

The Scottish Labour Manifesto 2010



**A future
fair for all**

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Foreword from Gordon Brown

This General Election is fought as our troops are bravely fighting to defend the safety of the British people and the security of the world in Afghanistan. They bring great pride and credit to our country: we honour and will always support them.

At the same time the world has been rocked by the first great crisis of the new global economic age.

In Britain, the political crisis caused by expenses has undermined the bond of trust between the people and the politicians elected to serve them.

So this cannot, and will not, be a 'business as usual' election or Manifesto. In this Manifesto we set out plans to address the main future challenges we face in our economy, our society and our politics. We will rebuild the economy to secure the recovery and invest in future growth and jobs. We will renew our society to further strengthen the communities that bind our country together. And we will restore trust in politics with greater transparency and accountability in a system battered by the expenses scandal.

This programme for further national renewal meets the big challenges of the age. Our Manifesto is ambitious but affordable, bold but realistic, and learns from the lessons we take from our experience to date. Over the next ten years we will confront major challenges - intensive global competition, climate change, an ageing society, and bringing stability to Afghanistan. This is a moment for good judgement and serious purpose to meet the challenges ahead.

Our aim is a modern, progressive Britain based on fairness, respect, decency and openness.

This is a Manifesto about the greater progressive change we need because of the tougher times we are living through. There are no big new spending commitments, but there is a determination for every penny to be used wisely, and, as present plans make clear, to give the maximum protection to frontline public services.

This is a moment to show greater boldness in response to what Britain has gone through and the toll it has taken. We reject a 'business as usual' mentality because we have to re-build and re-balance the economy, as well as renew our society and politics. Reform cannot stand still - not least because we need to get more value and delivery from public services in a period of public spending constraint. Our Manifesto charts an optimistic course in tougher economic times. It builds on and takes forward the reforms we have undertaken since 1997.

I love Britain and want the very best for our country. This Manifesto is my pledge of a future fair for all.



Gordon Brown
Prime Minister

Introduction

The argument of this Manifesto is that to deliver a future fair for all we need to rebuild our economy, protect and reform our public services as we strengthen our society and renew our politics.

Scottish Labour will fight every election on our commitment to all those things which matter most to Scottish families and workers; the economy, jobs, crime, schools and hospitals. Devolution means that many of these issues are decided in the Scottish Parliament. Where responsibility is reserved to the UK Parliament, Labour will deliver the commitments made in this manifesto in the next Parliament. Where responsibility is devolved, Scottish Labour will endeavor to deliver for Scotland from opposition in the Scottish Parliament, a Parliament of minorities, as we have done on new apprenticeships for young Scots. We will carry these commitments through into the next Scottish Parliament.

We, Labour, are the people to carry out this next stage of renewal because of our values and our understanding of the role of government: to stand by ordinary people so they can change their lives for the better. It is our belief that it is active, reforming government, not

absent government, that helps make people powerful.

We are proud of our country and the way it has changed since 1997. It is just too easy to forget. Our public services were a byword for decline; today they have been transformed. Our large cities were reeling from two savage recessions; today, despite the global economic crisis, they have a renewed prosperity and civic pride. People were paid £1 an hour; today the minimum wage and tax credits provide the dignity of a living income.

The welfare state simply did not understand working women and families. Today, with family friendly working and better childcare it has at last begun to do so.

These changes happened because we applied our values to the world as it was then. We changed our party so that it connected to the hopes and aspirations of the British people.

We changed our country because we rejected the philosophy of the 1980s which said that government should just get out of the way and that we were in it just for ourselves.

We are proud of our record but today we are running for the future. We have to address

a world that is very different now with major new challenges we must confront: fighting for our economic future in a tough competitive world, tackling climate change, improving public services amidst financial constraint, confronting the reality of international terrorism, adjusting to an ageing society so people can live longer and happier lives, and restoring trust in politics.

The global financial crisis shows we need to be bolder about reforming our financial markets and building our economic future on fairer, more solid foundations. To build on success in our public services, we need to protect investment in the front line and also be bold about putting citizens genuinely in control.

And we must be bold reformers of our politics: seizing this once in a generation opportunity to make Parliament properly accountable. In all these decisions, we offer progressive solutions in tough times. We do not measure the boldness of our programme by how much we spend but the results we achieve. By taking hard decisions, being guided at all times by a sense of fairness, we believe that we can continue to advance towards the good society in which we believe.

There is a big choice at this election about whether we confront these challenges and build the kind of economy, society and politics we believe in, or duck them. But to be able to meet these future challenges, there are some immediate decisions we need to get right now. Above all, we need to secure the economic recovery. Get it right and we can go on to build a strong economic future. Get it wrong and we will slip back into recession.

Labour believes we must not put the recovery at risk by reckless cuts to public spending this year.

From the autumn of 2008, big calls had to be made. We nationalised Northern Rock, protected people's savings, cut VAT to stimulate our economy, put in place job guarantees to get people back to work, and stepped in to stop repossessions

It is working. The banking system has been stabilised. Our economy is showing signs of returning to growth. Unemployment has, so far, risen by over 500,000 less than people expected this time last year. Repossessions are at around half the level of the 1990s.

The question at this election is whether people think the choice we made was the right one

and whether we use the power of government to help sustain recovery, or allow it to be snuffed out. Every government of the major developed economies – of Left and Right – recognises the need to support the economy while growth is still fragile. We will not cut spending this year, but instead support the economy to ensure recovery is established.

Labour believes we should rebuild our economy in new ways: with more high-tech business, fairer rewards and responsibility from all, including at the top.

The world changed out of all recognition in 2007 with the onset of the global economic crisis. Major British banks, the custodians of our savings and livelihoods, ran out of money because of the recklessness of those in charge. This Manifesto makes the case that there should be no return to business as usual. People have suffered too much with their jobs, livelihoods and confidence to allow a return to the same old ways. There is a desire not simply to correct for what went wrong but to seize the opportunity to build anew. Financial services have been an essential job creator in Britain and will continue to be so. But our financial institutions left to themselves have undermined our economy.

We are enacting sweeping banking reform to prevent a repeat of the past; ensuring new support for the high-tech industries of the future, such as green industries; and taking action to forge a new culture of long-termism in business. It isn't markets or governments that create wealth – people do, through their own effort and hard work. So we will do more to support enterprise and to help those who want to build up a business and get on in life. Those who can work must do so and it needs to be properly valued. We will end for good the concept of a life on benefit by offering all those unemployed for more than two years work they must accept, and we will make work pay better with the goal of a minimum wage rising at least in line with average earnings and a guarantee that people will be better off in work than on benefit.

As we more than halve the fiscal deficit over the next four years we will ensure that we do so in a fair way with a combination of a return to economic growth, cuts to lower priority programmes and fair tax rises. Responsibility at the top means people paying their fair share and we believe it is right that those with the broadest shoulders bear the greatest burden of paying down the deficit.

Labour believes we should protect frontline spending on schools, the NHS and policing.

Millions of people working in our public services embody the best values of Britain, helping empower people to make the most of their own lives while protecting them from the risks they should not have to bear on their own. Just as we need to be bolder about the role of government in making markets work fairly, we also need to be bold reformers of government.

For a decade we have combined investment and reform and improved our public services

Now we need to rise to the challenge of achieving even higher standards in a period of constrained resources. We will drive forward our programme to strip out all waste, improve efficiency and get the most out of every pound spent. We recognize that investing more in priority areas will mean cutting back in others.

