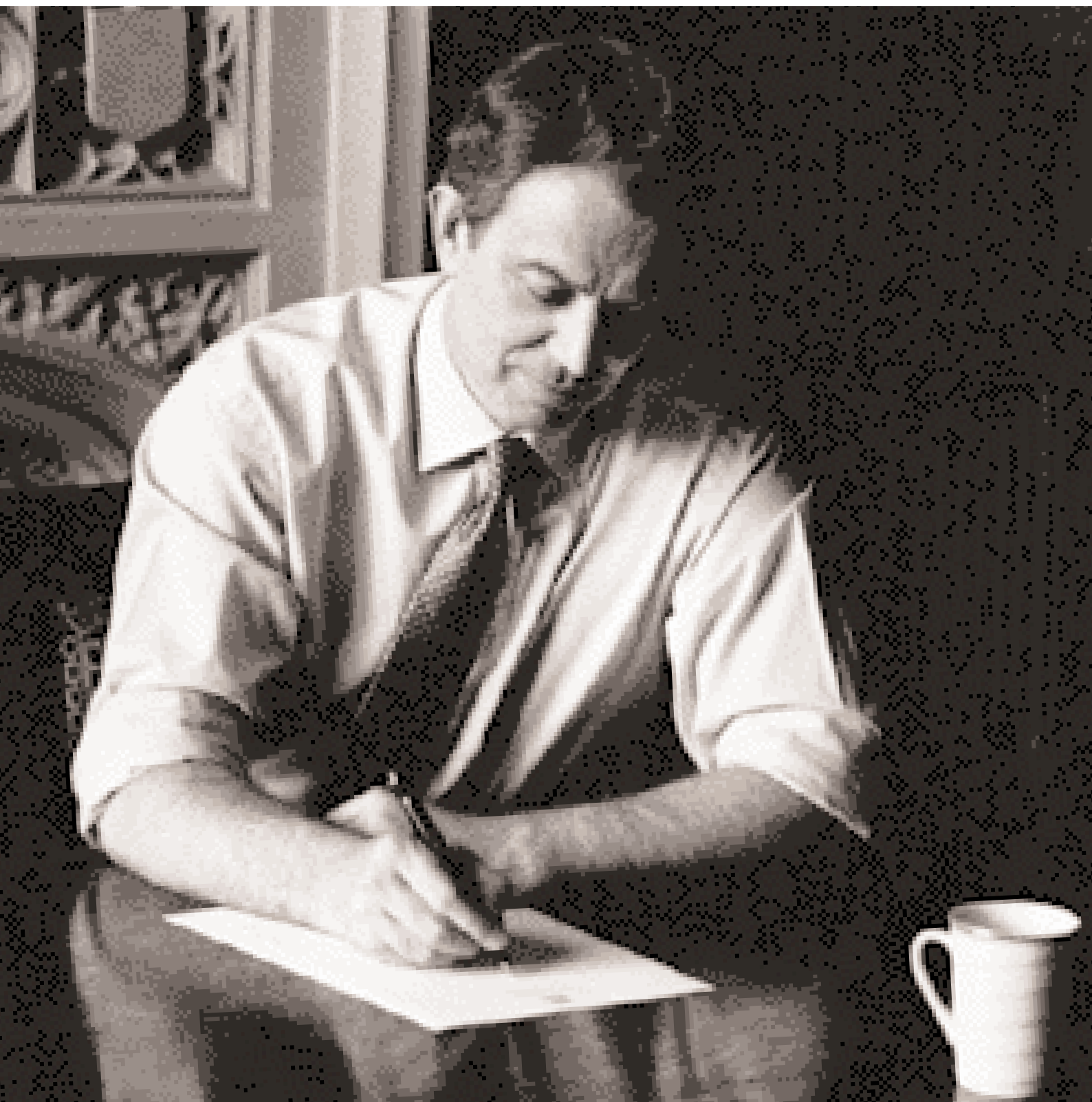


Ambitions for Wales

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This general election is in many ways even more important than the last. Since May 1997 we have laid the foundations of a Britain whose economy is stronger, where investment is now pouring into public services, where social division is being slowly healed and where influence abroad is being regained.

But these are only the foundations of larger change. Now is the chance to build the future properly, to make our second term the basis for a radical programme of British renewal: to keep a firm grip on inflation, with low interest rates and sound public finances, and then to build the dynamic and productive economy of the future; to keep investment coming into public services and then make the reforms so we use the money well; to refashion the welfare state on the basis of rights and responsibilities, with people helped to help themselves, not just given handouts; to ensure all families are safer in their communities by tackling crime and its causes; and to give Britain back its leadership role in the world. We need the second term to do all this. That is the choice: to make progress or to dismantle the foundations laid. And with the state of today's Conservatives, the choice is stark.

This choice will decide whether more people will be able to realise their aspirations for themselves and their children – to be able to rely on a stable economy where hard work is rewarded by rising living standards, to receive world-class education and healthcare, to enjoy a dignified old age, to feel safe and secure in a strong community, and to be proud to be British. Or whether we will be held back by the traditional British malaise of restricting life's great opportunities and blessings to a minority. There is much still to be done, but we have come a long way in four years. Wales now has its own National Assembly, and Britain is stronger as a result. Britain stands more prosperous, more equal, more respected. Our country is on a new course.

My passion is to continue the modernisation of Britain, in favour of hard-working families, so that all our children, wherever they live, whatever their background, have an equal chance to benefit from the opportunities our country has to offer and to share in its wealth.

The challenge for Britain

I am honoured to be Prime Minister. And I have a confident belief in our country. We are not boastful. But we have real strengths. Great people. Strong values. Proud history.

The British people achieved magnificent things in the 20th century. But for too long, our strengths have been undermined

by weaknesses of elitism and snobbery, vested interests and social division, complacency bred by harking back to the past. We achieved spurts of economic growth, but inflation would then get out of control. Our welfare state was founded to offer security, but its progress was stalled. We reached out to Europe, then drew back to become semi-detached.

It is as if a glass ceiling stopped us fulfilling our potential. In the 21st century we have the opportunity to break through the glass ceiling, because our historic strengths match the demands of the modern world.

We can use our openness and entrepreneurial flair to become a global centre in the knowledge economy. We can use our sense of fair play and mutual responsibility to be a dynamic, multiracial society held together by strong values.

We can use our historic and geographical position to link Europe and America and help the developing world. The key to tapping our strengths, to breaking through the glass ceiling, is contained in a simple idea that is hard to achieve, set out at the heart of our constitution as a party: the determination to put power, wealth and opportunity in the hands of the many, not the few.

I know as well as anyone that we have just begun; millions of hard-working families want, need and deserve more. That means more change in a second term, not less – to extend opportunity for all. We reject the quiet life. We must secure a mandate for change.

Ten goals for 2010

- Long-term economic stability
- Rising living standards for all
- Expanded higher education as we raise standards in secondary schools
- A healthier nation with fast treatment, free at the point of use
- Full employment
- Opportunity for all children, security for all pensioners
- A modern criminal justice system
- Strong and accountable local government
- British ideas leading a reformed and enlarged Europe
- Global poverty and climate change tackled.

Fulfilling Britain's great potential

Shifting the odds for hard-working families

In 1997 we promised a start, not a revolution. We made five specific five-year pledges. Three of these have been completed early; all will be completed within five years, as promised.

Each pledge is matched by further achievement: the lowest inflation and unemployment for a generation, one million new jobs, over 2,000 extra nurses recruited in Wales, the best primary school test results ever, and recorded crime is down by 16 per cent here in Wales.

We also offered a ten-point contract to the British people. The results are at the back of this manifesto (see page 44). Not everything has gone right – it never does. But we are getting there, easing burdens and extending opportunities – by choice, not chance.

Economic instability wrecks the lives of hard-working families. So we chose to put the public finances right. It meant tough decisions, opposed by the Conservatives. But today the economy is stable and growing, and interest rates are nearly half the level they averaged under the Conservatives.

Unemployment steals dignity. So we chose to introduce a windfall tax on the excess profits of the privatised utilities, to help unemployed people back to work. That was opposed by the Conservatives, who are now pledged to abolish the New Deal. But today, youth unemployment is at its lowest level since 1975 and long-term unemployment at its lowest level since 1978.

Poor education is a cruel injustice. So we chose to focus on the basics in primary schools. And today primary schools are achieving their best results ever.

A run-down health service causes insecurity. So we chose to reform the NHS and inject new money. Waiting lists and times are now falling, the number of nurses and doctors is now rising. In Wales, we have devolved the running of health to allow decisions to be taken at a local level, and we have underpinned these reforms with record public investment.

Poverty denies basic rights. So we chose to reform the welfare state to channel extra money to the poorest pensioners and poorest children. Today single pensioners can look forward to a minimum income of £100 a week, £154 for pensioner couples, and over one million children have been taken out of poverty.

