

# Better jobs and better work



Great opportunities are within our country's reach.  
Only Labour can seize them, and build a new Britain which  
guarantees security, prosperity and respect for all.

As we emerge from the pandemic, find a new place in the world outside the European Union and transition to a carbon neutral economy, we need a Labour government that would rise to the moment with ideas that meet the aspirations of the British public. A Labour government that is on your side. A Labour government that would give people much greater power over the issues that affect their lives. A Labour government that would tackle the cost-of-living crisis head on, get Britain growing again after 12 years of failure and improve public services so they deliver for the people paying for them.

This year's National Policy Forum, alongside Stronger Together – the policy review led by our Party Chair Anneliese Dodds – is a vital opportunity for us to develop the ideas that will form an election-winning platform on which a Labour government would build that new Britain.

The six consultation documents demonstrate the scale of the challenges we face but also the breadth of the opportunities available to us. They range from harnessing the potential of the green and digital revolutions to making sure the workplace of the 2020s offers working people the security and prosperity they deserve. They look at how the criminal justice system can keep our communities safe and secure, and how we can build first-class public services fit for the future after years of Conservative neglect. They consider how we can guarantee families up and down the country financial, social and housing security, and how we can protect our national interest while promoting Labour values abroad.

As Party members, supporters and stakeholders your voice in these debates is absolutely critical, and I encourage you to get involved. Please consider submitting your views either individually or as part of your CLP or organisation, or perhaps attending one of the online members' events to hear from one of my Shadow Cabinet colleagues. The strength of our movement is its diversity, and the breadth and depth of our collective knowledge, passion and insight. It is by working together that we will develop the ideas that underpin our vision of a new Britain – one that guarantees security, prosperity and respect for all.

**Keir Starmer**  
**Leader of the Labour Party**



Thank you for getting involved in the Labour Party's 2022 National Policy Forum (NPF) consultation. It's a really important opportunity for us to hear from our members, supporters and stakeholders on how the next Labour government can build a new Britain which guarantees security, prosperity and respect for all.

This paper is one of six policy documents published by the Labour Party as part of this year's consultation. Each document will ask a set of questions on specific policy issues, followed by detail on the context, the challenges we face and Labour's proposed way forward to help inform your answers. For further information, you may wish to refer back to the relevant sections of the two reports we published at Conference 2021 looking at the same six themes:

- *Britain in 2030*, which contrasted life at the end of the decade under continued Conservative rule with how things could look under a Labour government: <https://labour.org.uk/stronger-together/britain-2030/>
- *Labour Works*, which showcased inspiring examples of the difference Labour is already making across the country where we are in power: <https://labour.org.uk/stronger-together/labour-works/>

You don't need to answer every one of the questions in the document, nor answer them in a specific way. We suggest using the questions to stimulate your thoughts on what you think the main issues are in the document's policy area.

You can write your response as an individual, or as a collective through your local party or organisation. Once you have drafted your response, please submit it to us through Labour Policy Forum: [www.policyforum.labour.org.uk](http://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk). For more information on how to make a submission, see [www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/consultation-submission-guide](http://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/consultation-submission-guide).

On the Policy Forum website you can find out about other ways to get involved with the consultation, including our programme of online members' events. You can also read this year's five other NPF consultation documents which might be of interest. If you have an idea on an issue or topic that isn't covered by a specific consultation, then you can submit those too – the website lists which policy areas are covered by which NPF commission.

Thank you again for taking the time to take part in the NPF. It is through the contributions of members, supporters and stakeholders like you that Labour will develop the policy platform that will build a new Britain which guarantees security, prosperity and respect for all.

### Want to know more about how Labour makes its policy?

You can learn more about the Labour Party's policy-making processes on our online Resource Hub: [www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/resource-hub](http://www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/resource-hub).

You can also follow us on Twitter [@labpolicyforum](https://twitter.com/labpolicyforum) for all of the latest policy development news and events.

## 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](mailto:policydevelopment@labour.org.uk)** to discuss how we can best accommodate your requirements.

# Guaranteeing good work in the modern workplace

## Questions

1. How can we help all workers and businesses gain from new technologies and new ways of working?
2. How can we ensure that technologies don't become more intrusive and undermine workers' rights?
3. What does 'flexible working' mean for the UK's varied industries and how can it support growth in local economies and for different workers?
4. How can we ensure that innovation contributes towards good work?
5. How can we help the genuinely self-employed achieve greater security, prosperity and respect?

## The context

Last year Labour launched its New Deal for Working People, a comprehensive package of policies to transform the world of work and strengthen the rights and protections of all workers.

This included introducing a single status of worker with full rights and protections from day one, ending the practice of 'fire and rehire', banning zero-hours contracts and clamping down on insecure work, beefing up enforcement and expanding trade union and collective bargaining coverage.

The New Deal green paper published at Labour's 2021 Annual Conference doesn't just set out rights for workers, but represents a fundamentally different approach to the economy than that taken by the Conservatives. We believe that wealth doesn't trickle from the top down, but comes from the bottom up and the middle out.

Since then, the urgency of this agenda has been underlined with the disgraceful actions of P&O Ferries and the refusal of the Government to outlaw fire and rehire.