Above all we will build public services that are more personal to people's needs: with a clear commitment to quality, the ambition of tailoring services to individual needs and the concerns and aspiration of the hard-working majority at the heart of service delivery.

In health, this means halving the time from one month to two weeks to see a cancer specialist and get results. In education it means placing literacy and numeracy at the heart of our policy agenda because we are committed to providing opportunities which allow every child to reach their full potential. In creating safer communities, we will crack down on knife crime with mandatory minimum jail sentences for carrying a knife and we will place victims at the forefront of our judicial system.

Labour will strengthen our society, by protecting the things people value and demanding rights and responsibilities from all.

Our society is not broken; it is strong in many different ways. But it is changing fast. Changing with immigration, changing as people move more frequently, as young people grow up more quickly and older people live longer. We will protect the things people value: families, strong communities, local institutions. We will create a new settlement across the UK on how we care for the elderly through the creation of a National Care Service, and fathers will have more time off to spend with their kids. There will be greater protection for the local institutions people value, like local post offices and pubs.

In everything we do, we will demand the responsibilities that must come with rights: to work when you can, not to abuse your neighbour or neighbourhood, to show respect for Britain as a newcomer, to pay your fair share of tax.

Labour proposes radical reform of our democracy to reconnect politics to the people it should serve. Just as the global economic crisis was a shock to our economic system, the expenses crisis created turmoil in our political system. It revealed not just unacceptable behaviour by some MPs but also that our closed political system had lost touch with people. Once again, the response cannot be to try and return to business as usual.

We need fundamental reform of our politics to make it more accountable. We will let the people decide how to reform our institutions and our politics: changing the voting system and electing a second chamber to replace the House of Lords. But we will go further, introducing fixed-term parliaments, banning MPs from paid second jobs that pose a conflict of interest, and providing for a free vote in Parliament to widen the franchise to 16 and 17 year olds.

In 1997 New Labour met the call of renewal. In our politics and economy over the last 18

months, we have witnessed seismic events. In this election, the first of the post-crisis era, we stand as the people with the experience, values and ideas to help our country through the next phase of renewal.

This task has always relied on optimism. Our principle opponents, the Conservatives, offer a fundamentally pessimistic vision of national decline: about Britain today and in the future. Their only real prescription for the good society is a smaller state and the decisions they seek to make for our country would favour the privileged few over the many. They would isolate Britain, cutting us adrift from the alliances and influence that will enable us to succeed as a country.

This is a Manifesto that is idealistic about what is possible but realistic about how to achieve it.

This is not a conservative moment. It is a progressive moment. We speak for the ordinary people of this country who work hard, want their kids to do better than them, and worry about the economic, environmental and social challenges we face. We are on their side, it is their voice, needs and hopes that shape this programme.

Securing Britain's future

The plans set out in this Manifesto take full account of the fiscal position we face. We will protect frontline public services while meeting our commitment to halve the deficit over the next four years.

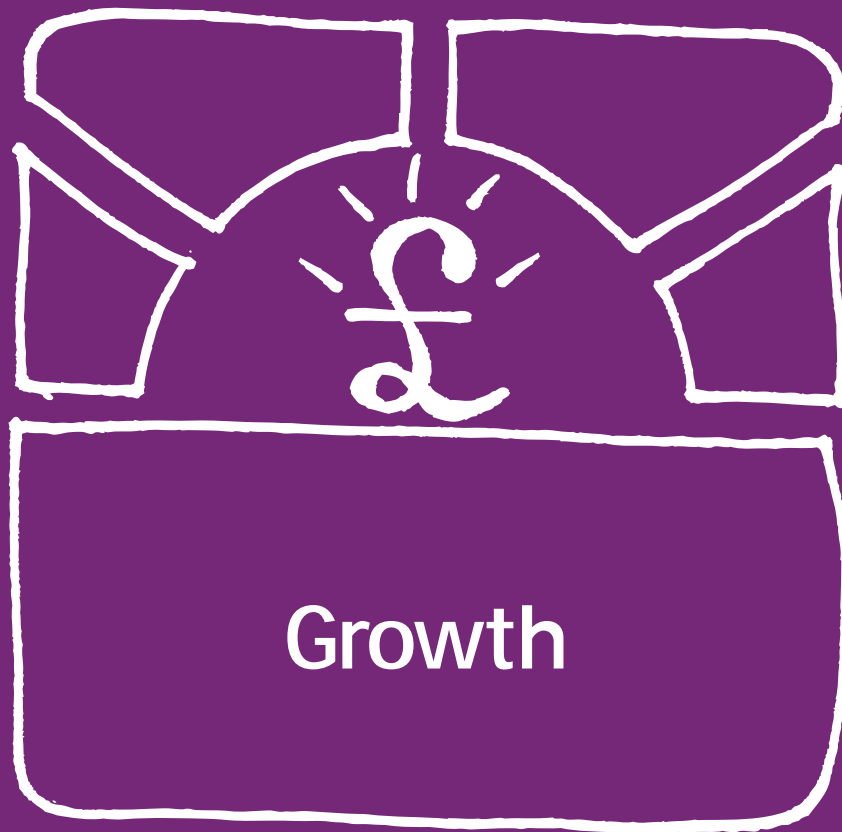
We are now emerging from the global financial crisis. It has had a lasting effect on tax receipts, here in the UK and across the world. We are sticking to our spending plans this year so that support for families and businesses remains as we secure the recovery. But from 2011-12, as growth takes hold, spending will be tighter.

The Manifesto reflects the tough choices that we will make to secure Britain's future in a way that is fair to all:

- **Tough choices for £15 billion efficiency savings in 2010-11.**
- **Tough choices on cutting government overheads: £11 billion of further operational efficiencies and other cross-cutting savings to streamline government will be delivered by 2012-13**
- **Tough choices on pay: action to control public-sector pay including a one per cent cap on basic pay uplifts for 2011-12 and 2012-13, saving £3.4 billion a year, and new restrictions on senior pay-setting. Tough decisions on public sector pensions to cap the taxpayers' liability – saving £1 billion a year.**
- **Tough choices on spending: £5 billion already identified in cuts to lower priority spending.**
- **Tough choices on welfare: our reforms will increase fairness and work incentives, including £1.5 billion of savings being delivered.**
- **Tough choices on assets: £20 billion of asset sales by 2020**
- **Tough choices on tax: a bonus tax, reduced tax relief on pensions for the best off, a new 50p tax rate on earnings over £150,000 and one penny on National Insurance Contributions.**

The Scottish Labour Manifesto 2010

Building the high-growth economy of the future



The challenge

To secure the recovery and learn the right lessons from the global economic crisis laying the foundations for sustained growth: reforming banks, modernising infrastructure, and as we pay down the deficit, providing the right support to the private sector to build a diverse, high-tech industrial economy. The Tories would threaten recovery with cuts this year, and fail to invest in our economic future.

The next stage of renewal

- Secure the recovery by supporting the economy now and more than halve the deficit by 2014 through renewed economic growth, fair taxes and cuts to lower priority spending.
- Realise our stakes in publicly controlled banks to secure the best deal for the tax-payer, introduce a new global levy, and reform the rules for banking to ensure no repeat of past irresponsibility.
- Create UK Finance for Growth bringing £4 billion together to provide capital for growing businesses, investing in the growth sectors of the future.
- Build a high-tech economy, supporting business and industry to create one million more skilled jobs and modernising our infrastructure with High Speed Rail, a Green Investment Bank and broadband access for all.
- Encourage a culture of long-term commitment to sustainable company growth, making corporate takeovers harder by requiring a super-majority of two-thirds of shareholders.

