

Coalition Programme for Government: "Freedom, Fairness, Responsibility"

This document was published on 20th May 2010 and covers 31 policy areas, including banking, business, civil liberties, equalities, consumer protection, immigration, pensions, defence and transport. What follows is a summary of some of the key areas that might impact on social care and health services

Social Care and Disability

The Government believes that people needing care deserve to be treated with dignity and respect and understand the urgency of reforming the system of social care to provide much more control to individuals and their carers, and to ease the cost burden that they and their families face. Government will:

- Establish a commission on long-term care, to report within a year. The commission will consider a range of ideas, including both a voluntary insurance scheme to protect the assets of those who go into residential care, and a partnership scheme as proposed by Derek Wanless.
- Break down barriers between health and social care funding to incentivise preventative action.
- Extend the greater roll-out of personal budgets to give people and their carers more control and purchasing power.
- Use direct payments to carers and better community-based provision to improve access to respite care.
- Reform Access to Work, so disabled people can apply for jobs with funding already secured for any adaptations and equipment they will need.

Families and Children

The Government believes that strong and stable families of all kinds are the bedrock of a strong and stable society. They intend

to make society more family friendly and to take action to protect children from excessive commercialisation and premature sexualisation. They will:

- Maintain the goal of ending child poverty in the UK by 2020.
- Support the provision of free nursery care for pre-school children, and we want that support to be provided by a diverse range of providers, with a greater gender balance in the early years' workforce.
- Take Sure Start back to its original purpose of early intervention, increase its focus on the neediest families, and better involve organisations with a track record of supporting families. They will investigate ways of ensuring that providers are paid in part by the results they achieve.
- Re-focus funding from Sure Start peripatetic outreach services, and from the Department of Health budget, to pay for 4,200 extra Sure Start health visitors.
- Investigate a new approach to helping families with multiple problems.
- Publish serious case reviews, with identifying details removed.
- Encourage shared parenting from the earliest stages of pregnancy – including the promotion of a system of flexible parental leave.
- Put funding for relationship support on a stable, long-term footing, and make sure that couples are given greater encouragement to use existing relationship support.
- Conduct a comprehensive review of family law in order to increase the use of mediation when couples do break up, and to look at how best to provide greater access rights to non-resident parents and grandparents. *Continued*

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Communities and Local Government

The Government believes that it is time for a shift of power from Westminster to people. They will promote decentralisation and democratic engagement, and end the era of top-down government by giving new powers to local councils, communities, neighbourhoods and individuals. They will:

- Cut local government inspection and abolish the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA).
- Abolish the Government Office for London and consider the case for abolishing the remaining Government Offices.
- Stop the restructuring of councils in Norfolk, Suffolk and Devon, and stop plans to force the regionalisation of the fire service
- Freeze Council Tax in England for at least one year, and seek to freeze it for a further year, in partnership with local authorities.
- Create directly elected mayors in the 12 largest English cities, subject to confirmatory referendums and full scrutiny by elected councillors.
- Give councils a general power of competence.
- Introduce new powers to help communities save local facilities and services threatened with closure, and give communities the right to bid to take over local state-run services.
- Give councillors the power to vote on large salary packages for unelected council officials.

The NHS

The Government believes that the NHS is an important expression of our national values and is committed to an NHS that is free at the point of use and available to everyone based on need, not the ability to pay. They want to free NHS staff from political micromanagement, increase democratic participation in the NHS and make the NHS more accountable to the patients that it serves. Government will:

- Strengthen the role of the Care Quality Commission so it becomes an effective quality inspectorate, and develop Monitor into an economic regulator that will oversee aspects of access, competition and price-setting in the NHS.
- Establish an independent NHS board to allocate resources and provide commissioning guidelines.
- Enable patients to rate hospitals and doctors according to the quality of care they received, and we will require hospitals to be open about mistakes and always tell patients if something has gone wrong.
- Measure success on the health results that really matter – such as improving cancer and stroke survival rates or reducing hospital infections.
- Prioritise dementia research within the health research and development budget
- Publish detailed data about the performance of healthcare providers online.
- Significantly cut the number of health quangos.
- Cut the cost of NHS administration by a third and transfer

resources to support doctors and nurses on the front line.

- Reform NICE and move to a system of value-based pricing, so that all patients can access the drugs and treatments their doctors think they need.
- Help elderly people live at home for longer through solutions such as home adaptations and community support programmes.
- Put patients in charge of making decisions about their care, including control of their health records.

Monitor is the independent regulator of NHS foundation trusts, established in January 2004 to authorise and regulate NHS foundation trusts.

