

**THE
FUTURE IS
OURS**

YOUTH MANIFESTO



Foreword

For too long politics has failed young people. We now have a generation growing up who can expect to be worse off than their parents. Surging housing prices, stagnating wages, rising student debt – these are just some of the challenges facing young people after a decade of austerity.

Today's youth also face new challenges, from rising levels of knife crime, mental ill health, and chronic levels of loneliness. This Tory government is failing on the climate emergency and pursuing policies that are bringing nothing but destruction to their environment, their health, and their future.

However, it's hard not to be inspired by this socially conscious generation who, despite the injustices they face, have not been deterred and continue to demand change. Across the country, young people are taking to the streets and leading the climate strikes, they're campaigning on issues they care about, volunteering in their thousands, and using social media to make their voices heard.

We often say that young people are the leaders of tomorrow, but recent events have shown they are the leaders of today.

The next Labour government will invest in young people and match their ambition with the money and resources needed to put support back into our communities.

We will take radical steps, from building a National Youth Service to leading a Green Industrial Revolution to tackle the climate crisis, and ensure that every young person can fulfil their potential and feel secure in their future. And we will get Brexit sorted in six months by giving people the final say – with a choice between a sensible leave deal or remain. We will implement whatever the British people decide.

I would like to thank Cat Smith, the Shadow Minister for Youth Affairs, for leading efforts in the Labour Party to develop new policies for young people. Policies that will transform the lives of young people and change our country for the good.

This election is a once-in-a-generation chance to rebuild and transform our country. The future is ours to make. It's time for real change so that no one is held back and no community is left behind.

Jeremy Corbyn

Introduction

Labour will transform our country so that all young people feel valued, included and secure in their future.

We will achieve this vision under five key pillars:

- Skilled and equipped to learn and earn
- Active members of their communities and society

- Experiencing positive health and wellbeing
- Happy and confident in their future
- Treated fairly and equally

Skilled and equipped to learn and earn

Education is a right for all, not just a privileged few. Young people need a broad education that equips them with the knowledge and skills they need to learn and earn.

The Tories have slashed funding at every stage of our education system, reversing years of investment under the last Labour government. Schools are being subjected to intensified testing, inspection, league tables and competition, which has failed to improve pupil attainment and is putting unnecessary pressure on young people.

Britain's skills crisis has grown under the Tories and the narrowing curriculum is denying many young people access to modern languages, arts and music, or technical and engineering skills that will be essential in a world shaped by climate change. The Tories have slashed college funding and the education maintenance allowance, which enabled young people from poorer backgrounds to continue their studies. Tuition fees have trebled and maintenance grants have been scrapped, leaving the poorest graduates with an average debt of £57,000.

Labour will:

- Create a National Education Service to provide support and opportunity throughout your life.
- Review the curriculum to ensure that it enriches students and covers subjects such as black history and continues to teach issues like the Holocaust. Pupils will learn both the science of climate and environmental emergency, and the skills necessary to deal with them.
- Reform existing careers advice, working towards an integrated information, advice and guidance system.
- Abolish tuition fees and bring back maintenance grants in both further and higher education, making lifelong learning accessible for all as part of a National Education Service.
- Bring back the Education Maintenance Allowance as the Welsh Labour Government has done.
- Launch a Climate Apprenticeship programme and introduce targeted bursaries for this available to women, BAME people, care leavers, ex-armed forces personnel, and people with disabilities.

Active members of their communities and society

Every young person needs somewhere to go, something to do and someone to speak to. For many young people, their local youth centre is the only safe space they have to get the support they need outside of school or college.

Under the Tories, at least 750 youth centres have closed since and over 14,500 youth and community worker jobs have gone. The consequences of these cuts have been devastating. Young people have lost opportunities to learn new skills, develop friendships, and have their say in local decision-making. Recorded crime has risen, including violent crimes like knife crime, which has risen to record high levels, up 80% in the last five years. The rate of school exclusions has increased, as has social inequality – crime rates are driven by both.

Labour will:

- Build a properly funded, professionally staffed National Youth Service, and guarantee every young person has access to local, high-quality youth work.
- Focus on crime prevention and early interventions, giving people the best chance of rehabilitation.
- Invest in a youth justice system in which schools, local authorities, health authorities and youth services work together to divert young people away from the pathways towards crime.

The internet also plays a crucial role in connecting communities across Britain and has become such a central part of our lives. It opens up opportunities for work, creativity, entertainment and friendship. What was once a luxury is now an essential utility.

Labour will:

- Deliver the fastest full-fibre broadband free to everybody in every home in our country by creating a new public service, boosting the economy, connecting communities and putting money back in your pocket.

From leading the climate strikes to local campaigns, young people across the country have shown they are politically engaged and want to get involved in their communities and democracy locally, nationally and internationally.

However, politics remains inaccessible, limited to the wealthy and connected few, and many young people feeling their future is decided for them by another generation. This includes the 1.5 million 16- and 17-year-olds living in Britain who are denied the right to vote by this Conservative government. As a result, young people are consistently less likely to register to vote and participate in elections. Labour will give young people the tools they need to be active members of their communities and society.

Labour will:

- Oversee the largest extension of the franchise in generations, reducing the voting age to 16 and giving full voting rights to all UK residents.
- Make sure everyone who is entitled to vote can do so by introducing a system of automatic voter registration.