As the economy steadily recovers, there will be no return to business as usual. Financial institutions cannot continue the practices of the past. Radical change is needed. Without long-term investment in wealth-

creating infrastructure and enterprise, accompanied by the diversification of our industrial base, Britain will not emerge from the recession ready for a stronger, fairer future.

The engine of growth is private enterprise: we will give business our full support in creating wealth and jobs. Strong and sustained growth is fundamental to a credible strategy for keeping the public finances on a stable long-term footing

To be successful business needs stability: but to achieve stability after the seismic shock of the global banking crisis, the governance of our economic and financial institutions must be radically reformed.

And to support business in securing prosperity for future generations, an activist industrial strategy is essential: learning the lessons from those nations that have succeeded in developing advanced manufacturing and leading-edge service industries. In these countries the role of government is not to stand aside, but to nurture private sector dynamism and properly support infrastructure and the sectors of the future.

Securing the recovery

We have taken the tough decisions to get Britain through the downturn. We have done so with fairness in mind: we have not allowed the recession created by the financial crisis to become a depression, or

stood aside and allowed grave damage to be inflicted on our society as it was in the 1930s and 1980s. The Tories argue that public spending should be cut immediately, but this position is out of step with every other G20 government, right or left. If governments do not provide support when families and businesses most need help, growth is set back, jobs are lost, and the country builds up more debts - paying a higher price in the future. To cut now would push the economy back into recession, not reducing the deficit but increasing it.

We will continue to support the economy while growth is still fragile, sticking with our targeted increase in public spending over the next year to sustain the recovery. Our focus for the stimulus is strategic investment, putting in place the new digital, transport and energy infrastructures that will support the return to sustainable growth.

Deficit reduction and fiscal sustainability

Once the recovery is secure, we will rapidly reduce the budget deficit. We have set out a clear, balanced and fair plan to more than halve the deficit over the next four years and we will stick to it. We will achieve

this through a combination of fair tax increases; a firm grip on public spending including cuts in lower priority areas; and strategies for growth that increase tax revenues and reduce spending on benefits. Over the next Parliament the structural deficit will be cut by more than two-thirds.

The huge global recession and our efforts to counter it have required us to make tough choices, including on tax. We have made our choice in ways that put the greatest burden on those with the broadest shoulders. Bankers have faced a bonus tax, tax reliefs on pensions for the best off will be reduced, and we have introduced a new 50p tax rate on earnings over £150,000. We have also decided to put one penny on national insurance contributions, asking those on salaries over £20,000 to pay a little more from April 2011 when the economy will be stronger - protecting front line services. These commitments allow us to credibly deliver our deficit reduction plan and to protect the services that matter most to families.

We will not raise the basic, higher and new top rates of tax through the next Parliament and we renew our pledge not to extend VAT to food, children's

clothes, books, newspapers and public transport fares. We will maintain tax credits, not cut them. And we have made our choice to protect front-line investment in schools, the NHS and policing in Scotland.

Tough choices

On public spending, we will be relentless in making sure that the public get value for money for every pound spent. We will overhaul how government works: cutting back-office and property running costs; abolishing unnecessary arms-length-bodies; sharply reducing spending on consultancy and marketing; and cutting lower priority spend. We have already shown in Budget 2010 how these steps will help us to achieve savings of £20 billion a year by 2012-13, on top of the £15 billion that are being delivered this year.

We will take a tough stance on public sector pay, saving over £3 billion by capping public sector pay rises at 1 per cent in 2011-12 and 2012-13. We have agreed tough reforms to public sector pensions, as set out in Budget 2010, which will make significant savings and ensure that pensions for the public sector workforce are secure and sustainable in the long-term. Any UK government controlled

appointment involving a salary over £150,000 will require ministerial sign-off – and we would take a similar approach in Scotland. Savings from our tougher approach will help realise a fair rate of pay for all those working for government.

As we prepare for the upturn, fiscal responsibility and monetary stability will be the foundations on which we build. We have made the new fiscal responsibility framework legally binding, and we will maintain our inflation target of 2 per cent so that mortgage rates can be kept as low as possible.

Rebuilding our banking system

The international banking system played a key role in fuelling the most severe global recession since the Second World War. We are determined to support our financial sector and for it to be a major employer and wealth creator, but there will be no return to the excesses of the past - banks will face tighter regulation. The banking system must support domestic businesses, including start ups and entrepreneurs, as well as mortgages. We have agreed lending targets with those banks in which we have a stake, and there will be consequences for executive

remuneration if targets are breached.

Learning the lessons of the crisis means ensuring that far greater responsibility is taken for risk is taken in the boardroom. We will compel banks to keep more capital and create 'living wills' so that should they fail there will be no danger of that failure spreading. Because the banking crisis demonstrates the global nature of financial instability, we will continue to work with our international partners to require all banks to hold more and better quality capital, to ensure counter-cyclical protection, and to introduce a global tax on financial services so that banks across the world contribute fairly to the society in which they are based.

In the UK the new Council for Financial Stability will monitor and help address asset bubbles and financial imbalances. We will give the FSA additional powers if necessary to constrain and quash executive remuneration where it is a source of risk and instability. If there is evidence of bonus rules being evaded, we will act.

We will ensure greater competition in the banking sector, breaking up those banks in which the Government

currently has a controlling stake. The proposed OFT review into how City markets operate is welcome. We value the role of building societies owned by their customers and the strength and diversity that a healthy mutual sector brings to our financial services, and we will consult on measures to help strengthen the sector. As one option for the disposal of Northern Rock, we will encourage a mutual solution, while ensuring that the sale generates maximum value for money for the taxpayer.

Rebuilding our industrial base: new industries, new jobs, new knowledge

Britain is already the 6th biggest manufacturing economy in the world. Because of substantial investment since 1997, the UK has an excellent research base and is already strong in some world-leading sectors. But if we make the right decisions as a country in the coming years - through a new industrial policy, stronger infrastructure and a renewed partnership between business and government - we can be leaders in the emerging industries of the future.

After the crunch, we will ensure that growth industries can access the investment they need to grow. Finance must

be at the service of industry, as new public channels are built to deliver private funds to innovative and fast-growing companies. The new UK Finance for Growth Fund will bring together a total of £4 billion of public funds and combine it with private money to channel equity to businesses looking to develop and grow. Within this, the Growth Capital Fund will focus on SMEs which need capital injections of between £2 and £10 million, while the Innovation Investment Fund will focus on the needs of high-tech firms

Business investment in physical capital will play a key role in a balanced and sustainable recovery. The Strategic Investment Fund is supporting important new investment in the nuclear and renewables industries. We will provide incentives for companies to invest through R&D tax credits, and protect and increase the size of capital allowances that help to grow key sectors such as manufacturing. We will ensure a competitive regime through the development of the patent-box – a lower rate of corporation tax to encourage UK-based innovation – supporting the UK's strengths in new industries and sectors.

Britain is among the best places in the world to do science, having massively increased investment in research and development as a proportion of national income. We are committed to a ring-fenced UK science budget in the next spending review. To help us do better in turning research outputs into innovation, we will provide focused investment for Technology and Innovation Centres, developing technologies where the UK has world-leading expertise.

We will also support university research through the development of a new University Enterprise Capital Fund. The proceeds of success will flow back into the higher education sector.

As we create a more diverse economy, we will strengthen support for exporters to help us increase our market share with our traditional markets in Europe and the United States, while breaking further into the emerging markets of China, India and Brazil.

