

THE EQUALITY TRUST

MANIFESTO FOR A FAIRER SOCIETY

The UK is one of the most unequal countries in the developed world. Evidence shows how this harms our physical and mental health, hinders our education, damages our economy, restricts social mobility, reduces levels of trust and civic participation, and weakens the social ties that bind us.

■ We have **astronomical pay inequality**, with workers trapped on poverty wages while Chief Executives take home pay packets that resemble massive lottery wins each year. Britain's top bosses are paid, on average, well in excess of 100 times more than nurses, teachers, police officers and care workers.

■ We have **staggering wealth inequality**, with the richest 1,000 people in Britain, in recent years, owning more wealth than the poorest 40% of UK households put together.

■ We have a **housing crisis** that is fuelling homelessness, locks the vast majority of renters out of home ownership and traps many in substandard housing – plus an outdated council tax system that hits the poorest hardest.

■ We have a **shocking gap in healthy life expectancy** which condemns the poorest to 20 fewer years of healthy life than the richest.

■ We have **unacceptable attainment gaps** between equally bright children from richer and poorer backgrounds.

■ We have people falling through **gaping holes in our safety net**, a record high for food bank usage, rising death rates for babies and the frail elderly, and rising child poverty.

BUT IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THIS WAY. INEQUALITY IS NOT INEVITABLE.

Here, The Equality Trust sets out its policy priorities for all political parties. We strongly advocate that these policies should be delivered as part of a comprehensive Inequality Reduction Strategy, embedded across government, with the explicit aim of radically improving the quality of life in the UK.

FAIR WORK

- 1 Protect and progress workers' rights: strengthen trade union rights and introduce employment rights from day one. Discourage the use of zero-hours contracts wherever possible.
- 2 Recognise the contribution of every worker: require large and medium sized companies to publish the ratio of remuneration between the highest paid and the median employee, along with a justification of the ratio, annual changes to it, and a plan for its reduction. In addition, publish top-to-bottom pay ratios.
- 3 Give workers a voice: require one third of the members of companies' boards to be comprised of employees, and require elected employee representatives on remuneration committees.
- 4 Give workers a genuine stake in their workplaces: promote industrial democracy in our economy by encouraging the growth of the co-operative, employee-owned and mutual sectors.

FAIR TAX

- 5 Ensure the broadest shoulders bear the greatest burden: reinstate the 50p top rate of income tax, which affects approximately the top 1% of earners.
- 6 Transform council tax into a progressive property tax: re-value properties and create new bands with higher rates for high value properties.
- 7 Explore the most effective ways of distributing wealth fairly and efficiently: establish an independent Commission on Wealth.
- 8 Ensure business benefits our society: strengthen measures to tackle tax avoidance, reverse the race to the bottom on corporation tax and prevent the UK from becoming a tax haven.

FAIR CHANCES

- 9 Help level the playing field and ensure pupils' diverse needs are met: end selective education, properly fund a comprehensive education system for all, and introduce universal free school meals.
- 10 End child poverty: reinstate child poverty targets and commit to eliminating child poverty.
- 11 Reduce health inequalities and improve health for all: properly fund the NHS and social care, and address the root causes of poor health and the health gap.
- 12 End the two-tier justice system: restore and properly fund legal aid.

FAIR DEAL

- 13 Tackle our housing crisis: establish a large scale house building programme, prioritising social housing and truly affordable housing, built to high quality and environmentally friendly standards. Ensure Local Housing Allowance rates rise in line with increases in local private rents.
- 14 Let low-income families keep more of the money they earn: restore Universal Credit work allowances and reduce the taper rate to 55%.
- 15 Ensure everyone can keep up with rising living costs: restore the link between annual increases in social security levels and inflation.
- 16 Ensure public bodies consider how their decisions affect inequality: commence the Socio-Economic Duty in Section 1 of the Equality Act 2010.

WILL YOUR MP TACKLE INEQUALITY?

Please ask your MP if they will support this manifesto. You can email or write to them or, even better, visit one of their regular surgeries to talk to them.

Once you have found out their opinion (whether wholly supportive, broadly sympathetic or opposed) please let us know. This information will be enormously helpful to us in planning our campaigns and allow us to map and monitor the level of support in Parliament for tackling inequality.

WILL YOU SUPPORT US?

The Equality Trust is working to build a better society by reducing economic and social inequality. But we need your help. Our work depends on donations from individuals who share our vision. Please help support active campaigning for a fairer society by becoming a supporter of The Equality Trust. Please:

Visit www.equalitytrust.org.uk/support-us to set up a Direct Debit; or

Send a cheque payable to The Equality Trust to: **Freepost EQUALITY TRUST**; or

Text **EQUA16 £10 to 70070** to donate £10 (the JustGiving service accepts text donations of £1, £2, £3, £4, £5 and £10).

We also welcome applications to affiliate to The Equality Trust from business, trade unions and the public sector, as well as from co-ops, charities, social enterprises and campaign groups. To find out more, just visit here:

www.equalitytrust.org.uk/affiliate-us.

And if you want to get involved in tackling inequality where you live, you can join or start a local equality group. To find out more, just visit here:

www.equalitytrust.org.uk/local-groups.

Thank you for your support. It is hugely appreciated.

www.equalitytrust.org.uk | [@equalitytrust](https://twitter.com/equalitytrust) | facebook.com/equalitytrust

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