

National Policy Forum Consultation Papers for 2023 (Compact Format)

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These documents have been reformatted from those on the Policy Forum website so as to use less than half the paper (22 instead of 54 sides) that would otherwise be involved in printing them for personal study and comment. The text have not been altered in any way. The URLs of the original documents are given below. Also, having all the papers in one document makes it easy to search all of them at once for a given word e.g. “transport”, “school” etc.

1. A green & digital future: <https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/commissions/delivering-growth>
2. Better jobs and better work: <https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/commissions/the-everyday-economy>
3. Safe & secure communities: <https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/commissions/empowered-communities>
4. Public services that work from the start: <https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/commissions/prevention-early-intervention-and-better-public-services-for-all>
5. A future where families come first: <https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/commissions/supporting-families>
6. Britain in the world: <https://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/commissions/labour-s-progressive-trade-policy>

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This is a critical year for Labour to set out the case for change: for a fairer, greener and more dynamic Britain, where aspiration is rewarded, where working people succeed and where communities control their own destiny.

There can be no doubt that Britain faces serious challenges, nor that 13 years of Conservative government have left our country, our economy and our public services on their knees and vulnerable to those challenges. But there should also be no doubt that we can rise to them.

We believe in our country and our people. What they lack is a government that shares their ambition.

We need to show people that Labour would be that government. Show not just what the Tories have done to Britain but the Britain that Labour can build. A country run in the interests of working people, and where politics is once again a force for good.

This requires a bold and credible policy agenda – and the National Policy Forum plays a critical role in getting us there.

These will be the final NPF consultations before Labour finalises our manifesto for the next election, and they are a vital opportunity for us to hear from voices across the labour movement and country on some of the most pressing policy issues facing an incoming Labour government.

They look at the ways Britain can prosper by ensuring growth in every part of our country, by forging new, ethical trading relationships and by improving our everyday economy. They consider how better public services, focused on prevention and early intervention, can make us happier, healthier and safer. They look at how we can support families in all their wonderful diversity, and how by pushing power out of Westminster we can make our neighbourhoods and communities more cohesive and prosperous.

Please do contribute your thoughts and ideas. The strength of our movement is its diversity, and that is nowhere more apparent than in our democratic policymaking process. It is important that we are able to draw on the thoughts and experiences of our members, affiliates, stakeholders and supporters.

Together we can give Britain the fairer, greener future it deserves.

Keir Starmer
Leader of the Labour Party

Anneliese Dodds
National Policy Forum Chair

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Thank you for taking part in the Labour Party's 2023 National Policy Forum (NPF) consultation.

This is the final of four annual consultations before the next general election and will form a key input to the manifesto-drafting process.

As we further develop our policy platform, it is particularly important that we hear from people across the labour movement, including from local Labour Parties and affiliated trade unions. We also encourage external organisations, such as charities, think tanks, businesses and civil society bodies to submit their ideas.

Members should contribute to discussions and submissions through their constituency or branch party, as the commissions will not be accepting submissions directly from individuals in this final year.

The Labour Party is publishing six consultation documents this year. Each asks a set of seven questions on a specific policy area, followed by detail on the context and the challenges we face.

After the consultation closes on 17 March, all of the submissions from the four years' worth of consultations will be used to develop final year policy documents. Those documents will then be debated, amended and agreed by the NPF representatives in a final meeting on 21-23 July.

You may wish to look at the work of the Labour Party's policy roadmap, Stronger Together, which produced a final report, structured around the same six policy themes, in 2022: www.labour.org.uk/stronger-together.

Alongside Stronger Together, the party commissioned three independent reviews which reported over the last year, which may be helpful to refer back to as you consider your responses:

1. *A New Britain: Renewing our Democracy and Rebuilding our Economy*, the final report of the Commission on the UK's Future, chaired by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, which made recommendations to reignite Britain's economy, rebuild trust in politics and reunite the country: www.labour.org.uk/page/a-new-britain;
2. *Start-Up, Scale-Up*, the final report of the Start-Up Review led by Lord Jim O'Neill, which explored what is needed to make Britain the best

place in the world to start and grow a business: www.labour.org.uk/startupreview; and

3. *Learning and skills for economic recovery, social cohesion and a more equal Britain*, the final report of the Council of Skills Advisers, chaired by former Education Secretary Lord David Blunkett, which detailed how Labour's further education and skills agenda could improve growth, deliver quality jobs and prepare people for the future of work: www.labour.org.uk/skillsreport.

You don't need to answer every one of the questions in this document, nor answer them in a specific way. We suggest using the questions to help structure your response and act as a prompt for your thoughts on the policy area.

You can submit a response on behalf of your local party, at branch or Constituency Labour Party level. You can also respond as an organisation, such as an affiliated trade union, socialist society or external stakeholder.

Once you have drafted your response, please submit it to us through the Labour Policy Forum: www.policyforum.labour.org.uk.

For more information on how to make a submission, see www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/consultation-submission-guide.

You can find all six consultation documents on the website, and explore other ways to get involved in the consultation such as online members' events, which you can find at www.labour.org.uk/npf23/.

Thank you again for taking the time to contribute to the NPF. It is through the contributions of members, supporters and stakeholders that Labour will develop the policy platform that will build a fairer, greener, more dynamic future for Britain.

Want to know more about how Labour makes its policy?

You can learn more about the Labour Party's policy-making processes on our website: www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/resource-hub.

You can also follow us on Twitter @labpolicyforum for policy development news and information on members' events.

A Green & Digital Future: Delivering growth

Introduction

The National Policy Forum (NPF) is entering the final year of the current policy cycle, which will culminate in a full, in-person meeting of the NPF to determine Labour's policy platform. That platform will in turn contribute towards an election-winning manifesto for the next general election.

The Green & Digital Future policy commission and its predecessor commissions have consulted on a range of policy topics over the previous three years:

- In 2020, on Protecting the natural environment after coronavirus;
- In 2021, on Just Transition: Making the green transformation work for all of us; and
- In 2022, on Creating green jobs.

For this fourth and final year, the Green & Digital Future policy commission has chosen to focus on delivering growth. We welcome submissions on this issue – and specifically the seven consultation questions set out below – from Constituency and Branch Labour Parties, affiliated trade unions and socialist societies, as well as contributions from expert third party organisations such as think tanks, businesses and civil society. Full details on how to make a submission can be found on www.policyforum.labour.org.uk.

The outcomes of all four consultations will then be taken into account when the commission produces its draft policy document for consideration at the full NPF meeting in July 2023.

Questions

1. How can science and technology policy support growth in all regions and nations of the UK?
2. What role does the digital economy have in enabling the UK's growth?
3. How can improvements to transport deliver growth across the country, including in rural areas?
4. What policies can help deliver Labour's existing pledges on green growth, particularly the Green Prosperity Plan?
5. What policies can help contribute to the four

missions outlined in Labour's industrial strategy?

6. What are the specific implications of policy proposals in this area for (a) women, (b) Black, Asian and minority ethnic people; (c) LGBT+ people, (d) disabled people and (e) all those with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010?
7. What consideration would need to be given to policy proposals in this area when collaborating with devolved administrations and local governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

The context

Britain has extraordinary economic potential. Yet the country are in the midst of the worst cost of living crisis in 40 years and the economy is shrinking.

The Conservatives have failed to protect working people from rising prices. While Labour has consistently called for energy prices to be frozen, the government has allowed them to soar. Working people are picking up the bill, while oil and gas giants are getting a tax break thanks to the windfall tax loophole.

