

BUILD AN NHS FIT FOR THE FUTURE

Bringing care closer to you

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Our Labour government was elected on the promise of change – to deliver a decade of national renewal and put the country back in the service of working people.

In the face of the toxic division being peddled by other parties, we need to work together to stand up for unity so we can continue delivering the change our country needs. Labour chooses renewal over grievance, and every day we are getting on with the job of turning our country around.

Already with Labour, NHS waiting lists are down by more than 330,000. Inflation is falling, and interest rates have been cut six times, meaning new mortgages are almost £1500 cheaper a year on average. This is because we made the tough but fair decisions to invest in public services, help people with the cost of living, and restore our public finances.

2026 is the year that Britain turns a corner and that people will start to feel that change. After years of decline and drift under the Tories, 2026 is the year renewal becomes real:

- ✔ Thousands more free breakfast clubs will open giving children a better start to the day and saving parents £450 a year;
- ✔ 3,000 more neighbourhood police officers are on our streets from March making our communities safer;
- ✔ Almost 120 community diagnostic centres will be open 7 days a week across the country by April – as we bring down waiting lists and fix our NHS for the future;
- ✔ New rights for renters and workers will deliver greater security for millions;
- ✔ And inflation, interest rates and mortgage costs are forecast to keep on falling helping to keep costs down .

Many of the policies that are going to make a real difference to people's lives this year came from the work of the National Policy Forum– so thank you.

This year, the National Policy Forum is continuing this important work, supporting our Labour Government and looking ahead to the next General Election. We look forward to hearing from you and invite you to get involved and play your part in our country's renewal.

Keir Starmer
Leader of the Labour Party
Prime Minister



After two decades on the National Policy Forum, I am delighted to continue my work as NPF Chair as we enter the second year of the cycle. It is a privilege to lead the NPF as we shape the next stage of Labour's work in Government.



Since the Labour movement's historic General Election victory, this Government has delivered major action across all six missions.

We are tackling the cost of living and delivering major planning reforms to kickstart economic growth and build 1.5 million homes. We are speeding ahead with our mission to secure home-grown energy and deliver clean energy jobs. We are restoring neighbourhood policing and making communities safer. Our Child Poverty Strategy, including scrapping the two-child benefit limit, will lift around 550,000 children out of poverty and break down barriers to opportunity. We promised 2 million extra NHS appointments and delivered 5.2 million in our first year as part of our work to build an NHS fit for the future. Our VAWG Strategy will put into action our plan to halve violence against women and girls in a decade. The Employment Rights Act represents the biggest transformation of workers' rights in a generation, and we have reset our relationship with the EU.

Last year's consultation focused on 'Fixing the Foundations to Deliver Change', looking at how the Labour Government can deliver the milestones set out in the Plan for Change, on the path to delivering the decade of national renewal that we promised in the 2024 Manifesto.

This year, our focus moves firmly to the delivery of national renewal.

The 2026 consultation will look at some of the vital areas we must continue to focus on if we are to deliver Labour's decade of national renewal, making working people feel more secure.

This means bringing back pride in our communities, restoring our natural world, supporting young people to get on in life, bringing health services closer to people, securing our borders and restoring Britain as a respected partner in the world.

As Party members, supporters and stakeholders, your voice is imperative to this work. Your lived experience, expertise and insight help ensure a strong link between the Party in Government and the Party across the country.

I encourage you to take part in this consultation, submit your views individually or through your CLP or organisation, and join one of our online members' events to hear directly from Cabinet colleagues.

Together, our long-term work will get Britain back on track to deliver the change and national renewal we promised, as well as looking ahead to future challenges.

Ellie Reeves
NPF Chair and Solicitor General

Thank you to everyone who got involved in the previous cycle of the National Policy Forum (NPF). The new cycle of the NPF was launched in January 2025 following the 2024 General Election. We are now in the second year of the policy development cycle.

The NPF is made up of the following six policy commissions:

This year's consultation runs from 5 March to 11 June 2026.

