

## Foreword

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Over the last five years, we have put our country back on the right track. Five years ago, Britain was on the brink. As the outgoing Labour Treasury Minister put it with brutal candour, 'there is no money'. Since then, we have turned things around.

Britain is now one of the fastest growing major economies in the world. We are getting our national finances back under control. We have halved our deficit as a share of our economy. More people are in work than ever before. Britain is back on its feet, strong and growing stronger every day.

This has not happened by accident. It is the result of difficult decisions and of patiently working through our long-term economic plan. Above all, it is the product of a supreme national effort, in which everyone has made sacrifices and everyone has played their part.

It is a profound Conservative belief that our country is made great not through the action of government alone, but through the flair, the ingenuity and hard work of the British people – and so it has proved the last five years.

We can be proud of what we have achieved so far together, and especially proud that as we have taken hard decisions on public spending, we have protected the National Health Service, with 9,500 more doctors and 6,900 more nurses, and ensured generous rises in the State Pension.

Our friends and competitors overseas look at Britain, and they see a country that is putting its own house in order, a country on the rise. They see a country that believes in itself. But our national recovery remains a work in progress. It is fragile, and with the wrong decisions, it could easily be reversed.

So the central questions at this election are these: how do we maintain our economic recovery, upon which our ambitions for our country depend? And how do we make sure that the recovery benefits every one of our citizens, at every stage of their lives?

This Manifesto sets out our plan to do just that. It is a plan for a better future – for you, for your family. It is a plan for every stage of your life. For your new-born baby, there will be the world's best medical care. For your child, there will be a place at an excellent school. As you look for your first job, we are building a healthy economy that provides a good career for you with a decent income. As you look for that first home, we will make sure the Government is there to help. As you raise your family, we will help you with childcare. And as you grow older, we will ensure that you have dignity in retirement. Throughout, we will make sure that if you or your family fall ill, you will always be able to depend on our cherished National Health Service to give you the care you need.

And in an increasingly dangerous and uncertain world, we will fulfil the most basic duty of government – to defend our country and keep it safe.

But all of these things depend on a strong and growing economy. So as you consider how to vote, I hope you will ask this: which party is best placed to keep our economy strong? The team which has delivered the growing economy we have today, which created more jobs since 2010 than the rest of the European Union put together; or the party which left behind a ruined economy just five short years ago?

Now is a time to build on the progress we have made, not to put it all at risk. This Manifesto is our plan of action – our plan to take our amazing country forward. Above all, it is a plan for you.

I hope you will give it your support, so that together, we can see through the task we have begun.