The UK entered this crisis more vulnerable than we should have been because the Conservatives have failed over 13 years to grow the economy, leaving us less prosperous and more insecure. On top of a lost decade of growth, the UK is the only G7 economy that is smaller than before the pandemic. And we are forecast to have the slowest growth in the G7 over the next two years.

Low growth is reflected in declining living standards across the country. Real wages are lower in every region of Great Britain than they were in 2010. On average, people are earning £1,600 less per year than they were when Labour was last in government.

Driving weak growth is the lowest rate of business investment in the G7. Businesses need stability and certainty but the Conservatives have overseen a chaotic economic environment. They've broken their own fiscal rules 11 times, undermined independent economic institutions and shunned economic warnings that have led to higher mortgages and borrowing costs for the UK. The botched Brexit deal

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continues to cause difficulties for exporters.

To rebuild Britain, we need to improve our technological capabilities and compete on a global stage. Yet the Government scrapped its industrial strategy, leaving the UK falling behind in the race for the jobs of the future, many of which will be in green and digital industries. Our world-leading research capabilities in science and technology too often fail to translate into growth in the high-tech sectors which could provide good jobs across the country. Despite much talk about 'levelling up', there continue to be stark differences in income between different regions in the UK.

Digital technologies have the potential to be a significant source of growth. But businesses are still waiting for regulatory clarity and poor digital infrastructure is holding growth back.

A chronic lack of investment has created high-cost, low-reliability utilities and public services, including the transport network. When people cannot reliably and affordably travel to work, the whole economy suffers.

Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has exposed just how insecure the UK's energy system has become under the Conservatives, contributing to higher bills for everyone. The Conservatives have failed to invest in energy security, severely cutting energy efficiency programmes and effectively banning new onshore wind projects. This leaves people facing higher bills, businesses less competitive and growth dampened.

The Government has neglected its role as a partner for businesses and unions. They scrapped their industrial strategy, leaving businesses without the certainty and clarity they need. And they have frequently refused to sit down with unions, forcing them into the largest wave of strikes in a generation.

The future under Labour

Labour would unlock Britain's potential by creating a fairer, greener, more dynamic economy that delivers better jobs and living standards for working people. A Labour government would secure growth that is sustainable, and that is both driven by and delivering for all communities and groups.

Science and technology policy

Labour has a vision for the UK to lead the world once again in high-tech industries. Labour would build on our strengths in science and technology, aiming for at least three per cent of GDP to be invested in

research and development (R&D). Labour is proud of the foundational research conducted by universities, and the public good that produces. But Labour also thinks also think we can do better at translating the UK's research successes into growth and jobs across the country. The Commission on the UK's Future highlighted the regional challenges the UK faces on R&D and recommended a reformed suite of place-based R&D programmes.

The Start-Up Review highlighted the potential to improve the pipeline of spinouts emerging from universities.

The digital economy

Labour believes that to unlock the economic potential of digital technologies, it is necessary to shape them for public good. Therefore, Labour would act to ensure that systems are safe, trustworthy and reliable. Labour would use data to drive better outcomes for public services and open up more data for the benefit of researchers and small businesses. Labour's pro-innovation regulatory regime would ensure the UK's data ecosystem is secure and trusted, providing certainty to businesses and delivering better outcomes for consumers. To avoid unnecessary trade barriers, Labour would maintain Britain's data adequacy status with the EU.

A Labour government would also address the huge power some digital platforms have over consumers and workers, with a robust and agile competition and regulatory regime, which would help level the playing field for smaller firms, creating more competitive markets and enabling new services. And a Labour government would ensure everyone can benefit from digital technologies, ensuring the UK has world-leading digital infrastructure, with every home connected.

Transport

The UK's transport network is failing to provide reliable, affordable and clean options for millions of people. This is a drag on growth, with people unable to travel reliably to work, school or the high street.

Too many rail operators are profiting from failure. The problem is especially bad in the North of England where it is common for hundreds of services to be cancelled every day. Labour would end the failed experiment of railway privatisation and bring services back into public ownership as contracts expire. And a Labour government would build High Speed 2 and Northern Powerhouse Rail in full.

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Labour would also give the public more control over bus services. Labour would give local communities that want it the power to set bus routes and fares, following the path set by Labour mayors in Greater Manchester, West Yorkshire and Liverpool City Region. It is only by improving services that buses will become a more reliable option for many people.

Public transport is not always an option, especially in rural areas. To reach net zero, Britain also needs to decarbonise private transport, which is why Labour would build electric vehicle supply chains in the UK and roll out charging infrastructure. Labour would also develop more active travel options including walking and cycling.

Green prosperity

Labour believes the best way to grow the economy is to win the global race for the industries and jobs of tomorrow, many of which will be in the green economy. Labour's Green Prosperity Plan will create one million good jobs in new industries and businesses in all parts of the country.

The next Labour Government will launch an urgent mission for a net zero-emission electricity system by 2030, making the UK a clean energy superpower, exporting clean power to the rest of the world.

To achieve this, the next Labour government will establish Great British Energy, a new national champion in clean power generation. Labour would create a National Wealth Fund to build British industry, investing in electric car battery manufacturing, green steel and clean energy including on and off-shore wind and nuclear power.

Delivering on these pledges will require mobilisation from government and the private sector to overcome barriers. For example, a Labour government would turbocharge planning decisions for energy projects, to bring the decision timeline down from years to months.

Industrial strategy

At the heart of Labour's approach will be a modern industrial strategy. At Annual Conference 2022, Labour set out its industrial strategy¹ vision centred on a partnership between government, business and unions to grow the high-tech, competitive industries of the future.

Labour's industrial strategy is centred around four missions:

- Delivering clean power by 2030
- Harnessing data for public good
- Caring for the future
- Building a resilient economy

Labour's missions will provide a clear signal and organising framework for business and set the overall direction for the party's policy interventions on growth.

Equalities

Just as a Labour government would unlock the potential of communities across the country to contribute to growth, it would unlock the potential of different groups currently underrepresented in certain parts of the economy. For example, the Start-Up Review highlighted the potential for the British Business Bank to direct more funding to women and Black, Asian and minority ethnic founders.

Devolution

Under Labour, the economy will be run for working people in all parts of the country. Labour knows Britain succeeds only when everyone contributes. Labour will devolve power, wealth and opportunity, to every place in Britain so that people can determine their own future and grow their local economy.

1. <https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Industrial-Strategy.pdf>

Better jobs & better work: The everyday economy

Introduction

The National Policy Forum (NPF) is entering the final year of the current policy cycle, which will culminate in a full, in-person meeting of the NPF to determine Labour's policy platform. That platform will in turn contribute towards an election-winning manifesto for the next general election.

The Better Jobs and Better Work policy commission and its predecessor commissions have consulted on a range of policy topics over the previous three years:

- In 2020, on Economic recovery and renewal after coronavirus.
- In 2021, on Repairing the foundations for a stronger, fairer economy.
- In 2022, on Guaranteeing good work in the modern workplace.

For this fourth and final year, the Better Jobs and Better Work policy commission has chosen to focus on the everyday economy. We welcome submissions on this issue – and specifically the seven consultation questions set out below – from Constituency and Branch Labour Parties, affiliated trade unions and socialist societies, as well as contributions from expert third party organisations such as charities, think tanks, businesses and civil society. Full details on how to make a submission can be found on www.policyforum.labour.org.uk.

