In Scotland

- Do not support children being fingerprinted at school without parents permission

In England/Wales

- Enhance child protection by enforcing the publication of an anonymised version of **Serious Case Reviews** to ensure that lessons are learned
- Support the **objective of at least a 70% reduction in child maltreatment by 2030**, promoted by the WAVE trust

Community activities and volunteering

Conservative Party

Devolved

In England

- Introduce a **National Citizen Service** – 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 (and **seek Scottish partners for this initiative**)

Labour Party

Devolved

In Scotland

- **Free access to council swimming pools**
- Every child will have lifetime library membership from birth.
- Reintroduce **Project Scotland**

In England/Wales

- To give every child the opportunity to do at least **five hours' sport per week** to be provided through extended schools, community sports clubs and 3,000 new Olympic-inspired sports clubs
- Invest in a new **national network of school sports coaches** to increase the quality and quantity of coaching in some of the most deprived areas
- Continue investing in **free swimming for children and the over-60s**
- Every child and young person should be entitled to **five hours of art, music and culture per week**
- Every child will have lifetime library membership from birth.
- Investing £235 million to create new or refurbished **play spaces and adventure playgrounds**
- **Community Land Trusts** enable local people to purchase and run local amenities and assets in their area such as youth facilities, parks and open spaces
- Taking forward plans for a **National Youth Community Service**, with the goal that all young people contribute at least 50 hours to their communities by the age of 19

Liberal Democrats

Devolved

In England/Wales

- Maintain **free entry to national museums and galleries** and open up the Government Art Collection for greater public use
- Remove the requirement for schools and hospitals to apply for a **licence to put on live music**
- Use cash in dormant betting accounts to set up a **capital fund for improving local sports facilities** and supporting sports clubs
- Close loopholes that allow **playing fields** to be sold or built upon without going through the normal planning procedures
- Make the **Youth Service a statutory service**, and encouraging local authorities to provide youth services in partnership with young people and the voluntary sector

Environment and sustainability

Conservative Party

Partially devolved

- **Create green individual Savings accounts (devolved – England)**
- **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. And ensure that 10% of the staff directly employed by 'Green Deal' providers are apprentices (**devolved – England**)

- Ensure 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 (**reserved - trade**)
- **Improve the energy efficiency of everyday appliances** by drawing on the experience of the 'top runner' scheme from Japan (**reserved - trade**)

Devolved

In Scotland

- Work with the Scottish Government to ensure Green Deal programme **complements existing schemes**
- Encourage the Scottish Government to consent to **new nuclear power stations**

In England/Wales

- **Promote local food networks** so that homes and businesses can obtain supplies of locally produced food
- **Encourage councils to pay people to recycle**
- **Protect poorer households from excessive rises in water bills**

Labour Party

Reserved

- Achieve around **40 % low-carbon electricity by 2020** and **create** 400,000 new green jobs by 2015, **with 40,000 jobs in Scotland**

Devolved

In Scotland

- Aim for **50% electricity to come from renewables, nuclear and clean fossil fuels by 2020**
- Devolve **power to local government to develop local energy systems** and support community organisations and social enterprises to provide energy services
- Expand the range of **allotments** available
- **Move towards a 'zero waste' Britain**, banning recyclable and biodegradable materials from landfill
- Introduce a new **Warm Home Standard for social housing** and regulate landlords so that privately rented accommodation is properly insulated
- Work with community organisations to make it easier to find and use sites for **'grow your own' (food) schemes**
- Continue to encourage and support imaginative solutions in **rural communities** to the provision of locally owned services

In England/Wales

- **Move towards a 'zero waste' Britain**, banning recyclable and biodegradable materials from landfill
- Require that **energy companies provide subsidies for insulation** to make sure that all household lofts and cavity walls are insulated, where practical, by 2015

- Ensure that **every home has a smart meter by 2020** to help control energy use and enable cheaper tariffs
- We will enable seven million homes to have a fuller 'eco-upgrade'.
- Legislate to **introduce 'Pay As You Save' financing schemes** under which home energy improvements can be paid for from the savings they generate on energy bills
- Introduce a new **Warm Home Standard for social housing** and regulate landlords so that privately rented accommodation is properly insulated
- Work with community organisations to make it easier to find and use sites for **'grow your own' (food) schemes**
- Continue to encourage and support imaginative solutions in **rural communities** to the provision of locally owned services