The centralisation of power only helps the powerful. So we chose to break the suffocating centralisation of British government. The UK has been strengthened. Today it is the Conservatives who threaten the stability of the UK with their proposals for two classes of MP. This manifesto sets out our vision for continued partnership between Labour at Westminster and Labour in the Welsh Assembly.

Isolation from Europe does not help anyone. So we chose to engage constructively in Europe, not shout abuse from the sidelines. Today, Europe is moving in a direction that is good for Britain and good for Europe. We have led the way in policy

for aid, development and international debt relief.

Of course, there are still big problems, but we are better off, better educated, better governed, better respected abroad. There has been another change too. A change of priorities and values.

We learnt in the 1980s that looking after number one was not enough; that without opportunity, responsibility was weak; and that an unfair society was a less prosperous one.



Better primary school results than ever before... now we focus on secondary schools

The philosophy was wrong; it hurt millions of families and it left our country with lasting problems.

We have shown we are a reformed party, competent to govern. Now we offer more. More change and more rewards for Britain's hard-working families: more prosperity, more opportunities, more security.

Ambitions for Britain

Stretching the family budget; finding time for children as well as work; holding on to mutual respect; staying healthy when there can be hazards even in the air we breathe. These are daily worries that confront people.

They are my concerns too. But, while there is always a market for people who say we are doomed, that all new ideas are bad ideas even as things improve, that we might as well curl up with our prejudices and shut the door on the world, I am an optimist. New Labour is ambitious for Britain's future and is ready to lead.

First, we will sustain economic stability and build deeper prosperity that reaches every part of the country. Skills, infrastructure, the technological revolution – all are vital to raise British living standards faster. We will put as much energy into helping those adults without basic skills as we did in tackling long-term unemployment through the New Deal.

Second, we seek to achieve a renaissance of status and quality for public services and their staff. We will invest new resources to enable the Labour-led National Assembly to reform education and health services in Wales; we will seek to extend the very best in culture and sport to all.

Third, we seek to modernise the welfare state. The benefits system will be restructured around work; support for children and families through the tax and benefits system will be transformed; cash and services for pensioners will be radically improved.

Fourth, we will strengthen our communities. We will reform the criminal justice system at every level so that criminals are caught, punished and rehabilitated. And because we know that without tackling the causes of crime we will never tackle crime, we will empower local communities by combining resources with responsibility.

Fifth, we will turn our inner confidence to strength abroad, in Europe and beyond, to tackle global problems – above all, environmental degradation and the shame of global poverty. We will engage fully in Europe, help enlarge the European Union and make it more effective, and insist that the British people will have the final say on any proposal to join the Euro.

These ambitions are summarised in our ten goals for 2010. They will never be achieved by government alone. We know it is people who ultimately change the country. Our partnership with the voluntary sector has steadily strengthened since 1997, as we learn from its diversity. We work with the private sector, drawing on its vitality. Countries only prosper on the basis of partnership – between government, employers and their employees, and the voluntary sector. An active, enabling state, not a nanny state – doing things with people, not to them – is what Britain needs.

So, while the Conservatives will spend most of this election telling you what their government cannot do, this manifesto sets out what our government can do. We know the power and value of markets, but we also know their limits. Now is the time to renew our civic and social institutions to deliver better education, health, safety, transport and a better environment.

Fighting for values, not just for election victory

The Conservatives always look back. In economic policy they promise to repeat the mistakes of the 1980s – unaffordable tax cuts and spending cuts followed by ballooning deficits, rising interest rates and the old cycle of boom and bust.

In social policy their renewed commitment to cuts and privatisation, and to withdrawing the support helping to heal social division, is just a throwback to the 1980s.

In foreign policy they risk not just isolation but exit from the EU. Jobs, trade and investment depend on our membership of the European Union. The Conservative policy of opposing the enlargement of Europe in the Nice Treaty and their pledge to renegotiate the terms of Britain's EU membership is dangerous and ill thought-out. Standing up for Britain means fighting for Britain's interests in Europe, not leaving Europe which threatens our national interest. A vote for the



Listening to Wales... Tony Blair at Swansea Sound radio station

Nationalists can only aid the Tories. On 8 June, Britain will either wake up to a Labour government or a Conservative government.

So the choice we face today is starker than in 1997. The Conservatives have swung further to the right. And in government, Labour's agenda has become increasingly bold and ambitious. For many years the Conservatives have claimed to offer economic strength. Labour dominated social issues. Many people found their head telling them to vote Tory, and their heart telling them to vote Labour.

Today, head and heart are coming together. New Labour is proving that it is only by using the talents of all that we get a healthy economy; and that only by giving a stake to all can we become a healthy society.

We have made our choice: stability not boom and bust; investment not cuts; engagement not isolationism; the many not the few. A lot done and a lot more to do with new Labour; or a lot for you to lose under the Conservatives. I deeply believe that for Britain the best is still to come. So I ask you to continue on this journey with us.

Together we can achieve so much more.

Tony Blair

Prime Minister and Leader of the Labour Party

Building a better Wales

Your vote at this general election will determine whether these policies can be delivered. This election presents a stark choice to the people of Wales. A Labour government, pledged to investment in public services, or a Tory government pledged to cuts. A Labour government which will work in partnership with the Labour-led Assembly or a Tory Party whose policies threaten the stability of the United Kingdom



A vote for a third party in this election increases the chance that a Tory government will be returned to power, with disastrous consequences for Wales.

We believe in a confident, outward-looking, modern Wales, with its own strong voice as part of the United Kingdom. We are united in rejecting nationalism which would isolate and bankrupt Wales. We also reject the narrow English nationalism of William Hague's Tories. We believe that for Wales the best is still to come – a strong confident Wales, in a strong confident Britain.

Rhodri Morgan

Paul Murphy

History is being made in this general election for Britain and in particular for us in Wales. This is the first UK general election to be held following devolution and the establishment of the National Assembly. Devolution will only fulfil its true potential for Wales via a partnership between a Labour government at Westminster and a Labour-led Assembly administration in Cardiff. This manifesto embodies that spirit of partnership.

Many matters are the responsibility of the UK government: economic policy, pensions and benefits, defence, foreign policy, law and order, taxation, international development. Other public services are now the responsibility of the Assembly; health, education, economic development, local transport, the environment, agriculture, sports and culture are the Assembly's agenda. The issues detailed in this manifesto are the policies of Labour in the National Assembly.

These policies are made in Wales, for Wales. They are based on the common values of the Labour Party across Britain. They are a vital part of this manifesto and they cannot be delivered without a re-elected Labour government managing the economy and public finances soundly, and working with the Welsh Assembly to deliver the people's priorities. This enables the record growth of investment in public services to be continued.

Rhodri Morgan, First Minister of the National Assembly for Wales and Paul Murphy, Secretary of State for Wales

1

Prosperity for all

Our ten-year goals

Fiscal rules consistently met, low inflation, and interest rates as low as possible, as we deliver long-term economic stability.

Faster productivity growth than our main competitors, as we achieve rising living standards for all.

Our next steps

- Basic skills for 750,000 people
- Free local bus journeys for pensioners and people with disabilities in Wales from 2002
- A £300 million five-year plan for integrated transport in Wales
- Raise the minimum wage to £4.20
- £1,000 tax cut – the Children's Tax Credit – for parents of newborn children

Labour's purpose is to help every family, not just a few, to raise their living standards and plan ahead with security. We have a ten-year vision: higher living standards, affordable mortgages and fairer taxes combined with much greater investment in vital public services.

Economic stability is the foundation. We know the price of boom and bust; it was paid in the 1980s and 1990s by millions of hard-working families.