The outcomes of all four consultations will then be taken into account when the commission produces its draft policy document for consideration at the full NPF meeting in July 2023.

Questions

1. How can Labour strengthen sectors that make up the everyday economy?
2. How can Labour ensure its industrial strategy and other policies support creating good, secure work in the everyday economy?
3. How can we support businesses and workers in the everyday economy through skills, technology and competition policy?
4. How can we enable public services in the everyday economy to meet current and future challenges?
5. How can we ensure the Government's buying

power supports good jobs, small business and the self-employed?

6. What are the specific implications of policy proposals in this area for (a) women, (b) Black, Asian and minority ethnic people, (c) LGBT+ people, (d) disabled people and (e) all those with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010?
7. What consideration would need to be given to policy proposals in this area when collaborating with devolved administrations and local governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

The context

Since the last consultation cycle, a deepening energy crisis and a litany of Conservative policy failures means the UK is facing a bleak economic outlook.

The cost of living crisis also continues unabated with 2023 looking set to be a dire one for living standards as the price of energy and other essentials is expected to stay elevated. Meanwhile, higher interest rates are feeding through into higher borrowing costs for families and businesses, while homeowners face steep rises in monthly mortgage payments.

A series of Conservative economic policy failures have left us uniquely exposed to this crisis, including decisions to wind down gas storage capacity, failure to insulate our ageing housing stock, dither and delay on nuclear and effective bans on cheap renewable energy like onshore wind.

This year's consultation cycle has been framed around the 'everyday economy' which is those parts of the economy which keep our country moving and society functioning. It is made up of the private and public sectors and includes health, social care, retail, utilities, transport, post, child care, construction, education and food.

The everyday economy has been overlooked and undervalued by the Conservatives and this has weakened our country's foundations. Neglect of areas that support the everyday economy, such as skills and enforcement, has led to low pay, low productivity and inadequate progression.

The pandemic showed the importance of key workers and yet still too many jobs are low paid,

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insecure and the Government has no strategy to address this.

While policymakers are rightly concerned with the immediate energy crisis, the long-term outlook for growth and prosperity, in the everyday economy and beyond, remains grim.

13 years of stagnation and low growth has left our economy wholly unprepared and lacking in resilience. It is no surprise the International Monetary Fund expects the UK to have the lowest growth and lowest inflation of any major advanced economy over the next two years.

The Government has no real plan for growth and has already caved to their own backbenchers on key measures around housebuilding and renewable energy.

The Prime Minister has no vision for capitalising on the opportunities around net zero and seems content to let potential jobs, investment and growth slip away to other countries.

The Government also look set to repeat the failures of the past decade, where some welcome progress in renewable generation has failed to deliver jobs in the UK because of avoidable policy mistakes.

The Conservatives continue to ask working people to foot the bill for their economic failures – picking their pockets first with huge tax hikes, while the mega-rich and energy giants enjoy untargeted tax breaks.

After 13 years of Conservative government our public services are in crisis with many increasingly struggling to provide the service expected of them and meet demand. There are growing recruitment and retention crises among many workforces and the government has repeatedly failed to address this, which has directly contributed to industrial action.

The Conservatives have sought to sow division and stoke political fights instead of trying to find solutions, proposing new unworkable and unfair restrictions on trade union activity that threaten to further undermine workers' rights and living standards instead of negotiating and resolving issues.

The future under Labour

In contrast to the Conservatives' dismal record, Labour has set out bold and credible proposals to grow the economy, ensure good work and break the UK out of our current cycle of stagnation.

Labour's plans for prosperity and growth build on

the work of previous policy development cycles and on other work including its New Deal for Working People.

Labour will do things differently, recognising that real and sustained economic growth comes from the bottom-up and middle out and not discredited 'trickle down' approaches.

At the core of all of Labour's policies is the principle that growth comes from working people and does not trickle-down from the top. The failure of the 'trickle-down' ideology was laid bare in 2022 and has made the need for a clear alternative even more pressing.

Labour is clear Britain's wealth is created by the talents and efforts of millions of working people and businesses across our country.

Labour's plans include the Prosperity Through Partnership framework for industrial strategy announced at Annual Conference 2022 and the Green Prosperity Plan, with a National Wealth Fund to invest in all regions and nations and GB Energy, a publicly owned national energy champion. It also includes plans to overhaul the failing apprenticeships system, with reform to the apprenticeship levy and new Skills England body to oversee local skills provision.

A number of independent economic policy reviews have reported to the Party since the last cycle.

A New Britain: Renewing our democracy and rebuilding our economy, the final report of the Commission on the UK's Future, headed by former Labour Prime Minister Gordon Brown, published a wide-ranging framework for economic devolution in England to drive the growth of new internationally competitive economic clusters.

Start-up, Scale-up, the review led by Lord Jim O'Neill, looked at barriers to finance for new and fast-growing businesses, with a series of detailed proposals to support Labour's ambition to make Britain the high growth, start-up hub of the world. Proposals look at crowding-in more institutional investment, the role of the British Bank, universities and spin-outs, the role of procurement and a number of existing schemes aimed at entrepreneurs.

Labour's Council of Skill Advisors, headed by former Labour Education Secretary Lord Blunkett, published its independent report on the skills system with a number of proposals to overhaul skills provision in the UK.

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Prosperity Through Partnership outlines how Labour would work with unions, businesses, local leaders and workers to drive prosperity. The strategy sets a clear direction for Labour's Industrial policy including how Labour will work across sectors to boost economic growth, investment, resilience, and employment rights.

The industrial strategy also looks at the wider regulatory landscape for the everyday economy and other sectors, discussing levers such as competition policy, corporate governance and procurement. These frameworks will ensure dynamic, competitive markets that reward innovation and long-termism while protecting rights and standards.

The strategy looks not only to the technological frontier, but to the everyday economy sectors that make up the bulk of the UK workforce and are too often overlooked in economic strategies.

Evidence suggests the UK's everyday economy underperforms internationally, due to a combination of low investment, low uptake of technology and an overly precarious labour market that works against progression, productivity and higher pay.

Labour's New Deal for Working People provides some of the groundwork to support the everyday economy, such as Fair Pay Agreements, ending one-sided flexibility and beefing up enforcement.

These proposals will ensure businesses compete on innovation and quality rather than driving down standards and operating a poorly managed, precarious, low-paid workforce.

This year's consultation will look in further detail at some of the policy issues affecting businesses and workers in the everyday economy.

In the previous cycle, the commission also looked at issues relating to technology and automation in the workforce, exploring ways to ensure these trends benefit workers and do not lead to a further erosion of standards and conditions. This year's consultation will seek to build on some of these areas in more detail.

Previous cycles have also looked at some of the problems and unfairness in our tax system that allow some to get away without paying their fair share, including profit shifting by multinationals, online giants and loopholes enjoyed by private equity fund managers and non-doms. The cycle will look to build on this work and build out an evidence base, looking at how can make Britain's taxation system fairer for everyone whether they are employed, self employed in a challenging economic climate.

At Annual Conference 2022, Labour made new pledges to ensure investment is used to create good jobs in all parts of the UK, with proposals on using public buying power to promote best practice, high pay, progression, skills, opportunities for business benefits and trade union representation.

Labour also set out plans to ensure smaller firms and the self-employed are not locked out of public contracts, cutting red tape and making the process simpler, calling time on a series of scandals propagated by outsourced giants.

