



**5 MISSIONS FOR  
A BETTER BRITAIN**

**A ‘MISSION-DRIVEN’  
GOVERNMENT TO END  
‘STICKING PLASTER’  
POLITICS.**

## WHAT IS A MISSION-DRIVEN GOVERNMENT?

To end short-term sticking plaster politics, Britain needs a mission-driven government. This is a profound statement of intent. It means deciding the big challenges that government should focus on and then using all the tools at our disposal to try to solve them. Given the scale of these challenges and the ambition of our missions, nothing less than a rethink of how we govern will be needed.

A mission-driven government works relentlessly towards long-term national goals that are measurable. Missions ensure the government is focused on outcomes that matter to citizens and society, not on short-term political gain or on vested interests.

Missions can only be achieved with sustained focus. They require departments working together rather than in silos. Business working with unions. The private sector working with the public sector. And partnership between national and local government.

The missions themselves organise government activity and galvanise others to work in partnership with government in pursuit of these shared goals.

### What makes a strong mission?

To achieve this, the missions need to be real missions rather than vague aspirations or simple slogans. Each one a north star to guide us, to keep our focus, and to stop the demands of the day-to-day from taking over. They must have the following qualities:

- **Long-term problems** that need a long-term plan
- **Complex problems** that have no silver bullet and therefore need lots of actors and agencies working to achieve them
- **Common causes** to which many want to contribute
- **Measurable outcomes** where it is clear what success looks like with a defined timeline
- **Ambitious but attainable goals** so we strive to go beyond the incremental and make lasting change for the better

We have seen missions driving a nation forward before. New Labour's commitment to end child poverty within a generation was a national mission which made employment support, social security and social policy work together to deliver huge gains for families across the country. The evidence shows this approach works, but it has not been tried as the overall governing philosophy of Britain. Too often it has been used only to see off evils of the past and not often enough to seize the opportunities of the future.

## LABOUR'S MISSIONS

Labour is setting out five national missions that we will build our manifesto around and, if elected, guide us in government.

These missions are personal for Keir Starmer. They draw on his experience reforming the Crown Prosecution Service where he saw first hand the importance of early intervention, working across silos, focusing on the big things that really matter and ensuring there is tangible impact on people's lives.

They draw too on his belief that Britain will only be able to shape a better future if everyone plays their part in all parts of the country.

So these missions add up to powerful modernisation of the economy, public services and government to prepare Britain for the future.

In two of these missions we are setting out measurable outcomes which are ambitious but attainable if the government is relentless, focused and works in partnership. They will also provide a yardstick by which we can measure our progress and the public can hold us to account. Each mission is built on the strong foundations of economic stability, national security, and secure borders.

- ▶ **Secure the highest sustained growth in the G7**, *with good jobs and productivity growth in every part of the country making everyone, not just a few, better off.*
- ▶ **Make Britain a clean energy superpower** *to create jobs, cut bills and boost energy security with zero-carbon electricity by 2030, accelerating to net zero.*

We will set out measurable goals with similar ambition for the remaining three missions over the coming months.

- ▶ **Build an NHS fit for the future** *by reforming health and care services to speed up treatment, harnessing life sciences and technology to reduce preventable illness, and cutting health inequalities.*
- ▶ **Make Britain's streets safe** *by reforming the police and justice system, to prevent crime, tackle violence against women, and stop criminals getting away without punishment.*
- ▶ **Break down the barriers to opportunity at every stage**, *for every child, by reforming the childcare and education systems, raising standards everywhere, and preparing young people for work and life.*

### The building blocks of the missions

Each mission will be constructed in a way that gives them the best chance of success. We will put the citizen at the heart of policy making and build project teams around each building block towards the missions.

We will set out in the coming months a route map for each mission:

- ▶ A measurable goal
- ▶ The projects to achieve that goal
- ▶ The first steps that will deal with the immediate crises people face on the way to the bigger mission
- ▶ A timeline towards the mission

## HOW WE CHOSE OUR MISSIONS

The missions we have chosen flow from our diagnosis of the country—the challenges we face and the opportunities ahead of us.

While most people agree that Britain is not functioning properly at the moment and that too many of the basics are not working, it is still vital we seek the root causes. To get underneath the headlines and work out what is really going on.

What is happening in Britain at the moment is that there are multiple crises that are compounding each other - crises that can't be seen in isolation but taken together reinforce each other and make the overall situation so much worse.