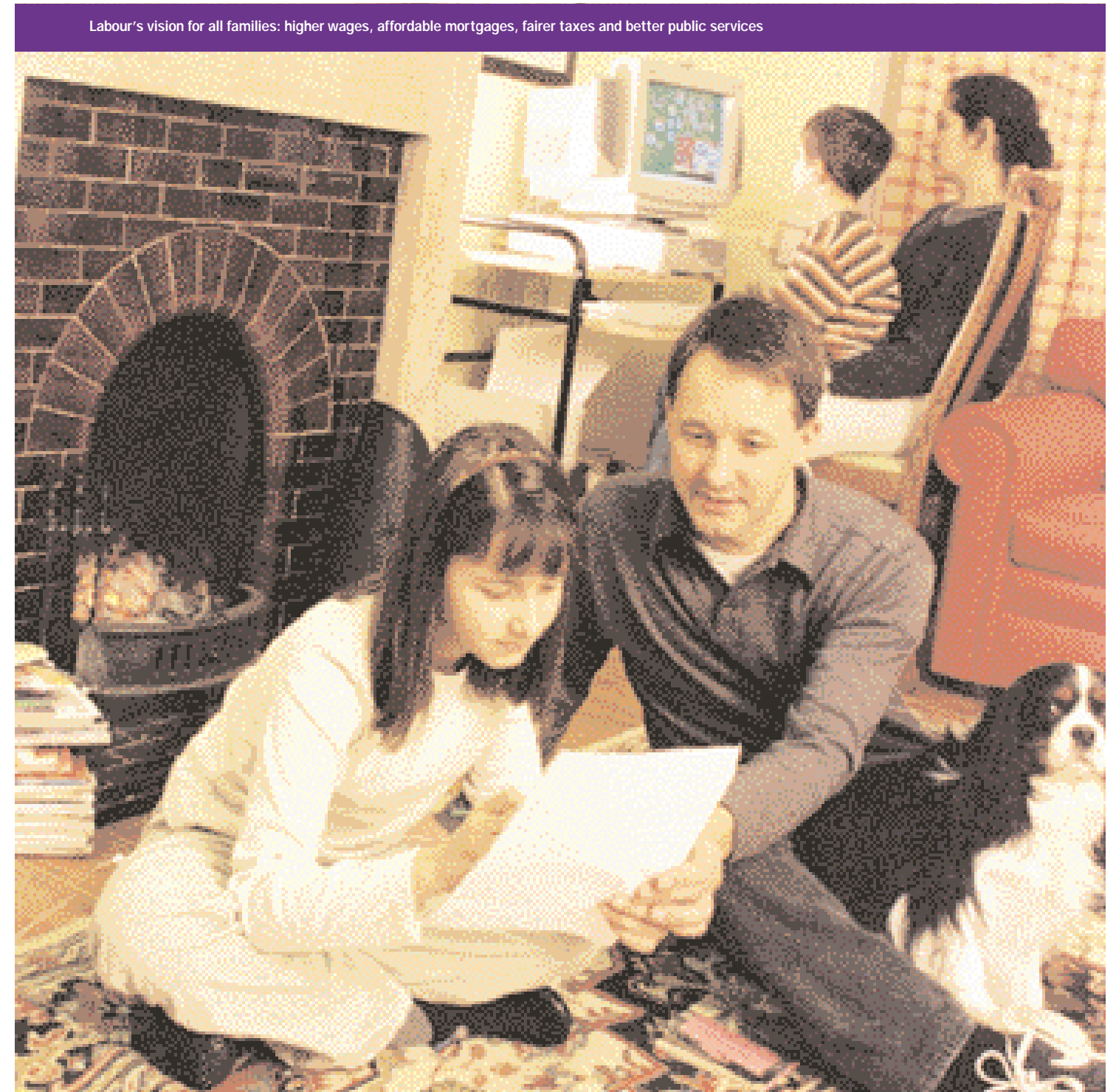
Our reforms since 1997 have helped cut interest rates to nearly half of what they averaged under the Conservatives, saving mortgage payers on average £1,200 a year. By 2010, we want Britain to break from decades of boom and bust, as we stick to clear rules for spending and borrowing. We will take no risks with economic policy, make no compromise on fiscal responsibility.

Stability comes first. But stability is not enough. We need to produce more, better, to higher value to raise our earning power and meet our ten-year goal of faster productivity growth than our main competitors.

We must make Britain the best place to do business in Europe – a dynamic economy, founded on skills and knowledge, developing the talent of all our people, and contributing to sustainable development. That means investment by private and public sectors in infrastructure and skills, and the right competitive framework to support enterprise, small and large, manufacturing and services.

Every extra trained, employed worker contributes to a fairer society, as well as a more prosperous one. With social failure, from school drop-outs to crime, comes economic failure. Fairness and enterprise go together. It is up to government to do everything it can to help ensure that no individual and no community is left behind.

Labour's vision for all families: higher wages, affordable mortgages, fairer taxes and better public services



The fundamentals Better off with Labour

The foundation of opportunity and prosperity is economic stability. We know the risks of promises that cannot be paid for: the Conservatives led Britain into two deep recessions, double-digit inflation, record unemployment, 15 per cent interest rates, and a doubling of the national debt.

Choice, not chance, has turned things round. Independence for the Bank of England and long-term fiscal rules have given the UK the most stable and transparent economic framework in Europe. Britain now has the best combination of low interest rates, low inflation and low unemployment since the 1960s. We are saving nearly £9 billion this year from debt and unemployment, so 84p of every extra pound of public spending goes on national priorities, compared to 58p under the Conservatives.

So we will pursue a balanced approach on the economy with stability the foundation, more investment not less and, as affordable, targeted tax cuts on our priorities.

Our aim is to put more wealth in the hands of

Tax and spending

Fiscal responsibility and monetary stability are the foundation of our future plans. New Labour's inflation target is 2.5 per cent. We will continue to meet our fiscal rules: over the economic cycle we will borrow only to invest and keep net debt at a stable and prudent level.

We are pledged in partnership with the Welsh Assembly for the next three years to raise health and education spending to record levels. Labour will double net public investment.

Tax policy will be governed by the health of the public finances, the requirement for public investment, and the needs of families, business and the environment.

We have rewarded work through the new 10p starting rate of tax and the Working Families Tax Credit. The basic rate of tax has been cut to 22p. We will support families through the new Children's Tax Credit, set at up to £1,000 a year for new parents – the first recognition of the costs of children in the tax system for 20 years. On average, UK households have benefited by £590 a year from personal tax and benefit measures introduced since 1997. Living standards have risen by ten per cent over the

week: in the next Parliament an Employment Tax Credit will reward the work of people on low incomes, whether or not they have children (see 'A modern welfare state').

The first-ever National Minimum Wage for Britain, bitterly opposed at every stage by the Conservatives, has been a success of our first term. It fulfils, after 100 years, a founding ambition of the Labour Party. Up to 1.5 million people, have been helped, the majority of them women, and 100,000 of them in Wales; jobs have not been lost. The Low Pay Commission, which we will make permanent, has made clear recommendations for the future. New Labour will raise the minimum wage to £4.10 this October, and we are committed, subject to economic conditions, to raising it to £4.20 in October 2002.

Labour rewards saving

Nine million people invested in Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) in their first year. To encourage more saving we will maintain the £7,000 contribution limit for the next Parliament. We will also help pensioners: the Pension Credit will match private saving with government funds, and pensioners will no longer be penalised because of their thrift (see 'A modern welfare state').

To boost the savings habit, we will create a new Savings Gateway for people on lower incomes where their savings will be matched by the government.

The productivity challenge Staying better off

To raise living standards, our ambition is to raise our productivity faster than our competitors, and ensure our goods and services are competitive in world markets. Labour has four priorities.

1 Investment in skills and innovation.

Skills

We are passionate about giving every child the chance of a decent education. But we are equally determined to offer learning opportunities to adults. Our ambition is for everyone to have the opportunity to train, in a partnership of employers, employees and government, each giving time and/or money to raise standards of skills in the UK. Our first priority is to help the estimated seven million adults who lack basic literacy and numeracy skills, with 750,000 people achieving basic skill levels by 2004. We will:

- ensure that jobseekers get the benefit of a basic skills test, as well as incentives and obligations to take courses to tackle literacy and/or numeracy problems
- extend Individual Learning Accounts, with a pledge in Wales to open 50,000 by April 2002
- dramatically improve the quality and quantity of prison education

- tackle the financial barriers that prevent adults studying in further education.

Basic skills are the start: updating skills is something for all of us. We have created Education Learning Wales (ELWa) through the Learning and Skills Act to co-ordinate 16 to 19 and adult education and training in Wales. Further education colleges have a critical role to play in the future. We will help drive up standards, by reforms to ensure specialist adult provision to meet local skills needs. The world-first University for Industry now offers over 400 skills courses. A £27 million Basic Skills Strategy for Wales will focus on the skills needed by all, whatever their age or location.

We need a step-change in workplace learning – particularly in small and medium-sized firms. We are determined to develop a three-way partnership to bring this about. Current arrangements have secured increased participation, but not enough. Unions and employers have a key role but we also need to motivate individual employees. Where both sides of industry in a sector agree, we will help set up a statutory framework for training. We will boost the efforts of trade unions to raise skill levels by giving statutory backing to union learning representatives, and supporting the Union Learning Fund.

Government has a wide-ranging role to play, and is examining the development of a training tax credit. We will look to business and unions to come forward with proposals on how they can contribute to meeting the nation's training goals.

Innovation

Science and technology are the basis of new products and industries, both vital to productivity growth. Since 1997 extra investment of £1.5 billion over three years has given science a fresh start, and a new stream of university funding has helped create new links between scientific breakthroughs and new products.

But we need to invest more to be at the cutting edge of science – in biotechnology and genome research. We propose an R&D tax credit to promote business investment in research. We will work for a European patent system by the end of this year to simplify the process of bringing ideas to market. The £235 billion a year, and growing, global market for green technology gives real opportunity to British industry to benefit from a shift to low-carbon technologies.