The pandemic showed us that a decade of Conservative government had shattered the resilience of British businesses, services and our local economies. Instead of trusting decent British firms to deliver services, jobs and a better future, big contracts were given to Conservative cronies and unqualified providers. The Conservatives eroded standards at work, encouraging a race to the bottom.

From the Welsh Government, to Metro Mayors and local government across the country, Labour in power is showing how things can be done better. Labour is unleashing the power of procurement to rebuild local economies and create more and better jobs.

People want good jobs, investment in their communities and a system that will put their interests first. A public procurement policy that the public can trust will make the awarding of contracts a force for good, while backing the British businesses and workers who are creating this country's wealth.

Labour in government is ready to take on this mantle, utilising what the Labour Party has learnt in power regionally and locally to build a new guarantee for the British public. This consultation cycle will look in more detail about how the UK can stop lurching from crisis to crisis to boost the resilience of our everyday economy and make procurement deliver for Britain. The consultation will also look at the everyday economy in the public sector and the specific levers that are relevant there, including skills provisions, insourcing and procurement.

These policies are particularly important in light of Labour's Green Prosperity Plan, with investment in domestic renewables, nuclear, hydrogen and green industries. Avoidable mistakes and policy failures from the Conservatives have seen increased renewable energy generation not drive a similar rise in good jobs based here in the UK.

Safe & Secure Communities: Empowered Communities

Introduction

The National Policy Forum (NPF) is entering the final year of the current policy cycle, which will culminate in a full, in-person meeting of the NPF to determine Labour's policy platform. That platform will in turn contribute towards an election-winning manifesto for the next general election.

The Safe and Secure Communities policy commission and its predecessor commissions have consulted on a range of policy topics over the previous three years:

- In 2020, on Devolution and the constitution after coronavirus;
- In 2021, on Ending violence against women and girls; and
- In 2022, on Guaranteeing safe and secure communities through an effective criminal justice system.

For this fourth and final year, the Safe and Secure Communities policy commission has chosen to focus on empowered communities. We welcome submissions on this issue – and specifically the seven consultation questions set out below – from Constituency and Branch Labour Parties, affiliated trade unions and socialist societies, as well as contributions from expert third party organisations such as charities, think tanks, businesses and civil society. Full details on how to make a submission can be found on www.policyforum.labour.org.uk.

The outcomes of all four consultations will then be taken into account when the commission produces its draft policy document for consideration at the full NPF meeting in July 2023.

Questions

1. How should Labour tackle anti-social behaviour and ensure people feel safe in their homes, workplaces and local communities?
2. What resources and tools do the police and enforcement agencies need to keep our streets safe and to deal with neighbourhood crime?
3. How can prevention and diversion schemes be improved to reduce crime and reoffending?

4. What approach should the Labour Party take to improving justice?
5. In what ways can devolution and constitutional reform empower people and bring our communities closer together?
6. What are the specific implications of policy proposals in this area for (a) women,
7. (b) Black, Asian and minority ethnic people; (c) LGBT+ people, (d) disabled people and (e) all those with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010?
8. What consideration would need to be given to policy proposals in this area when collaborating with devolved administrations and local governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

The context

The last 13 years of Conservative government have left our communities more divided, unequal and vulnerable. The pandemic has had a lasting impact on our communities and the cost of living crisis presents both immediate and future challenges. Yet, the Conservatives have prioritised their own political future ahead of building stronger community cohesion and security.

The poorest areas have been hit the hardest, with the deepest cuts often being inflicted upon local and neighbourhood services most in need, while financial support is handed out to those areas which are already better off. Labour will seek to rebalance power, give local people more control over their communities and build a fairer future for everyone.

Ensuring our communities are safe and that people feel secure in their homes and local neighbourhoods should be one of the top priorities for any government. Yet the Conservatives have spent a decade cutting our police and fire service workforces, leaving communities across the country exposed.

There are thousands fewer Police Community Support Officers than in 2010, and neighbourhood policing has been slashed in the past eight years alone. The percentage of people saying they never see the police out on foot patrol has almost doubled since the Conservatives came to power in 2010.

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Confidence and trust in our police have plummeted and it is the sad reality that in 21st century Britain many people have given up reporting neighbourhood crime, as they believe nothing will come of it. Our police lack the ability to respond quickly to crimes, investigate them thoroughly and hold those responsible to account. The overall charge rate is at the devastatingly low level of 5.5 per cent and the total number of arrests has fallen sharply since 2010.

Furthermore, serious violent crime is increasing, with specific types of knife crime surging to their highest point on record. Online crime and fraud have also risen to unprecedented levels, and the number of sexual offences being recorded by the police has now reached a record high.

Despite this, diversion schemes and preventative services have been decimated, particularly those available to young people. Between 2010 and 2020 more than 4,500 youth work jobs were cut, and 760 youth centres closed. Cuts to youth services funding have left our young people without the safe spaces they need, and access to mental health services for many is virtually impossible.

The Conservatives have also eroded public faith in our constitution and political institutions. From the granting of peerages to ex-Conservative staff members to the decision to award contracts during the pandemic to businesses with connections to the Conservative Party, it is clear greater scrutiny and accountability must shape the future of the UK's constitution, so it reflects our modern democratic values.

The UK remains one of the most centralised democratic countries in the whole world and has one of the highest income inequalities in Europe. While there have been some welcome developments in recent years, such as the expansion of regional Mayors and Police and Crime Commissioners, the Government's approach to devolution and constitutional reform has been far too slow and too narrow.

The overall focus of this year's commission is therefore how Labour can empower our communities more broadly and strengthen neighbourhood cohesion, in particular, with the aim of reducing crime.

The future under Labour

Strengthening neighbourhood cohesion will be a key priority for the next Labour government, as every

person and every family has a basic right to feel safe. It is Labour's mission to drive down crime and anti-social behaviour, put more police in local areas, stand up for community services and empower victims. Our communities deserve a stronger and brighter future.

Ensuring our police have the necessary resources, equipment and skills will be essential for Labour in achieving this mission. Labour has already pledged to bring back neighbourhood policing by putting 13,000 more neighbourhood police on Britain's streets, including recruiting at least 10,000 more officers, PCSOs and specials. This is the equivalent of giving every constituency in England and Wales 15-20 extra neighbourhood police.

Furthermore, Labour has brought forward plans to tackle the increase in several types of serious violence, such as knife crime. By cracking down on knife supply, such as increasing enforcement against online black market sales, introducing heightened surveillance, hotspot policing and analysing the geographical pattern of where knife attacks have taken place, Labour will be able to act on one of the most serious threats our communities face.

Previously, Labour has outlined a package of measures that would help tackle the epidemic of violence against women and girls, in a green paper published in 2021. Proposals include introducing a new statutory minimum sentence for rape of seven years, whole life tariffs for those who rape, abduct, and murder, as well as criminalising street harassment.

More recently, Labour has committed to rolling out specialist rape courts that would also fast-track rape cases and better support victims, in addition to introducing a new Domestic Violence Register that would allow for better police and law enforcement monitoring of perpetrators and help to identify offending patterns more quickly.

This was accompanied by a pledge to deliver specialist support for victims, by putting domestic abuse experts into 999 control rooms and rape investigation units in every force to get justice for women.

Everyone has the right to live free from fear and these are practical measures which will help tackle the crisis.

A Labour government would advocate for and embed at every level the principle that victims should be at the heart of our criminal justice system.

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It was under a Labour government that the Victims' Code was drawn up and the post of Victims' Commissioner created. Labour will look to build on this positive record and measures already put forward.