Monitor is independent of central government and directly accountable to Parliament. There are three main strands to its work:

- *determining whether NHS trusts are ready to become NHS foundation trusts;*
- *ensuring that NHS foundation trusts comply with the conditions they signed up to – that they are well-led and financially robust; and*
- *supporting NHS foundation trust development.*

You can find out more about Monitor's functions and powers, as detailed in the National Health Service Act 2006. <http://www.monitor-nhsft.gov.uk/>

Schools

The Government believes that we need to reform our school system to tackle educational inequality, which has widened in recent years, and to give greater powers to parents and pupils to choose a good school. They want to ensure high standards of discipline in the classroom, robust standards and the highest quality teaching. Government also believe that the state should help parents, community groups and others come together to improve the education system by starting new schools. Government will:

- Promote the reform of schools in order to ensure that new providers can enter the state school system in response to parental demand; that all schools have greater freedom over the curriculum; and that all schools are held properly to account.
- Give parents, teachers, charities and local communities the chance to set up new schools, as part of plans to allow new providers to enter the state school system in response to parental demand.
- Help schools tackle bullying in schools, especially homophobic bullying.
- Simplify the regulation of standards in education and target inspection on areas of failure.
- Publish performance data on educational providers, as well as past exam papers.
- Create more flexibility in the exams systems so that state schools can offer qualifications like the IGCSE.

- Reform league tables so that schools are able to focus on, and demonstrate, the progress of children of all abilities.

IGCSE is the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (abbreviated IGCSE or iGCSE). It is an internationally recognized qualification for school students, typically in the 16-17 age group. It is similar to the GCSE in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, Standard Grade in Scotland or Junior Certificate in the Republic of Ireland.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/International_General_Certificate_of_Secondary_Education

Social Action

The Government believes that the innovation and enthusiasm of civil society is essential in tackling the social, economic and political challenges that the UK faces today. They will take action to support and encourage social responsibility, volunteering and philanthropy, and make it easier for people to come together to improve their communities and help one another. They will:

- Support the creation and expansion of mutuals, co-operatives, charities and social enterprises, and enable these groups to have much greater involvement in the running of public services.
- Give public sector workers a new right to form employee-owned co-operatives and bid to take over the services they deliver. This will empower millions of public sector workers to become their own boss and help them to deliver better services.
- Introduce National Citizen Service. The initial flagship project will provide a programme for 16 year olds to give them a chance to develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds, and start getting involved in their communities.
- Use funds from dormant bank accounts to establish a 'Big Society Bank', which will provide new finance for neighbourhood groups, charities, social enterprises and other non-governmental bodies.

Universities and Further Education

The Government believes that our universities are essential for building a strong and innovative economy and will take action to create more college and university places, as well as help to foster stronger links between universities, colleges and industries. Government will:

- Seek ways to support the creation of apprenticeships, internships, work pairings, and college and workplace training
- Set colleges free from direct state control and abolish many of the further education quangos
- Await Lord Browne's final report into higher education funding and judge its proposals against the need to:
 - increase social mobility;

- take into account the impact on student debt;
- ensure a properly funded university sector;
- improve the quality of teaching;
- advance scholarship; and- attract a higher proportion of students from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Ensure that public funding mechanisms for university research safeguard its academic integrity.

The Browne Review or Independent Review of Higher Education Funding and Student Finance - is a panel considering the future direction of higher education funding in England. It was launched on 9th November 2009 and is being chaired by Lord Browne of Madingley, the former chief executive of British Petroleum.
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Browne_Review

Described by David Cameron and Nick Clegg as "An historic document in British politics: the first time in over half a century two parties have come together to put forward a programme for partnership government", the full document can be found at http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/409088/pfg_coalition.pdf

Many of the above measures were reinforced in the Queen's speech on Tuesday 25th May, in which twenty-one new Bills and one draft Bill were announced, outlining the Government's legislative programme for the coming parliamentary session. Details can be found at: <http://www.number10.gov.uk/news/topstorynews/2010/05/queens-speech-2010-3-50297>

Coalition Ministers

At the time of writing, only the Department of Health had outlined the portfolio of each minister

Department of Health

Secretary of State for Health – The Rt Hon Andrew Lansley CBE MP
 Minister of State for Care Services – Paul Burstow MP (Long Term Care Reform; Adult Social Care; Carers; Personal Health Budgets; Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults; End of Life Care; Long Term Conditions, including cancer and diabetes; Dementia; Mental Health; Physical Disabilities; Autism; Learning Disabilities)
 Minister of State for Health – Simon Burns MP
 Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Public Health – Anne Milton MP
 Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Quality – Earl Howe
http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/MediaCentre/Pressreleases/DH_116244

Department for Education

Secretary of State for Education – The Rt Hon Michael Gove MP