Liberal Democrats

Devolved

In Scotland

- Set aside **extra money for schools** who want to **improve the energy efficiency of their buildings** - pay back loan through energy savings

In England/Wales

- **Target to have a zero-carbon Britain by 2050**, and to **reduce carbon emissions by over 40 % by 2020**
- Reduce pressure on NHS budgets by **cutting air pollution** (cancelling plans for airport expansion and tighter regulation on vehicle pollution)
- Their first term in office would include a **one-year job creation and green economic stimulus package**, with £3.1 billion of public spending to create 100,000 jobs
- Implement a ten-year programme of **home insulation**, offering a home energy improvement package of up to £10,000 per home, paid for by the savings from lower energy bills, and make sure every new home is fully energy-efficient by improving building regulations
- Provide extra money for **schools to improve energy efficiency**
- Work with other countries to develop an **international labelling system for the environmental impact of products**, helping consumers choose those with the least impact on resource use and pollution
- Double the rate of **modernisation of armed forces' family homes**

Scottish Green Party

Reserved

- Support the growth of **renewable energy and oppose new nuclear power stations**
- **Extend feed-in tariff to cover micro-generation renewables**

Devolved – UK-wide approach

- Begin a **national energy efficiency and energy demand programme**
- **Add micro-renewables to public buildings**

- Provide **incentives for district heating**
- Introduce **tight restrictions on incineration**

Transport (mainly local)

Conservative Party

Devolved

In England/Wales

- Support **sustainable travel initiatives** that work best for local communities by:
- Giving the **concerns of cyclists** much greater priority
- Encouraging **partnerships between bus operators and local authorities**
- Helping people **cut down on work-related travel**

Liberal Democrats

Devolved

In England/Wales

- **Give councils greater powers to regulate bus services** according to community needs so that local people get a real say over routes and fares
- Include **the promotion of safer cycling and pedestrian routes** in all local transport plans
- Set up a **UK Infrastructure Bank to invest in public transport** like high speed rail
- Bring in **stop-on-request for night buses** – you should be able to ask the driver to let you off between stops, so you're as close to home as possible [listed as a crime prevention measure]

Labour Party

Devolved

In Scotland

- Where local bus services are not serving communities well, seek to **re-regulate to improve services**

Scottish Green Party

Reserved

- **Renationalise the railway network**

Devolved – UK-wide approach

- Make **streets more friendly for people** to walk and cycle
- **Decrease demand for transport** through stronger local economies and home working

Criminal justice

Conservative Party

Devolved

In Scotland

- Change the law so that anyone caught **carrying a knife** can expect a **prison sentence of two years** at a minimum.
- Coordinated action plan between Westminster and Holyrood - **raise taxes on those drinks** linked to anti-social drinking, ban off-licences and supermarkets from selling alcohol below cost price

In England/Wales

- Allow councils and the police to shut down permanently any shop or bar found persistently **selling alcohol to children**
- Double the **maximum fine for under-age alcohol sales** to £20,000
- **Raise taxes on those drinks** linked to anti-social drinking, ban off-licences and supermarkets from selling alcohol below cost price
- Introduce a series of early intervention measures, including **grounding orders**, to allow the police to use instant sanctions to deal with anti-social behaviour without criminalising young people
- Make it clear that anyone convicted of a **knife crime** can expect to face a prison sentence
- Introduce **mobile knife scanners** on streets and public transport, and extend the length of custodial sentences that can be awarded in a Magistrates' Court from six to twelve months
- Ensure that **victims and their families** are better informed about the progress of criminal proceedings and release of offenders
- Carry out a **fundamental review of legal aid** and examine ways of bringing in alternative sources of funding
- To help stop sexual violence before it occurs, ensure that the **school curriculum includes teaching young people about sexual consent**
- Reduce the burden of **stop and search** procedures
- **Police:** make them accountable to a directly-elected individual who will set policing priorities for local communities and set the budget, while the police retain their operational independence; and oblige them to publish detailed local crime data statistics every month
- Redevelop the **prison estate and increase capacity** as necessary
- Introduce a system where the courts can specify **minimum and maximum sentences for certain offenders** – these prisoners will only be able to leave jail after their minimum sentence is served by having earned their release
- Ensure that, when offenders leave prison, they will be **trained and rehabilitated by private and voluntary sector providers**, under supervision, with providers eligible for payment by results
- Apply the **payment by results reforms to the youth justice system**