We will continue to encourage the best scientists to work in the UK, as well as making the most of our science base in universities (see 'World-class public services').

2 Supporting British business

Government cannot make a business successful. But government must create the right framework to help business achieve healthy long-term growth.

Since 1997, corporation tax rates have been cut to their lowest levels ever. Companies no longer face a perverse incentive to pay out dividends rather than invest for the future. Reform of capital gains tax has given the entrepreneur or investor new incentives for investment.

We support vital investment through the tax system, with allowances for high-tech as well as small business investment. The Myners report has identified weaknesses in our venture capital market, undermining long-term investment and economic dynamism. We will act on its recommendations, including the abolition of the Minimum Funding Requirement and reforms to pension fund management, and review progress in two years. In Wales the Labour-led National Assembly has already set up Finance Wales to assist with venture capital.

When people have worked hard, they want their money to go as far as possible. Competition policy has already helped cut cash-machine charges and new car prices. We will extend our fair and robust competition regime by giving more independence to the competition authorities. We will toughen the laws on rogue traders, unfair terms in contracts, and loan sharks.

In the labour market, minimum standards for



Investing in business... first-class engineering

people at work offer dignity and self-esteem. Regulation should be introduced, where it is necessary, in a light-touch way. We will cut back the red tape associated with regulation, examine opportunities to put time limits on regulations, deregulate by secondary legislation, and offer help to small firms.

Over 150,000 small businesses have been set up in the UK since 1997. The Labour-led National Assembly, via the Welsh Development Agency, is increasing the emphasis on supporting and nurturing home-grown small and medium-sized businesses, particularly those with growth potential. We are committed to reforming the tax treatment of small business, including VAT, and to seeking to reduce payroll burdens. Small business will also benefit from extending the 10p tax band. We will reform the bankruptcy laws to ensure second chances for

people who go bankrupt through no fault of their own and provide funds for new start-ups. We will also promote the development of entrepreneurship in the school curriculum.

We will modernise company law to promote transparency, reduce burdens on small business and promote long-term economic success. We welcome the recommendations of the Co-operative Commission, which also covered the significant mutual sector, and will examine them with a view to strengthening these important parts of our economy.

3 Modernising our infrastructure for the Information Age

Digital nation

The infrastructure of the future includes fast, efficient and affordable communication – telecommunications, the internet and broadcasting. That requires the best competitive environment, effective regulation, and continued public and private investment in the technologies of the future.

A 'digital divide' would hurt business as well as individuals: universal access is vital to effective markets. We will put all government services on-line by 2005, to improve access to services and spur business on-line. We will work to ensure that broadband, which allows fast internet access, is accessible in all parts of the country.

We have the best TV in the world. The next challenge is to open up the opportunities of learning and enjoyment offered by digital TV and the internet to every household. We are committed to making the switchover from analogue to digital signals as soon as conditions for access and cost have been met.

The governance of this fast-changing industry is out of date. We will merge the five separate regulators into one, to create the world's most competitive and advanced regulatory system. We believe in the value and necessity of public service broadcasting, have committed to major funding increases for the BBC, and support a publicly-owned Channel 4 and S4C. Ofcom will ensure a level playing field, benefiting consumers in terms of choice, price and quality, in particular through promoting competition.

Transport

A strong economy needs good transport. Yet our inheritance was massive under-investment, with British Rail broken into over 100 privatised pieces and bus services in decline.

Labour's priority is to improve and expand railway and road travel. Our ten-year Transport Plan, supported by all the key players, matches large resources with major reform.

Local transport provision is devolved in Wales. We will expand the transport network in a way which helps the economy and access to job opportunities without adversely affecting the environment.

- Rail: Passenger numbers have risen by 17 per

More security and support for families with Labour: lower household bills, smaller mortgages and tax and benefit reform to help children

more people. That is why we will keep mortgage rates as low as possible, ensure competition keeps down household bills, support savings and share ownership, and create a new Child Trust Fund for every child at birth to invest for when they reach adulthood.

There are no guarantees in an integrated world economy. But we showed during the Asian economic crisis how to steer a course of stability in turbulent times. We will continue to work at international level to minimise global economic turbulence and to protect Britain if it occurs.

Parliament for a single earner family on average earnings. To help those who work and save we will extend the 10p tax band. We will continue to tackle tax avoidance. We will not raise the basic or top rates of income tax in the next Parliament. We renew our pledge not to extend VAT to food, children's clothes, books, newspapers and public transport fares.

Labour rewards work

Labour believes that if you work hard you should be able to support a family. We will guarantee a minimum family income of £225 for a 35-hour

cent since 1997 and freight has increased by 22 per cent. But recent crises have proved the need for urgent investment and strong regulation. With Labour, £60 billion will be spent on upgrading the rail network, with the majority of rolling stock replaced. Around 500 new carriages are already in use, with another 3,000 ordered. We plan to expand capacity to boost passenger levels by 50 per cent, and freight by more. Safer train protection systems are now being installed and will be extended following Lord Cullen's report into rail safety.

The Strategic Rail Authority (SRA) has been set up to provide strong, strategic direction. Train companies will get longer franchises in return for higher investment and improved services. The SRA will lead the expansion of the network, using public-private partnerships (PPPs). Railtrack is being reformed to focus on the operation of existing track and signalling. The Rail Regulator, with strengthened powers, will ensure the delivery of higher standards, increased safety and increased investment by the company.

We will work towards a single rail franchise for Wales and the borders as announced by the Strategic Rail Authority.

- **Roads:** The Labour-led Welsh Assembly will invest in roads where this boosts sustainable economic regeneration, improves the quality of urban and rural communities, and helps to tackle congestion. But environmentally damaging road schemes have been scrapped; all new roads must now be strictly appraised for maximum benefits and minimum environmental damage. Our trunk roads are the safest in Europe, and we aim to reduce serious road casualties by a further 40 per cent over ten years.

We have given local authorities the freedom to choose to use charges to reduce traffic – but we insist they put the money into better transport services. New road safety schemes will help cut the number of child road deaths and serious injuries by 50 per cent by 2010.

Road tax is being cut on smaller, cleaner cars and duty reduced on greener fuels. Tax incentives are creating a cleaner lorry fleet while the road haulage industry will benefit from steep reductions in Vehicle Excise Duty to among the lowest in Europe. We will also ensure that hauliers from overseas pay their fair share towards the cost of our roads. Smarter driving will be encouraged by new highway communications technology. We are also working with the motor industry to develop safer and more fuel-efficient vehicles.

- **Buses:** Buses are vital to local journeys. Pensioners and people with disabilities in Wales are already entitled to a free bus pass for concessionary local bus travel. From 2002, local bus journeys will be free for the same groups.

Integrated transport

Good transport systems offer choice across



The Cambrian Coast Railway... with Labour £60 billion will be spent on upgrading the rail network

transport modes. A phone and internet system for Wales (PTI Cymru) will supply comprehensive information to help to plan journeys and offer tickets for door-to-door journeys on public transport. This innovation will put access to all transport modes at people's fingertips.

We will develop a National Framework for Cycling in Wales, drawing together long distance and local initiatives, and continue to develop urban and rural footpaths.

International links are also vital. Plans for aviation and airports over the next 30 years will be produced next year. In Wales we are working with the private sector to provide a new rail link to Cardiff International Airport. Merchant ships are returning to the British flag. We will complete the high-speed Channel Tunnel Rail Link.

The Post Office and postal services

We are committed to high-quality, universal postal services, and a dynamic Post Office which can thrive in a world of technological change and increased competitive pressure. Labour is working with the banks to offer a new universal banking service. This will allow all benefit and pension recipients to receive their payments in full, at no charge, at the Post Office after the switch to automated credit transfer in 2003. We also intend the local post office to become an invaluable resource for access to government information. There will be increased incentives for people to take over and modernise

post offices. Business customers, representing by far the majority of the Post Office's turnover, want a full range of express, parcels and logistics services. We have given the Post Office greater commercial freedom in the public sector. It needs to be able to gain an advantage in the new postal market and become a leading force in domestic and international postal services through alliances and joint ventures. We want to help the Post Office keep up with the best in a fast-changing market.

Energy

Labour is committed to a secure, diverse and sustainable supply of energy at competitive prices. We have brought full competition to the gas and electricity markets. Coal and nuclear energy currently play important roles in ensuring diversity in our sources of electricity generation.

We are putting an obligation on electricity companies to deliver ten per cent of the UK's electricity from renewable sources by 2010, with a doubling of combined heat and power. We will consider setting further targets for renewables, with particular focus on off-shore wind, solar and bio-mass technologies, supported by a £100 million fund. It will back up the Climate Change Levy which includes agreements to improve efficiency in energy-intensive sectors, and the new Carbon Trust which will recycle £100 million to accelerate the take-up of cost-effective, low-carbon technologies.

