

General Election 2024

A pre-manifesto analysis



**DO
JUSTICE**

A pre-manifesto analysis

As the 2024 general election approaches, political parties are beginning to unveil their key proposals, offering a glimpse into their visions for the future of our nation. This booklet provides a summary of these early proposals, setting the stage for the detailed manifestos yet to come. By examining the preliminary plans from each party we aim to equip voters with the knowledge needed to navigate the political landscape, understand the core issues at stake, and make informed decisions at the ballot box on the 4 July 2024.

**We urge all Catholics to #RegisterToVote before
23:59 on 18 June 2024
[gov.uk/register-to-vote](https://www.gov.uk/register-to-vote)**

Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) is the domestic social action agency of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, therefore our remit does not cover Scotland or Northern Ireland. Our summary only covers the main parties of England and Wales.

***All citizens, therefore, should be mindful of the right and also the duty
to use their free vote to further the common good***

Guadium et Spes (75)

The Conservative party has laid out 5 priorities for the Conservative Party:

1. **Halve Inflation**
2. **Grow the Economy**
3. **Reduce Debt**
4. **Cut Waiting Lists**
5. **Stop the Boats**

These priorities are expected to form the key parts of the Conservatives Manifesto for the election. The party has though announced some other policies, some of which include:

- **Scrapping A-Levels and replacing them with a new ‘Advanced British Standard’, bringing together academic and technical qualifications, and ensuring maths is studied until the age of 18.**
- **Keeping the triple lock system, whereby pensions increase each April by the highest of either inflation, average earnings or 2.5%**
- **The party has vowed to continue with plans for the Rwanda immigration scheme if it wins the election**
- **The Conservatives have pledged a move to mandatory national service for 18-year-olds, with either a 12-month military/cyber defence placement (for around 30,000 people) or compulsory volunteering for 25 days in a year in civil resilience roles.**

Further Details

- Challenges to the Conservative government have been made that the **tax burden to families is at a higher level than at any point since World War II.**
- The party has been vocal on the highly contested **Rwanda plan - with promises to keep this in place if the Government is reelected.**
- The Conservatives are **providing funding for childcare**, with the aims of helping parents back into work, although many people have criticised these roll-out plans with questions over lack of nursery places and parent’s choice to be able to stay home with their children.
- The party are working towards a **2050 Net Zero goal**, but have delayed some plans such as the banning of petrol and diesel cars from 2023 to 2050.
- The Conservative Party have put **forward a ‘smoking ban’**, which would raise the legal age at which a person could buy cigarettes by one year every year.



Labour has announced its first 6 steps for change, including:

1. **Deliver economic stability** through tough spending rules in order to grow the economy and keep taxes/inflation/mortgages low
2. **Cut NHS waiting times** through 40,000 more appointments each week
3. **Launch a new Border Security Command** designed to smash criminal gangs and strengthen borders
4. **Set up Great British Energy** as a new publicly-owned clean power company
5. **Crack down on antisocial behaviour** with more neighbourhood police and new youth hubs
6. **Recruit 6,500 new teachers** in key subjects, paid for by ending tax breaks for private schools

Labour has also set out 5 missions which they say will form the backbone of the party's manifesto and drive forward a Labour government. The missions include:

1. **Get Britain Building Again** – securing the economy, investing in jobs of the future and building more homes
2. **Switch on Great British Energy** – a new publicly owned energy company to deliver energy security, cheaper bills and new jobs
3. **Get the NHS Back on its Feet** – cutting waiting times, offering more appointments and improving health outcomes
4. **Take Back Our Streets** – guaranteeing town centre police patrols and halving violence against women and girls
5. **Break Down Barriers to Opportunity** – introduce free school breakfast clubs and more high quality teaching

Further Details

- Labour are promoting their stance on tough spending rules with an indication that **they will not change any policies surrounding the two-child-cap on benefits** and have also spoken **against the Conservative policy on extending free childcare.**
- They have promised to **scrap the Rwanda Bill** but plans to launch a new **Border Security Command** to work against gangs and human trafficking.
- The party has pledged that parliament will debate and vote on changing **Assisted Suicide** laws if Labour wins the next general election.
- Labour are aiming to move Britain towards **Net Zero** and aspire to develop a publicly owned energy that is clean and that aims to cut bills.
- The party is open to to **reducing NHS waiting lists using private healthcare providers.**
- Labour have said they would allow **16-year-olds to vote in future elections.**

The Liberal Democrats say that “now more than ever, people deserve a fair deal”. The party’s key priorities as part of its fair deal include:

1. **A fair, prosperous and innovative economy that promotes opportunity and wellbeing**
2. **Fair access to good public services and a strong social safety net**
3. **A flourishing environment, with fair access to nature for all.**
4. **A strong United Kingdom and a fair international order.**
5. **A truly fair democracy, where everyone’s rights are respected and individuals and communities are empowered.**

Following the announcement of the election, the party said it was “time to change the system and give people real hope”, “time to smash the blue wall and kick out the Conservatives” and “Time to deliver the fair deal the British people deserve”.