- Engage with **specialist organisations to provide education, mentoring and drug rehabilitation programmes** to help young offenders go straight
- Pilot a scheme to create **Prison and Rehabilitation Trusts** so that just one organisation is responsible for helping to stop a criminal re-offending
- Legislate to make sure that the **DNA database** is used primarily to store information about those who are guilty of committing crimes – i.e., the DNA of all existing prisoners, those under state supervision who have been convicted of an offence, and anyone convicted of a serious recordable offence

Labour Party

Devolved

In Scotland

- Work with **health visitors** to develop approaches that will **reduce future crime and behavioural problems** reaching all vulnerable first time mothers
- Provide **Family Intervention Projects (FIPs)** for the most dysfunctional families
- Expand joint working between police and the probation service to **supervise prolific young offenders after they get out of prison** and use of mentors including vetted ex-prisoners to meet offenders 'at the gate'
- Toughen law on **knife crime with mandatory minimum custodial sentences**. Carry a knife, go to jail
- Right for licensing forums to **petition local authorities to end 24-hour licensing** where problems arise
- **Revive the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders** and expand them so that community organisations can apply to the police or local authority for one
- Ensure that the most serious offenders are added to the **DNA database** and retain for six years the DNA profiles of those arrested but not convicted
- **Retain six-month prison sentences** and implement legislation to end automatic early release
- **Support the establishment of a Victims Commissioner**

In England/Wales

- Expand **Family Nurse Partnerships** to all vulnerable young mothers (proposed as a crime prevention measure)
- Provide **Family Intervention Projects (FIPs)** for the 50,000 most dysfunctional families who cause misery to their neighbours
- Expand US-style **street teams** which use youth pastors and vetted ex-offenders to reach out to disaffected young people
- Implement **Youth Conditional Cautions** which focus on rehabilitation and reparation, and introduce a preventative element for all **Anti-Social Behaviour Orders for under 16s**
- Double the availability of **organised youth activities on Friday and Saturday nights**

- Expand joint working between police and the probation service to **supervise prolific young offenders after they get out of prison** and use of mentors including vetted ex-prisoners to meet offenders 'at the gate'
- Bring in a **Restorative Justice Act**
- Switch investment towards those programmes that are shown to sustain **drug-free lives**
- **Alcohol treatment places** will be trebled to cover all persistent criminals where alcohol is identified as a cause of their crimes.
- Commit to zero tolerance of **violence against women**, by continuing to drive up prosecution rates, tackle causes, and raise awareness – as well as maintaining women-only services including a Sexual Assault Referral Centre in every area
- **Anti-social behaviour:**
 - Guarantee an **initial response to any complaint within 24 hours**
 - All relevant agencies will hold **monthly public meetings** to hear people's concerns
 - Give **Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)** stronger powers to tackle ASB
 - Introduce a '**Respect**' standard for the private rented sector
 - Local ASB champions will make agencies work together to tackle cases
 - Ensure that the majority of applications for ASBOs take under a month and that whenever an **ASBO is breached there is an expectation of prosecution**
 - Legislate to give people financial support to pursue **legal injunctions**, with the costs met by the agency that let them down when pursuing a case involving ASB
- Ensure that the most serious offenders are added to the **DNA database** and retain for six years the DNA profiles of those arrested but not convicted
- Offer the biometric **ID scheme** which already covers foreign nationals to an increasing number of British citizens on a voluntary basis
- Ensure a total of **96,000 prison places by 2014**, but work to reduce the number of women, young and mentally ill people in prison
- Through **Community Payback**, extend nationwide the right for local people to vote on what work offenders do to pay back to the communities they have harmed
- Create a National Victims Service to guarantee all victims of crime and anti-social behaviour seven day- a-week cover and a named, dedicated worker offering one-to- one support through the trial and beyond

Liberal Democrats

Devolved

In Scotland

- *Pay for more than 3,000 police on the beat across the UK – enough to **increase Scottish police numbers by 300 above existing plans***

