Women and the Labour Manifesto 2019

Labour will create a new Department for Women and Equalities, with a full-time Secretary of State, responsible for ensuring all our policies and laws are equality-impact assessed in order to deliver a fairer society for women and all under-represented groups.

We will establish a modernised National Women’s Commission as an independent advisory body to contribute to a Labour government.

We are guided by our firm commitment to the Human Rights Act and Convention on Human Rights that have been consistently attacked by the Conservatives. We will ratify both the Istanbul Convention on preventing domestic abuse and the ILO Convention on Violence and Harassment at work.

**Women**

Labour will put women at the heart of our government and programme. Next year marks the 50th anniversary of the Equal Pay Act, yet women still earn 13% less than men. Labour will take action to close the gender pay gap by 2030.

We will also:

* Deliver gender pay equality by making the state responsible for enforcing equal pay legislation for the first time. The new Workers’ Protection Agency working with HMRC will ensure that employers take equal pay seriously and take positive action to close the gender pay gap. Women will no longer be left to take enforcement action by themselves through the courts.
* Require all employers with over 250 employees to obtain government certification on gender equality or face further auditing and fines. By the end of 2020, we will lower the threshold to workplaces with 50 employees, whilst providing the necessary additional support for small businesses.
* Revolutionise parents’ rights by increasing paid maternity leave from nine to 12 months, doubling paternity leave to four weeks and extending pregnancy protection. We will ban the dismissal of pregnant women without prior approval of the inspectorate.
* Transform the workplace and require all large employers to have flexible working, including a menopause policy, and consider changes to sickness and absence practices.
* Enable positive action for recruitment to roles where employers can justify the need for more diversity and introduce a right for all workers to request flexibility over their hours from the first day of employment.
* Ensure that the single-sex-based exemptions contained in the Equality Act 2010 are understood and fully enforced in service provision.
* Create a safer society for women and prioritise domestic abuse as a health issue, introduce 10 days of paid leave for survivors of domestic abuse, and ensure women’s refuges receive the long-term sustainable funding they need. Misogyny and violence against women and girls will become hate crimes.
* Increase women’s representation across parliament by building on the Equality Act, passed by the last Labour government, and enact Section 106 so that all political parties publish diversity data about electoral candidates.

**Work**

Labour will eradicate in-work poverty in our first term by tackling the structural causes of poverty and inequality, such as low pay and high living costs, while raising the floor provided by our social safety net.

We will rapidly introduce a Real Living Wage of at least £10 per hour for all workers aged 16 and over, and use savings to public finances to help small businesses manage the extra cost.

And we will explore other innovative ways of responding to low pay, including a pilot of Universal Basic Income.

Self-employed people will benefit from a broad range of our policies, from free childcare and full-fibre broadband to face-to-face lending and business support through our Post Bank.

We will also seek to develop tailored support and protections for the self- employed, including: collective income protection insurance schemes, annual income assessments for those on Universal Credit, and better access to mortgages and pension schemes.

We will start to roll out sectoral collective bargaining across the economy, bringing workers and employers together to agree legal minimum standards on a wide range of issues, such as pay and working hours, that every employer in the sector must follow. Sectoral collective bargaining will increase wages and reduce inequality. This will also stop good employers being undercut by bad employers.

We will tackle insecurity by:

* Giving everyone full rights from day one on the job.
* Strengthening protections for whistleblowers and rights against unfair dismissal for all workers, with extra protections for pregnant women, those going through the menopause and terminally ill workers.
* Ending bogus self-employment and creating a single status of ‘worker’ for everyone apart from those genuinely self-employed in business on their own account, so that employers can not evade workers’ rights; and banning overseas-only recruitment practices.
* Introducing a legal right to collective consultation on the implementation of new technology in workplaces.
* Banning zero-hour contracts and strengthening the law so that those who work regular hours for more than 12 weeks will have a right to a regular contract, reflecting those hours.

We will help people balance work and family life by:

* Increasing wages through sectoral collective bargaining.
* Requiring breaks during shifts to be paid.
* Requiring cancelled shifts to be paid and proper notice for changes in hours.
* Giving all workers the right to flexible working.
* Extending statutory maternity pay from nine to 12 months.
* Doubling paternity leave from two weeks to four and increasing statutory paternity pay.
* Introducing statutory bereavement leave, guaranteeing workers time off to grieve the loss of close family members or following miscarriage.
* Introducing four new bank holidays celebrating our four patron saints’ days.
* Reviewing family-friendly employment rights, including rights to respond to family emergencies.

