



Manifesto 2024

What does it mean for you and your business?

By MHP Public Affairs

What does the manifesto *really* mean?

The eagerly anticipated Labour election manifesto is finally here, and the big surprise is, there are no surprises.

The significant policy announcements have all already been made and the pitch has been well and truly rolled - and Keir has spoken about his 5 missions for Government, and more recently his 6 steps for change over and over. This is a feature, not a bug – Labour knows that the job, now, is to keep sceptical switchers on board rather than to promise radical change.

And Labour made a virtue of this at the launch – as Keir said at the podium today: “It’s not about rabbits out the hat, it’s not about pantomime, we’ve had that. I’m running as a candidate to be Prime Minister, not a candidate to run the circus”.

Labour's pitch to the country is that nothing works any more, after 14 years long years of the Tories. It's also that the Labour Party is no longer a party of protest, but a party that seeks power for (incrementalist) political change. This document sets a realistic vision for the change that 5 years of a Labour Government will deliver.

And to hammer home that point, "change" is referenced 197 times across the manifesto. Now that is consistent messaging...

There is no doubt that some people will be left asking for more, but Keir has been consistent that the manifesto is about setting the direction of travel for an incoming Government not laying out a day by day, blow by blow timeline of every decision for the next parliament. When I worked for Labour, I'd explain to stakeholders that the manifesto is like a jigsaw, putting together existing policy announcements, not a roadmap. Today is the culmination of that jigsaw finally being put together but it isn't the end of the story. There is still plenty of time to influence the shape of the Labour's agenda as they transition from opposition to Government.

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1. The manifesto and business

What does the manifesto mean for business in the UK?



What does Labour's manifesto mean for business?

Growth, stability and partnership. If there was a mantra that Keir Starmer wants business to take away from today's manifesto, it is just that; working with private sector, a Labour Government will deliver stability and supply-side reform to help grow a sluggish UK economy.

Fundamentally, Labour has committed to end the short-termism and “chaos” of the current Government and will develop long-term plans for growth.

To aid this, expect significant, if yet undisclosed, changes to the **National Policy Planning Framework** to help achieve its target to build 1.5 million homes over the next parliament; and to help businesses grow their operations – the expansion of laboratories, digital infrastructure and gigafactories are cited as specific examples in the manifesto.

For national infrastructure, Labour will also develop a new **ten-year infrastructure strategy**, which will align with a new sectoral **Industrial Strategy**

Given the UK's poor fiscal position, Labour has made clear that much of the **capital investment** to help boost growth with need to come from the private sector. The new **Industrial Strategy Council** will help to facilitate this.

Labour has reiterated its now well-established **fiscal rules** for any public sector investment, which include that the ‘day-to-day’ balance of public services – which does not include long-term investment – balance costs and revenues. Debt must also be falling as a share of GDP by the end of the next parliament.

On tax, which has been one of the most prominent policy areas discussed in this campaign, Labour has reiterated its pledge *not* to raise income tax, National Insurance or VAT. For businesses it has also confirmed that **Corporation Tax** will not rise above 25%.

Overall, expect a broadly more **interventionist, energised Government** which will both be receptive to investment - but cautious about businesses passing on major costs to consumers during a cost of living crisis.

Although little new detail has been published today, business should expect more to come if Labour wins the election on 5 July – especially in its first 100 days.

Labour will...

Publish a roadmap for business taxation for the next parliament which will allow businesses to plan investments with confidence.

Aim to double the size of the UK's co-operative and mutuals sector.

Create a Green Prosperity Plan to invest in the industries of the future – creating 650,000 jobs by 2030.

Replace the business rates system, so that revenue can be raised more fairly.

Retain a permanent full expensing system for capital investment and retain the annual investment allowance for small business.

Make it easier for small and medium sized enterprises to access capital.

Improve guidance and remove barriers to exporting for small businesses.

Give firms greater clarity on what qualifies for allowances to improve business investment decisions.

Raise £7 billion in tax by launching raids on private schools, overseas property investors and non-doms.

Reform of the British Business Bank, including a stronger mandate to support growth in the regions and Nations.

