

Built to Last

The Aims and Values of the Conservative Party

Our Values

Our Party seeks to cherish freedom, advance opportunity and nurture responsibility. By trusting people, we help individuals grow stronger; by sharing responsibility, we help society grow stronger. We believe that there is such a thing as society, but it is not the same thing as the state.

Our Party stands for a free society and a strong nation state; an opportunity society, not an overpowering state; a responsible society in which each person and every family, regardless of position or power or wealth, is able to fulfil their potential, to make their own choices, and to find true and lasting happiness.

Foreword by David Cameron

We live in a world that is undergoing far-reaching change. A huge shift is taking place in economic power to the new developing economies of the east, bringing with it unprecedented competition and unimagined opportunity. The threat of climate change is forcing the world to innovate and to co-operate in new ways.

The global terrorist threat demands not just new international security effort abroad but new efforts to integrate at home. The endemic poverty of Africa and the spread of killer diseases like HIV/AIDS are no longer someone else's problems.

There are more subtle changes taking place too. Our society is becoming less hierarchical and less deferential. People searching for fulfilment and well-being expect more control over the decisions that affect their lives. Choices that were once beyond the reach of all but the richest are now just the click of a button away for everyone.

New social networks are emerging every day through the internet, bound together by common interest not a common geography.

The old answers are not working well. Top-down government seems to belong to another age. Monolithic, unreformed public services do not provide the personalised response people expect. High taxes and poor education make us steadily less competitive. People hope for more in their family and working lives – and in their communities – than centralised government knows how to deliver. Millions in our own country, and many more millions around the world, are caught in traps of multiple deprivation from which centralised government does not know how to deliver them.

The country needs a new direction and new answers.

I am clear about the new direction we must set for Britain. To meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, and to satisfy people's aspirations today, this country needs a responsibility revolution.

A revolution in personal responsibility – giving every individual the skills, the resources, and the confidence to take control of their life.

A revolution in professional responsibility – giving all those who work in our public services the freedom to fulfil their vocation.

A revolution in civic responsibility – giving our neighbourhoods and communities the power to shape their destinies, fight crime and improve the quality of life.

A revolution in corporate responsibility – giving business the encouragement and the incentive to help enhance our environment and improve well-being.

That is the mission of the modern Conservative Party: a responsibility revolution to create an opportunity society – a society in which everybody is a somebody, a doer not a done-for.

Ours is a message of change, optimism and hope. Our aims and values are built to last; they are as relevant now as they have ever been. In this document, we show how those aims and values apply to the great challenges our generation faces today.

We first published this statement in draft earlier this year and then we asked our party members to engage in the process of shaping it. This is the result of that process. Now, we will put it to a democratic vote of our members.



Our Aims

- 1. To encourage enterprise in all its forms – in the economy and in the community – in order to raise living standards and the quality of life for all. We believe that the enterprise of our people is the source of our progress, and that opening up opportunity is the best way to build a dynamic economy that creates wealth, eliminates poverty, and supports the public services and the social action upon which we collectively rely.**

Today that means:

- Creating stable foundations for enterprise and economic growth by strengthening the independence of the Bank of England and putting economic stability and fiscal responsibility ahead of promises to cut taxes.
- Sharing the proceeds of growth between investment in public services and tax reduction.
- Strengthening competitiveness to help create jobs through fairer, flatter and simpler taxes and deregulation for employers and wealth creators.
- Liberating the enterprise of public sector professionals, freeing them from the constraints of centralised targets and bureaucracy.
- Harnessing the entrepreneurial spirit in our communities to tackle poverty and deprivation by removing the barriers that hold back the expansion of the social enterprise sector, community organisations, voluntary bodies and charities.
- Increasing financial security in old age by reducing means-testing and restoring the incentive to save for a pension, paid for by raising the retirement age.

- 2. To fight social injustice and help the most disadvantaged by building a strong society. The test of a strong and just society is how it looks after the least advantaged – but this duty is not reserved for the state alone. It is a shared responsibility: we are all in this together.**

Today that means:

- Setting social enterprises and the voluntary sector free to tackle multiple deprivation through long-term funding, increased scope to innovate and a level playing field with the public sector.
- Enabling the voluntary sector to create a national programme for young people to support their personal development and promote a sense of social responsibility as they move from childhood to adult life.
- A huge increase in the level of drug rehabilitation for young people, operated through social enterprise and the private sector.
- Supporting special schools and reforming the statementing system to put parents in the driving seat.
- The development of supported employment opportunities as a stepping-stone from Incapacity Benefit to the workplace, so that people coming off Incapacity Benefit can re-learn how to achieve success in the workplace.
- Measures, including clearer rights to respite care, to recognise the role played by voluntary carers, without whom local social services would be wholly incapable of meeting the needs of the disabled and the chronically ill.

3. To meet the great environmental threats of the age, to enhance the environment and to increase general well-being. We believe that there is more to life than money; that the beauty of our surroundings, the quality of our relationships and the sustainability of our environment are central in building a strong and just society.

Today that means:

- Playing our part in tackling climate change by encouraging green growth through binding annual targets for carbon reduction, a long-term price for carbon, and the removal of barriers that hold us back from leading the world in new green technologies.
- Encouraging more eco-conscious use of our resources through energy and water conservation, and recycling.
- Encouraging greater corporate responsibility by offering a lighter regulatory regime to companies who make a commitment to responsible business practice.
- Enabling people to strike a better balance between work and life through flexible working – with government setting an example by making the British public sector a world leader in flexible working.
- Supporting families and marriage, and making high quality childcare more available and more affordable.
- Promoting the construction of attractive, affordable and eco-friendly housing through new approaches to planning and building regulations, and by decentralising the provision of energy.
- Improving transport through greater integration in our railways, more school buses and investment in new light rail systems for cities – and adopting tough targets for carbon reduction in new cars.
- Supporting the shared experiences that bring us together and promote well-being, like sport, the arts and culture, and reforming the National Lottery so that its proceeds are properly allocated to these purposes.

