

Britain in the world



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. For more information on how to make a submission, see 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.

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** to discuss how we can best accommodate your requirements.

Protecting our national interests and promoting Labour values abroad

Questions

1. What role do international alliances play in protecting our national interests?
2. What does multilateralism mean and how should Labour work with multilateral institutions, particularly the United Nations?
3. What should the role of international aid and development be within Labour's foreign policy?
4. How should Labour respond to major humanitarian crises?
5. How should Labour work to promote democratic institutions?

The context

The Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 was an attack on the values of democracy, freedom and the rule of law that Britain and the Labour Party believe in. It has brought the international community together in solidarity, prompting a renewed focus on key global issues.

The crisis in Ukraine follows events in Afghanistan in August 2021, when the Taliban rapidly took control of the country after the US withdrawal. This has resulted in a significant humanitarian crisis, with 24 million people in Afghanistan in urgent need of aid according to the International Rescue Committee.

The impact of these events has been felt in Britain and across the world. Disruptions to oil and gas supplies have contributed to soaring energy costs, while food prices continue to rise significantly.

Ukraine is responsible for approximately 10 per cent of the world's wheat supply and is a major provider of corn and sunflower oil, yet fighting has severely restricted agricultural exports. The UN has warned that food prices are up by a third since last year, to their highest ever level. This is causing great hardship, particularly in countries where conflict and climate change are already exacerbating food insecurity.

Events on the world stage over the last year have highlighted that the Conservatives' approach to foreign policy has been hugely misguided.

The Government's Integrated Review, published in 2021, failed to acknowledge the possible fall of Kabul or the prospect of Russian aggression, favouring an Indo-Pacific tilt that de-emphasised the importance of European security.

The UK government has continued to push ahead with plans to reduce the size of the army while wasting millions of pounds of taxpayer money at the Ministry of Defence.

It has overseen the closure of the hugely respected Department for International Development and slashed the aid budget from 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income (GNI) in a short-sighted move that is already having real life consequences.

These include a 70% cut to global nutrition programmes, plus a significant reduction in funds to support vulnerable women and girls through initiatives such as the Women's Integrated Sexual Health programme, which delivers life-saving contraception and sexual health services for women in some of the world's poorest communities.

Such damaging cuts to the aid budget have left little room to respond to future crises or new emergencies.

Instead, the Conservatives have pursued trade deals that do not reflect British interests, instead selling out our workers and businesses. The recent Australian Trade Deal undercut British farmers and made no mention of climate targets, a key failure in light of the international consensus on tackling the climate crisis outlined at COP26 in November 2021.

The challenges

The events in Ukraine continue to develop at a significant pace, with new stories emerging each day of the horrors the Ukrainian people are facing. It is difficult to predict how events will unfold over the period during which the consultation will take place. The commission will meet regularly throughout the summer, ensuring that members engage with Shadow Cabinet Ministers to discuss the developing situation.

The invasion will almost certainly have long-term implications for Europe, presenting a need to work closely with European allies and determine a future UK-EU relationship which is not based on petty spats with one of our closest diplomatic and defence partners.

The risks of the conflict escalating remain high, with new reports of human rights abuses emerging each day. We must work with international partners to document all reports and hold those responsible to account.

The scale of the humanitarian crises is unprecedented. By mid-2022, it is estimated that 87 per cent of the Afghan population could be living in near universal poverty. Meanwhile, figures suggest that over four million refugees have already fled Ukraine since the invasion began, the vast majority of whom are women and children.

The response of the British people has been overwhelming. Tens of thousands of people have shown their willingness to help, offering their support and even their homes to Ukrainian refugees. The Government's mismanagement of its own scheme to house refugees has wasted people's generosity, once again demonstrating the Conservatives' failure to step up in times of need.

Despite the urgency of the situation in Ukraine and in Afghanistan, we must not lose sight of the many other conflicts happening around the world, including those in Yemen, Kashmir, Ethiopia and Israel and Palestine.

As we continue to readjust to life after lockdown, we must also remember how the pandemic highlighted and exacerbated global inequalities.

Ahead of the next general election, Labour must show it can be trusted by the public to stand up for Britain and protect our national interests. Our values will have a vital role to play in tackling global challenges and in restoring Britain's reputation on the international stage.

The way forward

The Labour Party is an internationalist party with a proud history of working closely with international partners. We stand firmly with allies in providing assistance in times of international crisis.

Under the Conservatives, Britain's international reputation has been tarnished. The next Labour government will put Labour Party values at the heart of its foreign policy and help rebuild Britain's reputation on the world stage.

This starts with a commitment to our international partners. In government, Labour will restore Britain's reputation as a reliable partner focused on the global challenges facing us all.

It also includes a commitment to international aid. While the Conservatives try to shift the focus of aid towards short-term business interests, Labour believes aid should be targeted where it is needed most, aimed at tackling poverty reduction and the root causes of conflict and instability.

Labour understands that international development is about more than just aid. The UN's Sustainable Development Goals are an important framework within which to advance Labour values, helping to ensure that nobody is left behind. Working with low income countries to increase their resilience to future crises is a key challenge for the Labour Party to consider.

This consultation will look at how a future Labour government would work with international partners to rebuild Britain's global reputation and promote our core values on the world stage.