

# The Fair Work Agenda



Statements from  
Labour's Leadership  
Candidates

**Unions21**

**Chair: Sue Ferns**

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About Unions21

We provide an open space for discussion of the future of the trade union movement.

Our supporters include unions both affiliated and non-affiliated to the Labour Party. Our work has helped shape unions since 1993 by providing evidence, advice, new thinking and networks. We are mainly resourced by contributions from unions and others who work with unions that recognise we need to keep the movement evolving in an ever-changing world.

We encourage discussion through research, publications, conferences, seminars and similar activities.

Our steering committee meets monthly to identify the issues that matter and decide how we can stimulate debate around the relevant policy areas and engage with those holding influence so that new thinking can be put into practice.

# Unions21

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## Introduction

**Dan Whittle**

**Director of Unions21**

The exam question Labour's leadership candidates were posed for this publication was set by the Unions21 steering committee: "Outline your views on fair work, particularly focusing on work quality, pay, training and productivity". A straight forward interview question from leading trade unionists for those vying for the job of Labour leader or deputy.

But the articles submitted in response are revealing on a number of fronts, they seek also to answer some of the more fundamental questions union members might have. How deep is your connection to the trade union movement? What ability do you have to remake the case for trade unions? What future do you see for Labour and the unions?

Not only – What policy prescription do you have? But also, how will you persuade people?

And importantly: Are you an

election winner?

The process, we hoped, would be a useful exercise for the candidates in organising and presenting their thoughts on 'fair work' directly to a union audience. The result is a rich resource for trade unions and those interested the future of the world of work.

**Yvette Cooper** begins the collection with a positive vision of a high value, high tech economy. She will ensure 3% of GDP is invested in science and R&D to deliver it—and 2 million more manufacturing jobs.

Increased productivity and trade growth need to be national targets. Meanwhile, tribunal fees will be scrapped as will the two year qualifying period for unfair dismissal claims. Her view is that unions and Labour face a common challenge in needing to respond to a fast changing world or be left behind.

**Andy Burnham** also sees investing in the skills and industries of the future as key. He emphasises the need to boost pay at the low end – and will make any rises in the Minimum Wage apply to working people under 25 years

of age. He will create parity between academic and technical education. And Councils will be allowed to build more homes.

**Liz Kendal's** article remakes the case for trade unions, drawing on examples of their contribution to campaigns for the National Minimum Wage and their practical success in boosting training. Liz aspires to make it easier for unions to organise and deliver for members. She will bring in online balloting for industrial action, and put employees on the boards of firms.

**Jeremy Corbyn** describes a crisis in the labour market "not of quantity, but of quality". He sees unions as "the most effective force for equality in our society". He will restore national pay bargaining and above inflation pay rises in the public sector. He wants trade unions to have the right to access workplaces to recruit and organise. Jeremy's prescription of wage councils in low paid industries and an extended remit for the gangmasters licensing authority are broadly in tune with the ideas explored in Unions21's Fair Work

Commission project of 2013.

**Caroline Flint's** article begins our collection of articles from Deputy Leadership candidates. Caroline believes union recognition creates better firms – a view she has backed with organising action in her own constituency. She believes “flexibility should not equal insecurity”. Caroline’s range of policy ideas includes a duty on employers to provide employees who make a complaint a list of agencies that could represent them, to include unions.

**Stella Creasy** uses the lyrics of Billy Bragg’s “To Have And To Have Not” to set the scene for her article. Stella’s focus is on Labour’s regaining of momentum and winning form. “Winning is the only way we can guarantee a government that respects and appreciates trade unions”. Unions are partners to business in building a productive economy, and to Labour in providing the energy, experience and ideas for an effective alternative government.

**Ben Bradshaw** as Deputy Prime Minister would see the return of the union learning agenda in government. Ben wants to see it

grow into a bigger and stronger programme than before 2010. High quality apprenticeships are part of the route to the high skilled jobs of the future. Ben supports workers on boards and wants to see the Equal Pay Act and Equality Act fully implemented. He wants Labour to do more work with unions to develop the next generation of political leaders.

**Tom Watson** identifies the Government’s “one dimensional political approach to employment” centred on private sector job quantity rather than quality, as a key issue. He believes industrial policy, more ambitious employment standards and collective bargaining are all part of the answer. Speaking as a former trade union official, he paints a picture of a workforce under pressure and his desire to work with unions from “day one” to improve the world of work.

**Angela Eagle** focuses on pay and training. As Deputy leader she would fight for all workers to be paid a proper living wage, champion stronger sector skills training and strengthen collective bargaining. Of the Government’s attacks on unions

Angela says “A government that was serious about representing workers and ensuring they’re treated fairly would work with trade unions, not try to use the law to weaken them”.