Labour would strengthen community sentences and create Community and Victim Payback Boards to act on antisocial behaviour and stop more serious reoffending at source. Victims and other local representatives will be given a role in deciding what unpaid work offenders must undertake, such as removing graffiti, clearing wasteland or redecorating community centres.

Labour understands that public trust in our police is critical to keeping people safe, particularly among marginalised communities and people that have been victims of discrimination. Labour has consistently called for an overhaul of our police standards system and would introduce mandatory professional standards for every police force, as well as reforming vetting processes. Policing by consent is an essential part of Britain's criminal justice system and Labour would end the postcode lottery on police standards which undermines the important work we need the police to do.

Labour will also seek to tackle the root causes of the problems that our communities face. By introducing stronger preventative action involving local government, schools and community organisations, charities and frontline providers, we can urgently identify and protect those at risk of being drawn into violence. It means restoring youth projects and treatment services, building upon the positive work

Labour councils are already doing around community cohesion and intervention.

To ensure that the increased police workforce can be as effective as possible, we must also understand the challenges anti-social behaviour presents to our communities and how agencies can work best together to ensure safe and secure communities. The commission would welcome respondents' thoughts on how supporting community-led strategies in tackling youth violence can encourage people to reintegrate and take pride in their local community.

Giving local people more control over their local area can help us tackle crime, build community safety, and increase political engagement. A Labour government will introduce a Take Back Control Act within the first King's Speech to establish clear frameworks for local leaders to request, negotiate and take on powers over economic policymaking, establishing a presumption towards moving power out of Westminster and ensuring local areas can bid for any powers that have already been devolved elsewhere.

Following the publication of the report by the Commission on the UK's Future, chaired by former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, we must consider how devolution and constitutional reform can act as another tool in driving community participation in politics. Advocating for the transfer of power from Westminster to the people and their local areas will be a key pledge for Labour and the commission would welcome respondents' thoughts on the recommendations contained within the report.

Public services that work from the start: **Prevention, early intervention and better public services for all**

Introduction

The National Policy Forum (NPF) is entering the final year of the current policy cycle, which will culminate in a full, in-person meeting in July 2023 to determine Labour's policy platform. That platform will in turn contribute towards an election-winning manifesto for the next general election.

The Public Services that work from the Start policy commission and its predecessor commissions have consulted on a range of policy topics over the previous three years:

- In 2020, on The education system and the health and social care system after coronavirus;
- In 2021, on Tackling health inequalities to make the country the best place to grow up and grow old in; and
- In 2022, on Education and skills, health and mental health services, and social care.

For this fourth and final year, the Public Services that work from the Start policy commission has chosen to focus on prevention, early intervention and better public services for all.

We welcome submissions on this issue – and specifically the seven consultation questions set out below – from Constituency and Branch Labour Parties, affiliated trade unions and socialist societies, as well as contributions from expert third party organisations such as charities, think tanks, businesses and civil society. Full details on how to make a submission can be found on www.policyforum.labour.org.uk.

The outcomes of all four consultations will then be taken into account when the commission produces its draft policy document for consideration at the full NPF meeting in July 2023.

Questions

1. How can Labour ensure our public health services prevent worsening population health, ensure pandemic preparedness, address widening health inequalities, and offer early intervention programmes that reduce pressure on our

communities and other services (in conjunction with wider social policy)?

2. What should Labour do to strengthen primary care (including all primary healthcare professions) and to shift healthcare where possible into the community, while ensuring high quality hospital services?
3. How can education and children's care services support vulnerable children, and those who are disabled or have special educational needs (SEND), to thrive?
4. What should Labour include in a Women's Health and Wellbeing Strategy?
5. How can Labour ensure public service buildings are designed to meet the needs of all their users?
6. What are the specific implications of policy proposals in this area for (a) women,
7. (b) Black, Asian and minority ethnic people (c) LGBT+ people, (d) disabled people and (e) all those with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010?
8. What consideration would need to be given to policy proposals in this area when collaborating with devolved administrations and local governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

The context

As 2023 begins, public services are under immense pressure. The combined impact of 13 years of Conservative underfunding, neglect, and mismanagement, a global pandemic, soaring energy costs, and spiralling inflation is limiting services' ability to give security and support to communities around the country.

The NHS in England went into the pandemic with an acute staffing crisis and a waiting list that had soared from 2.4 million in 2010 to 4.4 million in 2020. Now, services are faced with a backlog of care and are not yet back to pre-pandemic activity levels. Preventative services are lagging behind; almost one million fewer women a year are being screened for

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breast and cervical cancer compared to a decade ago. Despite huge shortfalls and inequalities in women's healthcare, the Government has failed to deliver on its own women's health strategy. Urgent and emergency care is in crisis. Ambulance crews routinely queue for hours outside hospitals because A&E departments are full, and the average response time to someone who has had a suspected stroke or heart attack is 48 minutes.

Meanwhile, mental health services are facing extraordinary demand as people reel from the impact of isolation and hardship, with children and young people particularly affected. 44 per cent of children and young people who are referred for urgent treatment for an eating disorder wait three months or more.

Community care services haven't got enough staff to prevent people from going into hospital, and neither do they have capacity to support all those who need continuing care after leaving. England has lost more than 4,000 GPs and a fifth of all GP practices over the last decade. Now, millions of people wait over a month to see their GP and public satisfaction with GP services has fallen to 38 per cent - the lowest level since records began and 39 percentage points below Labour's last year in government.

Long-promised social care reforms have been postponed again, leaving thousands unable to access care. Almost 35,000 people a year are estimated to die whilst waiting for social care, whilst almost 6,000 a year run out of savings paying for their own care. This leaves unpaid carers to fill gaps, with families forced to take time out of work and lose income in order to care for their loved ones, often with little support or respite.

In education, schools are being squeezed by soaring energy costs and will see no net growth in spending per pupil from 2010 – 2024. Schools cannot fill vacancies, school buildings are crumbling and attainment has suffered as a result of pandemic disruption. Children who are disabled and those with special educational needs (SEND) are particularly disadvantaged by the Conservatives' lack of ambition, with 1,500 children with SEND who should be in education still waiting for a place at school. Further education is suffering after a sustained period of Conservative neglect, while anticipating a predicted 160,000 extra students by 2024, and our world-class universities are becoming financially unviable, with standards driven down for staff and students as a result of the Government's broken

funding system and failed higher education policies.

Children's social care is in a desperate state. Local authorities are often life lines for vulnerable children and families, but do not have the resources they need to reach those who could benefit from support and intervention. This leaves too many vulnerable children at risk and facing disadvantage simply because of the circumstances in which they were born.

Meanwhile, the dedicated staff in our public services are working overtime to fill workforce gaps and meet record demand, without the fair pay and recognition they deserve. Many public service employees are considering or taking industrial action as a result – for example, in winter 2022/23 the Royal College of Nursing in England took country-wide strike action for the first time in its history.

The future under Labour

The next Labour government will address these challenges and secure first class public services for all.

Health and mental health services

Labour has set out a guiding principle that it will protect an NHS free at the point of use and secure health care for all.

Using revenue raised through Labour's commitments to end tax exemptions for private schools and scrap a tax loophole enjoyed by a small number of private equity fund managers, the next Labour government will introduce an ambitious plan to improve mental health care. This includes guaranteed mental health treatment within a month of referral, the first ever long-term, whole-government plan to improve mental health outcomes, 8,500 new staff, fair funding for mental health services, specialist mental health support in every school, and an open access mental health hub for children and young people in every community.