Create a new National Infrastructure and Service Transformation Authority, bringing together existing bodies, to oversee the design, scope, and delivery of projects

Business in the UK - policies that may impact you

2. The five missions – fleshed out

Breaking down the manifesto by mission

Get Britain Building Again

Labour's strategy for revitalising the UK's economy and housing landscape is rooted in reform of the planning system, removing bureaucratic barriers and fostering a framework designed to meet contemporary needs. By streamlining the process for significant infrastructure projects and aligning national planning policy with the demands of a modern economy, the party is seeking to catalyse development in sectors critical for future growth, such as technology and clean energy.

The ambitious target of constructing 1.5 million new homes is central to reversing what Labour perceives as the detrimental changes made by the Conservative government in this policy area, particularly the erosion of mandatory housing targets. Central to achieving this is a focus on urban regeneration and strategic land use, coupled with a commitment to large-scale new community developments.

At the heart of Labour's economic vision is integrating Local Growth Plans with a broader national industrial strategy, emphasising the need for long-term, strategic partnerships between government, industry, and educational institutions, representing a shift towards a more collaborative, strategic, and regional economic policy framework.

Infrastructure Development and Planning Reform

- Revise the current planning system to expedite development of new infrastructure such as roads, railways, and reservoirs, as well as the needs of a modern economy, facilitating the construction of laboratories, digital infrastructure, and gigafactories.
- Combined authorities will receive new planning powers and greater flexibility in grant funding usage.
- Introduce new national policy statements to streamline major projects, reducing bureaucracy and costs.
- Local authorities will receive 300 additional planning officers, funded by a higher stamp duty surcharge on non-UK residents.
- Take decisive measure to ensure planning authorities maintain up-to-date Local Plans, collaborating with key stakeholders to create long-term plans that identify growth sectors and the necessary programmes and infrastructure.

Housing Strategy

- Committed to building 1.5 million new homes over the next parliamentary term.
- The National Policy Planning Framework will be revised to reverse Conservative changes and reinstate mandatory housing targets.
- Use intervention powers when necessary to meet housing needs, while still allowing local communities to influence housebuilding, encouraging communities to support developments by ensuring they received direct benefits.
- Combined and Mayoral Authorities will be required to plan for housing growth.

Brownfield Development and Green Belt Preservation

- A 'brownfield first' strategy will be adopted, prioritising previously used land for development and accelerating the approval of urban brownfield sites.
- Dedicated to preserving the green belt and will adopt a strategic approach to its designation and release.
- Development on 'grey belt' land will be favoured, with 'golden rules' to ensure benefits for communities and nature.

New Towns and Strategic Planning

- Labour plans to build a new generation of towns, drawing inspiration from the 1945 Labour government.
- Large-scale new communities, urban extensions, and regeneration projects will be part of this initiative.
- New mechanisms for cross-boundary strategic planning will be introduced

Social and Affordable Housing

- Aim to significantly increase the construction of social and affordable housing.
- Planning obligations will be strengthened to ensure new developments include more affordable homes.
- The Affordable Homes Programme will be modified to maximise the number of homes built from existing funding.
- Councils and housing associations will be supported to enhance their contribution to affordable housing supply.
- The building of new social rented homes will be prioritised, and protections for existing social housing will be reviewed and strengthened.

Switch on Great British Energy

Since its announcement in 2021, Keir Starmer has significantly watered down his flagship £28 billion Green Prosperity Plan, blaming the Conservatives for "crashing" the economy.

While today's Manifesto promises less money than its historic green investment pledge – with critics saying that £8.3bn for Great British Energy over a parliament is not "game-changing"- it nevertheless speaks to Starmer's ambition to make Britain a world leading clean energy superpower.

It promises 650,000 high quality jobs, a warm home plans which will upgrade 5 million homes and goes into a little more detail on Great British Energy - which will drive forward investment in domestic clean energy production by partnering with industry and trade unions and ensure distributed production capacity through its 'Local Power Plan.'

While Sunak's government reneged on some climate commitments during office – e.g., removing the Bank of England's commitment to give due consideration to climate change – the Labour manifesto promises to accelerate net zero by strengthening significant frameworks and pledges. This includes a 'carbon border adjustment mechanism' to prevent countries from dumping lower-quality goods in Britain, reversing the Conservatives BoFE decision, and mandating British financial institutions and FTSE 100s to implement credible plans that align with the Paris Agreement's 1.5C goal.