In England/Wales

- Give local people a real say over their police force through the **direct election of police authorities**
- Turn the National Policing Improvement Agency into a **National Crime Reduction Agency** with a wider remit to test what policing techniques and sentences work and spread best practice across police services and the criminal justice system
- Make hospitals share non-confidential information with the police so they know where **gun and knife crime** is happening and can target stop-and-search in gun and knife crime hot spots
- Require **better recording of hate crimes** against disabled, homosexual and transgender people
- Focus financial resources, and police and court time, on **prosecuting and imprisoning drug pushers and gangs** (rather than drug users and addicts), and on getting addicts the treatment they need
- Always base drugs policy on independent scientific advice, including making the **Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs** completely independent of government
- As resources allow, increase the number of hours prisoners spend in **education and training**
- Introduce a **presumption against short-term sentences of less than six months** – replaced by community sentences
- Move **offenders who are drug addicts or mentally ill** into more appropriate secure accommodation
- Give people a direct say in how petty criminals and those who engage in anti-social behaviour are punished by setting up **Neighbourhood Justice Panels (NJPs)** – and champion other **restorative justice** programmes
- Remove innocent people from the police **DNA database** and stop future storage of DNA from innocent people and children

Education and training

Conservative Party

Reserved

- Provide **university and further education scholarships for the children of servicemen and women** killed while on active duty, backdated to 1990

Devolved

In Scotland

- 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.
- Provide more support to schools to help them **identify pupils with additional support needs at the earliest opportunity**.

- More **rigorous testing of 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.
- Promote the teaching of **synthetic phonics**
- Campaign to ensure there are **more opportunities for** our brightest pupils to sit **Advanced Higher Examinations**.
- Set up **sport trust funds** to allow all pupils to have the opportunity to take part in sports activity within their local school or community campus
- Make better information available to parents about what facilities schools offer for **extra-curricular sport**.
- Ensure there is **more comprehensive reporting on PE** within school inspections.
- Give all pupils the opportunity to experience **a full week of residential outdoor education** at least once between the ages of 11 and 15.
- Charities and not-for-profit trusts should be allowed to **set up new schools, which would receive funding from the state based on the number of pupils that they attract**, drawing on Swedish schools reforms and the charter school movement in the USA,
- Push for **fully structured vocational opportunities** for children from the age of 14

In England/Wales

Behaviour/discipline:

- Stop head teachers being overruled by bureaucrats on **exclusions** [ie, abolish exclusion appeal panels]
- Reinforce powers of discipline by strengthening **home-school behaviour contracts**

Curriculum/assessment:

- **Reform the National Curriculum** so that it is more challenging and based on evidence about what knowledge can be mastered by children at different ages. We will ensure that the **primary curriculum** is organised around subjects like Maths, Science and History
- Create a **better focus on Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths (STEM)** subjects in schools (a recommendation in the Dyson review into how to make Britain Europe's leading hi-tech exporter)
- Promote the teaching of **systematic synthetic phonics** and ensure that teachers are properly trained to teach using this method
- Establish a **simple reading test at the age of six**
- **Encourage setting** so those who are struggling get extra help and the most able are stretched
- **Keep Key Stage 2 tests and league tables**, but reform them to make them more rigorous
- Give universities and academics more say over the **form and content of other exams**
- Allow all state schools the freedom to offer the same high quality **international exams** that private schools offer

- **Reform school league tables** so that schools can demonstrate they are stretching the most able and raising the attainment of the less able
- Establish a **free online database of exam papers and marking schemes**
- **Publish all performance data** kept by the Department for Children, Schools and Families

14 to 19 education and training:

- Allow **schools and colleges to offer workplace training**
- Set **FE colleges free from direct state control** and abolish many of the further education quangos. Public funding will be delivered by a single agency, the Further Education Funding Council
- Create 20,000 additional **young apprenticeships**

Regulation/inspection:

- Ensure that the schools inspectorate **Ofsted adopts a more rigorous and targeted inspection regime**, reporting on performance only in the core areas related to teaching and learning
- **Ensure failing schools are inspected more often** – with the best schools visited less frequently
- Any **school that is in special measures** for more than a year will be taken over immediately by a successful Academy provider
- **Give parents the power to save local schools threatened by closure**, allowing communities the chance to take over and run good small schools
- Make sure **Academies** have the freedoms that helped to make them so successful in the first place