Experiencing positive health and wellbeing

A decade of Tory underfunding and cuts has driven our NHS into a year round crisis, leaving too many young people unable to get the support they need. Public health budgets have been slashed, mental health services are stretched to breaking point and thousands of young people are being turned away or have to wait too long for treatment.

A lack of jobs, a shortage of housing and cuts to public services has also pushed young people's health and wellbeing into crisis and created huge inequalities between the richest and poorest young people. Labour will provide the real change young people need to live happier, healthier, more fulfilling lives.

Labour will

- Double the funding of child and adolescent mental health services through our £845 million plan for Healthy Young Minds.
- Establish a network of open access mental health hubs to enable more children to access mental health.
- Recruit almost 3,500 qualified counsellors to guarantee every child access to school counsellors.

Time off to rest, relax and be with family is essential to a happy and fulfilling life, but workers in the UK put in some of the longest hours in Europe.

Labour will:

- Reduce average full-time weekly working hours to 32 across the economy and with no loss of pay, funded by productivity increases.
- Create a £1 billion Cultural Capital Fund to transform libraries, museums and galleries across the country.

Happy and confident in their future

The climate and environmental emergency is the greatest challenge we face and this election is our best hope to protect future generations from an uninhabitable planet. Many young people do not feel happy and confident in their future, which is why they are taking to the streets, leading the climate strikes, and sending a clear message to the government that climate change will be a fundamental and defining feature of their adult lives.

Instead of taking radical and urgent action to tackle the climate emergency, the Tories have cut green schemes while forcing through dangerous fracking and offering tax relief to oil and gas corporations. The Tories even criticises pupils who missed school to protest over climate change. Labour hears young people's demands for change and has a radical, credible plan to tackle the climate and environmental emergency.

Labour will:

- Kick-start a Green Industrial Revolution that will create one million jobs in the UK to transform our industry, energy, transport, agriculture and our buildings, while restoring nature.
- Achieve the substantial majority of our emissions reductions by 2030 in a way that is evidence-based.

Everyone has the right to a decent, secure home. This government has also made it nearly impossible for young people to move out of your parents' home because rents are sky high. As for buying a house, that's an idea from another generation, because the Tories haven't built any. Labour has ambitious plans to tackle the housing crisis.

Labour will:

- Deliver a new social housebuilding programme of more than a million homes over a decade, with council housing at its heart.
- Scrap the Conservatives' bogus definition of 'affordable', set as high as 80% of market rents, and replace it with a definition linked to local incomes.
- Reform Help to Buy to focus it on first-time buyers on ordinary incomes.
- Take urgent action to protect private renters through rent controls, open-ended tenancies, and new, binding minimum standards.
- Stop runaway rents by capping them with inflation, and give cities powers to cap rents further.
- Give renters the security they need to make their rented housing a home, with new open-ended tenancies to stop unfair, 'no fault' evictions.

Treated fairly and equally

Labour is the party of equality, committed to achieving a world free from all forms of bigotry and discrimination. The Conservatives have failed to tackle society's burning injustices. Instead, they have inflicted injustice after injustice on women, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) and LGBT+ communities and disabled people. Labour will take bold steps to ensure all young people should be treated fairly and equally.

Labour will:

- Close the gender pay gap by 2030 and deliver gender pay equality by making the state responsible for enforcing equal pay legislation for the first time.
- Implement recommendations of the Lammy Review to address the disparity of treatment and outcomes for BAME people within the criminal justice system.
- Reforming the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to introduce self-declaration for transgender people.
- Eliminate remaining areas of discrimination in law, ensuring that LGBT+ people can live in safety and dignity.
- Put LGBT+ equality at the heart of government, ensuring our public services are LGBT+ inclusive and delivering on the national LGBT Action Plan.
- Provide sufficient funding for schools to deliver mandatory LGBT+ inclusive relationships and sex education.

Work should provide a decent life for all, guaranteeing not just dignity and respect in the workplace, but also the income and leisure time to allow for a fulfilling life outside it. But getting onto the job ladder can be very difficult with many young people who are forced to take on series of unpaid internships and placements. Young workers also face out-and-out discrimination, receiving lower wages than older colleagues for the same day's work. This has left many young workers crippled with debt and resorting to food banks. Labour will stand up for young workers.

Labour will:

- Cap the total amount that can be paid in overdraft fees or interest on a loan.
- Rapidly introduce a Real Living Wage of at least £10 per hour for all workers aged 16 and over, abolishing the youth rate of the minimum wage.
- End insecurity and exploitation by ending zero-hours contracts, strengthening trade union rights and ensuring all workers have equal rights from day one.
- Banning unpaid internships - because it's not fair for some to get a leg up when others can't afford to.

Access to public transport is vital for young people who want travel to work, to study and to visit friends. But young people have less disposable income and tend to be in lower paid, more insecure work and have which means they are spending a higher proportion of their income on travel. Labour wants to help young people make the most out of life by investing in them.wants to help young people make the most out of life by investing in them.

Labour will:

- Introduce free bus travel for under-25s, where councils take control of their buses.
- Deliver improvements for rail passengers including more affordable fares, by bringing our railways back into public ownership, using options including franchise expiry.



**IT'S TIME FOR
REAL CHANGE**

 **Labour**