Three conclusions can be reassuringly drawn from this collection: The field of Labour leadership candidates see unions as crucially important to a fair economy, they believe in the role of government in creating the conditions for high quality work and training, and (whether they win or lose the contest) each have a range of credible policy prescriptions to take forward.

Reading across the contributions there is common ground to be found on investment in skills and further education, the prescription of partnership between employees and employers to increase productivity and the need for action on low pay.

**Unions21** will continue to work with these politicians, and across all political parties where we find support for a sustainable future for the trade union movement.

## Yvette Cooper

**MP for Pontefract and Castleford**  
**Candidate for Leader of the Labour Party**



*Yvette spoke at the Parliamentary launch of Unions21's most recent publication on regional inequality in July 2015*

I believe deeply in the Trade Union movement. When my mum went to work it was still legal to pay women less – our Trade Unions, working with the Labour Party, changed that. My dad was a trade unionist – for IPCS, Prospect and EMA. In office I fought to stop GCHQ trade union rights being removed. And I want a strong ongoing relationship between Labour and the unions.

Both Labour and the Trade Unions need to respond to a fast-changing world, workplace and politics or we will be left behind and Britain will be a poorer place.

At the start of the industrial age, Britain turned amazing science into amazing energy, amazing trade, and amazing growth and prosperity.

Technology and global trade also created huge new social challenges, inequality and division.

And the Labour Party emerged, born out of industrialisation and progress, to fight against injustice and calling for that growing prosperity to be shared by all.

Today, Britain is still driving new ideas and amazing science that leads the world – graphene being a good example. But this time, we aren't turning it into amazing trade or growth and our productivity has stalled.

Technology and globalisation are creating new social challenges. Our country is becoming more divided and unequal, with growing insecurity for those on both low and middle incomes.

I don't believe the Tories have the answers to these challenges facing modern Britain.

Right now Britain isn't winning in the world. Growth isn't strong enough or balanced enough. We aren't getting enough of the good jobs. Those on low income are being left behind. Those on middle income feel not so much squeezed as over stretched.

We're buffeted too much by the harsher winds of globalisation, without any plan to manage change or make sure more people feel the benefits.

The UK recovery was the slowest since comparable records began. The UK's labour productivity was 14% below the average for the G7 - the largest gap since 1991

The squeeze on pay is historically unprecedented. Real wages have continued to stagnate throughout this Parliament. Full-time wages grew by just 0.1 per cent - the

smallest rate of annual growth since the series began and well below the comparable rate of inflation.

Job growth is very welcome. But over most of the last Parliament, jobs in low-paid sectors grew twice as fast as high paid jobs. On skills, the Office of National Statistics has warned the share of high-skilled jobs in our economy is falling as the share of low-skilled work takes its place.

And far from keeping us an outward looking country they are turning inwards – especially on Europe

And the Government are failing completely to ensure that growth is fair and prosperity is shared. I welcome a higher minimum wage but it is misleading to call it a living wage – especially when it is more than offset by hitting the child tax credits that so many middle and low earning families rely on.

But these are the challenges for Labour too – both economic and political. Because people weren't convinced about our answers at the election. They knew we would offer a fairer deal - end

exploitative zero hours contracts and tackle insecure, low paid jobs – but they didn't think we could deliver a better deal.

Labour needs to offer an optimistic vision for the future.

One rooted in our values but also hard headed and credible. One that sets out a vision for growth and shared prosperity, where our nation becomes fairer and less divided, backed by strong and sustainable public finances. And one that includes everyone.

We need to be part of Europe. And Labour needs a strong Yes campaign.

But we also need improvements to the markets to help business, as well as fairer rules so working people benefit too. Europe needs to work for everyone – so we should defending things like the right to paid holidays against any attempt by David Cameron to water them down. And I will argue for stronger employment protection across Europe, strengthening the rules on agency workers and posted workers, and fairer benefit rules so people who travel to this country contribute before they claim.

As well as a strong minimum wage I want to see Whitehall Departments all paying a Living Wage – we have to lead from the front. And I want the best incentives to get as many employers as possible paying a Living Wage.

I will set an ambition for the UK economy – public and private – of 3% GDP investment in science, research and development – including cutting edge green technologies. This could help us deliver 2m more manufacturing jobs.

And I will make it a priority to end the Government's punitive tribunal fees and the two year qualification for unfair dismissal rules.

I want to work with Trade Union members to put workplace representatives at the heart of this shift in our economy towards high skill, high productivity jobs learning from abroad about stronger models of shared working.