Schools:

- Establish **Technical Academies** across England, starting in at least twelve cities
- **Establish new Academy schools** in the most deprived areas of the country
- Drawing on the experience of the Swedish school reforms and the charter school movement in the United States, **enable any good education provider to set up a new Academy school**
- **Create a new generation of good small schools** with smaller class sizes and high standards of discipline
- **All existing schools will have the chance to achieve Academy status**, with 'outstanding' schools pre-approved
- **Extend the Academy programme to primary schools**

SEN/Disability/Vulnerable pupils:

- Give many more children access to the kind of education that is currently only available to the well-off
- Introduce a **pupil premium** – extra funding for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, and use 'pupil level annual school census' data **to include service children** within those plans
- Call a **moratorium on the ideologically driven closure of special schools**, and **end the bias towards the inclusion of children with special needs in mainstream schools**

Workforce:

- Take steps to **enhance the status of the teaching profession** and ensure it attracts the best people
- **Expand Teach First** and introduce two new programmes – **Teach Now**, for people looking to change career, and **Troops to Teachers**, for ex-service personnel
- **Expect new graduates to have at least a 2:2 in their degree** in order to qualify for state-funded training as a teacher
- Give teachers the strongest possible protection from **false accusations**

Labour Party

Devolved

In Scotland

- Give every young person **a named mentor to support their learning** throughout their secondary years;
- reinstate **average class sizes of 20 in English and Maths at S1 and S2**
- Give each young person the **right to quality training or to stay on in education until 18 by 2015**
- **Protect frontline spending** on schools over the next three years
- **Implement the recommendations of the Literacy Commission** including that each local authority and every school should develop local literacy plans suited to their individual circumstances and to promote phonics as the main method, alongside a range of other approaches
- Make sure psychological and additional support services work closely with schools.
- Consult with **parent organisations** about the role that could be played by parents
- Give headteachers and staff **more control over their resources**
- Increase participation in **post-school learning**

In England/Wales

Behaviour/discipline:

- Guarantee **online information for all parents** about their child's progress and behaviour
- Strengthen **Home School Agreements**
- Require **every parent to agree to adhere to the school's behaviour rules** by signing a contract each year and face real consequences if they fail to live up to it, including the option of a court-imposed parenting order
- Extend **Safer School Partnerships** to every school where the head or parents demand it
- Invest more in **anti-bullying interventions including tackling homophobic bullying**

Curriculum/assessment/extra-curricular activities:

- Reform the **primary curriculum** – including opportunities to play sport, and to take part in arts, culture and music, including the chance to learn a musical instrument
- Require **all primary schools to teach a modern foreign language**; will create a specialist Mandarin teacher training qualification
- For primary-age children, **guarantee childcare and constructive activities from 8am until 6pm in term-time** at their own or a neighbouring school
- Continue to **reduce teenage pregnancy rates**, with compulsory, high quality **Sex and Relationships Education**
- **Review the qualifications system in 2013**
- Set up a **Pupil Guarantee** ensuring that every pupil should have access to regular competitive sport
- **Expand spare time activities for young people**, with neighbourhood police teams closely involved in areas where youth crime is highest

14-19 education and training:

- **Raise the education and training leaving age to 18**
- **Increase spending** on 16-19 learning
- Guarantee every young person **education or training until 18**, with 75 % going on to higher education, or completing an advanced apprenticeship or technician level training, by the age of 30
- Retain **Education Maintenance Allowances** and entitle all suitably qualified **16-18 year olds an apprenticeship place** from 2013
- Give **college students a 'traffic-light' grading system for all courses** and colleges
- Pioneer **University Technical Colleges and Studio Schools** for vocational learning for 14-19 year olds
- **Expand advanced apprenticeships**, creating up to 70,000 places a year

Schools:

- **Increase spending** on schools
- Where parents are dissatisfied with the **choice of secondary schools in an area**, local authorities will be required to act – securing take-overs of poor schools, the expansion of good schools, or in some cases entirely new provision
- Make sure that up to 1,000 secondary schools are part of an **accredited schools group** by 2015
- Place **Pupil and Parent Guarantees** in law
- Set up another 200 **Academies** already in the pipeline
- Introduce **School Report Cards**, and consult on giving every school an overall grade for its performance
- Take forward the **Building Schools for the Future** programme