We must seize the opportunity to develop education, in particular higher education, as a great export business. Universities will be encouraged to develop international links and research partnerships, and

we want the Open University to reach the global market in distance learning. We will develop a new gateway for the export of NHS intellectual property and services at the cutting-edge.

Restoring full employment

We expect our growing economic and sectoral strengths to create at least one million skilled jobs by 2015. These jobs of the future will increasingly come from the new growth sectors in which we are investing - low carbon, digital and creative industries, high value tourism, premium food and drink, life sciences – and professional work in business services, healthcare and education.

Championing an enterprise economy

At the heart of our approach to building a strong and fair Britain is a commitment to support enterprise. We will back those who want to get on, work their way up, and generate wealth. We will keep business taxation competitive at the same time as we increase capital allowances to encourage investment.

There is no substitute for the drive and ambition that entrepreneurs bring. We will

support small businesses and help with their cash flow by continuing our 'Time to Pay' scheme that has already – through tax and NICs deferral - helped thousands of firms, and in recognising the special contribution of entrepreneurs we are doubling the Entrepreneurs Relief lifetime limit to £2 million. We will also create a new Small Business Credit Adjudicator with statutory powers ensuring that SMEs are not turned down unfairly when applying to banks for finance.

We will continue to simplify regulation and avoid unnecessary red tape. If it is used correctly regulation can help drive innovation, as well as protect workers and consumers. We will seek to reduce the costs of regulation by more than £6 billion by 2015.

21st Century infrastructure

The key to creating the industries of the future is renewing the national infrastructure on which firms rely. To ensure Britain's infrastructure needs are properly resourced, we will work in partnership with the private sector reforming the regulation of energy to improve incentives for the

private sector to invest. We will establish a Green Investment Bank to invest in low carbon infrastructure, with the Government's stake funded by the sale of infrastructure assets. The Government will seek to match its' contribution with at least £1 billion of private sector investment.

We propose to extend the public interest test so that it is applied to potential takeovers of infrastructure and utility companies.

Britain must be a world-leader in the development of broadband. We are investing in the most ambitious plan of any industrialised country to ensure a digital Britain for all, extending access to every home and business. We will reach the long-term vision of superfast broadband for all through a public-private partnership in three stages: first, giving virtually every household in the country a broadband service of at least two megabytes per second by 2012; second, making possible superfast broadband for the vast majority of Britain in partnership with private operators, with Government investing over £1 billion in the next seven years; and lastly reaching the final ten per cent using satellites and mobile broadband.

Because we are determined that every family and business, not just some, should benefit, we will raise revenue to pay for this from a modest levy on fixed telephone lines. And we will continue to work with business, the BBC and other broadcasting providers to increase take-up of broadband and to ensure Britain becomes a leading digital economy.

Rebuilding our transport infrastructure

Britain needs to invest in modern, high capacity and low-carbon transport infrastructure. At the heart of our growth plan is the commitment to a new high-speed rail line, linking the North and South. Built in stages, the initial line will link London to Birmingham, Manchester, the East Midlands, Sheffield and Leeds, and then to the North and Scotland. By running through-trains from day one, cities including Glasgow, Edinburgh, Newcastle and Liverpool will also be part of the initial network. Journey times will be slashed – Glasgow and Edinburgh will be within three and a half hours of London, making the train a strong competitor to the plane for these longer journeys and slashing carbon emissions. We will consult fully on legislation to take forward

our high speed rail plans within the next parliament. Labour is committed to High Speed Rail coming to Scotland, serving Glasgow and Edinburgh and we will set out the business case.

High speed rail is not just about faster journey times. It will free up capacity on existing intercity rail lines, enabling more rail freight, commuter and local services.

Rail passenger numbers across the UK have increased by 40 per cent in the last ten years and punctuality and quality of service are improving steadily. We will encourage more people to switch to rail with an enforceable legal right to the cheapest fare. We will welcome rail franchise bids from not-for-profit, mutual or co-operative franchise enterprises and will look to remove unfair barriers that prevent such bids benefiting passengers and taxpayers.

Heathrow is Britain's international hub airport, already operating at full capacity, and supporting millions of jobs, businesses and citizens who depend upon it. Scotland, in particular, depends on connectivity through Heathrow to European and international markets. We support a third

runway at Heathrow, subject to strict conditions on the environmental impact and flight numbers, but we will not allow additional runways to proceed at any other airport in the next Parliament.

Our towns and cities need modern, sustainable transport infrastructure. We will build the Glasgow Airport Rail Link, supporting 1,300 jobs.

Buses are a lifeline. Around £300 million of public money goes to support bus services every year. Where local bus services are not serving communities well, we would seek to re-regulate to improve services.

Through our investment Labour has put Britain at the forefront of the electric and low carbon vehicle manufacturing. To promote the rapid take-up of electric and low carbon cars, we will ensure there are 100,000 electric vehicle charging points by the end of the next Parliament.

Corporate governance reform

To build strong businesses we need skilled managers, accountable boards, and committed shareholders – all with a culture of long-

term commitment. We will strengthen the 2006 Companies Act where necessary to better reflect these principles. The UK's Stewardship Code for institutional shareholders should be strengthened and we will require institutional shareholders to declare how they vote and for banks to put their remuneration policies to shareholders for explicit approval.

Too many takeovers turn out to be neither good for the acquiring company or the firm being bought. The system needs reform. Companies should be more transparent about their long-term plans for the business they want to acquire. There need to be tighter timetables, more disclosure of who owns shares, a requirement for bidders to set out how they will finance their bids and greater transparency on advisers' fees. There should be a higher threshold of support - two-thirds of shareholders - for securing a change of ownership and the case for limiting votes to those on the register before the bid should be examined.

Creating a shareholding society

We want Britain's workers to have a stake in their company by widening share ownership

and creating more employee-owned and trust-owned businesses. We will reform tax reliefs for employee share ownership, encouraging firms to offer share options to all their employees.

We want to see a step change in the role of employee-owned companies in the economy, recognising that many entrepreneurs would like to see their companies in the hands of their employees when they retire. We will review any outstanding barriers to the formation of more employee-owned companies like the John Lewis Partnership.

The Scottish Labour Manifesto 2010

Prosperity for all not just a few



The challenge

To grow together as a country, rewarding those who work hard so they can do well and look after their families: returning Britain to full employment, enabling people to get higher paid and better jobs, and widening access to home ownership. The Tories have no plan for fairness; their decisions would make our society more unequal and unjust.

The next stage of renewal

- **200,000 jobs through the Future Jobs Fund, with a job or training place for young people out of work for six months but benefits cut at ten months if they refuse a place; anyone unemployed for more than two years guaranteed work but no option of life on benefits.**
- **A National Minimum Wage rising in line with earnings, and a new £40 a week Better Off in Work guarantee.**
- **Sustainable modern apprenticeship places for adults and young people.**
- **No stamp duty for first time buyers on all house purchases below £250,000 for two years, paid for by a five per cent rate on homes worth more than £1 million.**
- **A People's Bank at the Post Office; a Universal Service Obligation on banks to serve every community; a clamp down on interest rates for doorstep and payday loans.**

As the British economy returns to growth, we will ensure that everyone who is willing to work shares fairly in renewed prosperity. We will support the recovery so that we see a swift return to full employment, with more chances to get on at work and a fair distribution of growth throughout Britain.

Our job guarantees will put an end to long term unemployment and a life on benefits. No one fit for work should be abandoned to a life on benefit so all those who can work will be required to do so. At the same time, we believe that people should be able to earn enough to live and be better off than on welfare.