That is my approach – proud of our values, but with the strength to win.

## Andy Burnham

**MP for Leigh**

**Candidate for Leader of the Labour Party**

In the months since our devastating Election defeat, Labour has been consumed by a round of painful soul-searching.

I spent the early stages of my Leadership campaign focusing on the most difficult issues we heard on the doorstep - the deficit, immigration and benefits - because we won't win until we regain the public's trust on them. But this doesn't mean copying the Tories. Far from it. Labour wins when we are better than them.

The focus on our weaknesses has given Labour's Leadership campaign a negative feel. The time has come to lift people with a bigger vision. In the 21st century, what is Labour for? My answer is simple: to help everyone get on in life.

The hopes of people at all levels of society are pretty much the same: a secure job; a decent



*Andy spoke at a Unions21's health fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference 2013*

home; a good standard of living; prospects for their kids; and proper care for their parents. But these dreams are dying for millions. Labour's mission must be to revive them.

The first Budget from a majority Conservative Government in 19 years made it even harder for young people to make their way in an already challenging world. It raised the prospect of a two-tier workforce, dividing young and old, and disproportionately hits families in work.

While raising skills is crucial to raising pay in the long term, we must break the cycle of low pay and productivity by boosting pay at the lower end of the pay

scales.

David Cameron continues to wage his campaign of demonisation against our union movement. I will oppose this unjustified attack on the legitimate role of trade unions to protect people in a fragmented and casualised workplace and if the new proposals get through Parliament I will repeal them.

We have seen the return to work undermined over recent decades, both due to the weakening of workers' rights and wider economic trends including globalisation and technological advances. Improving the economic position of British workers is not a simple challenge,



but it will be at the heart of my mission as Labour leader. We need to invest in the skills and industries of the future, so that we have an economy of high value, high paid jobs.

The sad truth is that despite his attempt to commandeer the language of the living wage campaign, the Chancellor has delivered nothing of the sort, with a measure not based on cost of living, taking no account of the slashing of tax credits, and ignoring the higher living wage rate needed in London.

I welcome plans to raise the minimum wage but, by applying the measure only to those 25 and over, the national minimum wage has now become a five tier system, with your pay decided by the year you were born not the job you do. I want the raise to apply to every age group.

One of the greatest failures of post-war public policy has been this country's lack of focus on technical education. Our schools system is geared towards the academic, University route. Young people who aspire to go on that route have clear goals to

aim for and support to get there. But the same cannot be said for young people who aspire to a high-quality technical education. They have been neglected by successive Parliaments full of people who went to University and have made that the focus of education policy.

No wonder so many people feel that politics doesn't speak to them. I will take Labour out of the 'Westminster bubble' and make it the vehicle for the hopes and dreams of ordinary people once again.

I will end the discrimination and inequality that is still inherent in our school system and bring true parity between academic and technical education. The best way to raise standards in schools is to give all children in those schools hope that they have something to aim for at the end of it. And the best way to build a modern economy is to invest properly in our skills base.

I will trust our councillors again and the time has come to trust local communities with more financial freedom too. We need the most ambitious house building programme in half a century – the best way to bring

down the Housing Benefit bill is to let councils build homes again.

This period now, the next few years after a bad defeat, will be defining for our Labour movement, party and unions together. We will either rise to the challenge with bold solutions to big problems or we will be written off as timid, small and irrelevant. The change I offer is to take our Party out of Westminster, put it back in touch with people across our country and I would like to ask for your support in doing that.

## Liz Kendal

**MP for Leicester West**

**Candidate for Leader of the Labour Party**

Britain can be a country where everyone can get a fair wage for a fair day's work; a high-skill, high pay country in which we train and invest in our workforce: improving people's lives and enabling our workforce to compete with the rest of the world.

That's my vision for Britain – and it's in stark contrast to the reality of Conservative policy: a frenetic race to the bottom, with millions of people under-employed on low-skills, low wage contracts, characterised by falling productivity, an erosion of our rights at work and soaring inequality.

Trade unions have always been a vital part of achieving that better society for everyone. The trade union movement has a proud record of standing up for the people that need it most, and for delivering fair pay and better working conditions for their



*Liz spoke at a Unions21's fringe meeting at TUC Congress 2014 on supporting older workers*

members and across the country.

When the Tories were still telling us the minimum wage could never work, unions were making the political case and pressing for a minimum wage for their members. Together, the Labour Party and the trade union movement delivered the Minimum Wage Act - one of our greatest achievements.

I'm proud to be a trade unionist, proud of Labour's history as a party founded by the unions, and proud to have been part of two movements that have successfully worked together to make Britain better for more than a century.