SEN/Disability/Vulnerable pupils:

- **Give parents a 3Rs guarantee** that every pupil will leave primary school secure in the basics, with one-to-one and small-group tuition for every child

falling behind; and in secondary school, that every pupil will have a **personal tutor** and a choice of good qualifications

- Introduce a local **pupil premium** to guarantee that extra funding to take account of deprivation follows the pupil
- Give **disadvantaged families free access to broadband** to support their child's learning
- For children with SEN, **improve the statementing process** to give more support to parents, and **increase the supply of teachers** with the specialist skills needed to teach pupils with severe learning disabilities in special schools
- Extend the provision of **free school meals** for an additional 500,000 primary school children in families on low incomes and trial free school meals for all primary school children in pilot areas
- Encourage new providers to take over existing **Pupil Referral Units**

Workforce

- Extend **Teach First**
- Promote new **Teacher Training Academies**
- Offer a **£10,000 golden handcuffs payment** to attract the best teachers into the most challenging schools
- Devolve more power to strong school leaders, with up to 1,000 schools, through mergers and take-overs, part of an **accredited school group** (not-for-profit chains of schools) by 2015

Liberal Democrats

Devolved

In Scotland

- **Increase the funding of Scottish schools** for them to recruit more teachers, pay for more one-to-one tuition, or catch up classes. **Give the Scottish Parliament more money** to achieve this.

In England/Wales

Behaviour/discipline:

- **Improve discipline by early intervention** to tackle the poor basic education of those children who are otherwise most likely to misbehave and become demotivated
- **Confront bullying, including homophobic bullying**, and include bullying prevention in teacher training

Curriculum/assessment/extra-curricular activities:

- Establish a fully **independent Educational Standards Authority (ESA)** with powers to stand up to ministers and restore confidence in standards to oversee the examinations system, school inspection and accountability and the detail of the curriculum (will replace QCDA and Ofqual)
- **Axe the National Curriculum and replace it with a slimmed down 'Minimum Curriculum Entitlement'** to be delivered by every state-funded school

- **Scale back Key Stage 2 tests at age 11**, and use teacher assessment, with external checking, to improve the quality of marking

14-19 education and training:

- Fund 15,000 **extra Foundation Degree** places
- **Create a General Diploma** to bring GCSEs, A-Levels and high quality vocational qualifications together, enabling pupils to mix vocational and academic learning
- **Give 14–19 year-olds the right to take up a course at college**, rather than at school, if it suits them better – this will enable all children to choose to study, for example, separate sciences or modern languages at GCSE, or a vocational subject
- Seek to **close the funding gap between pupils in school sixth forms and Further Education colleges**, as resources allow
- **Scrap university tuition fees** for all students taking their first degree, including those studying part-time, with a plan to phase fees out over six years and immediate scrapping of fees for final year students
- **Create a National Bursary Scheme for students**, with bursaries awarded both on the basis of studying strategic subjects (such as sciences and mathematics) and financial hardship
- **Scrap the target of 50 % of young people attending university**, focussing instead on a balance of college education, vocational training and apprenticeships

Regulation/inspection:

- Establish a **fully independent Educational Standards Authority (ESA)** with powers to stand up to ministers and restore confidence in standards. It would oversee the examinations system, school inspection and accountability and the detail of the curriculum – to include Ofsted

Schools:

- **Introduce an Education Freedom Act** banning politicians from getting involved in the day-to-day running of schools
- Set aside extra money for schools **to improve the energy efficiency of their buildings** – they will pay back the loan over time from energy savings
- **Reform league tables** to give parents more meaningful information reflecting the performance of a school
- **Give local authorities a central strategic role in schools**, including responsibility for oversight of school performance and fair admissions – they will be expected to intervene where school leadership or performance is weak
- Give all schools the **freedom to innovate**
- **Replace Academies with 'Sponsor-Managed Schools'** – these will be commissioned by and accountable to local authorities, and would allow other appropriate providers, such as educational charities and parent groups, to be involved in delivering state-funded education
- Allow parents to continue to choose **faith-based schools** within the state-funded sector and allow the establishment of new faith schools. Ensure that all faith schools develop an inclusive admissions policy and end unfair

discrimination on grounds of faith when recruiting staff, except for those principally responsible for optional religious instruction