Labour will tackle the root cause of capacity challenges in the NHS with the most ambitious expansion of the health workforce in history. The next Labour government will close tax loopholes for non doms and use the money to double the number of medical school places, train 10,000 new nurses and midwives each year, double the number of district nurses qualifying every year, and train 5,000 new health visitors a year. Labour is also committed to long term workforce planning for health and care,

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focusing on retention as well as recruitment, producing independent projections of the numbers of staff the UK needs to ensure our workforce is fit for a future of new health challenges and opportunities, creating new types of professionals that draw on a diverse skills mix, creating new career paths, and reviewing existing training pathways. A Labour government will also reform the pension rules that currently discourage senior clinicians from staying in the health service.

Labour will shift the focus of health care to prevention and early intervention, with a ten year plan for change and modernisation of the NHS to shift the focus out of hospital and into the community where possible. Labour is developing detailed policy in this area and is working on our approach to primary care, dental care, and public health in particular, with a focus on tackling health inequalities linked to gender, race and ethnicity, disability, sexuality, and income. Labour is keen to hear respondents' thoughts on these areas to feed into policy development.

Social Care

- Once in government, Labour will embark on a plan for reform that will act as a roadmap to a world-class National Care Service with just as much ambition as the 1945 government that brought in the NHS.
- Labour has set out its priorities for reform:
- Transform access to care, making sure every older and disabled person who needs care and support can get it when and where they need it;
- Act on the principles of prevention and early intervention - a "Home First" approach;
- Give disabled adults choice and control over their support;
- Establish a New Deal for Care Workers to ensure they get the job security they deserve, and the rewards they have earned; and
- Establish a new partnership with families to ensure they don't put themselves at risk for looking after people they love.

Labour will recruit and retain more carers by ensuring full rights at work, decent standards, fair pay, and proper training. Adult social care will benefit from a Fair Pay Agreement as the first priority of a Labour government, negotiated through collective bargaining between unions and employer

representatives.

A Labour government will ensure money invested in social care is spent on social care and will not tolerate poor quality, extractive providers. Under Labour, no private equity firm will be able to profit from running care homes while paying their care workers less than they need to live on. All providers will be required to demonstrate financial sustainability, responsible tax practices, and good employment conditions with high quality care for service users. Labour is keen to hear respondents' thoughts on next steps as we develop our policy in this area, including looking towards stronger national standards to reduce inequalities in access to care.

Education and skills

Labour's vision for education is a system that can transform opportunities, grow our economy and provide a platform for a rewarding life. Every parent, no matter where they live, should be able to send their child to a high-quality school that prepares them for the future, and ensures they leave education ready for work, onwards education, and life.

The next Labour government will roll out an ambitious school improvement plan, investing in the people that keep schools running. Labour's National Excellence Programme will be paid for by ending tax exemptions for private schools and will recruit new teachers, refocus regulation to improve support to struggling schools, provide further continuing professional development for staff, and equip all school leaders with the knowledge and skills to lead outstanding organisations. Labour is working to develop policy that supports inclusion and high standards for vulnerable and SEND children and those who are disabled or have special educational needs, so that every child can go to a high-quality school that supports and prepares them for the future. Labour is keen to hear respondents' thoughts on priorities in this areas.

In order to ensure high standards across the sector, Labour will make the national curriculum compulsory, ensure all teachers have qualified status, and establish national standards for support staff. The next Labour government will require academies to cooperate with local authorities to ensure fair admissions and will introduce inspections for multi-academy trusts to ensure effective oversight. Labour will implement a national strategy with clear targets to close the attainment gap and

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will also work with local and regional government in England to review the school curriculum.

Labour has a plan to ensure every young person leaves school ready for work, onwards education, and life, funded by revenue raised from ending tax exemptions for private schools. Labour will reform citizenship education to include practical life skills, introduce two weeks' worth of compulsory work

experience for every young person, and give every

child access to quality careers advice at school. Labour will make sure all children have the level of functional computer skills they need, and will also invest in re- engaging 16-17 year olds who are not known to be in education, employment or training.

Adult skills policy is covered by the Better Jobs and Better Work Commission and will take into account the detailed recommendations made by the Council of Skills Advisors in its report to Labour published in November 2022.

A future where families come first: Supporting families

Introduction

The National Policy Forum (NPF) is entering the final year of the current policy cycle, which will culminate in a full, in-person meeting in July 2023 to determine Labour's policy platform. That platform will in turn contribute towards an election-winning manifesto for the next general election.

The A Future Where Families Come First policy commission and its predecessor commissions have consulted on a range of policy topics over the previous three years:

- In 2020, on The education system after coronavirus;
- In 2021, on Making Britain the best place to grow up: How to ensure children are at the heart of our recovery from Covid-19; and
- In 2022, on Delivering financial, social and housing security.

For this fourth and final year, the A Future Where Families Come First policy commission has chosen to focus on supporting families. We welcome submissions on this issue – and specifically the seven consultation questions set out below – from Constituency and Branch Labour Parties, affiliated trade unions and socialist societies, as well as contributions from expert third party organisations such as charities, think tanks, businesses and civil society. Full details on how to make a submission can be found on www.policyforum.labour.org.uk

The outcomes of all four consultations will then be taken into account when the commission produces its draft policy document for consideration at the full NPF meeting in July 2023.

Questions

1. How can the next Labour government best deliver a modern and affordable childcare system that supports families from the end of parental leave to the end of primary school? How should Labour ensure that a new childcare system helps to tackle child poverty?
2. How can the next Labour government ensure all young children enjoy a childhood that enables

them to thrive?

3. How can the next Labour government defeat the scandal of rising poverty and end the soaring demand for food banks?
4. How can Labour's reforms to social security and employment support ensure people of working-age and pensioners have security throughout their working lives and in retirement?
5. How can Labour make home ownership a reality for more families, give private renters the security they need and tackle the scourge of homelessness? How can the next Labour government build more social and council housing and ensure greater investment in genuinely affordable homes?
6. What are the specific implications of policy proposals in this area for (a) women, (b) Black, Asian and minority ethnic people (c) LGBT+ people, (d) disabled people and (e) all those with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010?
7. What consideration would need to be given to policy proposals in this area when collaborating with devolved administrations and local governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

The context

Labour celebrates and cherishes the wonderful diversity of all families and households across Britain. The Labour Party wants to build a Britain that supports family life and brings genuine security to everyone. A country that gives our children the best possible start in life, enabling them to thrive in childhood and beyond; an economy that supports families to have a decent home, a good job and to lead a healthy, well-balanced life; and an inclusive society that treats people with fairness and respect and that guarantees security and dignity in retirement.

Thirteen years of managed decline by the Conservatives has made this much harder to achieve. Families have been left exposed to worsening living standards, deteriorating public services and cuts to social security. People's concerns over their household budgets are even

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more acute after the Conservatives crashed the economy and sent the cost of mortgages soaring. Inflation having been at a forty-year high, combined with anaemic economic growth, means that wages are now lower in real-terms than when the Conservatives came to office in 2010.

Before 2010, few people had even heard of a foodbank; now, they're being set-up in hospitals where some NHS staff can't keep pace with the spiralling cost of living. More than two million emergency food parcels were distributed by the Trussell Trust last year. Over 800,000 of those parcels were for children,

a clear indication that child poverty has risen and deepened over the last thirteen years and remains worryingly high under the Conservatives. Levels of poverty among disabled people have also soared under the Conservative government and poverty is forecast to rise even further over the coming years.