The Conservatives claim they

want to reform unions. In reality, driven by ideological antipathy to unionism of any kind, they aim to destroy it. The requirement that each strike ballot achieve 40% of all possible votes cast will effectively end the legal right to withdraw Labour, but it's the sheer hypocrisy of the move that is most maddening.

The Tories themselves won just 24.3% of all those who could have voted.

Just 56 of their 330 MPs had a majority of more than 40% of all possible voters.

If we apply the Tory logic to the recent election, half the Cabinet – including Sajid Javid himself – would be deemed illegitimate.

This legislation is a disgrace and I want to be categorically clear: I have always opposed the Trade Union Bill, I'll fight it at every stage in the commons and as Prime Minister I will repeal it.

I'll defend Labour's all important link with the union movement, but we can and must do so much more.

There are millions of people in this country who would massively benefit from union membership who have never been part of a union. Just 14% of people in the private sector are members of a union, but many of these are on low-skilled, low-paid contracts, in insecure or part-time jobs, and it is exactly these people who would benefit from unionisation the most.

And we can make it easier for unions to organise and deliver for their members.

In Germany and other European countries, there are significant rights for employees to be represented on company boards. So I want to see employees given a real voice in the workplace. Not

just a single person on remuneration committees but a real voice in how their companies are run.

And if we allow online balloting, we could make the process much easier and more inclusive, potentially massively increase participation - whilst at the same time, making unions even more responsive to their members.

The productivity gap remains one of the most pressing issues in modern Britain – British workers are almost a third less productive than the average American or German.

I'm determined to reverse this decline, and skills are at the heart of the way to do it.

Over the long term, early intervention in education has the potential to transform people's ability to compete in the global market as well as, crucially, their chances of having a better life, but to take skills seriously means we need to entrench the attitude that we never stop training and learning.

That's why the Government's cuts to adult and further education are so reckless and short-sighted, and that's why, again, the union movement is so crucial: unionised workers are a third more likely to have received workplace training.

My vision for a high-skills, high wage society is rooted in the principles of fairness, equality and social mobility that the Labour and the trade unions have always stood for.

I'm proud of that partnership and proud to stand up for those values.

As Labour leader - and Prime Minister - I look forward to putting those values into action and changing Britain for the better.



## Jeremy Corbyn

**MP for North Islington**

**Candidate for Leader of the Labour Party**

The British labour market is in crisis. That may seem an odd thing to say with the Conservatives crowing about record levels of employment, but the crisis is not of quantity, it's of quality.

Working together, the Labour Party and trade unions (whether affiliated or not) can make a difference. Indeed we were established to deliver for working people, whether in Parliament and in their workplaces. That is our shared movement.

Workers in the UK remain worse

off in real terms than they were before the crash. We have record levels of in-work poverty because of endemic low pay and insecurity. The number of workers on zero hours contracts has trebled and more and more working households are dependent upon the lifeline of tax credits and housing benefit, which George Osborne has set his sights on cutting.

Even before the crash, average workers wages were stagnating, and as a share of national income wages have been falling since the late 1970s. The attacks on trade union and employment rights in that time have made that possible.

Trade union membership over the same period has halved, even as the number of working people has increased. There is a real challenge for trade unions, especially in the private sector where only 14% of workers are in membership.

Unions improve pay and make jobs more secure. Companies with better recruitment and retention tend to be the ones who invest in training their staff.

As a country we don't invest enough, and George Osborne is grossly irresponsible in having cut the adult skills budget, and further education since 2010. We are going in the wrong direction.

The Labour Party needs to work closely with the labour movement while in opposition to strengthen your hand, to support and promote the work you do in organising workers and delivering a fairer society.

Now the Tories' propose a minimum 50% threshold on union ballots – a legal hurdle that exists in no other ballot, either for public election or for any other democratic organisation.

The Tories say this is about democratic mandate. This is a deceit. As Thatcher's Chancellor Nigel Lawson confessed in his memoirs, "a reduction in union power was an important aim of Conservative policy even though it was couched in language of checking abuse, democratising procedures and so on".

We know they pursue the same agenda today, because they have rejected trade union proposals to boost turnout through secure workplace balloting.

The same agenda drives public sector pay cap, hurting the families of public sector workers and damaging the morale of each and every public sector worker - and of the service provided. We need to invest to provide the well-funded public services that act as a springboard to an economy that enables everyone to prosper.

The next Labour government must ensure the recommendations of national pay bodies are implemented, and restore national pay bargaining. We urgently need an inflation-plus pay rise for public sector workers and we will need one even more by 2020.