We will make sure people are treated equally at work by:

* Requiring employers to devise and implement plans to eradicate the gender pay gap – and pay inequalities underpinned by race and/or disability – or face fines.
* Requiring employers to maintain workplaces free of harassment, including harassment by third parties.
* Increasing protection against redundancy for people wherever they work.
* Giving statutory rights to equalities representatives.
* Setting up a Royal Commission to bring health (including mental health) and safety legislation up to date.
* Ensuring that public-facing workers are protected by toughening the law against abuse and violence.
* Banning unpaid internships.

Labour will replace the Social Mobility Commission with a Social Justice Commission, based in the Treasury, with wide-ranging powers to hold us, and future governments, to account.

# Social Security

#### Universal Credit

Labour will scrap UC. We will immediately stop moving people onto it and design an alternative system that treats people with dignity and respect. Our ambition in designing this system will be to end poverty by guaranteeing a minimum standard of living.

We will start developing this system immediately. …… we will also implement an emergency package of reforms to mitigate some of the worst features of UC while we develop our replacement system.

We will end the five-week wait by introducing an interim payment based on half an estimated monthly entitlement. We will immediately suspend the Tories’ vicious sanction regime and ensure that employment support is positive not punitive.

We will stop 300,000 children from being in poverty by scrapping the benefit cap and the two child limit, so ending the immoral and outrageous ‘rape clause’. We will pay childcare costs up front so that parents aren’t forced to turn down work or get into debt to pay for childcare.

Labour will protect women in abusive relationships by splitting payments and paying the child element to the primary carer. We will make it easier for people to manage their living costs by introducing fortnightly payments and paying the housing element directly to landlords.

Labour will end the digital barrier and offer telephone, face-to- face and outreach support. We will recruit 5,000 additional advisors to deliver this.

We will stop housing costs running away from benefits by scrapping the bedroom tax and increasing the Local Housing Allowance.

#### Disabled People

We will support those who look after others, increasing the Carer’s Allowance to the level of the Jobseeker’s Allowance.

#### Pensions

This betrayal left millions of women with no time to make alternative plans – with sometimes devastating personal consequences.

Labour recognises this injustice, and will work with these women to design a system of recompense for the losses and insecurity they have suffered.

We will ensure that such an injustice can never happen again by legislating to prevent accrued rights to the state pension from being changed.

We will stop people being auto-enrolled into rip-off schemes and seek to widen and expand access for more low-income and self-employed workers. We will establish an independent Pensions’ Commission, modelled on the Low Pay Commission, to recommend target levels for workplace pensions.

# NHS and Social Care

Our immediate task is to repair our health services. Our urgent priority is to end NHS privatisation.

Our mission is to create the conditions to prevent illness and enable people to live longer, healthier lives.

Labour will end and reverse privatisation in the NHS in the next Parliament. We will repeal the Health and Social Care Act and reinstate the responsibilities of the Secretary of State to provide a comprehensive and universal healthcare system. We will end the requirement on health authorities to put services out to competitive tender.

We will guarantee universal healthcare by ensuring women’s and children’s health services are comprehensive ….

We will end mixed-sex wards.

We will invest more in eating disorders services and ensure NICE guidelines on eating disorders are implemented.

We will invest more than £1 billion in public health and recruit 4,500 more health visitors and school nurses. We will increase mandated health visits, ensure new mothers can have access to breastfeeding support and introduce mental health assessments in a maternal health check six weeks after birth.

#### Workforce

A Labour government will end the crisis in our health and care services, plan for the future and guarantee real-terms pay rises every year.

Agenda for Change terms and conditions will be put into law alongside safe staffing limits for all staff. We will invest, train and develop NHS staff throughout their careers.

We will introduce a training bursary for nurses, midwives and allied health professionals. We will remove the obstacles to ethical international recruitment.

A Labour government will review the tax and pension changes implemented by the Tory government to ensure that the workforce is fairly rewarded and that services are not adversely affected.

We will provide mental health support for staff and create a working environment within the NHS that is safe, flexible and free from harassment, bullying or violence.

#### Social Care

#### Almost £8 billion has been lost from social care budgets since 2010. This is having a profound impact on unpaid carers in this country, with 2.6 million carers quitting their jobs to provide care to family members. The current care system is at risk of collapse.