In today's world, every worker needs to be able to upgrade their skills in order to get on. As well as good career prospects, people want to know that their living standards and quality of life will improve. So we will enable more people to get on the housing ladder; offer a helping hand to build up savings; and secure a fair deal with the banks to strengthen people's personal finances

A modern welfare state for all

We will build a personalised welfare system that offers protection for all those who need it, increases people's control over their own lives, and is clear about the responsibilities owed to others. Getting more people into employment increases tax revenues and reduces spending on benefits. Our intensive help for people out of work – starting from day one – has already kept unemployment over half a million lower than predicted during the recession, saving £15 billion over the next five years.

We are determined that no-one should be scarred for life by joblessness. No young person in Britain should be long-term unemployed: those out of work for six months or more will be guaranteed employment

or training through the £1 billion Future Jobs Fund, with mandatory participation after ten months. The fund will support 200,000 jobs – at least 20,000 in Scotland. All those who are long-term unemployed for two years will be guaranteed a job placement, which they will be required to take up or have their benefits cut.

More people with disabilities and health conditions will be helped to move into work from Incapacity Benefit and Employment Support Allowance, as we extend the use of our tough but fair work capability test. This will help to reduce the benefit bill by £1.5 billion over the next four years. We will reassess the Incapacity Benefit claims of 1.5 million people by 2014, as we move those able to work back into jobs.

For those with the most serious conditions or disabilities who want to work there will be a new guarantee of supported employment after two years on benefit. We will seek to ensure that disabled people are able to lead dignified and independent lives, free of discrimination and with the support to which they are entitled.

The lone parent employment rate has increased by over 12

per cent since 1997. We are radically reforming how Job Centre Plus helps lone parents: providing extra help with childcare, training and support to find family friendly work, while requiring those with children aged three to take steps to prepare for work and actively seek employment once their youngest child is seven years old.

To ensure that work pays, we will guarantee that when someone who has found it difficult to get into work comes off benefits, their family will be at least £40 a week better off. This is our Better Off in Work guarantee: together the National Minimum Wage and tax credits should always make work pay. And we will consult on further reforms to simplify the benefits system and make sure it gives people the right incentives and personal support to get into work and progress in their jobs.

Our goal is to make responsibility the cornerstone of our welfare state. Housing Benefit will be reformed to ensure that we do not subsidise those living in the private sector on rents that other ordinary working families could not afford. And we will continue to crack down on those who try to cheat the benefit system.

Glasgow has a historic concentration of worklessness. The Glasgow Task Force examined the welfare challenges within the city with a particular focus on generational poverty and benefit reliance. We are committed to its core recommendation - the development of a “Glasgow Guarantee” or commitment to all unemployed people in the city of Glasgow, and in the future would aim to see more localised delivery across Scotland.

Making Work Pay

The National Minimum Wage is one of our proudest achievements. It protects and sustains millions of low paid workers. To ensure that the lowest paid share fairly in rising prosperity, the Low Pay Commission’s remit will have the goal of the National Minimum Wage rising at least in line with average earnings over the period to 2015.

To underline our commitment to helping the lowest paid we will ask all Whitehall Departments, within their allocated budgets, to consider how they can follow the lead of those who already pay the Living Wage. This will be supported by measures to address high pay in the public

sector – reducing pay-bill pressure in the years ahead.

We want everyone to have better prospects in work. We will give the Low Pay Commission additional responsibilities to report on productivity and career progression in low-skilled, low-paid sectors, bringing together representatives from the business community and social partners.

Getting Ahead: investing in you

As we restore full employment to the British economy, we will seek to make work more fulfilling and secure. That means supporting people to improve their skills.

We have led the way on skills. We are committed to the creation of sustainable modern apprenticeship places for both adults and young people so they have the skills needed to sustain economic recovery post recession. We successfully amended the Scottish Budget to create nearly 8,000 new apprenticeships.

Improving your living standards

Our aim is to put more wealth in the hands of the British people. We have done all we

can to keep mortgage rates low – at 0.5 per cent during this recession compared to 15 per cent in the 1990s - and will continue to do so in the future. The direct tax and benefit measures introduced since 1997 mean that in 2010-11, households will be £1,450 a year better off on average. A family with one child and one person working full time will have a minimum income of £310 a week in October 2010 – 27% higher in real terms than in 1999. Tax credits will be increased not cut.

As family budgets are under greater pressure, we will do more to help people with the cost of living. There will be more help with energy bills through the social tariff and Winter Fuel Payments and we will work with the regulator to promote greater competition and diversity in the supply of energy to ensure falling wholesale prices get passed onto households in lower bills.

Fairness at work

We will strive to ensure fairness at work for all employees, continuing our crackdown on exploitative gang-masters and rogue employers. In all sectors the law must be upheld, properly enforcing safety and employment rights, and tackling

tax avoidance. We will extend the licensing approach to labour providers in the construction industry if the evidence shows that is the best way to enforce employment rights. We have strengthened HMRC's enforcement of the minimum wage. In future it will co-operate more closely with local authorities to enforce minimum wage legislation. We are enacting the Agency Workers Directive to offer additional protection to agency workers in relation to pay and conditions.

New legislation and the Equality and Human Rights Commission will ensure that people are not mistreated at work because of their gender, age, disability, race and religious or sexual orientation. The new Equality Act will be enforced, promoting fairness across our society. The public duty to promote equality of opportunity is being extended. We will encourage employers to make greater use of pay reviews and equality checks to eliminate unfair pay gaps, including inequalities in pay between men and women.

Modern trade unions are an important part of our society and economy, providing protection and advice for employees, and working for equality and greater

fairness in the workplace. We welcome their positive role in encouraging partnership and productivity.

Extending home ownership

Owning your own home is the aspiration of most families. We want as many people as possible to share in the benefits of home ownership, and to have a stake in an affordable home. That everyone has access to a decent home at a price they can afford is a central Labour ambition.

We will widen home ownership: over 160,000 households have been supported into ownership through government action since 1997. We will ensure that more than nine out of ten first time buyers pay no stamp duty by ending it for all purchases below £250,000 for the next two years. This will be paid for by increasing stamp duty to five per cent for homes worth more than £1 million.

We have acted decisively to make repossession the last resort, helping over 330,000 families stay in their homes so that repossessions are running at around half the rate of the early 1990s recession. We will now strengthen regulation to ensure consistent standards of consumer protection from

repossession, making the FSA responsible for the regulation of all mortgages. This means transferring second charge loans such as debt consolidation loans that are often issued by sub-prime lenders into the FSA's tougher regime, guaranteeing equal protection for homeowners.

To meet housing needs, we are committed to delivering affordable, mixed-tenure homes including homes for low-cost purchase and for rent from local authorities and housing associations. This will also create jobs and apprenticeships. We will work with the private sector to reverse the decline in private house-building, and look at ways we can invest in infrastructure to maximise public and private housing.

This Government has led the way in making sure that British homes are greener homes including our world leading commitment to all new homes being zero carbon by 2016 to new eco-towns, with the highest standards of green living seen yet in Britain.

We will continue to invest in our town centres, and bring derelict land back into community use. We will instigate an audit of publicly owned land and set up a Town Centre Regeneration

Fund to give communities access to the funds they need to regenerate local areas by bringing derelict land and buildings back into productive use.

Support with saving

We will do more to support saving and spread wealth across more families. The annual limits for Individual Savings Accounts have been raised to £10,200 and will be index-linked. The Pension Credit capital disregard will increase from £6,000 to £10,000.