But low pay isn't limited to the public sector. Some of the worst examples of low pay and poor working conditions are to be found in the private sector, where too many workers lack trade union membership. We need to increase the resources going into enforcement of the

minimum wage to target illegal abuse.

Last year, UK company profitability hit record highs. But without unions in many workplaces, any increase in returns only gets shared in the boardrooms and between shareholders.

Trade unions are the most effective force for equality in our society. Research by The Spirit Level authors Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett shows that both in the UK and across the developed world greater pay equality correlates with higher trade union membership.

So how can a Labour government enable trade unions to deliver a more equal society? One key change would be to give trade unions the right to access workplaces to recruit and organise.

But we also need to look at establishing wage councils with binding standards in some low paid industries - and extend the remit of the Gangmasters Licensing Authority into industries where exploitation and

unsafe practices are worst.

When Labour leader John Smith made his last speech to the TUC he set out a 'Charter for Employment Rights' to:

*"give all working people basic rights that will come into force from the first day of their employment. We will give the same legal rights to every worker, part-time or full-time, temporary or permanent.*

*"We will give every working man and woman the right to protection against unfair dismissal, and access to health and safety protection. And every worker will have the right to join a trade union and have the right to union recognition."*

That modest charter - for equal rights for all workers from day one - needs to be in the next Labour manifesto. I hope you will back it.

## Caroline Flint

**MP for Don Valley**

**Candidate for Deputy Leader of the Labour Party**

Work helps create a society in which people can be independent, raise a family and be part of a community. It also ensures that through those that work we can provide for schools, hospitals and other public services essential to the common good. That's why we are Labour.



I'm the daughter of a lone parent. My mum worked in pubs and shops. At 13, I worked two nights after school in a newsagents. The day I finished my O-levels Mum signed me up to work in a dry cleaning firm for the summer before I started my A levels. Weekend, evening and holiday jobs were part of my work experience up and until my first proper job after university.

I was the first in my family to go to university; my brother and sister left school at 16. We should never treat skills, apprenticeships and experience on the job, as less important than degrees that earn you letters after your name. They are different but vitally important.

My grandma's family worked in a paper mill. It's still there today. Her family expected to have the same job for life. That seems a luxury today. Some things have improved for the better since that mill first opened but work is less secure and too many employers exploit employment laws to avoid giving permanence to employees; and poach rather than train. Change isn't all bad. Trade unions have a vital role in supporting workers to take up new opportunities whilst not being undervalued and undermined.

Working In local government, I introduced my borough's first workplace nursery; and recruited the first women trainee plumbers and electricians.

Even today, I get angry at the outdated attitudes which underpin job gender segregation.

Leading on Labour's energy policy for the last four years I know that investment in this sector to provide for a lower carbon future will create jobs throughout the UK. But we are facing a massive skills shortage and women are a small minority when it comes to skilled and well paid jobs across this sector. Primary school children today need the right education and encouragement to take up the opportunities of the future – girls and boys.

So what would I do?

First, Labour policy should encourage investment in

employees; and reward permanence over temporary employment. There are too many ways for employers to avoid making any commitment to an individual. Our employment laws need revisiting, challenging the minimal hours culture. Flexibility, should not equal permanent insecurity.

Second, fair work only comes with fair representation. How often do temporary staff have their "contract" ended (i.e. the phone stops ringing) only to be robbed of holiday or other pay. As soon as an individual makes a formal complaint, employers should be required to hand them a list of unions, lawyers and other agencies to represent them.

Third, firms work better, more fairly, and have fewer disputes, if they have a workplace partnership with trade unions. I campaigned with the then ISTC, writing to every employee and standing at factory gates, to secure union recognition at a large firm in my constituency. The firm still thrives today and has a great apprenticeship scheme. We should celebrate positive partnerships between unions and employers.

Fourth, I support a Living Wage and any genuine programme to achieve it, although the Tory argument for excluding 21 – 25's isn't fair. But we should question the opaque pay policies which create unnecessarily hierarchical structures in which often women and lower paid workers lose out. In my experience, bonus or performance pay structure don't always produce the desired outcomes or fairness in an organisation, private or public.

Fifth, Government can boost productivity. Two common mistakes about productivity: one is that public sector productivity is only achieved through privatisation; second - improving productivity involves losing workers. A McKinsey report in 2009, argued that public sector reform, doing things differently, made more impact than just putting the same workers into new (private) uniforms.

They also noted that raising the quality of what employees do, through training, skills and investment could be successful in raising productivity.

Government must encourage investment in training (the Chancellor's apprenticeship levy is borrowed straight from Labour) and investment in R&D (still too low in the UK). In the public sector,

government should reward authorities with low absenteeism. Poor management, low staff morale, and high public sector sickness rates are linked. When workers feel valued and supported, their attendance (and therefore, productivity) improves.

