

## **2025 NATIONAL POLICY FORUM CONSULTATION - Recommended submissions**

### **CONTENTS**

<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Kickstart economic growth</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Make Britain a clean energy superpower</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Safer streets</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Break down barriers to opportunity</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Build an NHS fit for the future</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Britain reconnected</b>	<b>8</b>

### **INTRODUCTION**

This year's NPF consultation will run until Sunday 8 June. The Labour Leadership has named this NPF cycle 'fixing the foundations to deliver change'. However, that is not what the Government has been doing. By keeping the 2 Child Benefit Cap, cutting Winter Fuel Allowance, and implementing swingeing cuts to welfare with further cuts to follow, Starmer and Reeves are fully signing up to many Tory policies that punish working class people for problems they didn't create.

But it's not enough for grassroots Labour members to simply criticise on the sidelines. We have to use the institutions of the Party to make proposals and show what type of policies we want to see. We know that most Labour members agree with us. A recent Survation survey showed that most Labour members oppose the current direction of the Party, with 90% supporting a wealth tax and opposing increased military spending. So let's use this NPF Consultation to tell the Party - end austerity, tax wealth, and invest properly in public services.

This document includes suggested policy interventions for socialist and progressive Labour members to make in this process. The proposals are grouped under the categories laid out in the NPF. Each category has sub-questions which attempt to act as a framework for the consultation. We have only included specific sub-questions where we believe it can identify straightforward answers in line with our principles.

The proposals in this document are based on policies Momentum have supported in the past, including our all members' Convention in 2024, recommended submissions to the NPF in 2023

and recommended motions. These are nonetheless only suggestions and are not intended to amount to a fully comprehensive political manifesto - proposals should be fully debated and can of course be amended before submitting.

We would particularly encourage members to make individual submissions but in particular to take proposals to your CLP, trade union and/or socialist society in order to generate debate and win fellow Party members and trade unionists over to these ideas. For more information on how to contribute to the National Policy Forum, see [here](#).

## KICKSTART ECONOMIC GROWTH

*In response to question 1, 'What are the key challenges in delivering higher living standards across the UK?'*

The biggest challenge to delivering higher living standards are austerity policies, which were initiated by the Conservatives in 2010, and which have been continued by the Labour Government. The combination of measures like the continuation of the 2 child benefit cap, cuts to the Winter Fuel Allowance, massive cuts to welfare and the civil service all amount to a deepening of austerity. Similarly, Starmer is yet to commit to restoring proper funding for local government, which guarantees the continuation of austerity in terms of the underfunding of key services that our communities rely on.

As [this article](#) outlines, the Office for Budget Responsibility's figures from November show managed expenditure for all government departments falling from 44.9 per cent of GDP in 2023/24 to 44.5 per cent in 2029-30, while analysis from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows the average family will be £1,400 worse off by 2030, representing a 3% fall in their disposable incomes. There can be no doubt that the Government has taken the political decision to continue austerity policies, even though their supporters deny it.

Instead, the Government should end Rachel Reeves's fiscal rule, allowing the UK to borrow more for investment, and implement a wealth tax. A wealth tax of just 2% on assets over £10 million would raise £24 billion a year - this could then be reinvested in social services that support living standards. Capital gains tax and dividends tax should be raised to the levels of income tax. Cuts to Winter Fuel Payments should be reversed entirely, planned cuts to welfare should be halted immediately and the Government should end and replace Universal Credit with a system that treats people with dignity and respect. The TUC's 2022 policy paper "[A Replacement for Universal Credit](#)" offers a clear way forward to create a social security system which focuses on the prevention of poverty, promotes equality, and enables financial independence. Labour should support the TUC's proposal. The Government should also reverse grant cuts to local government to ensure all statutory responsibilities of councils are fully funded as well as providing adequate funding for councils to use their discretionary powers according to local priorities.

The Government should end the dominance of private monopolies over key sections of the economy by taking key utilities (energy, mail, and water) into public ownership, as well as nationalising strategic sectors of the economy such as steel, where privatisation has been a catastrophe. Taking these sectors in-house would enable the Government to promote living standards by ensuring that investment is made in the sectors that require it and by ending rip-off bills that hit consumers.