Some of the party’s policies (yet to be officially released in a manifesto) include:

- **Give everyone the right to see their GP within seven days, or 24 hours for urgent cases**
- **Increase school and college funding per pupil to above the rate of inflation annually**
- **Lowering the voting age to 16**
- **Investing in renewable power so that 80% of the UK’s electricity is generated from renewables by the start of the next decade**

Further Details

- The Liberal Democrats have shared their support for the **‘triple lock’ on state pensions**, and oppose any reduction in inheritance tax, and tax for top-earners in society.
- The party **opposes the Conservatives’ Rwanda Plan**, and seek to bring policies which **promote safe and legal routes** for refugees and asylum seekers.
- They are public on their support for **legalising assisted suicide and have promised to ban all forms of Conversion Therapy**, which is criticised for having large implications for religious freedom.
- They are looking to **extend free school meals** to all primary-school children in England and Wales, and to all secondary-school children whose families receive universal credit.
- The Lib Dems are vocal on the **need to reform our current Social Care system**, and want to introduce a Carer’s Minimum Wage and increase the Carer’s Allowance for unpaid carers.



The Reform Party argues that reform is essential in a number of areas. These include:

1. **Reform our Economy** – the party says it would aim to free up over 6 million people from paying Income Tax and over 1.2 million small businesses and self-employed from paying Corporation Tax, in order to achieve faster growth
2. **Reform our Energy Strategy** – the party says its energy plan will create thousands of British jobs and also nationalise 50% of key utility companies.
3. **Reform our Public Sector** – the party says it has a bold plan to achieve zero waiting lists in health, while it also pledges changes in education and border security.
4. **Reform our Institutions** – the party wants to make the voting system in the UK fairer and more representative.

Further Details

- Reform wish to lower taxes, and **lift the threshold of paying income tax to £20,000**, further they wish to reduce taxes for businesses, abolish Inheritance Tax and to reduce government spending.
- Reform have a **strong stance against immigration** and seek to make a new department of immigration, as well as reducing the number of legal migrants in the country.
- On social issues, Reform wish to **replace the Equalities Act introducing a free speech bill**. Further, they have spoken out strongly against gender ideology and seek to mandate the **building of single sex spaces in public toilets and changing rooms**.
- Reform want to **introduce a 25% transferable tax marriage allowance**, as well as **front load the child benefit system for children aged 1-4**, so that parents have the option of being at home with their children.
- Reform speak strongly **against Net Zero plans** and do not plan to use renewable sources of energy, rather to use Britain's natural supply of fossil fuels.



The Green Party has said they have plans to: “improve everything that matters for families and communities” and look to seek fair, green solutions. Their fair and green solution covers:

- **Fairer Greener Homes and Housing:** Investing £250bn over 10 years in council-led schemes to insulate 10 million homes, fund council-led schemes through an emergency package of taxes on the wealthiest 1% and the biggest polluters, and call for an immediate freeze on rent rises and a ban on no-fault evictions to protect households.
- **Fairer Greener Schools:** Government to provide free school meals for all primary and secondary school children - to give every child a fair start in life and help families during the cost of living crisis
- **Fairer Greener Childcare:** Green Party want to see 35 hours of free childcare for all from the age of nine months so that every child gets the care they need and every parent can go to work if they want to.
- **Fairer Greener Transport:** The Green Party's "One Pound Fare To Take You There" plan would introduce a £1 single fare on all local bus routes in the country and guarantee free travel for everyone under 22 and pay for the plan from a carbon tax and by cancelling £27 billion pounds worth of national road building schemes
- **Fairer Greener Water:** keep water companies accountable for what they are doing to end sewage discharges and clean up our waterways and put water back into public hands.

Further Details

- Green Party have spoken on wanting to **introduce a Universal Basic Income** and scrap Universal Credit which they claim pushes more people into destitution and poverty.
- They want a ‘**fair and humane system of managed immigration** where people can move if they wish to do so.’
- The Green Party has **called for an immediate ceasefire** to the war in Israel and Gaza.
- The party **believe abortion is a right** and wish to remove the law requiring the consent of two doctors.
- The Green Party want to **eliminate all carbon dioxide emissions** within 10 years.
- On health, the party are committed to **keeping healthcare free**, and seek to put a greater **emphasis on treatment for those suffering from mental health issues**.
- The Green Party want to **disestablish the Church of England**, and abolish hereditary peerages.