The theme of this year's consultation is national renewal. Over the spring, each commission will consult on renewing Britain to support the Labour government in delivering the change we promised, while also looking ahead to future challenges. Through this consultation, commissions will consider evidence, review submissions, and develop policy recommendations as part of the ongoing policy development cycle.

Each commission has produced a set of questions to guide discussions, as well as details on the policy context, and some steps Labour has already taken to deliver on our promise of change and get Britain back on track.

You don't need to answer every one of the questions in the document, nor answer them in a specific way. These questions are intended as a guide to stimulate discussions on what you think the main issues are in each policy area.

We welcome submissions from members of the public, Constituency and Branch Labour Parties, affiliated trade unions and socialist societies, as well as contributions from expert organisations such as think tanks, businesses and civil society.

Please submit your responses on our website here:

<https://nationalpolicyforum.labour.org.uk/>

This website also provides further information about this year's consultation and other ways to get involved, including our programme of members' events coming soon.

Finally, we recommend looking at our FAQs here

<https://nationalpolicyforum.labour.org.uk/about/> and we will be sending a 'How to guide' out to roleholders if you have any questions.

Thank you again for getting involved with the NPF. It is through our collective work that we will deliver a decade of national renewal for working people.

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The Labour Party is an inclusive, member-based organisation that prides itself on being accessible to all. 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.

1. How can we continue to strengthen community and primary care, such as general practice, so that care can be delivered closer to and in the home?
2. How can neighbourhood health services deliver more personalised and preventive care in active partnership with patients?
3. How can we most effectively utilise digital and AI-enabled tools, like the NHS App, to deliver more productive and higher-quality care in our communities?
4. What might integrated neighbourhood teams look like, what care might they deliver, and where?
5. How can we best support healthcare workers, and other professionals like social care workers, to operate in these neighbourhood settings?
6. What are the specific implications of policy proposals in this area for (a) women, (b) Black, Asian and minority ethnic people (c) LGBT+ people, (d) disabled people and (e) all those with other protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010? What are the implications of these proposals on reducing the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage?
7. What consideration would need to be given to policy proposals in this area when collaborating with devolved administrations and local government in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland?

One of the greatest challenges for our generation is how to reform our public services so they deliver for everyone. Nowhere is this renewal more important than in our NHS. Over a decade of decline saw waiting lists soaring, and a health service lurching from crisis to crisis. With Labour, we have a plan to fix our NHS – a plan that is both ambitious and realistic, and that is already working.

The 10 Year Health Plan is at the heart of this revival. The three shifts in the plan will create a new model of care that will transform the way our NHS runs, and bring it into the twenty-first century. That's why the Build an NHS Fit for the Future Policy Commission centred its discussion around this plan during last year's consultation looking at how these three shifts can be used to tackle hospital backlogs.

The Commission found broad support for this approach to ease pressure on NHS services and modernise it for the future. The shift from analogue to digital will help make care across the health and social care system faster and more efficient, bringing the NHS into the digital age. Moving from sickness to prevention will help people stay healthier for longer, not just protecting the NHS but also building a healthy society. And shifting the focus of healthcare from hospital to community will forge the way for a thriving neighbourhood health service, where care can be delivered on your doorstep.

It's this final shift that the Build an NHS Fit for the Future Policy Commission will look at in more detail this year – in particular, how to bring care closer to you. Neighbourhood health services will deliver care faster, relieve pressure on overstretched hospitals, free up capacity to focus on prevention, and ultimately build a modern service that is organised around patients' needs, rather than the other way around.

While there are encouraging signs of improvement in our NHS, there is much more to do. By making the 10 Year Health Plan a reality, Labour will not just get the NHS back on its feet, but make it fit for the future.

The NHS is on the road to recovery. After reaching a record high under the Tories, waiting lists are falling with Labour, down by more than 300,000 since we came into office. We set a target of two million extra appointments in our first year – and this Labour Government delivered over five million, smashing that target. Ambulances are arriving more quickly, and waits in A&E are shorter. This is change that people can actually feel – faster care, less anxiety for families, and people back on their feet and back into work.