Sixth, we need smarter public procurement which can encourage apprenticeships, innovation and support small and medium size businesses embedded in our communities.

Seventh, clear Government direction encourages long term investment, training and job creation, transforming the economic landscape. Take low carbon energy: hundreds of thousands of jobs can be created if Government offers a stable, long term direction. Chop and change has characterised Tory policy, deterring investment as firms wait for clear signals about future intentions.

I believe that trade unions and the Labour Party can rise to the challenge of the 21st Century world of work whilst remaining true to our values.

## Stella Creasy

**Labour & Co-op MP for  
Walthamstow**

**Candidate for Deputy Leader of  
the Labour Party**

*At twenty one you're on top of  
the scrapheap*

*At sixteen you were top of the  
class*

*All they taught you at school*

*Was how to be a good worker*

*The system has failed you, don't  
fail yourself*

In 1983 Billy Bragg defined the threat a generation faced from Tory policies. Thirty two years later his words ring true again as we face a Government blind to the damage they are doing to the prospects of so many. Labour must offer more than opposition. We must be an alternative, fighting for a better future for all. In doing so, trade unions have a vital role to play contributing ideas, energy and experience. Following the election defeat it is vital that we do not retreat, but instead renew again our movement as the voice and vehicle for



*Stella spoke at the Unions21's fringe meeting at Labour Party Conference 2013 on supporting young workers*

working people.

We must not mourn- but  
organise.

Britain's union movement has a proud tradition of progressive change –delivering weekends, paternity and maternity rights and equal pay. In doing so, they have helped to not just protect but create millions of jobs, saving business's time and money, and helping the state deliver services that save lives. Despite this, the Tories are proposing the biggest crackdown on trade union rights for 30 years. We can and will oppose their agenda. But the truth is they will be able to pass this into law because they won. My campaign is about getting us

ready to win again, because winning is the only way we can guarantee a Government that respects and appreciates trade unions. And with much is at stake, we must not let Matt Hancock or Francis Maude define their purpose or wait until the election to challenge their destructive agenda. Instead, we must together put productivity and pay on the political agenda, using the work many unions already do as a template of how this benefits employees, employers and the economy.

British productivity levels are falling far behind our competitors: as a result of Britain's limited skills training



and poor infrastructure, we produce 30% less per hour than workers in Germany or France. Or to put it another way, by Thursday lunchtime a French worker has produced as much as we do in a week. Improvements in technology are also creating a “Second Machine Age”, where many of the jobs currently done by humans are being computerised. Osborne claims to support a living wage, but the bitter reality for those on low incomes is that they will find any increase in their wages will be wiped out by cuts to tax credits - and then some. In giving with one hand but taking much more with the other he has made it more likely people will live not just in poverty, but also in financial difficulty. This is now one of the most indebted countries in the world, as families try to bridge the gap between what they earn and what they need to live through borrowing. Under Cameron’s watch, our low pay high debt economy is causing misery for millions.

The Tories pretend all these issues could be solved if only people worked harder or if trade unions were weaker. We know the UK’s productivity crisis and low pay cannot be met by

deregulating business and regulating unions. A smarter government would get all the players – government, business, schools, employees and trade unions – working together. At Royal Strathclyde Blindcraft Industries in Glasgow, Community Union has worked in partnership with management to develop training programmes that take physically disabled young people through a training programme which leads to a decent job. The project is supported by local government bringing the business and trade union together in partnership to make a positive difference to workers’ lives. Such collaborative approaches offer a model for how people can develop new skills and gain the confidence and security they need to move from industry to industry over the course of their careers.

While the Tories view trade unions as barriers to change, we know that they can be the facilitators of success in the workplace, both within sectors and at a national level too. Helping tackle poverty pay is just the start of the conversation about the role they can play in driving up productivity and supporting employees in the

global economy. In the years ahead Labour must put into practice the partnerships that can help us demonstrate this is a possibility for all- both in our policy making and our campaigning. By renewing our power of collective action we can show how we would deliver fairness and prosperity for all – doing so as the biggest political organisations by far in the UK. As Labour’s next Deputy Leader ensuring our movement leads this debate from the front would be a personal priority.

## Ben Bradshaw

MP for Exeter

Candidate for Deputy Leader of the Labour Party

In the 115 years since the Trade Union Movement brought the Labour Party to life in collaboration with the Co-Operatives and the Fabian Society, Britain's economy has changed beyond recognition.