We can see that in play now. Our first mission is to grow the economy and all the other missions contribute to that bold aim. But currently that growth is being hampered by low business investment, our failure to get ahead of the game on green jobs, the fact that more than 7 million people are waiting for an NHS operation, the hoarding of power in Westminster and the knowledge that potential and life chances are not evenly spread. Together these problems reinforce each other. They need separate missions but linked solutions. We want to move from a perilous downward spiral to a self-reinforcing momentum towards success.

### A new approach to governing

The scale and cross-cutting nature of our missions require a sharp break from business-as-usual government. The current model of governing, geared towards delivering short-term results, reacting to the day-to-day political context, simply isn't going to meet the scale of the challenge.

Government delivery too often focuses on a top down, target-led approach to accountability. This command and control management technique is good at raising poor performance to a minimum standard, but the model is less capable of allowing systems to adapt to meet ambitious goals, and encourage the innovative, locally-led approaches that are often needed to drive excellence. Significantly, the government still largely operates in silos, where the problems we face do not. This inhibits our ability to address complex problems, whether that's tackling reoffending, chronic ill-health or the scale of change and effort needed to achieve net zero. With departments only ever dealing with fixing one small piece of a larger puzzle, problems are rarely addressed in the round, or at the root cause, inevitably leading to poor value for money for the taxpayer.

So, if we are to credibly achieve our long-term goals, we need government to be more agile, empowering, and catalytic - supporting a whole range of public, private and civil society players to make an impact. These changes will include:

- 1. Organising government around a shared vision:** missions require departments to work together to achieve shared missions. The old model of departments working in silos, competing for central government focus needs to be replaced with a genuine joined-up approach. This means collective agreement on the government's objectives and how best to deploy time, attention and resources to meet them. *This could mean new structures and ways of working to facilitate collaboration, including replacing some of the cabinet committees with new delivery focused cross-cutting mission boards.*
- 2. Focusing on real-world impact:** governments often place too much emphasis on input and outputs, detached from the people they are trying to help and the goals they are trying to achieve. Missions move the spotlight away from overly focusing on the number of boxes being ticked, to genuine focus on the ultimate goals people care about - higher living standards, better health, less crime, better education and cheaper bills. *This could be done by putting citizens centre stage from the outset, making sure policy is built around meeting people's needs.*

- 3. Focusing on the ends, with flexibility and innovation on the means:** having a clarity of vision means you can institute a new way of governing, with the focus and accountability set at the top, but those responsible for delivery given the freedom to innovate. You can't reach genuinely ambitious goals, by mimicking the same tired approach we've had for decades. It means learning from the mistakes as well as the successes. It means embedding rigorous evaluation into everything that is done, seeking out creativity, and diffusing and scaling up best practice. This is a different mindset that says we are prepared to do whatever it takes to deliver results the country needs. *This could mean creating the conditions for innovation to thrive and technology to be harnessed for the public good, boosted by our industrial strategy focus on data and life sciences, and reviewing the institutional landscape of how we identify innovative practice and scale it up.*
- 4. Devolving decision-making away from Westminster to those with the experience, knowledge and expertise:** Too much power is hoarded in Westminster. Despite initiatives such as 'levelling up', no-one has had the courage to properly devolve power from the centre to communities. While there can be no compromise on the standards citizens should expect, no matter where they live, if we are to achieve our goals, we will do so more effectively if we understand the barriers to improvement at a local level. *This could mean handing powers to local leaders to deliver the improvements they want to see, and letting local people make the big calls about what affects them and not leaving everything to decision-makers in Whitehall.*
- 5. Injecting more accountability into government:** Mission-driven government puts a spotlight on what it is we're aiming to achieve. The bigger the challenge, the more honest we need to be about how we're going to approach it, the obstacles we face and progress against our aims. People want politicians to be upfront with them and have a proper discussion about the trade offs. Increased data transparency provides the double benefit of enabling the public to hold the government and local services to account, while the desire to boost reputation can act as a driver of improved performance. *This could mean new statutory obligations to report to Parliament on progress and requiring departments and providers to publish the measures and data against which success will be judged.*
- 6. Approaching problems with a long-term, preventative approach:** Long-term challenges require long-term solutions. Moving to a more preventative approach means considering changes over a longer time horizon, and require governments to stay the course, rather than chop and change depending on which way the political headwinds are blowing on any given day. It also means flexibility around budgeting horizons, to enable us to plan for the long-term challenges faced by the country, in line with our fiscal rules. This includes how we incentivise preventative approaches which rightly put the emphasis on long-term, sustainable improvement rather than short-term incremental gain. *This could mean providing long-term, integrated funding settlements to local leaders to provide greater financial certainty for local areas, where they have the capacity and accountability to manage it.*