However, after public backlash to Labour mayor Sadiq Khan's ULEZ policy, Starmer will be mindful that Britain's path to net zero does not fall on the taxpayer in anyway. Whether his lofty goals can be achieved on a tight public purse remains to be seen.

Labour's plans to achieve clean energy by 2030 will see it:

- Work with the private sector to double onshore wind, triple solar power, and quadruple offshore wind by 2030, and invest in carbon capture and storage, hydrogen and marine energy.
- Ensure the long-term security of the nuclear sector, extending the lifetime of existing plants, and get Hinkley Point C over the line and building new nuclear reactors.
- Maintain a strategic reserve of gas power stations to guarantee security of supply, promising not to jeopardise existing jobs, but not issuing new licences to explore new fields.
- Ban fracking
- Support investment in the plan by closing the loopholes in the windfall tax on oil and gas companies

Publicly owned Great British Energy will "drive forward investment in clean home-grown energy production" and give taxpayers a stake in the market. Its HQ will be in Scotland.

- GBE will partner with industry and trade unions, delivering clean power by "co-investing in leading technologies, helping support capital-intensive projects, and deploying local energy production to benefit communities across the country." To support this, Labour will capitalise GBE with £8.3bn over the next parliament.
- To reduce pressure on the transmission grid and diversify the energy mix, Labour will deploy more distributed production capacity through its 'Local Power Plan.' GBE will partner with energy companies, local authorities, and co-operatives to install thousands of clean power projects across the country. Communities will be invited to "come forward with projects" and Labour will "work with local leaders and devolved governments to ensure local people benefit directly from this energy production."

Labour's new 'National Wealth Fund' will deliver 650,000 high quality jobs by 2030 and rebuild supplier chains at home. It will:

- Invest in ports, hydrogen and industrial clusters in every corner of the country.
- Reward clean energy developers with a British Jobs Bonus, allocating up to £500 million per year from 2026, to incentivise firms who offer good jobs, terms and conditions and build their manufacturing supply chains in our industrial heartlands, coastal areas, and energy communities.
- End the "injustice of the Mineworkers' pension scheme."

Labour will introduce a warm homes plan which invests an extra £6.6 billion over the next parliament, doubling the existing planned government investment, to upgrade five million homes to cut bills for families. It will:

- Offer grants and low interest loans to support investment and other improvements such as solar panels, batteries, and low carbon heating to cut bills. It will fund this by working with the private sector to accelerate home upgrades and low carbon heating.
- Ensure homes in the private rented sector meet minimum energy efficiency standards by 2030.

Build an NHS fit for the future

As Labour's policy offer has taken shape, it has become clear the party will not radically change the policy direction already set in NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care.

Labour will not restructure the NHS in England, will continue to support many of the ongoing programmes like encouraging the growing role of community pharmacy, and continue the ambition to ensure the NHS is an innovative health service.

On tricky issues where there is consensus about the goal, but little consensus on how to achieve it, Labour has taken a cautious approach. On social care for example, Labour has said it will only 'build consensus' towards a National Care Service. The plan for a cap on care costs from 2025 is missing from the manifesto, although the party had recently voiced support for it. Its main innovation has been to boost care workers pay and rights. Making social care a great sector to work in is an easy choice for the party of labour.

Another easy choice has been to voice the intention to focus resources and on preventative medicine in primary care. It's been simple for many people to say this before, but more difficult for the health service to actually deliver on this.

So, policy may not have changed, the big question is whether the politics will. Does Wes Streeting have the political capital and will to actually drive serious, prolonged, service reform and transformation? Can he deliver on the promise to cut waste in the health service? Will resources go into departments and services (like social care and public health) which actually protect the NHS, and prevent burden on the health services?

The answer to these questions has not come in the manifesto.

Public Health

- Stop the next generation legally buying cigarettes and ensure all hospitals integrate 'opt-out' smoking cessation interventions.
- A ban to stop vapes being branded or advertised to appeal to children.
- A ban on advertising junk food to children along with the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to under-16s.