#### A Labour government will build a comprehensive National Care Service for England. We will provide community-based, person-centred support, underpinned by the principles of ethical care and independent living. We will provide free personal care, beginning with investments to ensure that older people have their personal care needs met, with the ambition to extend this provision to all working-age adults.

#### Labour will invest to end the social care crisis, end 15-minute care visits and provide care workers with paid travel time, access to training and an option to choose regular hours. We will increase the Carer’s Allowance for unpaid full-time carers.

# Transport

Women are especially dependent on buses, which also provide a lifeline for both older and younger people and for many economically disadvantaged groups.

Labour will ensure that councils can improve bus services by regulating and taking public ownership of bus networks, and we will give them resources and full legal powers to achieve this cost-effectively, thereby ending the race to the bottom in working conditions for bus workers.

Where councils take control of their buses, Labour will introduce free bus travel for under-25s.

We will increase and expand local services, reinstating the 3,000 routes that have been cut, particularly hitting rural communities.

# National Education Service

#### Early Years

#### Early years education also helps parents – usually mothers – by providing a bridge between maternity/parental leave and school.

#### We will reverse cuts to Sure Start and create a new service, Sure Start Plus, with enough centres to provide a genuinely universal service, available in all communities, focused on the under-2s.

#### Labour will radically reform early years provision, with a two-term vision to make high-quality early years education available for every child. We will also extend paid maternity leave to 12 months.

Within five years, all 2, 3 and 4-year- olds will be entitled to 30 hours of free preschool education per week and access to additional hours at affordable, subsidised rates staggered with incomes. Labour will also work to extend childcare provision for 1-year-olds and to ensure that childcare provision accommodates the working patterns of all parents.

We will improve child development by transitioning to a qualified, graduate- led workforce. We value the experience of current early years workers, and will offer free training to the workforce to attain these qualifications on the job.

Achieving this vision will require significant investment. We will increase funding and end the fragmentation of the current system by funding providers directly, making things simpler and more sustainable for both parents and providers.

We will recruit nearly 150,000 additional early years staff, including Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, and introduce a national pay scale, driving up pay for the overwhelmingly female workforce.

Maintained nursery schools provide a proven, high-quality service but they are under threat from Tory cuts. We will provide sustainable, long-term funding to secure their future.

#### Further Education and Lifelong Learning

We will restore funding for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) courses and restore and expand the Union Learning Fund, giving workers the right to accrue paid time off for education and training.

Labour will reform existing careers advice, working towards an integrated information, advice and guidance system that covers the entire NES.

# Police and Security

Only 1.4% of reported rapes are prosecuted.

We will ensure better police training on domestic abuse and offences arising from coercive control, as well as historical abuses and other crimes neglected by the reduced forces operating under Tory austerity.

We will introduce minimum legal standards of service for all victims of crime.

# Justice

We will set new standards for community sentences and introduce a presumption against prison sentences of six months or less for non-violent and non-sexual offences.

We will invest in proven alternatives to custody, including women’s centres, expand problem-solving courts and plug the funding gap in the female offender strategy.

To help people enforce their rights, we will restore all early legal aid advice, including for housing, social security, family and immigration cases.

We will set new standards for tackling domestic and sexual abuse and violence, and appoint a Commissioner for Violence against Women and Girls. We will establish an independent review into shamefully low rape prosecution rates. We will establish a National Refuge Fund, ensure financial stability for rape crisis centres and reintroduce a Domestic Abuse Bill.

We will improve the safety of the family court system for domestic violence victims and prohibit their cross-examination by their abuser.

We will introduce protections for victims of so-called revenge porn. Labour will introduce a no-fault divorce procedure. We will uphold women’s reproductive rights and decriminalise abortions.

# Digital, Culture, Media and Sport

#### Culture

#### A Labour government will open up career opportunities in these industries for everyone and consult on ways to address the gender imbalance in the digital creative industries.

#### We will work with trade unions and employers to make creative jobs accessible for all, ensuring diversity in these industries so that everyone sees themselves represented on screen and on stage.

#### Media

#### *[Nothing about portrayal of women in the media?]*

# Funding

When services are procured from the private sector, companies will be assessed against best practice public service criteria, including provisions for collective bargaining, fair wage clauses, adherence to environmental standards, effective equalities policies, full tax compliance and application of pay ratios. In the public sector, we will enforce maximum pay ratios of 20:1.