



Work, Pensions and Equality:
Addressing in-work poverty and
working-age inequalities

Thank you for taking part in the Labour Party's 2018 National Policy Forum Consultation, the Party's process for getting input from our members, supporters and stakeholders on how we shape our policies.

This booklet is one of eight policy documents published by the Labour Party as part of our consultation this year.

Each document contains sets of questions for you to answer. You do not need to answer every question, nor is there any specific way to answer them. We suggest picking the questions most important to you and using them as a guide to write a few lines or paragraphs on what you think about the issues in this area.

At the end of the document you can find a guide on how to send in your ideas to us and other ways to get involved in the consultation.

There are seven other documents that might interest you covering different areas of the Party's policies, you can find them in the consultation pack or online. If you have an idea or issue you would like to talk about that is not covered in this year's consultation, you can submit these to us too via www.policyforum.labour.org.uk

Whether you're a Labour Party member or not, we want to hear your ideas on how the next Labour government should tackle the challenges our country faces, and build a more equal Britain for the many, not the few.

Want to know more about how Labour makes policy?

You can learn more about how Labour makes policy, further details about the 2018 Consultation and find policy events in your area on our website www.policyforum.labour.org.uk

ACCESSIBLE MATERIALS

The Labour Party is an inclusive member-based organisation that prides itself on being accessible to all who share its values. If you would like an accessible version of these documents please email us at policydevelopment@labour.org.uk to discuss how we can best accommodate your requirements.

Work, Pensions and Equality: Addressing in-work poverty and working-age inequalities

Labour's vision

Labour has a proud record of championing equality and social justice and fighting discrimination and poverty in all its forms. We believe in equality for all and a social security system that is supportive, enabling and, for people of working-age, makes work pay. As a society, we believe that we achieve more when poverty and inequality are reduced across all people and regions of the UK.

However, under this Government, many families are struggling to make ends meet. In-work poverty is at record high levels, real wages are lower today than they were ten years ago, pay gaps and discrimination against women, Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, disabled and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans (LGBT) people persist. At the same time, people of working-age have seen substantial cuts in support from the social security system. The combined result has been almost eight years of rising poverty, increasing insecurity and a less equal society.

Labour's challenge is to develop and implement policies that will reverse this and prioritise action to tackle in-work poverty and working-age inequalities, so we can build a country for the many, not the few. This consultation is an opportunity for members, experts and interested groups to help build on policies set out in Labour's General Election manifesto so that we can best address the growing crisis of in-work poverty and tackle working-age inequalities.

Issues

In-work poverty

Analysis from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation shows there are now eight million working-age adults living in poverty, while both child poverty and pensioner poverty have increased substantially since 2010. To make matters worse, evidence from the Child Poverty Action Group suggests cuts to Universal Credit will push a million more children into poverty, compared to its original design, and are threatening women's economic independence.

Over that same period, the Government has made substantial cuts to working-age social security, increasing pressure on the resources of local authorities across the country and on other Government departments. This has led to greater poverty, including food poverty and period poverty, and a greater reliance on food banks and loans.

Labour's General Election manifesto committed to rebuilding and transforming our social security system so that, like the NHS, it is there for us all in our time of need. It pledged to reform Universal Credit, strengthen workers' rights and introduce a Real Living Wage of £10 an hour. With the crisis of in-work poverty growing, the challenge now is to build on these policies so that working families are lifted out of poverty.

Have your say - give us your thoughts on the questions below:

- How do we tackle the growing crisis of in-work poverty?
- How can Universal Credit be reformed and redesigned so that it fulfils its original purpose of making work pay and reducing child poverty and other forms of poverty?
- How do we ensure all workers can earn sufficient income to provide for themselves and their families and to save for security in retirement?
- Are there specific issues for self-employed workers, agency workers and workers employed on zero-hours and short-time contracts?
- How do we end unfair pay disparities and close the gender and BAME pay gaps?
- How do we tackle discrimination at work against women, young, older, BAME, disabled and LGBT people including how different layers of discrimination interact?
- How would statutory rights for union equality representatives help tackle discrimination?
- How will Brexit affect our equality rights and social security protection and how can Labour safeguard them?

Working-age Inequalities

Society is becoming less equal under this Government. Women have been disproportionately affected by Government policies, with 86 per cent of the burden of austerity coming from women's pockets. Meanwhile, the gender pay gap remains stubbornly high and women face growing discrimination at work, including sexual harassment and pregnancy discrimination, while measures to tackle inequality such as those in the Equality Act 2010 have not been enacted.

Disabled people have also borne the brunt of the Government's changes. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has found that households with a disabled adult are £2,500 a year worse off because of changes made since 2010. Progress has also been rolled back for BAME communities and there is still a long way to go until we achieve equality for LGBT people.

Labour's General Election manifesto committed to publish a Social Security Bill to repeal cuts to social security but also to transform the system. It also pledged to tackle the gender and BAME pay gaps, enhance the role of the EHRC and protect the rights of LGBT people.

Labour's manifesto with and for disabled people was underpinned by our commitment to a social model of disability and an end to unfair assessments. People may have a condition or impairment but are disabled by society. We need to remove the barriers in society that restrict opportunities and choices for disabled people in all areas including housing, transport and work.

Labour's Race and Faith manifesto, also launched at the General Election, set out wide-ranging policies to address the barriers facing BAME communities across the country, including mandatory equal pay audits for large employers and a Real Living Wage of £10 an hour.

The challenge now is to build on these policies so that the next Labour government can reduce all inequalities across society.

Have your say – give us your thoughts on the questions below:

- How can Labour's Social Security Bill best be used to reduce working-age inequalities and ensure support in time of need?
- How can we reduce the number of disabled people living in poverty and how can we build a social model of disability to restore dignity and remove the barriers that restrict opportunities and real choices for disabled people?
- What steps can we take to protect and enhance the rights of lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people and tackle the inequalities they face?
- How can action on working-age inequalities ensure that everyone can fulfil their potential regardless of their socio-economic background?
- How do we restore and strengthen the powers and functions of the Equality and Human Rights Commission to better tackle inequality?
- How can we tackle and prevent sexual harassment in all of its forms?

Thank you for taking the time to read our consultation document. We want to harness the views, experience and expertise of our members, stakeholders and the wider public. If you would like to respond to any of the issues in this document, there are a number of ways you can get involved:

- 1. Online:** The best and easiest way to send in your ideas and join the discussion is via our online home of policy making:
www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/consultation2018
- 2. By post:** If you have written down your ideas, you can post these to us at:
The Labour Party,
Policy Unit,
Southside,
105 Victoria Street,
London, SW1E 6QT
- 3. At your local party:** You may want to discuss your ideas with other members of your CLP or local branch. You can suggest to your CLP Secretary that a policy discussion is held at a future meeting.
- 4. Regional Policy Forums:** Look out for events hosted by your regional office, local parties and National Policy Forum Representatives.

You can find out more about the 2018 consultation, upcoming events and more details on how Labour makes its policy at
www.policyforum.labour.org.uk

Follow us on Twitter for regular updates during the consultation
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Please send your ideas before the consultation period ends, it runs until Sunday 24 June 2018.