National Health Service

- A new 'Fit For the Future' fund to double the number of CT and MRI scanners, alongside delivering the current New Hospital Programme.
- A plan for procurement, with a clearer route to get products into the NHS coupled with incentive structures to drive innovation and faster regulatory approval.
- Transform the NHS app to give performance information on local services, allow patients to see the medical guidelines for their treatment, and support clinical trial recruitment.
- Implement professional standards and regulate NHS managers as well as establishing a Royal College of Clinical Leadership to champion the voice of clinicians, both with the aim of supporting patient safety.
- Share waiting lists across neighbouring hospitals and deliver an extra two million NHS operations, scans, and appointments every year by incentivising staff to carry out additional appointments out of hours.
- Incentivise GPs to see the same patient
- Trial Neighbourhood Health Centres, bringing together existing services such as family doctors, district nurses, care workers, physiotherapists, palliative care, and mental health specialists under one roof, while creating a Community Pharmacist Prescribing Service to increase pharmacist's prescribing powers.
- Recruit an additional 8,500 new mental health staff in Labour's first term with Young Futures hubs to provide drop-in mental health support for children and young people.
- Commission a new HIV action plan in England, in pursuit of ending HIV cases by 2030.

Dentistry

- A rescue plan to provide 700,000 more urgent dental appointments and recruit new dentists to areas that need them.
- In the longer term, reform the dental contract, with a shift to focusing on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists.
- Introduce a supervised tooth-brushing scheme for 3- to 5-year-olds, targeting the areas of highest need.

Social care

- Establish a Fair Pay Agreement in adult social care.
- Use national standards to deliver consistency of care across the country, building towards a National Care Service.
- Build consensus for the longer-term reform needed to create a sustainable National Care Service.

Take back our streets

Employing Tony Blair's old phrase "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime", Labour have shaped their plan for policing on the scandals of the last few years and pushed for a community approach on prevention. The policies revealed today reflect the brutal murder of Sarah Everard by a serving police officer, instances of police racism, and the Infected Blood and Post Office scandals, all of which loom large in the public eye. There is recognition that the issues of the last few years are widely viewed as institutional, and by providing victims of public scandals with legal aid and introducing mandatory vetting of police officers there is the sense of quiet wholesale reform.

On crime, the manifesto opts for more targeted measures and reflects the wider devolution that a Labour government is expected to bring. Policies for new Youth Hubs, neighbourhood policing, and linking probation to health and housing concentrate efforts on local initiatives and recognise the social factors behind crime. Even though, as he never tires of saying, Keir Starmer used to be the Director of Public Prosecutions, there is surprisingly little on tackling the backlog in courts. There are vague mentions of reforming sentencing and probation, but caution is still the by-word for Starmer's Labour: unwilling to spook the electorate, most changes are predicated by promises for strategic reviews into any proposed changes.

The Home Office is a notoriously difficult department, but unwilling to be cowed by the challenge, Yvette Cooper is once again auditioning to be Home Secretary. The confidence of the public and police service is vital, and she will be pleased that the manifesto has the backing of figures such as Gavin Thomas, the former President of the Police Superintendents Association. As one of the only Shadow Cabinet members who served in the last Labour Government, Cooper will be keen to replicate New Labour's record of cutting crime by a third. Whether a Labour government in 2024 can achieve this is yet to be seen.

Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour

- Labour will introduce a new Neighbourhood Policing Guarantee with town centre patrols by putting more neighbourhood police and PCSOs on the beat, aiming to halve knife crime in a decade and police a new ban on zombie-style blades and machetes, with strengthened rules to prevent online sales.
- There will be new Respect Orders providing courts the power to ban persistent adult offenders from town centres
- Shoplifting gangs will be tackled by ending the rule which stops shop thefts under £200 being investigated and creating a new specific offence for assaults on shopworkers that will protect them from threats and violence.

Tackling violence against women and girls

- Labour aims to halve violence against women and girls in a decade by fast-track rape cases through the courts and providing legal advocates for rape victims. There will be rape units in each police force and domestic violence specialists in every 999 control room.
- A new criminal offence for spiking will be introduced and the use of Stalking Protection Orders will be strengthened, giving women the right to know the identity of online stalkers.