The pioneering Savings Gateway account for people on lower incomes will be available to over eight million families from July 2010, providing a match of 50p for each £1 saved up to a limit of £300. We will extend this approach even further giving a boost to savings for more people on middle incomes. To help encourage the savings habit among young adults, we will develop a matched savings account for all 18-30 basic rate taxpayers, as set out in the Budget.

For the next generation we will protect - not cut - the Child Trust Fund - the world's first universal savings policy for young people, already giving 4.8 million children a nest

egg for the future. We will contribute an additional £100 a year to the Child Trust Funds of all disabled children.

A new deal on personal finances

In the post-crisis economy, we will fight for consumers and stand up to vested interests that treat people unfairly, whether in the private or public sector. We want a fair deal for all families.

The Post Office has an invaluable role to play in our communities and in serving local businesses. To promote trusted and accessible banking, we will transform the Post Office into a People's Bank offering a full range of competitive, affordable products. This will help sustain the network and boost competition in banking. The universal postal service delivered by the Royal Mail connects and binds us together as a country. We are firmly committed to the 28 million homes and businesses across the country receiving mail six days a week, with the promise that one price goes everywhere. The Royal Mail and its staff are taking welcome and needed steps to modernise work practices. For the future, continuing modernisation and investment will be needed by

the Royal Mail in the public sector.

We will introduce a universal service obligation on retail banks, so that all consumers with a valid address have a legal right to a basic bank account, and a right to redress if this is refused. Banks will have to publicly report on the extent to which they are under-serving communities. And we will introduce a new levy on the banks to help fund a step change in the scale of affordable lending by third sector organisations, including a new partnership with the Post Office, offering an alternative to loan sharks and high cost doorstep lending.

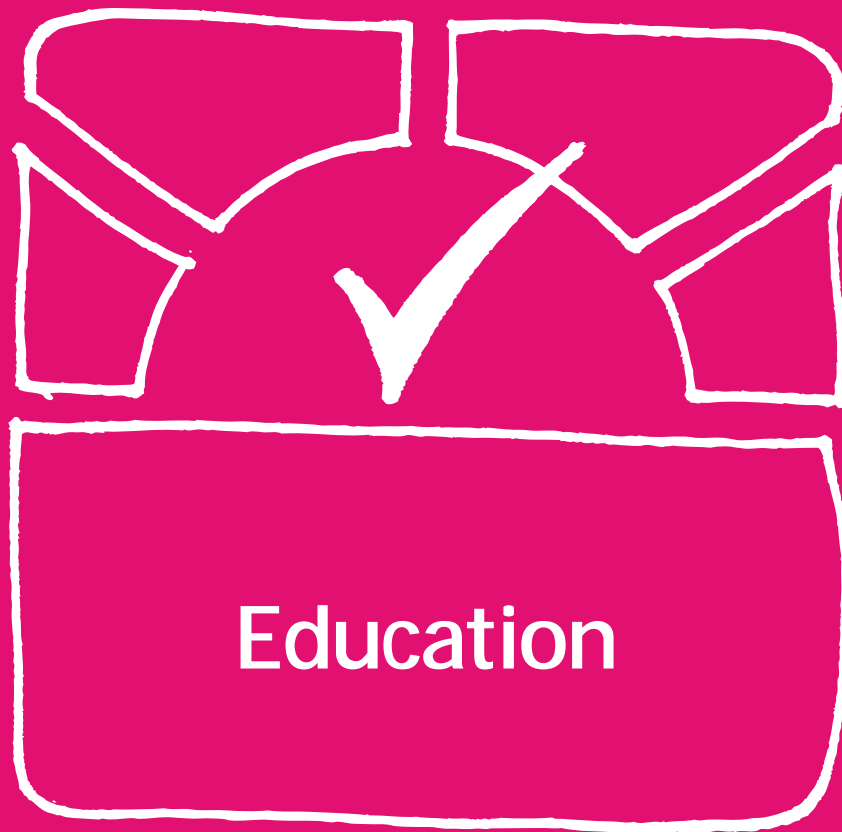
Over the lifetime of the next Parliament, as more affordable lending becomes available, we will clamp down on the interest rates and other fees charged by instant loan companies and payday or doorstep lenders, tackling the very high cost lending that hits low income communities hardest. We will introduce a single regulator for consumer finance to restore confidence and trust with responsibility for the supervision of all unsecured lending to be passed to the Financial Services Authority. And new rules governing how financial products are sold will

be introduced with a crackdown on unfair terms in contracts.

Finally, we will seek to promote competition in high street banking by introducing portable bank account and cash ISA numbers that stimulate switching where consumers are dissatisfied, along with consistent, easily understood labelling of financial products

The Scottish Labour Manifesto 2010

Excellence in education: giving every child the chance to fulfil their potential



The challenge

We want excellence for every child, not just the privileged few. Every child deserves encouragement and support to make the best of the opportunities a good education can open up. Labour is determined to raise education standards by tackling the most urgent priorities: improving literacy standards; sorting out the problems at S1 and S2; putting right the problems with the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence; and taking the steps necessary to close the attainment gap between the best and poorest performing schools.

The next stage of renewal

- **Every pupil in our primary schools being given the support they need to learn to read, write and count; placing literacy and numeracy at the centre of the primary curriculum; additional targeted support in English and Maths for those pupils who need it, with 1:1 learning support where required.**
- **Every young person to have a named mentor to support their learning throughout their secondary years; reinstating average class sizes of 20 in English and Maths at S1 and S2; small group tuition where needed to help pupils overcome barriers to attainment.**
- **Encouraging schools to innovate and develop specialist provision: giving head-teachers and their staff more control over resources; attracting the best entrants into teaching and retaining highly qualified young teachers within our education system; ensuring that adequate resources are available for professional development; and consulting with parents' organisations about extending the role that could be played by parents.**
- **Increased co-operation between educational establishments: strengthening links within clusters of establishments serving each local area: creating Communities of Learning so that a comprehensive range of learning opportunities is accessible to everyone**
- **Each young person given the right to quality training or to stay on in education until 18 by 2015 choosing from a variety of pathways including advanced apprenticeship or technician level training entering further or higher education, and staying on at school.**

Education is the key to personal fulfilment, economic prosperity and social mobility. The future of Scotland lies in our young people, developing their skills and talents so that they can secure the jobs of the future. So our goal is educational excellence for every child, whatever their background or circumstances

Our aspiration is for Scottish education to be amongst the best in the world. No-one must be left behind and everyone should be given the chance they need to fulfil their potential. Education is life-changing, life-enhancing and life-essential. We need to make sure our young people can acquire the knowledge, skills and intellectual capacities they need to compete on favourable terms with young people from other countries

With Labour, huge steps were taken in improving the school estate. The maintenance of schools was neglected in the 1980s and 1990s under the Tories with many of them characterised by leaking roofs and second-class facilities. Labour embarked upon the most ambitious programme of school building in our history, with hundreds of new schools being built and many more extensively refurbished. It is

time to start building again. Teachers and parents know that children learn better in schools that are fit for purpose. New schools have made a huge difference in terms of morale and discipline as well improved facilities. Labour believes that no pupil or community in Scotland should be left to learn in a crumbling school.

Even in a period of financial constraint, Labour will protect front-line spending on schools over the next three years. Funding will not rise as fast as in recent years, so it is imperative that we find new ways of raising standards.

We will encourage schools to innovate and develop specialist provision: giving head-teachers and their staff more control over resources; attracting the best entrants into teaching and retaining well qualified young teachers within the Scottish education system. We will ensure that adequate resources are available for professional development and consultations take place with parents organisations about extending the role that could be played by parents.

