

### 3.8 Protecting consumers and keeping bills low

Confident consumers encourage innovation and competition, which strengthen our economy. We have radically overhauled consumer rights law, making it simpler and clearer and for the first time protecting consumers buying digital content. We have driven competition in the energy sector, speeded up switching, and simplified tariffs so customers can always get the best deal. We have ended the era of above-inflation rail fare increases. We have clamped down on unscrupulous payday lenders and strengthened protections for vulnerable consumers against rogue traders. In the next Parliament we want to go further.

We will:

- ◆ Force energy companies to allow customers to change to any cheaper supplier in just 24 hours, and extend the principle of 'gainer led' switching, where your new provider organises your switch for you, into new sectors, including telecoms.
- ◆ Give people easier to understand information about their own energy use, with appropriate privacy protections, with a national rollout of smart electricity and gas meters. We will guarantee that anyone on a prepayment meter can choose a smart meter instead by 2017.
- ◆ Help people form new energy cooperatives so they can benefit from group discounts and cut their bills.
- ◆ Protect high streets and consumers by granting new powers to Local Authorities to reduce the proliferation of betting shops and substantially reducing the maximum stakes for Fixed Odds Betting Terminals.
- ◆ Ensure rail fares rise no faster than inflation over the Parliament as a whole.
- ◆ Require the Sports Ground Safety Authority to prepare guidance under which domestic football clubs, working with their supporters, may introduce safe standing areas.
- ◆ Continue and expand the midata project into new sectors, giving consumers the right to access data businesses hold on them in an open and reusable format.

### 3.9 Driving up standards in public services

Citizens expect a good service from their public services, and rightly so. While many schools, hospitals, libraries and other public institutions offer world-class standards, we could do so much