We will support research into clean coal technology and investigate its commercial possibilities. We will double the expenditure on energy efficiency. Fuel poverty blights lives: our aim is that by 2010 no vulnerable household in the UK need risk ill health due to a cold home. In Wales, the coverage of the new Home Energy Efficiency Scheme Wales will be extended to 38,000 needy households by 2003. £33 million will be available under the scheme up to 2004.

BNFL is an important employer and major exporter. The government insists it maintains the highest health, safety and environmental standards. We are examining the scope for turning the company into a public-private partnership.

4 Europe and the wider world

Labour will be engaged and influential, fighting for the British national interest, as we set out in 'Britain strong in the world'. We will support British Trade International, which gives business direct access to UK posts abroad, in partnership with Wales Trade International which is run by the National Assembly, and maintain the UK's position as the location of choice within Europe for multinational business.

Labour's position on the single currency was set out by the Chancellor in October 1997 and reiterated by the Prime Minister in February 1999. We have made it clear that provided the economic conditions are met membership of a successful Euro would bring benefits to Britain in terms of jobs, investment and trade. So in principle we are in favour of joining a successful single currency. But in practice the five economic tests we have set out must be met before the government would recommend entry to the single currency. An assessment of the tests will be carried out early in the next Parliament. If the government and Parliament recommend entry, the British people will have the final say in a referendum.

So the choice is between a Conservative Party which will deny the people of Britain the chance to join even if it is in our national interest to do so, and the Labour Party which says that if it is in our national economic interest, the decision should be made by the British people in a referendum.

No one left behind Helping everyone become better off

Britain is better off than in 1997 but our ambition is to widen the winners' circle so more people share in the benefits of economic growth. In 'A modern welfare state', we set out the route to full employment.

Fair and flexible work

We are proud of our commitment to combine a dynamic economy with fair standards in the workplace. Labour has put right historic wrongs.

Every employee now has the right to four weeks' paid holiday; trade unions have a right to recognition where a majority of the workforce want it; part-time workers have proper rights. Our objective has been to promote fairness that is consistent with the competitive position of British business; that will continue to be our position.

We have reformed the labour market to build a durable and fair basis for constructive employee relations. As we learn from the reforms in the light of experience, we will keep their effectiveness under review.

We want to strengthen partnership at work, which can foster employee commitment and help at a time of industrial change. We have established the Partnership Fund and want to expand it. Information and consultation needs to be appropriate to national traditions, with timely discussion of problems. When large-scale redundancies are being considered, there is an especially strong case for consultation. The government is reviewing the effectiveness of the UK's current arrangements for information and consultation – works councils in larger firms operating across Europe – as well as consultation on large-scale redundancies. We will implement the findings of our review in this area. We support conciliation at the workplace to avoid resorting to litigation. We will examine reforms that promote efficiency and fairness.

Women still suffer an 18 per cent pay gap compared to men. We are committed to tackling the causes of this inequality. We will work with employers and employees to develop effective proposals, building on good practice and sound business, in the private and public sector.

We will develop career services for all. Careers Wales, a single all-age advice and guidance service for the whole of Wales, is drawing together the careers service, local Adult Guidance Networks and guidance from Education Business Links. We aim for a ten per cent cut in death and major injuries at work by 2010, and will clarify responsibility, improve enforcement and toughen penalties for offences. We are also committed to working with managers and employees to reduce the problems of bullying and violence in the workplace. As a major employer, our ambition is to improve the quality of work for our employees – helping recruitment and retention.

Prosperity for Wales

In Wales, we have strengthened the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) by merging it with the Development Board for Rural Wales and the Land Authority for Wales.

The Welsh Development Agency is committed to helping businesses in Wales to expand, and to encouraging inward investment and job creation. The focus is on positioning the country at the leading edge of innovation and technology,

for example through close links with universities.

Labour's Job Transition Service (JTS) will provide an intensive and personalised response to large-scale redundancies, helping people secure work or acquire new skills. The JTS will focus its work on new Employment Action Plans drawn up by local economic partners.

Urban Wales

We are ambitious for Wales' urban and valley areas: we want to make them better places to live and better places to set up a business.

Labour is offering £1 billion of tax cuts over the next five years to increase capital investment in urban areas, for new businesses and for new housing. Labour in Wales is overhauling the planning system, creating a strategic framework as a basis for sustainable development. We will promote the most efficient use of land and strike the right balance of support for environmental protection, integrated transport and economic growth.

Housing

Lower interest rates enable more people to own their own homes. Labour will make it easier for people buying and selling homes through a new sellers' pack, through grants for low-income homeowners and help for key workers in high-cost areas. We will honour our commitment to tackle homelessness. We will continue to



Unemployment down...young people benefiting from Labour's New Deal

promote housing choice, with reforms to leasehold and commonhold law, a licensing scheme for houses in multiple occupation, and new powers for council tenants. We will develop a modern basis for land registration to make conveyancing faster and cheaper. We will also examine the ways in which tenants can be helped to gain an equity stake in the value of their home.

Labour is committed to investment to reduce the backlog of sub-standard housing

dramatically. We will continue to support voluntary transfers of housing stock when proposed by local authorities and supported by tenants.

Rural Britain

The recent outbreak of foot and mouth disease has caused strain and distress in rural areas. Labour's priorities have been clear: to eradicate the disease as quickly and effectively as possible, to compensate those directly affected, and to protect the wider economy. As the number of new cases falls significantly, and the clean-up of infected areas gathers pace, we are committed to helping the most affected regions with a recovery plan which includes advice on sustainable restocking, organic conversion, and early retirement and outgoer schemes. We will conduct a scientific review of how to prevent disease outbreaks from occurring in the future and will introduce tough rules to back this up. But we must also learn some of the wider lessons.



Urban renewal is at the heart of the planning system

Agriculture and fishing

Since the Second World War the economy of rural areas has undergone massive change. About two per cent of the workforce is now employed in agriculture. The industry is particularly important because of the links with food production, our landscape and our environment. Labour's aim is to promote economic renewal combined with a sustainable future for farming, strengthened communities and sustainable land use.

Short-term pressures need to be met. Since the early 1990s, sectors of farming have been hard hit by BSE, the weakness of the Euro and falling world commodity prices. Across Britain, Labour has provided £1.35 billion in short-term relief for farmers, including aid for diversification, farm business advice, better marketing, small slaughterhouses and restructuring of the industry. We have minimised many regulatory burdens and improved the way that food safety, environmental and animal health regulations are implemented.

But British agriculture will only thrive in the longer term through a further, radical

reorientation of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), away from distorting Europe-wide production subsidies towards more national responsibility for domestic farming, environmental and rural development priorities. CAP reform is now more possible: Labour's engagement with the EU gives us the best chance of making it happen.

We have begun the process of change with our farming strategy and our seven-year £3 billion Rural Development Plans for England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Labour will expand this programme so farming can become more diverse and responsive to consumers, and produce in a way that sustains and improves the environment. We have already increased payments for organic conversion.

We have set up an independent, open and consumer-focused Food Standards Agency to ensure that all food meets the highest standards. We will argue for the extension of food labelling, to give consumers more choice. Genetically modified (GM) foods and crops have caused concern despite stringent safety checks. There should be high standards of safety – regulation must be strict, to protect the environment and promote public health and consumer choice – but we must use science to establish the facts, the opportunities and the risks before taking final decisions in an open way.

It is also important to reform the Common Fisheries Policy to preserve fish stocks for the future. In the short term, Labour is providing more than £60 million in structural funds over the next three years to help the industry, including a new decommissioning scheme while also tackling the problem of 'quota-hoppers'.

Economic renewal

The economic hub of a rural area is often a thriving market town. We are incorporating our market towns initiative into a new Community Regeneration Strategy for Wales with around £2.5 million of funding from the Welsh Development Agency in addition to other National Assembly and European funding. Rate relief in Wales will be extended to pubs, garages, pharmacies and childcare facilities, as well as to farmers who diversify part of their activity into other enterprises.

Tourism is a vital, growing industry for Britain, with 1.8 million employees and links to the museums, arts and heritage that people want to enjoy. We will support well-targeted promotion and high-quality information via the internet. In Wales we are working with the Wales Tourist Board to help secure long-term prosperity and sustainable growth for the tourism industry to increase its contribution to a more diverse Welsh economy. The Labour-led National Assembly has allocated over £20 million towards implementing the National Tourism Strategy for Wales, a 30 per cent increase over the previous year.

Rural life

We are committed to providing more affordable housing in rural communities throughout Wales and have made an additional £1.5 million available to increase the amount of Social Housing Grant that local authorities target at rural Homebuy by up to 100 per cent.

