

Summary on a Page: May 2010

The coalition: New programme for government



What is it?

The document outlines the Government's priorities for the next five years under a range of themes, including banking, business and deficit reduction; the environment; and families, jobs, pensions, public health and social care, schools, and social action.

What does it say?

The Government's key priorities are protecting troops in Afghanistan; tackling the country's debt; improving social mobility through reform of welfare, taxes and schools; and redistributing power away from Westminster and Whitehall to councils, communities and homes. The Government has adopted overlapping policies from the coalition parties, for example combining Conservative focus on encouraging social responsibility and Liberal Democrat ideals of protecting civil liberties.

New powers will be introduced to help communities save local facilities and bid to take over state-run services; and the Sustainable Communities Act will give citizens more say over public expenditure in their area. Social responsibility, volunteering and philanthropy will be encouraged, including a concept of 'community organisers' as well as piloting National Citizen Service for 16 year olds.

The new government remains committed to ending UK child poverty by 2020 and will support free nursery care and focus Sure Start on the neediest families. They will review the criminal records and vetting and barring regime. The school system will be reformed to give greater powers to parents to choose a good school, and will help parents, community groups and others to start new schools; as well as preventing closure of special schools. A premium for disadvantaged pupils will be funded, and diagnostic assessments will be improved.

The focus of jobs and welfare policy will be on providing help for those who cannot work, training and support for those seeking work, but sanctions for those who turn down work or training offers. A single programme for Jobseeker's Allowance claimants facing the most significant barriers to work will be created. All current claimants of Incapacity Benefit will be reassessed; Service Academies will offer training and work placements; and Work Clubs will be set up for exchanging skills, finding opportunities, and networking. Protecting benefits and pensions will make it easier for older people to work or volunteer and the default retirement age will be phased out. Key benefits such as the winter fuel allowance, free bus travel, and free eye tests will be protected.

There is commitment to increasing health spending in every year, but reducing spending on administration and diverting resources back to front-line care. Patients will have a stronger local voice on local PCT boards and will have the power to choose any healthcare provider that meets NHS standards, within NHS prices, including independent, voluntary and community sector providers. The quality of patient services will be improved through greater involvement of independent and voluntary providers. Ways to improve access to preventative healthcare for those in disadvantaged areas will be investigated in order to tackle health inequalities, including incentivizing GPs to improve primary care access in these areas. Reforms of the social care system will continue, to provide more control to individuals and carers, and ease the costs they face.

Any implications?

Organisations in the Voluntary and Community sector can expect to see many changes over the coming months that will affect them and their beneficiaries. Not least is the shift to increased social responsibility on individuals and communities. Opportunities for engagement will continue particularly for organisations working in health and social care, and those operating at the local community level.

Key links:

 Read the full programme: [The Coalition: Our Programme for Government](#)