

Labour Manifesto 2019 – Real Change – National Education Service

Education makes our economy stronger, our society richer and our people more fulfilled. Whether it is businesses finding people with the right skills, a tech start-up making our economy more dynamic or more people in better paid work and able to contribute to public services, we all benefit from an educated society.

But education isn't just vital to our economy – it lets people develop their talents, overcomes injustices and inequalities and helps us understand each other and form social bonds.

The Conservatives have starved our education system of funding, transferring costs onto students, staff and communities. They have lost sight of its value.

From cutting budgets of schools, disproportionately in deprived areas, to closing Sure Start centres and underfunding support for those with special educational needs and disabilities, Conservative policy has meant those in most need have lost out.

That's why our National Education Service will be at the heart of Labour's plan for real change. It will provide free education for everyone throughout their lives and will nurture every child and adult to find a path that's right for them, by promoting all types of learning, skill and knowledge – technical, vocational, academic and creative.

Early Years

Early years education is vital to children's development. Children from disadvantaged backgrounds start falling behind their peers before they even start school. Early years education also helps parents – usually mothers – by providing a bridge between maternity/parental leave and school.

But the current system falls far short of what is needed. One thousand Sure Start centres have closed since 2010, while the Tories' so-called free childcare offer is desperately underfunded and excludes many of the most disadvantaged children.

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.

Schools

Labour will make sure schools are properly resourced with increased long-term funding, while introducing a fairer funding formula that leaves no child worse off. We will invest to upgrade schools that have fallen into disrepair.

Labour's funding settlement will ensure pupils are taught by a qualified teacher, that every school is open for a full five days a week, and maximum class sizes of 30 for all primary school children. We will also fund more non-contact time for teachers to prepare and plan.

Schools have faced years of budget cuts, leaving headteachers forced to beg parents for money for basic equipment. Despite promising to reverse their own cuts, the Tories latest funding announcement leaves 83% of schools still facing cuts next year.

Schools are being subjected to intensified testing, inspection, league tables and competition. These aren't improving pupil achievement or narrowing the attainment gap, but are contributing to a growing teacher recruitment and retention crisis.

The narrowing curriculum is denying many children access to modern languages, arts and music, or technical and engineering skills that will be essential in a world shaped by climate change.

The academies system is over-centralised, inefficient and undemocratic. Parents, communities and even teachers are shut out of decisions about schools and vulnerable children are being let down. And there is no evidence that academies deliver better results.

The Conservatives have failed a generation of children with special educational needs and disabilities, who have endured years of cuts and chaos. Labour will provide the necessary funding for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

Labour will end the 'high stakes' testing culture of schools by scrapping Key Stage 1 and 2 SATs and baseline assessments, and refocussing assessment on supporting pupil progress.

We will introduce an Arts Pupil Premium to fund arts education for every primary school child. We will review the curriculum to ensure that it enriches students and covers subjects such as black history and continues to teach issues like the Holocaust. Pupils will learn both the science of climate and environmental emergency, and the skills necessary to deal with them.

We will end the fragmentation and marketisation of our school system by bringing free schools and academies back under control of the people who know them best – parents, teachers and local communities.

Under our system:

- Budget and day-to-day decisions will be transferred back to schools, overseen by an accountable governing body with elected representatives.

- Responsibility for delivery of education and support for young people will sit with local authorities, they will manage admissions. and have responsibility for school places, including the power to open schools
- Oversight and coordination, including of continuous, peer-to-peer school improvement modelled on the London Challenge, will be carried out by regional offices of the NES.
- All schools will be subject to a common rulebook, set out in legislation.

We will replace Ofsted and transfer responsibility for inspections to a new body, designed to drive school improvement.

A new teacher supply service will tackle the waste of funds going to private supply teacher agencies thanks to the government's failure to recruit and retain experienced teachers.

We will take action to end 'off-rolling', removing the perverse incentives for schools to let pupils fall out of the system, by making schools accountable for the outcomes of pupils who leave their rolls.

We will properly regulate all education providers and reform alternative provision (AP) to ensure an excellent education is the right of every child, and improve the outcomes and life chances of some of the most vulnerable children in society.

We will 'poverty-proof' schools, introducing free school meals for all primary school children, encouraging breakfast clubs, and tackling the cost of school uniforms.

We will bring back the School Support Staff Negotiating Body and national pay settlements for teachers.

We will close the tax loopholes enjoyed by elite private schools and use that money to improve the lives of all children, and we will ask the Social Justice Commission to advise on integrating private schools and creating a comprehensive education system.

Further Education and Lifelong Learning

With automation and the Green Industrial Revolution bringing major changes to industry, it is more important than ever that people have the opportunity to retrain and upskill throughout their lives.

Under the Tories, adult education has undergone 10 years of managed decline. England already faces a shortage of people with higher-level technical qualifications, and demand for these skills will only grow as we create new green jobs.

Instead of investing in people to prepare them for the jobs of the future, the Conservatives have slashed funding and cut opportunities.

Labour will ensure fairness and sustainability in further education, aligning the base rate of per-pupil funding in post-16 education with Key Stage 4, providing dedicated capital funding to expand provision and bringing back the Education Maintenance Allowance as the Welsh Labour Government has done.

Labour will make lifelong learning a reality, giving everyone a free lifelong entitlement to:

- Training up to Level 3.
- Six years training at Levels 4-6, with maintenance grants for disadvantaged learners.

We will introduce additional entitlements for workers in industries that are significantly affected by industrial transition.

We will make sure training delivers the right skills by giving employers a role in co-design and co-production of qualifications.

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.

We will reverse the fragmentation and privatisation of further and adult education, incorporating it into a single national system of regulation that functions for education as our NHS does for healthcare provision.

Higher Education

Under the Tories, universities are treated as private businesses, left at the mercy of market forces, while top salaries soar and students pay more for less. Tuition fees have trebled and maintenance grants have been scrapped, leaving the poorest graduates with an average debt of £57,000.

Labour will end the failed free-market experiment in higher education, abolish tuition fees and bring back maintenance grants. We will fundamentally rethink the assessment of research and teaching quality, and develop a new funding formula for higher education that:

- Ensures all public HE institutions have adequate funding for teaching and research.
- Widens access to higher education and reverses the decline of part-time learning.
- Ends the casualisation of staff.

We will transform the Office for Students from a market regulator to a body of the National Education Service, acting in the public interest.

We will introduce post-qualification admissions in higher education, and work with universities to ensure contextual admissions are used across the system.