Plaid Cymru | Party of Wales

Plaid Cymru have said they are standing “For fairness, for ambition, for Wales”. Their headline policies include:

Fair funding for Wales

- Secure the £4bn owed to Wales from HS2 to invest in improving our own public transport in all parts of the country and reversing cuts to local bus services.
- Demand a fair funding system for Wales, based around our needs, giving us the public services we deserve.

Fair play for patients

- Fair funding from Westminster, enabling us to invest in our NHS workforce and recruit 500 GPs into Wales after years of Tory cuts and Labour mismanagement in Cardiff.
- A new Cancer Strategy to ensure cancers are caught and treated earlier, and ending Wales’s postcode lottery for treatment.

Fairness for families and communities

- Help 330,000 Welsh families to deal with the cost of living crisis by increasing Child Benefit by £20 per week. This will take 60,000 children out of poverty in Wales.
- Redressing economic unfairness; increasing windfall taxes and devolving the Crown Estate in order to create green jobs and build prosperity.

Further Details

- Plaid Cymru is calling on the UK Government to tackle the cost-of-living crisis through different measures, including an **uplift of £25 to Universal Credit**.
- Further, they want the UK Government to raise the minimum wage for those over 23 to the **Real Living Wage**.
- If Wales was to become independent, they would **seek to rejoin the European Union**.
- In Wales, Plaid Cymru seek to offer **universal child care to children from 12 months**, increase statutory paternity leave to 12 weeks, and **give free school meals to all children who come from a family who receive universal credit**.
- Plaid Cymru wants **zero waste to go to landfill by 2030 and to put an end to all waste incineration in Wales**.
- Plaid Cymru want a Welsh way of policing – with a focus on **crime prevention and protection of victims; fairer funding for police forces, and ensuring the police are present, visible, trusted and effective, in communities across Wales**.

General Election Resources

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has assembled a range of teaching resources of difference topics to guide the Catholic community in its discernment on how to vote for the common good. The resources can be found here: <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/election24/>

Caritas Social Action Network (CSAN) has published *Do Justice: A Vision for Spiritual and Civic Renewal* in England and Wales. This document might be a good place to begin your preparations for a Catholic response to the General Election, as a reminder of the Gospel-inspired principles which inform our reflections. The document and other Do Justice resources can be found here: <https://dojustice.co.uk/>

CAFOD and the St Vincent de Paul Society have produced a resource to help the Catholic community engage with their candidates in the election called, *A Year of Encounter*. You can find the resource here: <https://cafod.org.uk/campaign/uk-general-election-2024-a-guide-for-catholic-voters> with other CAFOD resources and here: <https://svp.org.uk/encounter> with other SVP resources.

Centre for Catholic Social Thought and Practice, based at Durham University, has produced a range of resources for parishes and first-time voters. You can access the resources here: <https://ccstp.org.uk/>

Columban Missionaries in Britain's Justice, Peace and Ecology team are inviting people to request extra copies of their latest "Vocation for Justice" magazine filled with thought-provoking content that they hope will be useful to Christians in preparation for the General Election on 4 July. You can order your copies here: <https://columbans.co.uk/justice-peace/14110/request-extra-copies-of-vocation-for-justice-election-edition/>

The Catholic Union of Great Britain, which has members of its team in Parliament, will be producing its election literature in due course. Visit their website for updates: <https://catholicunion.org.uk/2024/05/the-election-campaign-begins/>

The Church of England is launching a campaign known as [#PrayYourPart](#) – to promote prayer and participation in the life of our nation and communities, both as voters and as citizens. A series of daily thematic reflections written by bishops, drawn from the Bible and exploring major themes will cover the final three weeks up to polling day. You'll find more information here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/media/press-releases/general-election-2024-invitation-pray-nation>

Churches Together in Britain and Ireland has produced a set of resources and links on the General Election, including a round-up of news from Christian churches, a local hustings search and other resources. For more information visit: <https://www.churcheselection.org.uk/>

Joint Public Issues Team (JPIT) of the Baptist Union of Great Britain, the Methodist Church and the United Reform Church, has produced a guide for praying and preaching in preparation for the General Election which you can find here: <https://jpit.uk/general-election-praying-and-preaching>

Citizens UK. Many Catholic parishes and individuals are involved with Citizens UK. Their manifesto outlines eight areas that community leaders are calling on the next UK government to change. You can access the manifesto here: <https://www.citizensuk.org/campaigns/citizens-manifesto/>

The **Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS)** have published a statement on the upcoming election. Find it here: <https://www.jrsuk.net/news/jrs-uk-renews-calls-for-a-fairer-system-in-run-up-to-election/>