4. To provide first-class healthcare, education and housing that respond to the needs of each individual. This is not the same thing as the state trying to run our great public services. It is by trusting professionals and giving choice to parents, patients and families that excellence can be engendered through vocation, flexibility and local initiative.

Today that means:

- Improving the NHS through trusting health professionals more, ending the culture of top-down centralisation and targets, promoting a choice and a voice for patients and encouraging innovative and efficient provision through independent, voluntary and social enterprise providers.
- Action on public health that helps everyone to lead healthier lives, reduces health inequalities, and ensures that demands on the NHS are more sustainable.
- Improving the quality of education in all our state schools through the encouragement of streaming and setting, and of much greater rigour in teaching and exams.
- Giving schools greater control over their own affairs, and opening up new routes into teaching such as entry from other professions.
- Enabling universities to flourish by reducing centralised direction and continuing the freedom to raise an additional element of financing through tuition fees.
- Supporting home ownership by promoting the building of affordable homes for young families in appropriate places, and extending shared ownership to make it far easier for young people to afford their own home.

5. To take a lead in ending global poverty. Fighting global poverty is a moral obligation – a priority, not an afterthought. It is also a vital contributor to our long-term security; a necessary counterpart of controlled immigration and an imperative we cannot ignore if we want stronger, more cohesive communities at home and abroad.

Today that means:

- Tackling killer diseases such as HIV/AIDS, malaria and TB.
- Working towards the target of giving 0.7% of national income in aid by 2013 – and looking every year between now and then to see if it is possible to go further and faster.
- Keeping DfID as an independent department.
- Further reforming the Common Agricultural Policy, abolishing all remaining production-linked subsidies, scrapping import tariffs and removing all export subsidies.
- Promoting international trade agreements and debt relief to benefit poor countries.
- Supporting an International Arms Trade Treaty.
- Investigating aid vouchers to be put directly in the hands of poor communities, redeemable for development services of any kind with an aid agency or supplier of their choice.

6. To protect the country we love: proud of our past; confident in our future. We will never take for granted the security of our people, our institutions or our way of life. We will not flinch from our duty to defend these birthrights in the face of internal and external threat. We will be hard-nosed defenders of freedom.

Today that means:

- Enhancing the status of Parliament: giving it the ability to keep a check on the executive through measures such as stronger House of Commons committees and giving it the power to vote on treaties and wars.
- Giving statutory protection to civil servants from politicisation through a new Civil Service Act.
- Strengthening the United Kingdom by providing a constructive Unionist response to the West Lothian Question.
- Introducing a single, unified UK border police and proper border controls.
- Appointing a single minister to co-ordinate action to protect national security.
- Abolishing ID cards if they are introduced.
- Reforming the police to reduce top-down centralisation, targets and bureaucracy, and to introduce direct local accountability, modern management, and a single-minded focus on fighting crime.
- Protecting our freedoms and balancing them with responsibilities in a new Bill of Rights to replace the Human Rights Act.
- Maintaining strong and efficient Armed Forces to guarantee national security, and doing more to look after their families at home.
- Working to enhance international security relationships, and building into our energy policy an understanding of how energy insecurity threatens national security and stability.

7. To give power to people and communities, and to recognise the limitations of government. Political power should always be exercised as close to people and communities as possible. We believe in the United Kingdom and in the role of central government as a force for good, but we do not believe that it is through centralised government alone that we can change society for the better.

Today that means:

- Abolishing unelected Regional Assemblies and returning their powers to local government.
- Giving local communities greater control over local services, welcoming directly elected mayors in cities where they have public backing, and enhancing the role of local communities in determining plans for regeneration.
- Helping the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly to work better, and recognising that the policies of Conservatives in Scotland and Wales will not always be the same as our policies in England.
- Working in Northern Ireland to restore stable and accountable government based on all parties accepting the principles of democracy and the rule of law.
- Opposing any proposed European Constitution that would create a single European superstate.
- Recognising that persuasion can sometimes be a more powerful tool than compulsion in bringing about lasting change, and that there is a role for politics which goes beyond government – leading national debate on important questions of culture and attitude.

8. To be an open, meritocratic and forward-looking Party. We will represent all our country in all its diversity. We recognise the need to change when necessary to serve our fellow citizens faithfully.

Today that means:

- Taking action to ensure more women candidates, candidates from black and minority ethnic communities, and candidates with disabilities.
- Working in co-operation with other political parties and seeking consensus when it is in the long-term public interest – for example, in relation to climate change, the control of inflation and pensions policy.
- Undertaking social action in our communities to help improve people's well-being and quality of life.
- Rebuilding our Party in our cities and parts of the country where our organisation is weak.
- Tackling political apathy and alienation, particularly amongst young people, through innovative campaigning on the issues that make a real difference to people's lives.

CONSERVATIVES

Promoted by George Bridges on behalf of the Conservative Party of 25 Victoria Street, London SW1H 0DL.
Designed by Perfect Day (www.perfectday.gb.com).
Printed (August 2006) by Polar Print Group Ltd, Venturi House, 9-17 Tuxford Road, Hamilton Industrial Park, Leicester LE4 9TZ