A £30 million police programme will help cut rural crime. We have allocated an extra £5.25 million in the first year of the Assembly and pledged £250,000 a year for community transport schemes in rural areas. The Post Office is now obliged to prevent closure of rural post offices, except in unavoidable circumstances, with £270 million to help achieve this and recruit sub-postmasters.

Labour is determined to protect Britain's landscapes and wildlife. Planning, transport and energy policy all make a difference. We have also designated the first new national parks since 1948, and brought consensus to a large increase in access to open countryside. We will press ahead with an £8 billion programme for water companies to clean up rivers and minimise damage from waste. The dangers of coastal and inland flooding are now widely appreciated, and we are committed to investment in preventative solutions, including more sensitive use of agricultural land. We have increased the number of protected nature sites. We have also initiated important steps to improve animal welfare in Britain and argued successfully for higher welfare standards for battery hens and pigs across the EU.

How Labour makes you better off:

- by saving money on your mortgage, through economic stability and low interest rates
- by targeted tax cuts for families and pensioners
- by improving living standards, through action to tackle Britain's productivity gap
- by investing in skills and training and a revitalised infrastructure
- by offering a minimum wage of £4.20 and an Employment Tax Credit



Mountain splendour... the Labour-led National Assembly has allocated over £20 million towards implementing the National Tourism Strategy for Wales

Leadership for the future

Labour is committed to supporting our countryside and the people who live and work in it. We are committed to creating a new Whitehall department to lead renewal in rural areas – a Department for Rural Affairs.

Independent and wide-ranging views are essential to the development of strategic and long-term policy. We will set up an independent commission to advise on how we create a sustainable, competitive and diverse farming and food sector within a thriving rural economy which advances environmental health and animal welfare goals. The commission's work will complement the work of the Farming Futures Group and the Rural Partnership.

Coalfield communities

We have set aside £4 billion to compensate those men, and the widows who nursed them, who suffered from lung disease and vibration white finger after working in Britain's mining industry. In Wales the problems of ill health among ex-miners are particularly acute. Labour has shown its support for ex-miners by introducing a compensation scheme to help

those who have suffered after years working underground. We will ensure that compensation due is paid quickly.

Britain led the first industrial revolution. Other countries got ahead in the second industrial revolution. Now our ambition is for Britain to succeed in the third industrial revolution – enhancing knowledge, speeding up communication and developing the talents of all the British people.

2

World-class public services

Primary excellence... the vast improvements already made in primary schools are to be extended to secondary education

Our ten-year goals

More than 50 per cent of young people entering higher education, as we raise standards in secondary schools.

Life expectancy up, death rates from major and long-term illnesses down in Wales to match the best in Europe, as we modernise the NHS

Our next steps

- **Smaller class sizes in Welsh primary schools together with new money to drive up standards in the early years of secondary school**
- **Invest £290 million in school buildings in Wales in the next three years**
- **Reduce patient waiting times year on year in Wales**
- **More health service workers – more than 1,000 extra nurses in Wales over the next three years**
- **Free access to national museums and galleries throughout Britain**

The whole country depends on high-quality public services. We have a ten-year vision for Britain's public services: record improvement to match record investment, so they deliver high standards to all the people, all the time, wherever they live.

Since 1997 there has been investment with reform. Thanks to committed public servants, we have shown rapid progress is possible and begun to break the fatalism that says public services are always second class. Now is the time to move forward. Economic stability makes possible more investment as well as a successful partnership between the Labour government and the Labour-led National Assembly for Wales. Labour will put education and healthcare first. We promise reform to match. We will increase the quality and diversity of public services and meet the challenge of rising expectations.

In education, we will push standards higher in secondary schools and sustain the continuous improvement in primary schools already achieved. Every school will have a clear mission, with new opportunities for children. By 2010 we want a majority of Britain's young people entering higher education.

Under the Labour-led administration in Cardiff there will be at least 1,000 extra nurses in Wales over the next three years. Our ten-year goal is a healthier nation, with fast, high-quality treatment, meeting rising expectations and demographic and technological challenges. Doctors and nurses will be in the driving seat of reform.

The job of government is also about ensuring that the enjoyment, excitement and inspiration of arts and sport come alive for everyone. In all our public services, the key is to devolve and decentralise power to give freedom to frontline staff who perform well, but to change things where there are problems. Services need to be highly responsive to users' demands. Where the quality is not improving enough, alternative providers may be brought in. Where private sector providers can support public endeavour, we should consider their use. A 'spirit of enterprise' should apply as much to public service as to business.

Labour's ambition for public services is simple: we want excellent services for all. Our challenge is to reverse decades of denigration and under-investment. The citizen – the patient, the pupil, their needs and aspirations – must be central. We will work with frontline staff to deliver a revival of our public services every bit as profound as the changes to the private sector in the 1980s.

In our first term, national action was vital – to tackle crises of funding and quality. Government must take national responsibility for investment and for setting a clear national framework. Now we need to move on, empowering frontline staff. Each service needs the right structure and incentives at local level – decentralisation of power with strong incentives to high performance. Frontline staff are advocates for citizens and ambassadors for their services. Motivated by an ethos of service, they must be supported to carry through change.

Education Labour's number one priority

Education remains Labour's top priority. Excellence for the many, not just the few, is our driving passion. Our goal is to develop education to harness the individual talents of every pupil. In Wales, most of the responsibility for delivering education is devolved to the National Assembly. But crucially, it can only deliver rising school standards with the record investment produced by a Labour government at Westminster.

Since 1997 rising standards have been achieved through major new investment and significant reforms. Many teachers are set to receive a £2,000 pay rise above the usual annual increase and schools are benefiting from extra resources as a result of Labour's sound management of public finances.

The Welsh inspection body ESTYN has reported on rising standards in primary schools and secondary schools year on year. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 have achieved the best-ever results in their National Curriculum tests. Secondary school pupils and students have once again beaten previous best records of success in GCSE and Advanced level examinations. Our task now is to focus on 11- to 14-year-olds in secondary education, to push standards even higher while continuing to enrich opportunities and provision across the board.

Investment

Money alone cannot guarantee a good education, but extra investment is indispensable to achieving our ambitions. In partnership with the Labour-led Assembly, we pledge a further step-change in investment in return for a further step-change in standards.

In 1997 Labour promised to increase the share of Britain's national income devoted to

education. Over the Parliament we have increased it from 4.7 per cent to 5 per cent and we are pledged to raise this figure to 5.3 per cent by 2003-04. Investment in buildings and equipment is a top priority in Wales. By September 2002 every school in Wales will be linked to the internet. During the next Parliament, in partnership with the Welsh Assembly, we will again increase the share of national income for education.

Under-fives

All parents must receive the support they need to give their children a good start in life, so that every child starts school ready to learn. There is now a free nursery place for every four-year-old and the Sure Start programme is providing special help for the most disadvantaged communities.

We will continue to expand under-five provision. We will provide a nursery place for every three-year-old in Wales whose parents want it by 2003. We will improve nursery



Nursery places available for all three-year-olds by 2003

education and childcare for working parents (see 'A modern welfare state'). £25 million has been allocated to the first three years of Sure Start projects in Wales with an additional £30 million for the period 2002-04. These projects, led by voluntary organisations, are being set up to support parents and improve children's early development.

Primary schools

Primary school teachers have achieved excellent results. In 1997 too few 11-year-olds were up to standard in English, Welsh and Maths tests. The figures are now 74 per cent for English, 67 per cent for Welsh and 69 per cent for maths, a significant improvement and well on the way to meeting our targets of 80 to 85 per cent by 2004.

But Labour will not be satisfied until every child leaves primary school with the basic skills they need.

Primary education without the basics is a betrayal; but every parent rightly wants far more. We will provide primary pupils with wider opportunities in a broad curriculum.

Secondary schools

Transforming secondary education is the critical challenge of the next decade. We reject a return to the 11-plus. The principles of inclusion and equality of opportunity remain central to our commitment to liberate the potential of every child. But on their own they are not enough to guarantee high standards.

Standards have risen in the past four years. But the challenge ahead is immense. Too many pupils fall back and become disillusioned in the first two years of secondary school and levels of drop-out remain too high. In future every school must have:

The right leadership

Labour in Wales will improve training for headteachers and their leadership teams, with innovative programmes for serving and aspiring heads and senior teachers.

The right curriculum

In Wales, we are proud of our distinctively Welsh Curriculum (Y Cwricwlwm Cymreig), and the right of Welsh children to know about their own history, geography, language and culture. Wales is proud to be a bilingual country, and Welsh Labour is committed to excellence in education through both the Welsh and English languages. The Labour-led National Assembly is providing £2.5 million per year to support training in raising standards in literacy and numeracy. Resources have been provided to all LEAs in Wales to run summer literacy and numeracy schemes. In particular, we will target specific areas of deprivation identified under the Communities First initiative.