Participation in post-school learning will expand, with more and better apprenticeships, improved technical education,

and continued, wide access to higher education.

The early years

Good, play based early learning boosts a child's development and gets them off to a flying start so that they begin school ready to learn and achieve. That is why we will invest in expanding high quality early learning and childcare. This new provision also supports parents to work when they have young children, improving family living standards.

The early years of a child's life are vital in overcoming entrenched disadvantage and breaking the link between social background and aspiration. Early learning can help to tackle the root causes of poverty and boost child development, reducing the need for intervention later on and driving upward mobility. We will expand the number of free early learning places for disadvantaged two year olds as a first step towards our long-term goal of universal free childcare for this age group.

We will offer more flexibility to busy working parents over the hours their children are offered for nursery education, such as taking them over two full working days, as well as

greater choice over when children start school. We will retain childcare vouchers, with all families receiving income tax relief at the basic rate. We will raise the quality of childcare by improving the qualifications of the workforce.

Excellence for all: every school a good school

Every parent wants their child to attend an excellent school – with the best possible teaching and the very best facilities.

No school can be better than the quality of its teachers. We have the best generation of teachers ever; but we will continue to strive to get the very best people into teaching from the most committed graduates to the highest calibre career switchers. There are more than 2000 fewer teachers in Scottish classrooms than there were with Labour in 2007. Meanwhile, hundreds of newly qualified teachers are on the dole, scrabbling around for temporary work, or leaving for English schools.

We have invested heavily in the professionalism and expertise of the teaching and schools workforce, and we want the implementation of the Curriculum for Excellence to be successful.

The original aims of these reforms – greater freedoms for classroom teachers to deliver higher quality for pupils – are being overshadowed by the incompetent way they are being introduced by the SNP Scottish government.

Primary schools: no child left behind

Like parents, we believe that children should leave primary school secure in the basics. However, the number of children unable to read by the time they leave primary school has been going up.

That's why we established our Literacy Commission, with experts from teaching, the research community and authors, such as Ian Rankin. Its conclusions were clear:

- As a nation, Scotland should make a formal commitment to zero tolerance of illiteracy.
- There should be a sustained policy commitment from all levels of government and educational management to address the issue of improving standards of literacy at all levels.
- A focus for local authorities should be to ensure that best practice is shared in order to

develop consistent, effective, multi-agency strategies that meet the emotional as well as literacy needs of the children in their care.

- The allocation of education resources should reflect the priority of improving literacy levels.

The Commission set out a clear framework for action, saying that each local authority and every school should develop local literacy plans suited to their individual circumstances. These plans should involve:

- Systematic and supportive monitoring of outcomes both by HMIE and by local authorities.
- Modification of policy and practice in the light of the findings.
- A commitment to effective and appropriate action to support every individual child at every stage of learning.

Successful schemes should involve the following elements:

- Starting at an early age.
- Phonics as the approach to getting the great majority of children starting to read successfully.

- Use of a range of other approaches to tackle cases of difficulty up to and including intensive individual tuition for children who continue to experience significant reading problems.
- Programmes of high quality professional development, regularly updated and consistently available.

We will implement these recommendations. We will place literacy and numeracy at the centre of the primary curriculum. We will give every pupil in our primary schools the support they need to learn to read, write and count. We will provide additional targeted support in English and Maths for those pupils who need it, with 1:1 learning support where required.

Secondary schools: Excellence for all, personal to each

We will increasingly tailor education to the aspirations and aptitudes of individual pupils. Every young person will have a named mentor to support their learning throughout their secondary years. We will reinstate average class sizes of 20 in English and Maths at S1 and S2 and there will be small group tuition where needed to

help pupils overcome barriers to attainment.

We will increase co-operation between educational establishments. Our aim is to strengthen links within clusters of establishments serving each local area and to create Communities of Learning so that a comprehensive range of learning opportunities is accessible to everyone.

Because the learning environment itself matters, we will restart the stalled school building programme to give all our children first-rate facilities that support inspirational teaching and access to ICT, sports and the arts.

Zero tolerance of poor behaviour

The vast majority of schools have good or outstanding behaviour. But no child should have his or her learning disturbed by poor discipline in the classroom. It is unacceptable that pupils and teachers can face violence in school. The actions of a small minority can ruin the education of everyone else. We want to see good behaviour in every classroom. We will ensure that every school has a discipline code, with support bases for those who need it so that bad

behaviour can be tackled at the outset before things get out of hand. We believe schools and head-teachers should have more options and if needed, more powers for dealing with pupils who persistently misbehave.

All children safe and thriving; no child left behind

Living in a family on a low income, having special educational needs or disabilities and being in care all remain strongly linked to poor outcomes and low educational attainment. We are determined to narrow the gap between these children and their peers. We will make sure psychological and additional support services work closely with schools. We will support schools and other services in the early identification of unmet additional needs. We will promote evidence based early intervention and prevention programmes that make a proven difference to children's healthy development and capacity to learn. Ensuring all children are safe from abuse and harm will remain a top priority. We will learn all the lessons from appalling cases like that of Brandon Muir in Dundee.

But this is not a localised issue, it is one of national concern. We would establish a national inquiry into child protection services across the country. The current process fails vulnerable children in parts of Scotland. We would legislate to require the sharing of information between agencies for child protection purposes because no child's life should slip through the bureaucratic net. We will take action to ensure that the large numbers of children living with drug addicted parents and the children of parents with severe alcohol addiction problems are identified and supported as appropriate.

Staying on to get ahead

To stay ahead in the global skills race and to ensure a new wave of social mobility, we are committed to a historic change: giving each young person the right to quality training or to stay on in education until 18 by 2015. They will be able to choose from a variety of pathways including advanced apprenticeships or technician level training entering further or higher education and staying on at school.

World class universities

Higher education is fundamental to our nation's success in the global economy. Demand for high-level skills is strong and growing and the supply of good graduates is an increasingly potent factor in international economic competition. Scottish universities would be at risk of falling behind in teaching and research if the resources they receive increase more slowly than universities elsewhere in the UK. It is time for an independent, strategic review of Higher Education and Labour would establish one. Labour has successfully campaigned for increased student support for our poorest students and we will build on this progress, ensuring we have a support system that recognises and takes account of the diversity of today's student population.

Colleges are at the heart of our local communities and the local economy, developing the skills that Scotland needs to secure economic recovery and future growth. We will encourage greater business and college engagement, as well as supporting greater articulation routes for students through school/college partnerships and stronger relationships with universities. We recognise

that hardship and childcare funds at colleges are essential to supporting many students in their studies and we will deliver on improvements to the current system.

The challenge

Labour believes that as we protect front-line investment we can build an even better NHS with more preventative and personal care, clear patient guarantees and more care in the home. The Tories would fail to guarantee fair access to services, worsen inequalities by entrenching the post-code lottery of care and put the interests of patients second.

The next stage of renewal

- **Spending on NHS front-line services protected.**
- **A new right halving the time from one month to two weeks to see a cancer specialist and get results.**
- **Making our hospitals cleaner and safer.**
- **Cutting waiting times, driving up standards and ensuring that people are treated as close to their home as possible.**
- **Our Alcohol Strategy will identify measures to tackle alcohol abuse.**

While the NHS in Scotland has developed differently to the rest of the UK, it embodies our values of fairness and social justice - for sixty years it has been part and parcel of what it means to be British – it is part of the social union that binds us together. In an insecure, fast-paced world, people need a first-class health care system they can rely on. But to be safe for the next generation, we need to be prepared to continue with reform. We need to be bolder in our shift to preventative

care; tougher in ensuring value for money for every pound spent; and more determined in demanding the highest standards of care. Above all, the interests of the patient must come first. No longer should they be the passive recipients of care, they must be active partners. We will take steps to make sure that the patient's voice is heard.