Labour has continued to campaign on the core tenets of our New Deal for Working People, opposing the outrageous actions of P&O and using all tools at our disposal to force the Government to legislate and act.

The Government has dropped its pledge to bring forward an Employment Bill that has been promised for nearly three years. Although the initial idea for the Bill itself was limited, dropping it altogether sends a clear signal that this government is not on the side of workers.

Meanwhile, the problems that characterised the pre-pandemic labour market largely remain. The Conservative government continues to undervalue the importance of the 'everyday economy' on which our country relies on.

The cost of living crisis is made worse by squeezed wages over many years and depleted savings. It is particularly threatening to the finances of low paid workers.

The latest figures from the Office for Budget Responsibility forecast a 3.5 per cent drop in real wages over the next two years, prolonging an unprecedented period of wage stagnation. Millions of people are still in insecure and precarious work, while the key workers in the public and private sectors who were clapped throughout the pandemic are now facing higher taxes and higher bills.

Our New Deal for Working People offers hope that a Labour government would transform the world of work and end the blights of insecurity and low pay while offering greater security, prosperity, and respect for all workers.

This commission will now build on its work from last year and on the content of the New Deal for Working People.

From these solid foundations, it will look at some lesser explored areas around the future of work and technology, looking at how policy can work with other levers to grow the economy, productivity and ultimately pay packets.

## The challenges

The Conservative government has nothing to say on the future of work and how it can improve the quality of jobs in all industries and sectors.

Meanwhile, a decade-long assault on workers' rights under successive Conservative governments has given carte blanche to rogue employers like P&O. Labour is clear the national scandal of P&O has to mark a moment of real change.

There are also now around one million fewer people in work than there would have been on pre-pandemic trends, and workers - particularly older workers - are struggling to find work that suits them. Yet at the same time firms are finding it increasingly difficult to hire staff.

The Government has no plan to reverse this steep drop in labour market participation and no plan to create good, high quality jobs.

It has no vision for how new technologies and innovation can make work better and has given no thought to how we guard against future threats and bad practice.

Many businesses, for instance, are finding flexible working a boon to both them and their workers.

Flexible working allows employers to access a broader range of talent and to see improved performance from happier staff. It provides work to people who may not be able to manage a typical 9-to-5 and allows many already in work to better balance their personal and professional lives. This includes many workers who have been historically disadvantaged in the workplace and suffer from persistent inequalities at work.

Meanwhile, the economy benefits from a larger, more productive workforce in jobs better suited to them.

Of course, flexible working and remote working will not be suitable for all roles, and many workers prefer not to work remotely. Similarly, many businesses have found some things that are not feasibly done over video call.

Instead of trying to capitalise on these new trends, the Government has reverted to hectoring and lecturing business.

The Government also has no idea how to capitalise on new technologies and innovation more generally, ripping up its Industrial strategy and replacing it with a paper-thin 'Plan for Growth'.

It has committed to more Research and Development (R&D) spending but has no plan for how that will filter into better work, how it will be linked up with the skills system or be deployed across different areas of the UK.

The Government has belatedly recognised the importance of technology to smaller firms and the 'everyday economy' by launching a scheme last year to help with the up-front costs of digital transformation.

However, the implementation has not been thought through, with sluggish uptake that means the scheme is likely to undershoot its initial targets significantly.

The Government has failed to understand how small firms and their workers actually implement new technologies and processes and failed to properly engage with the workers who will be operating them.



## The way forward

The Conservatives have no plan to tackle the deep-seated problems in our labour market and have a tired and outdated view of the modern workplace.

In contrast, Labour's New Deal for Working People would end insecurity, low pay and exploitation once and for all.

Labour's New Deal also embraces new innovations and seeks to capitalise on emerging technologies and trends.

It includes a right to flexible working to ensure all workers have the opportunity to benefit from different types of flexibility at work.

While this policy is an important first step, more work is needed to look at what flexibility means for different jobs and different industries and how workers and businesses can both benefit.

This consultation looks to move beyond the archetype of the office worker on a video call and explores how new patterns of working and new technology can provide a flexible, fulfilled and productive workforce.

The commission will also be looking at how technology and innovation can be diffused to all sectors including the 'everyday economy', so that all firms and workers can boost pay and productivity. These issues are especially pertinent given our ageing society and increasing demands on the social care workforce.

It will look at how procurement and Labour's plans for insourcing can support innovation among suppliers and SMEs and how an active industrial strategy can help shape the technological transformation of our economy.

The pandemic has also shown the potential pitfalls of some new technologies, with concerning reports of increased surveillance or digital tracking tools used to infringe on the privacy and autonomy of workers. The consultation will explore some of these problems in more depth and will look at how we can ensure they don't deepen existing inequalities at work.

The consultation will also look in more detail at conditions for the genuinely self-employed. The New Deal for Working People includes a comprehensive package to stamp out bogus self-employment for good, but also acknowledges that the genuinely self-employed suffer from some of the same issues as their employed colleagues as well as other specific challenges.

The commission will look at how the issues facing the genuinely self-employed vary by industry and occupation, and how policy can help them achieve security and a decent standard of living.