

General Election 2024

Note 3 – Priorities identified by main
political parties





Introduction

This paper looks at what the main political parties standing in the UK general election are saying about housing policy. Tpas is focused on England and housing policy is devolved (which means policy is different in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland), so we've ignored parties that don't stand in England.

This is the third of our General Election notes:

- Note 1 – Tpas policy priorities (the Tpas Ask)
- Note 2 - Priorities identified by key sector bodies.
- Note 3 –Main parties' proposed housing policies.

Where parties' proposals align with something in the Tpas Ask, it's highlighted in **green**, and where it's something Tpas would tend to support it's highlighted in **amber**.

The manifestos are covered in the order of publication. It's important to note that this paper focuses on the same issues as our usual Policy Updates: housing policy (including affordable warmth and net zero), social security, public health, and social care. Clearly, the manifestos cover a wider range of issues, and each section includes a link where you can find out more.

This paper doesn't attempt to decide whether the parties' proposals are either realistic or genuine. However, the BBC has a dedicated election page [here](#), which includes a section analysing key manifesto commitments from each of the main parties; Sky News has a summary of the parties' pledges [here](#); ITV News coverage of the election is [here](#); and Channel 4 [here](#) – at the time of writing the focus for ITV and Channel 4 was on news stories rather than analysis.

When it comes to the claims that all parties are making about each others' manifestos, there are several genuine Fact Checkers available:

- [Fact Check](#) is linked to Channel 4 News
- [Verify](#) is from the BBC (includes a check of whether the manifesto proposals are deliverable)
- [Full Fact](#) is an independent charity and has set up a dedicated General Election page.

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democratic Party (LibDems) have chosen to call their manifesto 'For a Fair Deal'. You can find [all the documents here](#) (scroll right to the foot of the page).



LibDem manifesto commitments that are particularly relevant to social housing are listed below.

Housing, affordable warmth and Net Zero

- New homes to be zero carbon.
- commitment to cutting greenhouse gas emissions to net zero by 2045 at the latest... help households meet the cost of the transition.
- **Making homes warmer and cheaper to heat** with a ten-year emergency upgrade programme, starting with free insulation and heat pumps for those on low incomes, and ensure that all new homes are zero-carbon.
- Driving a rooftop solar revolution by expanding incentives for households to install solar panels, including a guaranteed fair price for electricity sold back into the grid.
- establishing a new Net Zero Delivery Authority to coordinate action across government departments and ... hand more powers and resources to local councils for local net zero strategies.
- Increasing new homes to 380,000/year, including **150,000 social homes** (UK targets), setting up 10 new garden cities, reforming compulsory purchase (making land cheaper for councils)
- **Giving local authorities... the powers to end Right to Buy in their areas.**
- A new Rent to Own model for social housing where rent payments give tenants an increasing stake in the property, owning it outright after 30 years.
- Ending rough sleeping, immediately scrapping the Vagrancy Act.
- Abolishing residential leaseholds and capping ground rents to a nominal fee.
- Protecting the rights of social renters by:
 - Proactively **enforcing clear standards** for homes that are socially rented, including strict time limits for repairs.
 - **Fully recognising tenant panels so that renters have a voice in landlord governance.**
- Tackling the funding crisis facing local authorities, including by providing multi-year settlements, boosting the supply of social housing, and

Social security

- Tackle child poverty by **removing the two-child limit and the [household] benefit cap.**
- **Scrapping the bedroom tax.**
- Further annual increases in Universal Credit to **ensure that support covers life's essentials**, such as food and bills.
- **Reducing the wait for the first payment of Universal Credit** from five weeks to five days.
- **Make the benefits system work better for disabled people** [various measures]



Public health and social care

- investment in **improving public health**, expanding early access to health services, and fixing social care.
- introducing **free personal care** ... so that provision is based on need, not ability to pay.
- Giving **unpaid carers a fair deal** ... including paid carer's leave and a statutory guarantee of regular respite breaks.
- **Increasing Carer's Allowance** and expanding eligibility...stop pursuing old overpayments.
- forging a **long-term, cross-party agreement on social care**.

Elements of the Liberal Democrats proposals have been welcomed in the sector, particularly the commitment to build more social housing and to suspend the Right to Buy. However, commentators emphasised that the plans are very ambitious and would need robust government support.

