

We will bring down energy bills by making homes more energy efficient, delivering a million interest free loans for energy home improvements in the next Parliament. For those on low incomes, we will make 200,000 homes warm every year, delivered street-by-street by local authorities and community organisations. Privately rented properties will have to meet a decency standard, bringing warmth to a further three million homes.

The water industry, too, also requires reform. One in five people struggle to pay their water bill. Despite this, only a fraction of customers have benefited from the social tariffs offered by water companies. Under our reforms all water companies will be required to sign up to a new national affordability scheme, helping those who cannot afford to pay their water bill. And we will strengthen the powers of the regulator to change licenses, limit price rises and enforce industry standards.

Living standards have been hit by fare increases on public transport. Since 2010, rail fares have risen by 20 per cent, leaving passengers paying the highest fares in Europe. Similarly, bus fares have risen by 27 per cent while at the same time 2,000 bus routes have been cut.

Labour will reform our transport system in order to provide more public control and put the public interest first. We will review the franchising process as a priority to put in place a new system and avoid a repeat of the Conservatives' franchising fiasco. A new National Rail body will oversee and plan for the railways and give rail users a greater say in how trains operate. We will legislate so that a public sector operator is allowed to take on lines and challenge the private train operating companies on a level playing field.

Rail fares will be frozen next year to help commuters while we implement reforms. A strict fare rise cap will be introduced on every route for any future fare rises, and a new legal right for passengers will be created to access the cheapest ticket for their journey.

City and county regions will be given more power over the way buses are operated in their area. They will be able to decide routes, bear down on fares, drive improvements in services, and bring together trains, buses and trams into a single network with smart ticketing.