*In response to question 4: What are the key challenges in delivering 1.5 million homes across this Parliament, and how could they be tackled?*

Britain's housing system is broken. At the heart of the problem is the simple fact that we do not have enough council housing. To date, the Labour Government has made few commitments on expanding council housing and has instead outlined a target of 1.5 million homes to be predominantly built by private sector developers. History shows that private developers are unlikely to build homes on the scale required, especially under volatile market conditions, and many of these homes will not be decent quality or genuinely affordable.

Labour should commit to a mass programme of new council housing, with at least 100,000 zero-carbon council houses being built a year by the end of a first term. To ensure this has a real lasting impact, Labour should go beyond the existing commitment to reform the Right to Buy, and should end it altogether, as Wales and Scotland have already done, so that public housing stays in public hands. These policies would pay for themselves as the public sector would receive the rent that accrues from public housing.

There must also be an extension of powers and funding for councils to buy back homes from private landlords, especially those left empty or those sold off under Right to Buy. Immediate relief however can only be met with rent controls. As a baseline, rents must be capped at inflation, but Labour should legislate to give cities the power to impose stricter caps. New minimum standards in the private rented sector must be enforced stringently, with nationwide licensing and sanctions for those landlords who ignore the rules.

## **MAKE BRITAIN A CLEAN ENERGY SUPERPOWER**

*We recommend submissions along the following lines in response to questions 2-5:*

In place of a market-led response to the climate crisis which has failed utterly, Labour should commit to complete public ownership of energy - at the level of the grid, of energy and supply, as think tanks such as Common Wealth have argued.

This means:

- Bringing energy generation, transmission and distribution networks, and supply companies (e.g., 'Big Six', etc.) into public ownership;

- Creating an integrated energy system, comprising a National Energy Agency, and Regional and Municipal Energy Agencies (as per Labour's policy on Bringing Energy Home: Labour's proposal for publicly owned networks);
- The public Great British Energy (GBE) company, which has been set up by Labour, is woefully under-capitalised and does not play a retail function which is crucial if it is to directly reduce bills. GBE should be a large-scale operation on at least the scale of EDF in France as originally suggested, and should ensure that all existing renewable energy assets are taken into public ownership;
- Placing operational management of the public authorities comprising this integrated energy system in the hands of both management and the workforce;
- Ensuring a just transition by a) offering all workers in the fossil fuel industry retraining and unionised jobs in the renewable industry on at least equivalent terms and conditions with high job security, b) Creating sector wide transition plans through democratic participatory planning with workers, trade unions, and impacted communities; and c) investing surpluses from the newly publicly owned energy extraction companies into the economies of impacted communities to diversify them, following Community Wealth Building principles.
- This must be backed up by fully-financed, publicly-owned national and regional green investments banks, mandated to lend in line with the mission to decarbonise our economy while increasing productivity and creating good jobs across the country. Labour should support the creation of millions of good, green, unionised jobs and hundreds of thousands of 'climate apprenticeships' to tackle the climate crisis, bring investment into held-back areas and re-energise Britain. The establishment of the National Wealth Fund is potentially a step in the right direction, but its orientation is towards a private-sector led approach which will inhibit a genuinely strategic approach to the transition, based on Labour values.

## SAFER STREETS

We recommend submissions along the following lines in response to Q3:

*3. How do we increase public confidence in the police to keep neighbourhoods safe, restoring the link with communities?*

Lack of public confidence in the police is caused by genuine concerns about institutional racism and authoritarian practices.

The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act of 2022 is a disgraceful attack on the long-fought right to protest, it undermines a fundamental cornerstone of our democracy, and is a deeply authoritarian measure that would rightly be criticised were it to be introduced in other parts of the world.

Since Labour took Government, authoritarian actions by the police have regrettably continued, including repression of the pro Palestine demonstration on 18th January and the raiding of a Quaker meeting house to arrest activists on 27th March.

Labour should therefore repeal authoritarian legislation and scrap the hostile environment and repeal legislation criminalising GRT communities.

Meanwhile, Labour should remove the cap on judicial sitting hours to reduce the crown court backlog, while reducing the use of the short sentences and invest in genuinely rehabilitative prisons in order to reduce reoffending.

