

June 2017 election manifestos

In the run up to the general election on 8th June, the political parties have published their respective manifestos. We have produced a short overview setting out the main commitments that we think are likely to have the most significance for people with multiple needs.

Commitment to end rough sleeping:

Both Labour and the Conservatives make commitments towards ending rough sleeping. Labour propose to do this through a new national plan to end rough sleeping within the next Parliament, including the provision of 4000 additional homes reserved for people with a history of rough sleeping. The Conservatives commit to halve rough sleeping over the course of Parliament and eliminate it altogether by 2027. This will be achieved through a new Homelessness Reduction Taskforce with a focus on prevention and affordable housing. The Liberal Democrat manifesto also places an emphasis on increasing support for homelessness prevention and funding age-appropriate emergency accommodation and supported housing.

Supporting people with multiple and complex needs:

Housing First - Both the Liberal Democrat and Conservative manifestos make reference to Housing First. While the Conservatives plan to pilot a Housing First approach, the Liberal Democrats will ensure that all local authorities have at least one provider of the Housing First model of provision for long-term, entrenched homeless people.

Incentives for employment of those with complex needs - The Conservatives propose to help groups of people who have traditionally struggled with employment, including those with disabilities, chronic mental health conditions, ex-offenders and those who have been unemployed two years plus, by incentivising employers to take them on by offering a holiday on their employers' National Insurance Contributions for a full year.

Better coordination of services - The Conservatives will ensure that police and crime commissioners sit on local health and wellbeing boards, enabling better co-ordination of crime prevention with local drug and alcohol and mental health services.

Different directions on welfare reform:

The Conservatives do not propose radical changes to their existing welfare reforms with the exception of legislating to give unemployed disabled claimants or those with a health condition personalised and tailored employment support. This is likely to refer to recent Government proposals to reform the assessments system and expand the scope of mandation and sanctions for people receiving incapacity benefits. Both Labour and the Liberal Democrats propose to make more significant changes.

Labour will commission a report into expanding access to work and will scrap the Work Capability and Personal Independent Payment assessments, replacing them with a personalised, holistic assessment that provides each person with a tailored plan. They will implement the court decision on Personal Independence Payment so that there is real parity between those with physical and mental health conditions. In addition, they will increase Employment and Support Allowance by £30 per week for those in the work-related activity group, and reform Universal Credit, including cuts to the limited capacity for work element and ending delays in payment. They will also scrap the current benefit sanctions regime and reinstate Housing Benefit for under-21s.

The Liberal Democrats focus on separating employment support from welfare benefits, making jobcentres places of training and support into work. This will include uprating working-age benefits in line with inflation, scrapping the Work Capability Assessment to introduce a new system, reversing cuts to Work Allowances in Universal Credit enabling people to work for longer before their benefits are cut, reversing cuts to Employment Support Allowance to those in the work-related activity group, increasing the Local Housing Allowance in line with average rents in an area and also reinstating Housing Benefit for 18 to 21 year olds.

Prioritising mental health:

There is a commitment across the parties to prioritise mental health. Labour will ring-fence mental health budgets and ensure funding reaches the frontline and ask the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) to evaluate the potential for increasing the range of evidence based psychological therapies on offer. The Liberal Democrats will accelerate the roll out of Individual Placement and Support to get people with mental ill-health back into work. The Conservatives will introduce a new Mental Health Bill intended to achieve parity of esteem with physical health, and ensure that police and crime commissioners sit on local health and wellbeing boards, enabling better co-ordination of crime prevention with local drug and alcohol and mental health services.

Focus on rehabilitation in the criminal justice system:

There is a commitment across the parties to focus on the rehabilitation of offenders within the prison estate including support for mental health, substance misuse and learning and employment. Labour will review the provision of mental health services in prisons and insist on personal rehabilitation plans for all prisoners.

The Conservatives will help prisoners learn English, maths and the work skills they need to get a job when they leave prison, whilst providing the help prisoners require to come off drugs and deal with mental health problems. To do this, they will invest £1bn in modernising the prison estate and reform the management and training of prison officers. The Liberal Democrats will also adopt a holistic approach to prisoners with multiple problems, and ensure that courses started in custody can be completed on release.