With families feeling a squeeze on their living standards, it's even more essential that childcare is affordable and accessible. Yet, under the Conservatives, the cost of childcare has soared, forcing many parents to cut back on their working hours or leave the labour market entirely. The rising cost of before- and after- school clubs means they too are out of reach for many families, contributing to a widening attainment gap between those families who can afford for their children to attend and those who can't. Moreover, parents with atypical working hours, single parents and parents of disabled children face additional barriers finding accessible childcare.

The country is also in the grip of a housing crisis under the Conservatives. Average house prices are nine times higher than average earnings and home ownership is a distant dream for millions of families. People living in the private rented sector face insecurity and have seen their rents sky-rocket. The Conservatives have failed to build the number of homes needed and failed to sufficiently invest in social and council housing. Meanwhile, more than 120,000 children are living in temporary accommodation, a rise of two-thirds since the Conservatives came to office.

The future under Labour

The next Labour government will build a better future for families by addressing these challenges.

On childcare, early years, social security, housing and equalities, Labour has set out ambitious and credible

policies to secure the fairer future that families deserve. Labour's challenge now is to ensure this policy offer is fully developed and refined and that the party responds as circumstances and the economic climate changes.

Labour will support families by making childcare available and affordable as a Labour government moves Britain towards a modern childcare system that supports families from the end of parental leave through to the end of primary school. As a first step on that road, a Labour government will deliver breakfast clubs, which are crucial for children's learning and development, in every primary school in England. Labour will fund these breakfast clubs and their workforce from the money raised by removing the non-domiciled tax status, a clear indication that, with Labour, children and families will come first, not the privileged few.

As part of Labour's plans to ease the pressure on parents struggling to find childcare places, Labour will also remove legal barriers to councils delivering new childcare facilities, and ensure local authorities can use their revenue raising powers to support them. Labour will build on this with ambitious plans to expand early years support for families.

Labour will reform social security so that it works for families and works to defeat child poverty, rather than entrenching it. Labour will develop a culture of respect and dignity across the social security system, rather than one of threats and punitive sanctions. In government, Labour will overhaul Universal Credit so that it provides genuine financial security, prevents and reduces poverty, reduces inequalities and promotes and protects women's financial independence.

Labour's social security system will ensure that older people have the security and dignity in retirement that they deserve. Pensioners have been at the sharp end of the cost of living crisis due to soaring energy bills and the real-terms value of the state pension falling significantly over the 2022/23 financial year. While the Government repeatedly wavered, Labour remained steadfast in our commitment that the state pension should be uprated by inflation for the 2023/24 financial year.

The next Labour government will support families into decent work, helping people find high-quality and fulfilling employment. Our ambition is for Britain to have the highest employment rate in the G7. Labour will achieve this by reforming Jobcentres and employment support to make work pay and to offer specialist and localised help. The Labour Party will

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give local areas the tools they need to deliver universal jobs support and to tackle the rising tide of economic inactivity.

This was an important recommendation by the Commission on the UK's Future, led by Gordon Brown, whose final report was published in December 2022. The commission emphasised that a new, local approach to employment support could help people find the right opportunities and help businesses find the skilled workers they need. The commission also recommended making Jobcentres more open, including to those looking to upskill or to run their own business.

The commission also proposed a package of basic rights regarding health, education, poverty and housing. On tackling poverty, it proposed a basic right that no child, family or elderly citizen need live in poverty, that every person legitimately present in the UK should be entitled to social assistance and that no person should be left destitute. On housing, the commission proposed that it should be a basic right that every person be entitled to decent accommodation.

Labour agrees that housing is a fundamental human right and that homes should be safe, secure and genuinely affordable. That's why the next Labour government will be the first in a generation to restore social housing to the second largest form of tenure, bringing homes back into the ownership of local councils and communities. Labour will also close loopholes that developers use to wriggle out of affordable housing commitments, ensuring that local councils have stronger powers to deliver the affordable housing that's needed, not the housing that will make the most profit for developers.

To support more families into owning their own home, Labour will set a new home ownership target of 70 per cent. Labour will aim to reach this target by building more homes and stopping foreign buyers from buying homes off-plan before local people get a look in. Under Labour, first time buyers will have first dibs on new build homes and will be supported through a mortgage insurance scheme, enabling more families to secure a mortgage without having to save eye-watering deposits or rely on gifts from family members.

The next Labour government will also bring security to families who are renting. Labour will introduce a

powerful new Private Renters Charter that will make renting fairer, more secure and more affordable. Labour will achieve this through a higher-quality and properly regulated private rented sector. Labour will also set out an ambition to re-establish the link between genuinely affordable housing and average earnings, bringing affordable rents and the dream of home ownership closer for those locked out today.

Equality will be at the heart of all of Labour's policies for families, as the party look to build a more inclusive, more tolerant and more accessible society. A Labour government will make it illegal to make a new mother redundant from notification of pregnancy until six months after their return to work, except in specific circumstances, and Labour will urgently review the failing system of shared parental leave.

Labour believes in a social model of disability and the next Labour government will remove societal barriers that restrict opportunities for disabled people. Labour supports the principle that policies for disabled people should be produced in partnership with disabled people. A Labour government will replace the current system of disability assessments with a more humane framework that treats people with dignity and respect and we will tackle disability discrimination in employment, including taking action to close disability pay gaps.

Building on Doreen Lawrence's report, *An Avoidable Crisis*, the next Labour government will introduce a Race Equality Act and a race equality strategy in order to tackle structural racial inequality at source. As part of our New Deal for Working People, A Labour government will also introduce mandatory ethnicity pay gap reporting that will mirror gender pay gap reporting.

Labour will ban conversion therapy in all its forms, modernise the law on gender recognition to remove indignities, and uphold the Equality Act, including its provision for single sex spaces and protections for LGBT+ people and everyone with a protected characteristic. Labour will also enact the socio-economic duty of the Equality Act and strengthen and equalise the law so that every category of hate crime is treated as an aggravated offence, meaning perpetrators of anti-LGBT+ and disability hate crime can no longer dodge longer sentences.

Britain in the world: Labour's progressive trade policy

Introduction

The National Policy Forum (NPF) is entering the final year of the current policy cycle, which will culminate in a full, in-person meeting of the NPF to determine Labour's policy platform. That platform will in turn contribute towards an election-winning manifesto for the next general election.

The Britain in the World policy commission and its predecessor commissions have consulted on a range of policy topics over the previous three years:

- In 2020, on championing internationalism in the post-coronavirus world;
- In 2021, on a strategy for veterans; and
- In 2022, on protecting our national interests and promoting Labour values abroad.

For this fourth and final year, the Britain in the World policy commission has chosen to focus on Labour's progressive trade policy. We welcome submissions on this issue – and specifically the seven consultation questions set out below – from Constituency and Branch Labour Parties, affiliated trade unions and socialist societies, as well as contributions from expert third party organisations such as charities, think tanks, businesses and civil society. Full details on how to make a submission can be found on www.policyforum.labour.org.uk

The outcomes of all four consultations will then be taken into account when the commission produces its draft policy document for consideration at the full NPF meeting in July 2023.

Questions

1. What is the role of international trade in promoting domestic economic growth, boosting jobs and driving up wages?
2. How can Labour ensure the UK's international trade policy promotes growth and investment across the nations and regions of the UK?
3. How can Labour build resilience into the international trade system and better ensure the security of essential supply chains?
4. How will a Labour government's trade policy reduce poverty and global inequality whilst promoting (a) human rights, (b) workers' rights, (c) fair trade and (d) global peace and security?