Preventing youth crime

- Every young person caught in possession of a knife will be referred to a Youth Offending Team and will receive a mandatory plan to prevent reoffending, with penalties including curfews, tagging, and custody for the most serious cases.
- New youth hubs, containing mental health staff and youth workers to tackle the crisis in mental health, will give teenagers the support they need and prevent knife crime.
- Labour will also introduce a new offence of criminal exploitation of children, targeting the gangs who are luring young people into violence and crime.

Police and criminal justice reform

- Mandatory professional standards on vetting, checks and misconduct for individual officers will be introduced; and there will be stronger training on racism and violence against women and girls.
- Labour will make more prosecutors available by allowing Associate Prosecutors to work on appropriate cases, and carry out a review of sentencing to ensure it is modernised.
- A 'Hillsborough Law' will be introduced which will place a legal duty of candour on public servants and authorities, and provide legal aid for victims of disasters or state-related deaths.
- The Windrush compensation scheme will be reformed to run effectively, with a new Windrush Commissioner. Labour will also ensure, through an investigation or inquiry, that the truth about the events at Orgreave comes to light.

Break down barriers to opportunity

Although less prominent than the last time we expected an incoming Labour Government, education is a key area in Labour's mission to break down barriers for individual growth.

Labour's view is that society has becoming increasingly stratified under the current government, with background becoming a more critical determinant of life outcomes.

To alleviate this, Labour is announcing investment in education at all life stages. Most significant is its early-years policy, which will provide significant numbers of new nursery places in England, with an emphasis on those who cannot afford it.

Elsewhere, they aim to address educational shortcomings, such as limited access to early learning and vocational pathways, and to foster skills and resilience in young people, as well as providing life-long educational opportunities for those wishing to retrain and change careers.

They additionally lay out their plans to reform and streamline initiatives on further and adult education – which is perceived as critical both to unlocking opportunity and to reversing rising levels of worklessness in the working age population.

Recruit 6,500 new expert teachers in key subjects

- Recruit more teachers into shortage subjects (aiding areas with recruitment difficulties), and tackle retention issues.
- Review how bursaries are allocated and the structure of retention payments.
- Update the Early Career Framework and ensure new teachers have/are working towards Qualified Teacher Status.
- Introduce Teacher Training Entitlement to ensure teachers continue professional development.
- Reinstate the School Support Staff Negotiating Body.
- Create a new Excellence in Leadership Programme, a mentoring framework that expands the capacity of headteachers and leaders to improve their schools.
- Introduce new Regional Improvement Teams to enhance school-to-school support and spread best practice.

3,000 new primary school-based nurseries

- Labour will open an additional 3,000 nurseries through upgrading space in primary schools, to deliver the extension of government funded hours that they feel families are entitled to.
- Labour will review the parental leave system, to give parents flexibility to best care for children.

Free breakfast clubs in every primary school

- Labour will fund free breakfast clubs in every primary school for all children, which they say will improve behaviour, attendance, and learning.
- This will support parents through the cost-of-living crisis, and they will also reduce school costs by limiting the number of branded items of uniform and PE kit that schools can require.

A modern curriculum so young people are ready for work and life

- Launch an expert-led review of curriculum and assessment, working with school staff, parents and employers. The curriculum should become rich and broad, inclusive, and innovative.
- Consideration of the right balance of assessment methods whilst protecting the important role of examinations.
- Improve inclusivity and expertise in mainstream schools. Ensure admissions decisions account for the needs of communities and require all schools to co-operate with their local authority on school admissions, SEND inclusion, and place planning.
- Support children to study a creative or vocational subject until they are 16.

High-quality apprenticeships and specialist technical colleges

- Establish Skills England to bring together business, training providers and unions with national and local government.
- Commitment to devolving adult skills funding to Combined Authorities.
- Transformation of Further Education colleges into specialist Technical Excellence Colleges.
- Reform the Conservatives' broken Apprenticeships Levy and create a flexible Growth and Skills Levy.

Other important policies now committed to

New Clean Power Alliance

International coalition placing UK at the centre of global climate action

New UK-EU security pact

To strengthen co-operation on mutual threats

Strategic defence review

To assess current military threats and the UK's existing capabilities

Create Border Security Command

To tackle small boats, funded by scrapping Rwanda programme

House of Lords reform

Mandatory retirement at 80 and consultation on future reform



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Thank you.