Conservatives

The Conservative Manifesto carries their election slogan: Clear plan, Bold action, Secure future. All of the documents are [available here](#) (scroll right to the bottom).

In relation to social housing and Tpas's priorities the overall message is 'more of the same', as the manifesto only includes a small number of new proposals. In particular, there's no target for new social housing, and some ideas that were very unpopular in the sector - such as the changes to social housing allocations that were [consulted on](#) earlier this year - have been included as manifesto commitments. Other proposals are listed below.

Housing, affordable warmth and Net Zero

- Deliver 1.6 million well-designed homes in the right places while protecting our countryside, permanently abolish Stamp Duty for homes up to £425,000 for first time buyers and introduce a new Help to Buy scheme.
- Ensuring that green levies on household bills are lower... reviewing and reforming standing charges.
- Deliver 1.6m homes in England in the next parliament [measures to achieve this include environmental and planning changes such as increased density on brownfield sites, special support for smaller builders, 'renewing' the Affordable Homes Programme, and 'continuing to protect the green belt']. There's no specific target for 'affordable' or social housing.
- Increased support for first-time buyers such as reduced stamp duty and a new Help to Buy scheme.
- Implement the changes to social housing allocations that were [consulted on](#) earlier this year



- Pass a Renters Reform Bill, plus the court reforms ‘necessary’ to abolish section 21 evictions.
- Ensure councils have the powers they need to **manage the uncontrolled growth of holiday lets**.
- Do more to boost the availability of affordable housing for local people in rural areas...ensure rural exception sites support people into home ownership.
- Create a dedicated **taskforce in Homes England to ... invest in [rural] regeneration** and building high quality homes.

Social security

- Various changes are proposed to the social security regime (which were already announced on 8 June), including:
 - Reform our disability benefits so they are better targeted and reflect people’s genuine needs, while delivering a stepchange in mental health provision
 - Tighten up how the benefits system assesses capability for work.
 - Overhaul the fit note process so that people are not being signed off sick as a default.
 - Introduce tougher sanctions rules...after 12 months [to potentially remove benefits completely]

In each case, there’s more detail in the text and generally, this talks about reducing payments while increasing support.

Public health and social care

Although the manifesto covers health policy, this doesn’t appear to include any plans for public health or social care, other than the stalled ‘Tobacco and Vapes’ Bill, and ‘we will continue to tackle childhood and adult obesity’.

The response from the social housing sector has been disappointment at the continuation of unpopular policies (such as increasingly ‘tough’ social security measures), but mostly at the absence of any commitment to invest either in new social housing or existing homes. The proposed subsidies for first time buyers have both been tried previously and have been condemned as increasing demand and helping to drive prices up.

Green party

The Green Party’s slogan for the general election is ‘More hope. Real change’, and their manifesto focuses much of its language on fairness. The central theme of their proposals is that ‘the solutions to the climate crisis are the same as those needed to end the cost of living and inequality crises’. You can find their manifesto [here](#) (scroll right to the bottom of the page)



The Green Party manifesto doesn't pretend that the party expects to be in power after the election. Instead it talks about aiming to influence the next government and focuses on things that 'elected Greens will push for':

Housing, affordable warmth and Net Zero

- providing 150,000 new social homes a year (at social rent)
- empowering LAs (with HAs and community groups) to acquire targeted homes, such as empty homes or poorly maintained private rented homes.
- end the Right to Buy
- empower local authorities to introduce rent controls and end no-fault evictions.
- introduce a Fairer, Greener Homes Guarantee linked to local authority led street-by-street programmes.
 - £12bn investment in social housing retrofit, £17bn in privately owned, aiming at EPC B over 5 years.
 - Insulation grant for public buildings such as hospitals and schools
 - £9bn over five years for heating systems in homes and elsewhere
 - £7bn over 5 years to address over-heating in homes.
- Ending competitive bidding for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund
- Bringing all social housing up to a decent standard backed by fair funding for councils and HAs.
- Funding LAs to take a strategic approach to the need for, and provision of, social housing.

Social security

- restoring the value of disability benefits, oppose a change from PIP to vouchers, reform eligibility tests and 'end the unfair targeting of carers and disabled people on benefits.
- Increasing Universal Credit (UC) and legacy benefits by £40 a week
- End the 5-week wait for UC.
- Abolish the two-child limit, scrap the bedroom tax.
- Increase disability benefits by 5%.
- Increase carer's allowance by at least 10% a month.