There are encouraging signs in our social care system, too. With GMB and Unison's support, the first ever Fair Pay Agreements for adult social care workers are set to be delivered, securing better pay, terms and conditions. Backed by £500 million in funding, this is a critical step in Labour's plan to undertake a programme of reform to create a National Care Service. Labour is also supporting people to live at home independently, for longer, through an additional £50 million for the Disabled Facilities Grant for this year.

We have also turned a corner in general practice, which we will be looking at in more detail in this year's consultation. Not only has this Labour Government hired an extra 3,000 new GPs, but patient satisfaction with GPs has shot up from 60% to 75%. The Government has made it easier to access practices, with almost all GP surgeries in England now offering online access during working hours, freeing up phone lines for those who need them most.

Labour is standing by NHS staff through these reforms, halving the number of targets GPs are held to so they spend less time box ticking, and more time seeing patients. And we've invested in bricks and mortar upgrades to over 1,000 surgeries to modernise practices, creating over 8.3 million more appointments each year.

We are also working to get NHS dentistry back on its feet and fit for the future. The Government is broadening the scope of 'urgent' appointments to increase access to NHS dentistry. Alongside a pioneering supervised toothbrushing scheme for 3 to 5 year olds, and reforms to the dental contract to boost dentist numbers, Labour will ensure that children and those in need are benefitting most.

The Government has taken significant steps to improve NHS mental health services, too. Labour has passed the Mental Health Act to ensure people with the most severe mental health conditions get better, more personalised care, all while ensuring patient and public safety. We have hired over 7,000 extra mental health workers since taking office, making good progress towards our target of 8,500. This Government has also harnessed technology, giving patients better access to 24/7 support through the NHS App, including self-referral for talking therapies.

But for all of this progress, we know there is much more to do to fix the front door to the NHS. Through the 10 Year Health Plan, Labour will create new Neighbourhood Health Centres in every community, so you can see a GP, nurse, physio, care worker, dietician, or therapist, all under one roof. Crucially, these centres will also help tackle this nation's shameful health inequalities, with the first set to be delivered in areas with the lowest life expectancy and the longest waits. This will help achieve the Government's goal to halve the gap in healthy life expectancy between the richest and poorest regions. Cross-societal work on prevention will raise the healthiest generation of children ever, end the obesity epidemic, and ultimately, create a healthier country.

This year, the Build an NHS Fit for the Future Policy Commission will focus on how to deliver care closer to home through these neighbourhood health services, ending the 8am scramble and offering personalised care for patients where and when they need it.

The Conservatives spent their time in office wrecking the golden inheritance left by the last Labour government, including a disastrous top-down NHS reorganisation that wasted billions. They left behind a trail of destruction, including a record 7.6 million people stuck on NHS waiting lists – unable to work, care for loved ones, or simply enjoy everyday life because treatment felt so far out of reach.

In the year since Labour's Elective Reform Plan was published, NHS staff have worked tirelessly to turn things around and get waiting lists down, despite record demand for NHS services in 2025. The ambition was high, but the NHS has risen to the challenge – with more than five million additional tests, procedures and operations delivered in Labour's first year in Government alone. Now, waiting lists are falling for the first time in 15 years.

That is the result of the combination of investment and modernisation that Labour has delivered so far. Yet the Tories, Reform and the Liberal Democrats all failed to back a record extra £26 billion investment in health and care spending at the 2024 Budget. Waiting lists won't fall with rhetoric alone – only Labour has taken the credible steps necessary to tackle the hospital backlog.

Unless we continue on this path to change the NHS, the argument that the NHS is unsustainable will grow more compelling. This would only serve to feed Nigel Farage's argument that the NHS shouldn't be publicly funded, and should instead be replaced with an insurance-based system. Working people could be forced to pay thousands of pounds when they get sick under Reform's plans. While Reform seeks to abandon our NHS, Labour is choosing to renew it – making sure that the NHS is financially sustainable for the long term, fixing the fundamentals, and making it fit for the future.

When you need the NHS, only Labour will make sure that it will be there to care for you on your doorstep, and that it will not keep you waiting.