We have recently launched a Basic Skills Strategy for Wales, designed to drive up standards in literacy and numeracy in families with young children, and for those moving into further education and employment. We will aim to provide all pupils in Wales with a broader curriculum including more opportunities to learn musical instruments and foreign languages. We are committed to providing extra opportunities for out-of-school hours learning, and to the introduction of measures to drive up standards for 11- to 14-year-olds. Our ambition is the development of quality and choice after age 14, catering for every pupil, including new vocational pathways for those who want them and an apprenticeship place for every young person who can meet the standard for one. We will establish parity of esteem between academic and vocational qualifications at post-16, and pilot a new qualification, the Welsh Bac, to offer a broad achievement for all young people, as well as greater study in depth. In addition, our extending entitlement policy has put Wales at the forefront of developing informal education, advice and guidance for young people.

A mission to achieve

We want every secondary school to develop its own distinct ethos and mission. The Labour-led



Labour is focusing on the basics in schools

Assembly is pledged to a policy of 'excellence for all' in secondary education. Labour in Wales will explore opportunities to identify the potential for building on particular strengths in our comprehensive schools.

Better infrastructure

The Labour government's sound management of the economy and public finances means that more resources are available to the Labour-led Assembly to invest in our schools. £300 million will be invested in school buildings over the next three years to start to make further progress on tackling the backlog of disrepair left by the Tories. Information technology has enormous potential to raise standards, and we will continue to improve access for pupils and teachers alike. We will pioneer a complete digital curriculum, to ensure materials are available to pupils in schools and at home. In the next two years we will invest £24 million in new computer learning centres in Wales, using schools to give greater access to community learning.

The right support

Good schools also depend on parents and the local community. We will continue to ensure that head teachers have the powers they need to tackle disruption and unacceptable behaviour in schools. Where there is underperformance in schools, it will be remedied.

We will ensure better training and support for school governors. Schools should be used more effectively as assets for the whole community, including for childcare and community learning. To help create a better environment for learning, all infant school classes will have been cut to 30 or under by September 2001, and free school milk has been restored to Key Stage 1 pupils in Wales.

Teachers

Nothing in education is more important than having good teachers. We have made teaching a far more attractive career, through better pay, better incentives to train, including training grants, and more recognition and improved support. The General Teaching Council for Wales has been established and the Labour-led Assembly will work closely with the new National College for School Leadership.

We want teaching to be a career of choice for the best graduates and attractive to people making career changes. We will continue to invest more in the profession and improve conditions for teachers. High status, better salaries and proper professional support are all essential. We will:

- invest in rapid promotion and rewards for classroom excellence
- boost recruitment and retention packages for teachers
- create new routes into teaching, including 'train-to-teach' courses accredited as part of undergraduate degrees
- further improve in-service training opportunities for teachers.

Further and higher education

With Labour, post-16 education is being transformed in Wales. A new national council for education and training – Education Learning Wales (ELWa) has been established to focus further education on the needs of the learner. Schools, colleges and workplaces will be able to work together to deliver the ambition of Wales as a learning country. The role of the further education colleges working locally with schools and businesses will be key in this process.

Higher education brings on average 20 per cent higher earnings and a 50 per cent lower

chance of unemployment. It is time for a historic commitment to open higher education to half of all young people before they are 30, combined with increased investment to maintain academic standards. Access and excellence are the twin ambitions of our higher education policy. Labour in Wales is committed to a well-funded strategic higher education sector.

In 1997 we inherited a system where the number of qualified people able to go to university was capped. Today, the numbers are rising and universities have the funds to expand, with new two-year foundation degrees already under way in Wales to offer students the option of a vocationally relevant, high-quality qualification as a way into skilled work or further study. Over the next three years we will continue to expand student numbers, taking us towards our 50 per cent target.

We will maintain university entry standards while intensifying efforts to extend to able young people from all backgrounds the huge advantages which a university education confers. Wales has the best record of access in the UK. In 1998-99, 91 per cent of young first-degree students in higher education in Wales were from state schools or colleges. We will work to maintain and extend this record.

We will not introduce 'top-up' fees and have legislated to prevent them. Since 1997, we have increased university funding by more than £1 billion a year – and invested considerably more in research. Our new system of university finance ensures that 50 per cent of students pay no tuition fees at all, that no parents pay more than under the old system, and that students only start to pay back loans when



Getting a head start...every child needs IT skills

they are earning more than £10,000 a year. We will ensure that the funding system continues to promote access and excellence.

The Conservatives' claims to support a £100 billion 'endowment' of universities are completely unfunded. Their policies to turn student support upside down threaten higher costs for students and less revenue for universities.

We will strengthen research and teaching excellence. It is vital that our world-leading universities are able to compete with the best internationally. We will also support world-class research and the development of public-private partnerships. We are determined to ensure that our universities have the freedom and incentives to meet our ambitions for them. Reforms to the inspection system for teaching will slash red tape for higher-performing departments.

Health Quality services from a growing NHS

For over 50 years the National Health Service has been part and parcel of what it means to be British. If you fall ill, the NHS is there. Its foundations – tax-based funding and care according to need – remain as valid today as ever.

The NHS employs 70,000 dedicated people in Wales with an additional 10,000 working for (but not employed by) the NHS in the primary care field. In Wales the delivery of healthcare is a devolved matter. The National Assembly has published its own plan for the NHS in Wales, which can only be achieved with the continuation of the investment announced by the Labour government in Westminster. Reform will be driven through Local Health Groups as power and resources are decentralised to frontline staff.

In 1997 waiting lists were rising, hospital building had ground to a halt, and the number of nurses working in the NHS had fallen. Today, waiting lists and waiting times in Wales are falling, and there are more than 2,000 extra nurses working for patients. NHS Direct, the 24-hour bilingual nurse helpline, is available across Wales. Eye tests for people who are 60 and over are now free, resulting in a 32 per cent increase in the number of people taking the tests in Wales, and additional free tests are available to high-risk groups.

But there is a lot more to do. We are committed to investment and reform. With Labour in just four years the NHS will have grown by a third. Spending on the health service in Wales will rise by over £1 billion in the next three years: the biggest sustained increase in its history. Provided that as a country we maintain economic stability, we will, if re-elected, be able to sustain significant funding increases throughout the next Parliament. So over time we will bring UK health spending up to the EU average.

The fundamentals of care

That money will help us get the basics right. By 2004 there will be at least 380 more doctors and 1,000 more nurses working for NHS Wales. An executive board member in each NHS Trust in Wales will have responsibility for cleanliness and hygiene in hospitals. There will be extra

support and training for ward sisters, giving them accountability for the cleanliness of their wards and the food served to patients, to improve basic standards across the NHS in Wales. There will be 425 extra beds commissioned throughout Wales by May 2003, and we will build ten new hospitals in Wales within the next ten years. Capital expenditure in Wales will rise to £108 million in the NHS in the next financial year 2002-03 including more than £8 million for cancer equipment from the New Opportunities Fund. We will seek to sustain this level of investment in future years.

Improving health

Our job is not just to improve the nation's health service. It is to improve the nation's health. Deaths from cancer and heart disease are too high. There has been a growing health gap between rich and poor. Beyond other commitments to combat child poverty and poor housing, we will tackle the long-standing causes of ill health and health inequality by:

- Making the fight against cancer, heart disease and mental ill health the top priorities for investment and reform. In the first year, this will include dedicated funding for cancer, cardiac and mental health services of more than £17 million. In the same year, we will spend more than £20 million on capital projects to improve and modernise buildings and provide the latest equipment for these purposes. By the end of 2001, cancer patients will have an appointment with a consultant within ten days of the hospital receiving an urgent referral from their GP. The proposals in the NHS Wales Plan, made possible by increased funding for the health service, will enable 255 extra consultants to be funded by 2004.
- Setting out tough targets to close the health gap to cut deaths in poorer communities and among those people with poorer children.
- New emphasis on prevention with more screening services including for conditions such as sickle cell disease.
- Using the Health Inequalities Fund for Wales to tackle our problems of cardiac heart disease.
- In Wales we will develop our innovative fruit tuck shop schemes and breakfast clubs to boost child nutrition, as well as restoring free school milk for primary school children.

We remain committed to our Bill – blocked by the Tories – to ban tobacco advertising and sponsorship.

Reforming the NHS

The NHS has to earn the confidence of each new generation. It has to change the way it works if it is to meet today's challenges and provide fast and modern services. In future access for patients to a member of the primary



care team will be available within 24 hours. We will work to reduce waiting times in Wales for elective treatment. Major conditions like cancer and heart disease will have priority, with all patients treated according to clinical urgency. We will give patients more choice. We have restored the right of family doctors to refer patients to the hospital right for them. Now we will redesign the system around patients' needs. Same day tests and diagnosis will become the norm. By extending the use of NHS Direct and increasing the numbers of dentists, patients will get easier access to NHS dentistry wherever they live. We will use spare capacity in private sector hospitals where necessary, treating NHS patients free of charge, if high standards and value for money are guaranteed. It would be totally unacceptable to force people to pay for their operations. That is why we reject the approach of the Conservatives, which would lead to this outcome.