Public health and social care

- public health to be a cross-government priority.
- free personal care to ensure dignity in old age and for disabled people (plus investment in care workers' pay and careers including changes to visas)

The Green Party manifesto includes policies and investments that many labour supporters would be glad to see in their own party's plans. It would involve a far [higher level of taxation than other manifestos](#), but the party has said this would be targeted on people with assets of more than £10m, starting at a rate of 1%.



Labour

The Labour Party [manifesto](#) is titled Change. Although it does include proposals for quite significant changes, the theme that comes through most strongly is about responsible government.

Housing, affordable warmth and Net Zero

- **1.5million new homes over the next parliament**, including a ‘new generation of New Towns’. Tenure not specified.
- Strengthen planning obligations, to deliver infrastructure, social housing etc. alongside new homes.
- **‘the biggest increase in social and affordable housebuilding in a generation’** (in other places, they have committed to being ‘net positive’ in terms of social rented homes, which implies building more than 27,000 homes a year at current rates of Right to Buy)
- **Changes to the Affordable Homes Programme** to deliver more homes with the same funding,
- **Support for councils and HAs** to build capacity.
- **Increased devolution and powers (including for housing and planning)**, but also cross-boundary strategic planning and a willingness to intervene and ensure homes are built.
- First-time buyers to get first dibs on new development, supported by ‘permanent, comprehensive mortgage guarantee scheme’.
- **Review the increased Right to Buy discounts introduced in 2012, increase protections for newly built social housing.**
- **Increased investment to deliver warm home upgrades to 5 million homes in partnership with combined authorities, local and devolved governments.**
- Minimum energy efficiency standards in the private rented sector by 2030
- Abolish no-fault evictions, extend Awaab’s Law to the private rented sector.
- **Cross-government strategy to end homelessness.**

Social security

- Create more good jobs, reform employment support, and make work pay so that many more people benefit from the dignity and purpose of work.
- Labour is committed to reviewing Universal Credit so that it makes work pay and tackles poverty.

Public health and social care

- **Reform to social care, including National Care Service aimed at consistent standards for local delivery.**

The Labour manifesto has generally been welcomed by the social housing sector, albeit that many would like to see stronger commitments and earlier investment.



Also of interest

Not sure if we should get rid of this. It's driven by visibility of these parties, rather than how many candidates they're fielding or how much support they have.

Reform UK has issued what they describe as a 'contract' with the electorate. It doesn't have much to say about our areas of focus:

- Reform Social Housing Law
 - Prioritise local people and those who have paid into the system. Foreign nationals must go to the back of the queue. Not the front
- Scrap Net Zero and related subsidies [there's no detail, but this would presumably include affordable warmth]
- Commence Royal Commission of Inquiry into Social Care System...simplify social care through a single funding stream...more funding will be needed when a national plan is agreed.

You can find Reform UK's 'contract' [here](#). To be clear, it doesn't appear to fulfil the legal requirements for an enforceable contract.

The Women's Equality Party has made their policy platform available online, rather than producing a manifesto.

- On housing, this includes:
 - A nationwide programme to retrofit sustainable housing with insulation, solar panels, or heat pumps.
 - Reform regulations and tighten private rental standards; and expand social housing stock.
 - Tighten accessibility and sustainability standards for new build homes.
- On social security
 - End the two-child limit, reform child benefit and tax credit cap to make it work for and commit to increasing child benefit over time.
 - Increases for all benefits in line with inflation to ensure they rise with costs.
 - Restore Disability benefit to 2010 levels and reform the assessment process.
 - End sanctions, increase the UC earnings threshold in line with inflation, end the benefit cap and increase universal credit to £120 per week - the minimum needed to cover essentials in the UK.
- On public health and social care:
 - A national social care service, which is free at the point of use, pays a real living wage and is co-produced with service users.
 - Restoring family visas for health and social care workers
 - Increase carers allowance, increasing the earnings cap and introduce a new rate for those caring for between 20 and 35 hours a week.



There's more about the WEP's policies [here](#).

The Workers Party of Britain has issued a manifesto, although it's not easy to find detailed policies.

- On housing, the aims seem to be more social housing (delivered through overriding planning constraints and compulsory expropriation of unused land banks) and increased tenant control of council housing through tenant managed co-ops.
- There is no detail on social security policy or on public health and social care.

Their manifesto is available [here](#)