

We will deliver better public services and more open government

We have supported the growth of public service mutuals – organisations that are owned by their staff and deliver public services. We want more of them, so we will guarantee a ‘right to mutualise’ within the public sector. This will free up the entrepreneurial spirit of public servants and yield better value for money for taxpayers. Transparency has also been at the heart of our approach to government. Over the last five years, we have been open about government spending, provided access to taxpayer-funded research, pursued open data and helped establish the Open Government Partnership. We will continue to be the most transparent government in the world. We addressed public concern about the influence of money on politics, with a law that strengthened rules governing non-party campaigning and established a register of consultant lobbyists. In the next Parliament, we will legislate to ensure trade unions use a transparent opt-in process for subscriptions to political parties. We will continue to seek agreement on a comprehensive package of party funding reform.

We will make government more efficient

We value our outstanding public servants. Over the last five years, we have made efficiencies in government. We have ruled out the introduction of regional pay in the public sector, which we do not support and will not introduce. Britain's impartial, professional and highly capable Civil Service is admired around the world and one of our nation's strengths. We will push ahead with reform of the Civil Service to make it more dynamic and streamlined. We will make recruitment to the Civil Service more open and actively look for exceptional talent, especially in areas where capabilities are in short supply. We will continue to tackle all the bureaucracy of Whitehall that clogs the arteries of government. We will end taxpayer-funded six-figure payoffs for the best paid public sector workers. We will continue to sell unneeded government property and co-locate services wherever possible. We have already created 20 high-quality digital services, which include apprenticeships applications and tax self-assessments. We will save you time, hassle and money by moving more services online, while actively tackling digital exclusion. We will ensure digital assistance is always available for those who are not online, while rolling out cross-government technology platforms to cut costs and improve productivity – such as GOV.UK.

We will reform Parliament

We have improved the operation of Parliament, strengthening its ability to hold the Government to account, with reforms such as the election of Select Committee chairs and the creation of the Backbench Business Committee, which enables backbenchers, for the first time, to determine a significant proportion of the House of Commons’ business. We have also passed the Fixed Term Parliament Act, an unprecedented transfer of Executive power. In the next Parliament, we will address the unfairness of the current Parliamentary boundaries, reduce the number of MPs to 600 to cut the cost of politics and make votes of more equal value. We will implement the boundary reforms that Parliament has already approved and make them apply automatically once the Boundary Commission reports in 2018. This will deal with the fact that the current electoral layout over-represents parts of the country where populations have been falling and under-represents parts where populations have been rising.

We will ensure that the House of Lords fulfils its valuable role as a chamber of legislative scrutiny and revision

While we still see a strong case for introducing an elected element into our second chamber, this is not a priority in the next Parliament. We have already allowed for expulsion of members for poor conduct and will ensure the House of Lords continues to work well by addressing issues such as the size of the chamber and the retirement of peers.

We will protect our electoral system, to safeguard our democracy

Building on our introduction of individual voter registration, we will continue to make our arrangements fair and effective by ensuring the Electoral Commission puts greater priority on tackling fraud and considers insisting on proof of ID to vote. We will complete the electoral register, by working to include more of the five million Britons who live abroad. We will introduce votes for life, scrapping the rule that bars British citizens who have lived abroad for more than 15 years from voting. We will respect the will of the British people, as expressed in the 2011 referendum, and keep First Past the Post for elections to the House of Commons. And we will introduce English votes for English laws, answering the longstanding West Lothian Question in our democracy.