That pace of change is only increasing today. From the increase in self-employment, and "self-employment" while tied to specific companies, to the stagnation of take-home pay and new business models that take advantage of globalisation, the challenges we face to protect workers' rights and fight inequality are immense.

If we're to meet these economic challenges that face workers across the UK then the Labour Party and Trade Unions must work hand in glove to defend what we have spent our history fighting for - a fair deal for workers.



Trade unions are facing unprecedented attacks from this Government, who see unions as a barrier to productive business and state run services. We know this isn't true. In an age where the state - taxpayers - are subsidising low paid workers across our economy, the role of trade unions is vital to ensuring that the interests of employees is balanced with those of the employer.

Where Trade Unions work well with business leaders, the business works well. The strong relationship between Unite the Union and BAE Systems is one

such case - working together, BAE Systems and workers operate some of the most advanced manufacturing facilities in the world, with high levels of productivity. Usdaw the Union has bucked the general trend of unions by growing their membership through national agreements with large supermarket chains.

But there are sectors of the economy that desperately need union representation. Where can call-centre workers go for help? Who can Uber drivers look to for protection in the workplace? As the economy changes, so must the response of the Labour

Movement. Without unions, we cannot hope to protect the social fabric of our society that we've fought for.

I'm proud of the work we undertook together on union learning under the last labour Government and I want to see us re-establish that and grow it bigger and stronger than before. We need more, better quality apprenticeships to help us create the high skilled jobs of the future. It's a measure of our ideas that this Government has stolen our clothes on apprenticeships. It's also a measure of our failure that we've allowed them to.

While I welcome the Government's move on apprenticeships, I abhor their twisted use of the language of the Living Wage. Let's be clear - what Osborne announced was no Living Wage, but an increased Minimum Wage - which would be fine, if it weren't accompanied with cuts to working tax credits, leaving working people worse off overall.

We need pay that isn't eroded over time, but rises with the cost of living. We need to fully implement the Equal Pay Act and

the Equality Act, so equal pay is a reality and not an aspiration, and so we make sure opportunities are based on our talent and skills, not where we've come from.

I also believe it's absolutely time for workers' representation on the boards of businesses so workers have a say in the running of the business, and a voice in decisions that impact on their pay and conditions from the very start. This will require training for reps and serious thought as to the roll-out, but it works in Germany, and it will work here too.

But we can't do any of this, and more, while we're in opposition.

I'm standing to be Labour's Deputy Leader to be an ambassador for the party in the country, and a voice for our movement within the Party. Part of the role as I see it will be to go out and defend the Labour-Union Link.

Where we embrace the diversity of the trade union movement, it will strengthen our party and our movement. I am a long-standing member of the NUJ, GMB and

Usdaw. In my local party in Exeter, we have active members from across the union movement - including our fantastic Exeter Council Leader who is an RMT member.

I absolutely don't believe that we should break the link. We need to mend the link. I want union membership and party membership to go hand in hand. I want Union members to feel they can stand for selection as candidates locally and nationally because their activism at work is valued. Union members need a party that will work with unions to develop political leaders based on talent, not based on who you know, or time served.

I've been an MP in Government, and now in Opposition. I know that everyone throughout our Party and Movement agrees with me that the very worst day of a Labour Government is far better than any day of a Tory Government. We owe it to people in this Country to do our very best to make sure we have a Labour Government in 2020. We only do that by working together.

## Tom Watson

**MP for West Bromwich East**

**Candidate for Deputy Leader  
of the Labour Party**

The next Deputy leader of the Labour Party must work to ensure the party speaks to a wider range of people in work and better demonstrate it genuinely understands their pressures, experiences and hopes. No-one expects us to have all the answers, but we need on-going conversations with working people and to show we can solve some of these problems together.

There's so much riding on this. Greater fairness at work is a crucial building block for a fairer society. Our identity, self-esteem, finances, health and happiness are often shaped by what happens to us at work. The Tories have taken a one-dimensional political approach to employment largely centred on the quantity of private sector jobs. They've shown little regard to the pay people



take home, the hours they work, job security, the skills developed or required and future prospects across the whole of the labour market. Worse still, government policies and crude cuts have actively contributed to the deterioration of work creating an increasing social and economic price later on.

What current ministers don't appreciate is that to increase the quality of jobs, we need industrial policy. Alongside this we need more ambitious employment standards and to

cultivate a climate where unions and employers work together on shared challenges. The Tories are desperate to re-run the battles of yesteryear, while giving no regard to the role trade unions play in the real world improving jobs, raising skills and helping solve problems.