At the core of the NHS is the principle of care provided on the basis of need, not ability to

pay. Under Labour, the NHS will remain a universal health service, not a second-rate safety net. Only fifteen years ago, the very existence of the NHS was in doubt. Now with sustained investment and reform, the NHS is delivering high quality healthcare in safer and ever more convenient ways.

To prosper in the future, the NHS will have to respond to the challenges facing healthcare systems across the developed world: new cures and breakthrough treatments, an ageing society, the growth of long-term diseases, and ever higher public expectations. At the same time as we face tough fiscal pressures

Protecting the NHS and investing in the front-line

In 1997, health spending in the UK as a share of national income was the second lowest of all the major industrialised countries. The resulting failures were visible to all: long waits, outdated buildings, and too few doctors and nurses.

Since then, investment has turned around the public's experience of the NHS. With Labour, an extra 700 new doctors and 5,000 nurses were employed by the NHS in Scotland between 1997

and 2007. Spending reached record levels in each year of the previous Executive, more than doubling in a decade. Since 2007, health spending in Scotland has been rising much more slowly than in the rest of the UK. Over the next three years, Scotland will be funded to protect frontline NHS services – we would guarantee that money to the NHS.

There will be tough decisions to make about priorities. It is a scandal that more money is spent on consultants' bonuses than on tackling superbugs in our hospitals. The NHS in Scotland has twice as many managers per head of population as in England. IT enabled E-care to provide efficiencies – at least £40 million a year. We will release resources through shared back-office functions, improved procurement and better management of land and property – NHS Scotland is one of the countries biggest landowners.

Over the next three years, we will ensure that every pound released in efficiencies in the health system is re-invested in frontline care.

A safer health service

Patients and their families have an absolute right to know that when they go into hospital they will be treated in clean and safe conditions. Labour's priority will be to eliminate hospital superbugs in the NHS by making our hospitals cleaner and safer.

In 2008, a total of 18 patients died at the Vale of Leven Hospital in what was then, in terms of the fatality rate, the worst case of *C. difficile* infection at any UK hospital. Across Scotland there was a 28 per cent increase in the number of deaths caused by *C. difficile*.

We supported the families who lost loved ones at the Vale of Leven in their successful campaign for a public inquiry. While lessons must be learned we would act immediately on the 15-point plan drawn up with assistance from the UK's leading health experts, Professors Hugh Pennington and Brian Toft:

- Establishing a robust monitoring system subject to rigorous checks by inspection teams, independent of government, undertaking unannounced visits and not relying on a system of self-assessment.

- Appointing an HAI Commissioner - to develop best practice and to co-ordinate and bring a sharper focus to the institutional clutter of those agencies responsible for tackling HAIs.
- Providing en-suite single room isolation facilities for all CDAD/MRSA patients.
- Providing quality hand-washing facilities - specifically temperature-controlled, sensor-operated, flow-regulated taps - appropriately positioned in all wards.
- Delivering real time detailed analyses at ward level, with high resolution fingerprinting of the causative microbes to track the spread of infection.
- Publishing monthly reporting hospital by hospital.
- Ensuring staffing numbers in key posts meet national guidelines- control of infection nurses, scientist/microbiologist and cleaning staff posts. Antimicrobial pharmacists should be deployed in every hospital.
- Workforce planning to deliver medically qualified academic bacteriologists to train future specialists and conduct research.

- Set HEAT target to reduce the rate of clostridium difficile by 50 per cent by March 2011.
- Funding for the provision of surplus capacity of storage and washing facilities for soiled bedding and clothes at all hospitals in the event of an outbreak of C.diff.
- Introducing sterile hygiene systems for staff uniforms.
- Making facilities for the steam cleaning of beds and curtains available in every hospital.
- Budgeting for future increases in the levels of MRSA screening activity and the need for rapid turn-round times for tests with benefits both to the patients and to rapid infection control.
- Increasing funding for the Reference Laboratory to permit all isolates to be fingerprinted, and to develop typing systems which will identify new and potentially more virulent strains of C.diff.
- Establishing a properly resourced reference laboratory should be established for Norovirus gastroenteritis, given its link to CDAD, in line with the MRSA and C.Difficile reference laboratories.

A personalised NHS: improved services for patients

People rightly want public services that are not just universal but also personal to their needs. We will empower patients through higher standards and quality guarantees:

- A new right halving the time from one month to two weeks to see a cancer specialist and get results.
- We will work to cut waiting times faster.
- We will also take steps to ensure that patients with long-term conditions are diagnosed early and given access to treatment as close to home as possible.

For many people, closer working between health and social care would make a substantial contribution to improved health and well-being. We set out in Chapter 5, our vision for developing a National Care Service.

With a patient centred approach to NHS service delivery, services must be flexible and have the capacity to respond to individual patients' needs.

We also know that access to health services by public transport can be very difficult for many service users and there can be issues travelling in rural areas or between major hospitals within a health board area.

We know that people value local services and where this is consistent with patient safety, we will defend those services.

A focus on fairness and equality

Scotland has one of the worst health records in Europe. Prevention and early intervention will be at the heart of our plans for healthcare, significantly improving survival rates for cancer, heart disease and strokes so that we are among the very best in the world. To achieve successful outcomes in NHS treatment, we need a renewed focus on equality and health promotion.

The smoking ban we introduced shows that Scotland can lead, and Scotland can change. Lifting the thick blanket of smoke from our pubs, bingo halls and restaurants was the most important measure in a generation to improve our nation's health.

We have established a Commission under the chair of Professor Sally Brown to help us build on this achievement with measures to tackle alcohol abuse. We will introduce a legal limit on caffeinated alcohol and we will take tough action to end the over-consumption of alcohol including introducing Alcohol Treatment and Testing Orders.

Improving Scotland's health is also about improving access to sport, housing and education. We need to give people the opportunity to take responsibility for their own wellbeing.

Obesity levels in Scotland are among the highest in the world. Obesity magnifies the risk of heart disease, diabetes and cancer and can shorten life by as much as nine years. Tackling childhood obesity is particularly important because excess weight in childhood tends to continue into adulthood. In particular, it is absolutely essential that children are not denied the opportunity to take part in sport because of the recession. That's why we believe that young people should be allowed free access to council swimming pools.

We will review how best to provide children with free access to football matches in Scotland. Our ambition is to provide children and young people with access to sport and positive role models, whatever their family's financial circumstances. We will deliver a guarantee of at least two hours PE in primary schools.

If we can get youngsters playing sport and watching sport, we will succeed in our ambition to make each new generation healthier than the last. Glasgow is the proud host city of the 2014 Commonwealth Games. This is a once in a generation opportunity to get young people involved in sport – whatever their background.

Dental services

Preventative programmes to improve children's dental health have proven to be effective, yet we recognise that access to NHS dental services remains acutely problematic or even absent in many areas. We will review how best to tackle barriers and the lack of access to NHS dental care services.

Mental health services

Improving mental health is a key public health challenge. Mental health problems are the largest single cause of disability and illness. Around one in four people will experience mental ill health at some time in their life.

Prevention and early intervention are crucial in securing positive mental health outcomes – and can prevent the need for more expensive interventions later on.

We will review how early intervention, other therapies and methods of treatment can help to reduce the number of people who are prescribed anti-depressants.