## **BREAK DOWN BARRIERS TO OPPORTUNITY**

*2. How can Labour give children the best possible start in life and break the unfair link between a young person's background and their future success?*

Labour should institute universal free-school meals for all primary school children. Means testing leaves many low-income pupils ineligible for Free School Meals, and the low eligibility threshold means that too many children miss out on free school meals. Children are means-tested by household, regardless of the number of children in the family, and a child is only eligible if their household received £7,400 per year or less. Only universal free school meals, as are currently implemented in London, Wales, and Scotland, can guarantee that all children receive a healthy lunch.

The Government must also end the 2 child benefit cap, a vindictive Tory policy that has caused 30,000 more children to fall into poverty since Labour were elected. The cost of doing this would be far outweighed by the gains in terms of child poverty reduction.

*3. How can we close the opportunity gap and help all children - including those from a disadvantaged background and children with special educational needs and disabilities – to achieve and thrive in school?*

The Government should address the historic underfunding of education and implement a major, sustained increase in state education funding.

The Government should also bring free schools and academies back under the control of parents, teachers and communities; and replace Ofsted with a new body to end often

punitive inspections and bring in a schools accountability system which is supportive, effective and fair. It should also restore the EMA.

The government should accept that, as the [National Educators Union \(NEU\)](#) have outlined, its offer of an unfunded pay rise of 2.8 per cent is totally inadequate and does nothing to ensure that staff remain in education and should instead offer a fully funded, significantly higher pay award to address the recruitment and retention crisis facing the sector.

The Government should also promote aspiration and motivation of young people to pursue tertiary education by abolishing tuition fees. Access to further education for adults should be increased by scrapping fees for further education for over 24s.

*5. How can early years services be better integrated to improve families' security and boost children's life chances?*

The Government should phase out the funding of profit-making early years private sector providers and promote to local authority-run delivery integrated into the rest of the education service. It should also reverse cuts to Sure Start, ensuring enough centres to provide a genuinely universal service, available in all communities, focused on the under-2s.

## **BUILD AN NHS FIT FOR THE FUTURE**

*Submissions in this section should emphasise the following:*

Labour must address the structural deficiencies of the NHS by reversing all privatisation and outsourcing. As per the [Socialist Health Association's 2024 response the NHS 10-Year Plan Consultation](#), NHS must be fully reinstated 'as a publicly provided service, operating within the context of a functioning welfare state, and which is planned according to the needs of the whole population and accountable to national and local elected bodies.' (Socialist Health Association)

Reversing NHS privatisation also means that all clinical services will be publicly provided and there will be no private sector input to decision making bodies at all levels. The Labour Government must repeal the 2022 Health and Social Care Act and abolish Integrated Care Systems, commit to major, long-term real-terms rise in investment in the NHS and reinstate free dental checks. The Government should also frontload the implementation of a National Care Service, rather than postponing it until 2028 as is currently the case. The National Care Service must be publicly owned and controlled.

*1. How can we shift the focus of healthcare out of hospitals and into the community to help cut hospital backlogs?*

Shifting to community based care has the potential to be positive but it is crucial that secondary care systems are not dismantled in favour of new community services, the transition is not used as an excuse for cost-cutting, and expensive duplication of services is avoided.

*2. How can we improve technology across health and social care to treat patients more quickly and accurately?*

NHS data systems must remain in the hands of public bodies rather than being privately owned or controlled. Data must be used for the delivery and clinical audit of care, and planning and monitoring services. If it is used for any other reasons, there must be a clear and transparent consent given from the public.

*3. How can we effectively tackle the causes of ill health so people stay healthy for longer, taking pressure off health and care services?*

As part of a universal health service, the Labour Government must commit to a national well-being strategy based on comprehensively improved public health. This will include priority for cross sector health promotion and policies, and funding and investment aimed at reducing health inequalities and addressing the determinants of health and ill-health, with an allocation mechanism to provide resources in line with need.