By modernising maternity services, and giving women greater choice over childbirth, we will ensure that women receive the highest quality maternity care. There will be tough new and



Above: More flexible working hours for NHS staff
Left: A bright future for frontline staff and patients

higher standards for care of children, the elderly and people with conditions like diabetes, kidney failure, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's disease and epilepsy.

We will further tackle the 'lottery of care' as we direct Local Health Groups and Trusts to fund drugs and treatments recommended by the National Institute for Clinical Excellence. Genetic services will be extended in the NHS so that more patients enjoy the benefit of the latest advances in testing and treatment; but we will ban by law human cloning and implement a moratorium on the use of genetic tests for insurance, following a recommendation of the Human Genetics Commission. We will continue to examine demographic and technological challenges as they affect the NHS.

Patients will have more say. We will give every citizen a personal smartcard containing key medical data which will give access to their

medical records. Older people, people with disabilities and their carers will be able to decide which services they want with the choice of having cash given to them directly by local councils; and nursing care will be made free. Patients and staff will be represented on Trust Boards in Wales and have more information on the quality of local services.

Power devolved

To achieve this vision, there will be clear national standards but greater decentralisation to frontline services and to the staff who run them. By 2004, all local care will be organised by Local Health Groups run by local partnerships. With more power for Local Health Groups we will abolish health authorities in Wales and the National Assembly will take over responsibility for the strategic direction of the NHS in Wales. We will give a new right of involvement in non-executive appointments to Trust Boards to patients and staff. Community Health Councils will be reformed in Wales to strengthen their role as patient watchdogs.

NHS staff

None of these ambitions will be possible without major investment in the skill, working conditions and working practices of all NHS staff, and especially nurses. Pressure will be relieved through expanded staff numbers, reformed working practices and investment in training.

Every NHS employer will offer more flexible working hours for staff, and especially nurses. Childcare provision will be improved. The pay system will be reformed to make it fairer. There will be new contracts for GPs and hospital consultants, coupled to extra money. We will examine the case for a public-private partnership with a commercial mortgage lender to make home ownership more affordable for nurses and other NHS staff.

Staff at all levels will get more help with training. Healthcare assistants, porters, cooks and cleaners in Wales will be offered an Individual Learning Account by April 2004 to develop their careers. We will examine the potential for sabbaticals to help GPs, senior nurses and consultants update their skills.

There will be new systems to learn from when things go wrong, a core education curriculum for all health professionals, and reforms to strengthen professional self-regulation.

This is a vision worth fighting for. It will take time to achieve but these are the most comprehensive plans ever put before the British people to improve the state of the nation's health and our health service.

Labour in Wales is particularly proud of the part it played in the creation of the NHS. In a partnership between the Labour government providing record investment for public services, and the Labour-led Assembly reforming the NHS

in Wales, we aim to build an NHS true to the founding principles of Aneurin Bevan but modernised to face today's challenges; an NHS of which the people of Wales can once again be proud.

Culture and sport

Government can be about lifting the human spirit – the thrill of scientific discovery at the National Museum, the emotion of theatre, the tension of inter-school rugby. The arts and sports are key to our quality of life. They matter for their own sake. And millions make their living out of their creativity. Government can and must make sure the opportunities are there. But for the last 20 years, under-investment, misplaced priorities, and lack of organisation have held back access and excellence.

Since 1997, this has begun to change. We have started to invest and to reform the system. Investment in theatre develops the film and television stars of tomorrow; investment in sport will produce the Olympic and Paralympic medal winners of 2012.

Culture and sport should not be seen as peripheral issues; they are vital to our identity

and enjoyment as a country. We are pledged to the investment necessary to expand access and excellence together in culture and sport, building on excellence in film and broadcasting.

Sport

The performance of British athletes at the Sydney Olympics and Paralympics thrilled everyone.

Labour is committed to a radical extension of sporting opportunities and facilities. Sport is a good health policy, a good crime reduction policy, a good way of building communities.

The Labour-led Welsh Assembly has established a PE and Schools Sport Action Group. We will examine its findings with a view to increasing access to sports for all children in Wales. We have stopped the enforced sale of playing fields and, thanks to the New Deal, there will be up to 2,000 sports assistants across Britain to help sports co-ordinators deliver sport activity in our schools. We will maintain the elite funding we put in place for individual athletics, with a first-class athletics stadium for the World Athletics Championships in 2005.

We are committed to selling the Tote to a Racing Trust to allow it to compete commercially, with all long-term profits invested in the sport.



The building of the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff with support from the National Lottery has brought economic benefits to Wales

We are committed to supporting the amateur sports clubs to which 5.6 million people now belong.

The House of Commons elected in 1997 made clear its wish to ban fox-hunting. The House of Lords took a different view and reform has been blocked. Such issues are rightly a matter for a free vote and we will give the new House of Commons an early opportunity to express its view. We will then enable Parliament to reach a conclusion on this issue. If the issue continues to be blocked we will look at how the disagreement can be resolved. We have no intention whatsoever of placing restrictions on the sports of angling and shooting.

Arts

Each year 30 million people enjoy arts activities. These activities are critical to national life, with huge importance for the creative and tourism industries. Yet the Conservatives introduced charges for our national museums and galleries, cut the arts budget and reduced support for arts education.

Since 1997, that has changed. National museums in Wales are now free for everyone. An increase of £4 million by 2003-04 has been awarded to the Arts Council for Wales ensuring

How Labour helps young people:

- by raising standards and investing more in education, from nursery schools to adult learning
- by giving the majority of young adults the opportunity to study in higher education
- by tackling youth unemployment, with the New Deal made permanent
- by opportunities to train as you work, through modern apprenticeships and the right to time off to study
- by expanding sports facilities in schools and in the community
- by cleaning up the environment, with support for green technologies and global action to tackle climate change

support for the existing eight theatres for young people, to train and commission scriptwriters and put on new productions. We have invested in our orchestras, and are investing an extra £10 million a year in developing our regional museums and galleries. We have maintained our commitment to the nation's heritage and to its historic buildings, and will continue our drive to put architectural quality at the heart of design of new public buildings.

Education is the bedrock of an artistic society. We have created the Music Development Fund in Wales with £8 million of funding, and we will ensure that all children who want to have the opportunity to learn music. Community arts will be included as part of the Communities First initiative in Wales, to offer children in disadvantaged areas the chance to develop artistic and creative talents. We will build on the pilot projects. We have made the largest-ever investment in computerising libraries; all will be online by 2002 with guaranteed standards to meet the needs of users.

From 2002, Culture On-line will offer children and adults alike tailored access to museums and cultural activity over the internet. Public money devoted to the arts should be spent on excellent art, not bureaucracy. The Arts Council for Wales is undergoing substantial reform, creating a simpler structure, working in partnership with key organisations cutting bureaucratic costs further, and delivering a better service to individual artists and arts organisations. We will ensure that our arts funding system backs excellence, giving artists and arts organisations the long-term stability they need to become world leaders.

Creative industries

The creative industries are a vital engine of our economy, providing jobs for over one million people. The National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts has been set up to back our most talented young people across Britain. Creative entrepreneurs need seed funding, cheap accommodation near other similar companies, and advice on how to develop their talent into a business. To meet those needs, we now plan to provide start-up advice, services and funding for new businesses.

Lottery

Under the Conservatives, Lottery money was concentrated on large capital projects. Many communities missed out on their fair share.

The number of Lottery grants to community groups has trebled with Labour. Yet there are still communities which have received a disproportionately small share of Lottery funding. We will ensure a fairer deal for these communities.

Labour has reshaped the Lottery to match



National showcase... the Labour-backed Botanic Gardens of Wales

people's priorities. Money goes for revenue as well as capital. The New Opportunities Fund (NOF) directs help to education, health and the environment – after-school clubs, vital cancer-beating equipment, local green spaces.

We backed going ahead with the Dome as an opportunity to showcase British talent and give people a good day out in the millennium year. Despite the enjoyment of more than six million visitors, the Dome did not fulfil expectations and we have learned the lessons, good and bad, from it. But the development of the Dome has been the catalyst for unlocking the value of the North Greenwich peninsula and regenerating local communities. In Wales, we backed the building of the Millennium Stadium and National Botanic Gardens with support from the National Lottery. These projects have brought great economic benefit already and help to enhance the image of Wales in Britain and beyond.

We need a revolution in the status, standards and focus of our public services. Labour is prepared to make the investment in staff and services – and we are ready to match investment with reform.