SEN/Disability/Vulnerable pupils:

- **Invest £2.5 billion in a 'Pupil Premium'** to boost education opportunities for the most disadvantaged 1 million pupils. This additional money would go into the schools' budget, and headteachers will be free to spend it in the best interests of children
- **Guarantee Special Educational Needs (SEN) diagnostic assessments for all five-year-olds**, improve SEN provision and improve SEN training for teachers
- Start discussions with universities and schools about the design of a trial scheme whereby the **best students from the lowest achieving schools are guaranteed a place in Higher Education**

Workforce:

- Include **bullying prevention in teacher training**
- Improve **SEN training for teachers**
- Improve teacher training by increasing the size of the **school-based Graduate Teacher Programme** and support the **expansion of Teach First** to attract more top graduates into teaching
- **Improve training for existing teachers** over the course of their careers to keep them up to date with best practice
- Seek to ensure that science at Key Stage 4 and above is taught by **appropriately qualified teachers**

Scottish National Party

Devolved In Scotland

- Continue to **offer 16+ Learning Choices**, a place of learning to every young person as they reach the end of their compulsory school years
- Continue to work with local government to make more progress on reducing **class sizes to 18 or less in P1 to P3**
- Protect the planned **£1.25 billion investment in new and refurbished schools**

Health

Conservative Party

Devolved In Scotland

- **Oppose the phasing out of prescription charges**, while securing free prescriptions for those who cannot pay
- Push for **additional funding for approved drugs**

- Introduce a **new dentistry contract** to keep more dentists in NHS
- Expand provision of **therapies and counselling**
- Pilot **walk-in treatment centres**
- **Renegotiate the GP contract at UK level**, linking pay to GP's results

In England/Wales

- Turn the Department of Health into a **Department for Public Health**
- Create an **independent NHS Board** to allocate resources and provide commissioning guidelines
- Provide **separate public health funding to local communities**, which will be accountable for – and paid according to – how successful they are in improving their residents' health
- Introduce a **health premium** weighting public health funding towards the poorest areas with the worst health outcomes
- Give **every patient the power to choose any healthcare provider** that meets NHS standards within NHS prices
- Give **GPs the power to hold patients' budgets and commission care** on their behalf, and put them in charge of commissioning local health services
- **Scrap targets** that have no clinical justification
- Enable NHS providers to become **autonomous Foundation Trusts**
- Introduce a **new dentistry contract** that will focus on achieving good dental health
- Give **every five year old a dental check-up**
- Provide £10 million a year beyond 2011 to **support children's hospices**
- Introduce a **new per-patient funding system for all hospices** and other providers of palliative care

Labour Party

Devolved

In Scotland

- Renewed focus on **prevention and early intervention**
- Prioritise **elimination of hospital superbugs** in NHS
- Introduce a **legal limit on caffeinated alcohol**
- Review **access to dental services**
- Review **early intervention, therapies** and other methods to reduce use of **anti-depressants**

In England/Wales

- Enshrine new legally binding guarantees in the **NHS constitution**
- Establish a **new National Care Service** working in partnership with the NHS to transform the way care is provided to the elderly and disabled people
- Increase **patient power** – patients requiring elective care will have the right, in law, to choose from any provider who meets NHS standards of quality at NHS costs
- Introduce **legally binding guarantees for patients** including the right to cancer test results within one week of referral, and a maximum 18 weeks' wait for treatment or the offer of going private

- Ensure that everyone with a **long-term condition**, such as diabetes, will have the right to a care plan and an individual budget
- **Preventative healthcare** through a major expansion of **diagnostic testing**
- Introduce a **right to choose a GP in your area** open at evenings and weekends, with more services available on the high-street, personal care plans and rights to individual budgets
- Expand further the **availability of GP-led health centres open seven days a week '8 til 8'** in towns and cities
- Wherever necessary, act to **protect children's health from tobacco, alcohol and sunbeds**
- Encourage **GPs to keep their patients healthy through exercise and healthy eating** advice, and through the **Change 4 Life programme**, support a more active, health-conscious country
- Over the next Parliament more than **8,000 new therapists** will ensure access to psychological therapy for all who need it