There's much to do. We need a Deputy Leader who can share the experiences across the movement and help join some dots. Councils in England eyeing up devolution should be listening and learning to the

many experiences from Wales and Scotland that will improve the quality of work. Progressive and thoughtful procurement policies can help lift standards, but they need to be shared and understood by Labour councillors and others in the public, private and third sectors. The government might not be interested in the collective work by Labour councils, unions and employers in Salford and Derby to lift employment standards – but I am.

The workforce are the only people with internal expertise and an interest in the flourishing of the firm. A third of the seats on boards should be elected by the workforce. A stronger worker voice is critical to improving work. A respected presence on remuneration committees should just be the start of greater participation and democracy at work. Increasing collective bargaining is what will ensure Britain gets a pay rise. Real wages are well behind where they were at the time of the financial crash and the sacrifices of workers since 2008 need to be rewarded. That is

why I personally cannot support the continued 1% cap in public sector pay. As a former trade union official, I know as well as you do that pay rates are only one side of the equation. Whether you're a teacher or a care worker, if employers are demanding more unpaid overtime then hourly pay rates tumble regardless of what is negotiated.

The erosion of 'time-off' harms productivity as well as wellbeing. One of the consequences of job insecurity is the perception of the need to be the first and last one in work. This does none of us any favours in the long term and if you've got any caring responsibilities it only adds to the pressure. It isn't just those on zero hours contracts who are on 'standby'. The growing expectancy that colleagues to answer emails out of the hours which intrudes on vital time off. Unlike UK productivity, workplace stress is rising sharply. If people don't get a break then that takes its toll on many aspects of life and work. Sadly it's often family that pays the price.

We need a campaign to defend Further Education and what it offers for the sake of our future economy as well as for students and working people. Investment in skills and training is going to matter more than ever. Given how many people are going to be expected to change careers throughout their working lives, the throttling of F.E. is one of the most short-sighted false economies of all from this government. As people are expected to retire later it's vital we ensure older workers are invested in and not discriminated against when training opportunities are determined and policy decisions are made. Increasingly precarious employment discourages investment in training and skills from all sides.

Thankfully we don't need to wait for the next general election to improve the world of work. If I become Labour's next Deputy Leader I will work with you and your unions from day one to make a difference working with and for working people. Our solidarity matters more than ever.

## Angela Eagle

**MP for Wallasey**

**Candidate for Deputy Leader of the Labour Party**



The right to be treated fairly at work is the essential right of every worker in Britain today. It means being paid properly, respected by your employer and having rights to sick pay holidays and to health and safety protections that are properly enforced.

It was the Labour movement that first fought for basic rights for workers, and Labour in government delivered substantial change – a national minimum wage, enhanced health and safety laws and important protections against discrimination in pay and the provision of goods and services. We should be proud of our collective record, whilst being very aware of the work that is yet to be done.

Workers' rights are already coming under sustained attack from this Tory government with the publication of their partisan and oppressive anti trade union Bill.

I've been vocal in opposing this. As Deputy Leader I would make sure that Labour stands up for workers and the trades unions that represent them. Tory attacks on collective bargaining and on rights at work must be resisted. And the Tory's desperate attempt to reincarnate themselves as some kind of workers' party must be exposed for the sham that it is. A government that was serious about representing workers and ensuring they're treated fairly would work with trades unions, not try to use the law to weaken them.

Fair work must mean fair pay. Everyone who goes out to work should expect to be paid enough to live on as a result. I have always backed a living wage as something we should aspire to and I have been forthright in exposing the Tories' cynical rebranding of the minimum wage as a 'national living wage' for the sham it is.

They have proposed a rebranded minimum wage as a smokescreen to hide their attack on tax credits which will leave millions of working people worse off.

As Deputy Leader I would lead the fight for all workers to be paid a proper living wage – one which takes tax and benefits changes into account. We need to crack down on employers who don't pay the minimum wage with better enforcement and penalties which deter this behaviour – this is not just bad employment practice, it is illegal. And we need to end the practice whereby care workers in particular aren't paid for essential travel between jobs – this is completely unjust and it hits some of the lowest paid people the hardest. Instead all we have seen from this Government is the introduction of tribunal fees which have virtually ended the enforcement of employment law.

The right to in-work training is

important. I'm proud that Labour in government instigated a culture of life-long learning, something that the coalition government seriously undermined opportunities at work with a sustained attack on adult education.

I believe we should have much stronger sector skills training opportunities and we should look to strengthen not weaken collective bargaining. Partnership at work improves productivity. Our globalised economy poses a challenge to many of our industries that can only be met with increased skills and productivity. Instead of cutting the budgets of technical colleges, the government should invest in the skills and infrastructure that will ensure British workers continue to compete in a global marketplace.

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