*4. How can we support NHS staff to deliver faster routine care for patients and bring down waiting lists?*

According to a recent [UNISON survey](#) last year, over a third of health workers said they were unable to concentrate at work because they were worrying about their finances. As a result, over a third of NHS staff had to take on extra shifts to get by, adding to an increased risk of stress and burnout

As UNISON and Unite are demanding, the Labour Government must commit to and implement proper pay rises for NHS staff, reversing 15 years of low pay, and conduct annual pay reviews in a timely manner, dealing directly with the relevant trade unions rather than discredited pay review bodies.

Meanwhile, current plans to use private providers to bring down elective waiting lists should be rethought, as these are poor value for money and - have adverse impacts for services and

patients. The role of Medical Associates Professionals (MAPS) needs to be seriously rethought and concerns raised by the Academy of the [Medical Royal Colleges \(AOMRC\)](#) and [the BMA](#) that MAPs are not cost-effective, do not free up doctor time, and are risk patient safety, poor value for money, need to be taken seriously.

*5. How can we improve access to mental health care and reduce backlogs in Care?*

As the [Royal College of Psychiatrists have outlined](#), the rise in people with mental illness being driven by real societal challenges and lack of available treatment. Labour must begin investing in services to improve people's mental health, including by implementing a major and strategic investment plan into Mental Health Services. There should be a specific strategy for child and adolescent mental health. Mental health disorders should be fully recognised and not demonised, and Ministers should refrain from making comments that underplay the seriousness of the mental health problems affecting society.

*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?*

The Government must protect the Equality Act and its legal protections for trans people following the damaging ruling from the Supreme Court on 16th April, including by opposing exclusions of transgender people from vital services, workplaces, and spaces where they have long been included, and by promoting trans-affirmative healthcare. Labour must also reverse the vindictive ban on puberty blockers, which disregards the urgent needs of vulnerable young people and flies in the face of Labour's manifesto commitment to 'remove indignities for trans people who deserve recognition and acceptance'.

## **BRITAIN RECONNECTED**

*What are the main threats to national security facing this Labour Government?*

The main threats to our national security are geopolitical instability, the growing number of international actors who act with total impunity and disregard for international law including the USA, Israel, and Russia, catastrophic climate change is a major force for instability, global pandemics, and hatred and fanaticism which has been driven by our involvement in destructive military interventions.

*2. What are the main lessons Labour can learn from the last Conservative*



### *Government's failings on national security and resilience?*

It is clear from the last 25 years that greater military spending and military interventions in other countries does not make our country more secure or more resilient. Britain already has the world's sixth largest military budget. We have military bases in Oman and Bahrain and we pay £9bn to Mauritius to keep the US air force on the Chagos Islands. Britain has intervened militarily or supported atrocities in Palestine, Yemen, Libya, Iraq and Afghanistan in this century alone with catastrophic consequences and without enhancing the security of people in the UK. Hikes in military spending inevitably reduce funding available for spending on the UK's degraded public sector.

If this Government is serious about national security, it should return the defence budget to its previous level of 2% or below to help facilitate different financial choices to, and should reduce our military spend in the Middle East and the Asia-Pacific, oppose Israel's genocide in Gaza and promote peace in Eastern Europe.

### *3. What lessons can Labour learn from our close allies and key partners' approach to national security?*

We should develop a foreign policy independent from the USA, which clearly has no interests in our national security, and we should focus on promoting peaceful resolution of conflicts based on legitimate multilateral institutions like the UN, international development, and climate change mitigation. Pressures from allies to increase military spending should be rejected in order to avoid a dangerous military buildup and to preserve finances for public services, and there should be no stationing of US nuclear weapons on UK shores.

We should also address the export of weapons to allies who have consistently enabled human rights abuses, war crimes and repression, with recipients including Saudi Arabia, Israel, Qatar, Turkey and the UAE. The Government should therefore prioritise arms control over arms exports and work with other states and international organisations to control the international arms trade. Existing licenses for arms exports to states that engage in human rights abuses and war crimes should be revoked.

### *5. How can Labour best ensure investment in defence and national security drives growth across the UK?*

Greater military spending is [not an effective way of creating good jobs and creates far fewer jobs than it did in the 1980s](#). There are far more effective ways of promoting living

standards in the UK than spending on weapons, such as building council houses, investing in public services and the green economy.