5. How can Labour use trade policy to deliver environmental protection and help drive the world to net zero?
6. What are the specific implications of policy proposals in this area for (a) women, (b) Black, Asian and minority ethnic people (c) LGBT+ people, (d) disabled people and (e) all those with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010?
7. What consideration would need to be given to policy proposals in this area when collaborating with devolved administrations and local governments in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

The context

Britain's trading relationships with the world are a key component of its foreign policy, providing an opportunity to boost economic growth at home while promoting British values and interests abroad. Yet as we approach the next general election, global trade faces a set of unprecedented challenges.

The outbreak of Covid-19 sent shockwaves across the international economic system, and global supply chains have struggled to recover from the disruption of national lockdowns, including the dramatic contraction and subsequent resurgence in demand for goods and services. This is not something that has been and gone; many countries continue to deal with outbreaks of the virus in 2023.

Meanwhile, Russia's illegal invasion of Ukraine has led to soaring energy costs across Europe and driven a global food crisis. Manufacturing costs have increased and household budgets have been squeezed, placing significant strain on the everyday lives of working people.

In Britain, the challenges of global trade have been exacerbated by almost 13 years of Conservative mismanagement, recklessness and neglect.

Having overseen our withdrawal from the European Union, the Conservative government failed to deliver on the trade promises they made, with the UK economy left paying the price. Instead of prioritising exports, growth and jobs across the UK, or taking a lead on using trade to tackle the climate crisis and workers' rights, Conservatives simply cut and paste pre-existing deals that were negotiated decades ago.

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In their 2019 manifesto, the Conservatives promised that 80 per cent of Britain's trade would be covered by free trade agreements by the end of 2022, yet they have now missed their own deadline.

This failure to deliver on trade targets is incredibly damaging, leaving the UK economy missing out on billions of pounds of potential opportunities that could boost growth here in the UK.

Boris Johnson and Liz Truss repeatedly promised new trade deals with India and the US, but these are yet to materialise.

Out of the few trade deals that have been signed, almost all have fallen short. Instead of aiming for ambitious new trade deals with international partners, the Conservatives have rushed around in search of the quickest agreements they can find, with no questions asked.

The Australian trade deal failed to include binding commitments on climate targets and risks undercutting UK farmers through the removal of import tariffs. By the Conservatives' own admission, "the UK gave away far too much for far too little in return" when negotiating the Australia deal.

In its negotiations with the EU, the Government's antagonistic approach repeatedly undermined progress and soured key relationships, limiting any chance of a new kind of progressive agreement. The last minute deal was far from what was promised, with significant gaps that make trading with European partners much more burdensome than before..

Moving into 2023, the Northern Ireland Protocol impasse remains one of the most damning examples of the Conservatives' failure on the international stage, with progress remaining slow. In government, Labour must immediately get to work on securing a better deal for British people.

After 13 years of Conservative government, Britain's reputation as a reliable and trusted partner has been significantly damaged. On trade, it is clear the Conservatives have no strategy, which is costing jobs, investment and growth. Labour knows that Britain deserves better.

The future under Labour

In light of our withdrawal from the EU, Britain will need to develop a bespoke and flexible trade policy that is fit for the future.

Negotiating an independent trading policy will be a significant challenge for a future Labour government. It will fall to Labour to grow the UK's economy and show that Britain can once again be a force for good on the international stage.

Heading into the next election, it is clear that Labour is the party of economic growth. The Labour Party has already set out a clear plan to make Britain and its people better off, giving the country the fresh start it needs.

International trade will be a vital part of this, helping deliver jobs at home while promoting Britain's principles abroad. From defending workers' rights to tackling the climate crisis, the Labour Party has the opportunity to develop a comprehensive trade policy that puts Labour values into action.

Building on the commission's previous consultation, where the NPF looked at the importance of promoting Labour's internationalist values through multilateral alliances, promoting aid and bolstering democratic systems, the commission will this year look to develop the party's position on trade.

The starting point must be the restoration of Britain's reputation as a trusted partner, both to our closest neighbours in Europe and our allies further afield. Labour has already outlined plans to scrap the treaty-breaking Protocol Bill and deliver real progress to ease trade, key first steps in building a new working relationship with Europe and solving the Northern Ireland issue.

The Labour Party will make Brexit work outside of the single market and the customs union, helping to move the country on from the arguments and divisions of the past. The veterinary agreement Labour will seek with the EU would eliminate most checks in agricultural goods, but there is much more to do.

Labour will seek to use trade policy to boost the economy and promote jobs, to create a trading environment that works for Britain. The UK is home to some of the best and most innovative businesses in the world, but they need the right platform to thrive. Labour's international trade policy must support this, particularly for businesses who rely on global supply chains.

Importantly, Labour understands that the benefits of trade must be felt across the whole of the UK. The country simply cannot go on with a situation where just 1.4 per cent of exports are from the North

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East and less than 5 per cent of exports originate from the East Midlands, compared to 25 per cent from London and 21 per cent from the South East.

The recent Commission on the UK's Future chaired by Gordon Brown highlighted this disparity, recommending a bigger role for devolved leaders as one way of tackling regional inequality. Labour is keen to build on this, and is looking at how a Labour government can further open up services and use trade to help level up across our regions and nations.

Following the recent disruption of the global pandemic and the war in Ukraine, Labour must consider what lessons to learn about the resilience of international trade to global events and use trade policy to better secure the UK's supply chains. This could include working closer with allies and partners to strengthen the international trading system.

To tackle the climate crisis and seize the economic opportunities of decarbonisation, Labour has set out plans to drive green British exports. At Annual Conference 2022, Shadow International Trade Secretary Nick Thomas-Symonds explained how a new network of Climate Export Hubs will work with businesses, universities and other innovators to take UK climate science innovations and export them to the world. These export hubs will support every region in the country – helping to create skilled jobs and opportunities nationwide.

Together with new rules to ensure that trade negotiators have binding responsibilities to deliver for the whole of the UK, Labour's trade policy will help ensure that Britain becomes a global leader in the race to net zero. These are strong first steps in the party's work to build a greener and fairer trade policy, but the commission is keen to hear what more the party can do.

Workers' rights must be the heart of Britain's trade policy. Labour opposes a global race to the bottom on standards and rights.

At home, this involves supporting wages and conditions in every sector of the UK economy. Labour can look to examples such as the new era of partnership in Wales, where the devolved government is working with business and unions to co-develop policy, as positive examples of civic engagement. This will help Labour to determine the best way of involving key partners, not just in relation to workers' rights chapters, but to entire trade agreements. Internationally, this involves standing up for workers, often including women and children, who are forced to work in extreme conditions. The UK must establish an effective means of working with key international players, including China, on issues such as the climate crisis while calling out cases of abuses of human rights.

Alongside an effective international development strategy, fair trade can play a key part in tackling poverty and global inequality, a key goal for a future Labour government.

Above all else, Labour sees trade as a force for good. In government, Labour will secure deals that bring investment while also promoting rights, climate action and ensuring higher standards. A Labour trade policy should support future green jobs, promote technology and innovation and embrace a digital future.

Through this consultation, the Britain in the World commission looks forward to receiving a wide range of thoughts and ideas on Labour's future trade policy, helping build the party's international policy platform in this important final year of the NPF cycle.