Liberal Democrats

Reserved

- Reduce pressure on NHS budgets by **cutting air pollution** (cancelling plans for airport expansion and tighter regulation on vehicle pollution)

Devolved

In Scotland

- **A UK-wide approach to health** and reform of health contracts
- Support **a ban on below-cost selling of alcohol** to reduce ill health caused by excessive drinking
- Ensure GPs provide **out-of-hours care**
- Reform **GP payments** (see below)
- **Cut air pollution and reduce pollution from vehicle exhaust** through tighter regulation

In England/Wales

- **Give priority to preventing people getting ill** by linking payments to health boards and GPs more directly to prevention measures
- Cut the size of the **Department of Health** by half, **abolish quangos like Connecting for Health** and cut the budgets of the rest and **scrap Strategic Health Authorities**
- Where possible **move health consultations into the community** (eg GP consultations)
- **Integrate health and social care** to create a seamless service (unclear whether this is adults only)
- **Guarantee respite care** for the one million carers who work the longest hours
- **Improve access to counselling** for people with mental health problems, by continuing the roll-out of cognitive and behavioural therapies

- **Reduce the ill health and crime caused by excessive drinking**, including a ban on below-cost selling; exploring the use of minimum pricing; and reviewing the system of taxation for alcohol
- Reduce pressure on NHS budgets by **cutting air pollution** (cancelling plans for airport expansion and tighter regulation on vehicle pollution)
- **Give local people more control over health services:**
- **Sharply reduce centralised targets and bureaucracy**, replacing them with entitlements guaranteeing that patients get diagnosis and treatment on time – if they do not, the NHS will pay for the treatment to be provided privately
- Empower local communities to improve health services through **elected Local Health Boards**, which will take over the role of PCT boards in commissioning care for local people, working in co-operation with local councils. Over time, Local Health Boards should be able to take on greater responsibility for revenue and resources to allow local people to fund local services which need extra money
- **Give Local Health Boards the freedom to commission services for local people** from a range of different types of provider, including for example staff co-operatives, on the basis of a level playing field in any competitive tendering – ending any current bias in favour of private providers
- **Give every patient the right to choose to register with the GP they want**, without being restricted by where they live, and the right to access their GP by email
- Ensure that local **GPs are directly involved in providing out-of-hours care**
- **Reform payments to GPs** so that those who accept patients from areas with the **worst health and deprivation scores** receive an extra payment for each one they take

Scottish National Party

Devolved

In Scotland

- Move to **abolish prescription charges** by 2011
- Continue with legislation to **restrict cigarette displays and remove vending machines**
- Continue to **invest in drug rehabilitation**
- Build on work to **tackle hospital acquired infection**
- Continue with **patient rights bill**, new health rights and waiting time guarantees

Housing

Conservative Party

Devolved

In Scotland

- **Support stock transfer** by councils to housing associations
- **Defeat SNP attempts to end Right to Buy**, to maintain flow of sale receipts to help fund new and improved social housing
- Propose measures to **introduce more accurate street counts**

In England/Wales

- Make it **easier for social tenants to own or part-own their home**
- Implement a range of measures to address the problems of the **homeless**, including introducing more accurate street counts and ensuring a Minister in each relevant department has homelessness in their brief

Labour Party

Reserved

- Strengthen regulation to ensure **consistent consumer protection from repossession**, transferring particular sub-prime loans into FSA regulation

Devolved

In England/Wales

- Provide **homeless 16 and 17 year olds** with Foyer-based supported accommodation and training including help with parenting skills. Once there is enough provision to provide universal coverage we will legislate to change the law so that for 16 and 17 year olds the right to housing is met solely through supported housing

Liberal Democrats

Devolved

In Scotland

- Bring 25,000 empty homes back into use, offering a grant or cheap loan to renovate them so they can be used

In England/Wales

- Make sure that **repossession is always the last resort** by changing the powers of the courts
- **Bring 250,000 empty homes back into use** with cheap loans and grants as part of our job creation plan
- Investigate reforming public sector borrowing requirements to free councils to borrow money against their assets in order to **build a new generation of council homes**, and allow them to keep all the revenue from these new homes. Over time, seek to provide a greater degree of subsidy as resources allow to increase the number of new **sustainable homes** being built

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