

Our NHS, care services, schools, colleges and other public services make up the essential fabric of our society. People need them to be able to live secure and fulfilling lives. Britain needs them if we are to succeed as a country. But under the Conservatives they are under threat. The next Labour Government will protect, improve and invest in our public services, while giving individuals and communities more control over their design and delivery.

The NHS is one of our great national institutions, and it is one of Labour's proudest achievements. It embodies our belief that by the strength of our common endeavour, we achieve more than we achieve alone. But the future of the NHS is under threat. The Conservatives have put the wrong values at its heart, and patients are finding it harder to get the care they need.

Care is at the heart of Labour's values. No-one should fear old age or be left to struggle alone caring for a loved one. But too many older people suffer insecurity, loneliness and exclusion. And the growing social care crisis is one of the biggest challenges we face. Since 2010, billions of pounds have been cut from budgets that pay for adult social care. The result has been 300,000 fewer older people getting vital care services, at the same time as the number of older people in need of care is increasing.

A good education is vital to achieving personal fulfillment and economic prosperity. A good society depends upon an education system that can open minds and teach the skills and knowledge we each need to get on in life. But our education system is failing to meet the needs of young people who do not follow the traditional academic path from school to university.

Our public services are a measure of the strength and decency of our society. But we need a change in how we design them by pushing power down and organising them around individuals and families not centralised bureaucracies. Good public services also need committed staff who are treated fairly and whose ethos of service is respected. They require decisions on pay that prioritise those on lower incomes, which are evidence-based, and which respect Pay Review Body recommendations rather than brushing them aside irresponsibly.