

GORDON BROWN'S DIRTY DOZEN

Twelve Conservative policies Gordon Brown included in his Draft Queen's Speech

1. Independent exams regulator

- *Labour proposal*

To introduce an independent qualifications body that will report directly to Parliament.

- *Conservatives got there first*

[“It is not acceptable that the QCA, the guardian of our exams, is not independent of the Government” \(David Cameron, *Sunday Express*, 21 August 2005\).](#)

2. Welfare reform

- *Labour proposal*

All existing and new Incapacity Benefit claimants should be subject to a medical assessment to see if they are capable of some form of work.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“We will require all current recipients of Incapacity Benefit to go through a thorough Work Capability Assessment as soon as is practicable” (Conservative Party, *Work for Welfare*, 8 January 2008).

3. Flexible parenting rights

- *Labour proposal*

Extend the right to flexible working to parents with older children.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“We will extend the right to flexible working to all parents, rather than just those with kids under 6” (Conservative Party, *Fair Play on Equal Pay*, 17 September 2007).

4. A constitution for the NHS

- *Labour proposal*

To establish a constitution for the NHS that sets out what patients can expect to get from the health service.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“We will write into law the underlying principle of the NHS that all people will receive universal access to a comprehensive health service based on need and not ability to pay” (Conservative Party, *Press Release*, 20 June 2007). Our draft NHS bill contained proposals for “A NHS Constitution enshrined in legislation” (Conservative Party, *Press Release*, 2 November 2007).

5. New rights to information about health care

- *Labour proposal*

New rights to information about care for NHS patients.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“Give patients choice and more control over their care at every level ... publish clear information on quality, on things like infection rates, so hospitals are held to account... Bring in "Health Watch": a powerful, independent watchdog, accountable to the public, not the NHS, to be a voice for patients’ (Andrew Lansley, *Speech to the Conservative Party Conference*, 4 October 2005).

6. Directly elected police commissioners

- *Labour proposal*

Directly elected representatives to give local people more control over policing priorities.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“There are various options for achieving such local accountability. Police Authorities could be directly elected. They could be replaced by an individual who is directly elected, like a police commissioner. Or elected mayors could fulfill this role” (David Cameron, *Speech to Crime Concern*, 16 January 2006).

7. Reducing police paperwork

- *Labour proposal*

Plans to free the police from unnecessary red tape to allow more time to be spent on the beat.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“The Conservative commitment to deliver on police reform runs deep, and our policies have been developed over years ... By scrapping the stop and account form and replacing stop and search forms with an oral recording procedure, we would save over a million police hours per year - freeing up officers to get back on the street” (David Davis, *Sunday Telegraph*, 3 February 2008).

8. Help for first time buyers

- *Labour proposal*

Help for first time buyers to get onto the housing ladder through shared equity schemes.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“We will take 200,000 people a year out of stamp duty altogether; that’s one million people over a Parliament; and our message to the family working long hours, saving every spare pound to afford their first home is this: Your dream is our dream too. Your aspiration is our aspiration. We will get you out of tax and into your home” (George Osborne, *Speech to Conservative Party Conference*, 1 October 2007).

9. Greater power to influence local spending decisions

- *Labour proposal*

Local people to have greater power to influence local spending decisions.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“The next Conservative government will require councils that want to introduce high council tax rises to submit their plans to a local referendum” (David Cameron, *Speech to the Young Foundation*, 13 November 2007).

10. Regulatory budgets

- *Labour proposal*

The Government will consult on the idea of regulatory budgets, looking at setting a limit on the annual amount of regulation departments can issue.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“Introduce a system of regulatory budgets, coordinated by the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, ensuring an overall reduction in regulatory burdens with a ‘one in, two out’ approach to regulatory costs: any additions to the regulatory burden in one department will be met by cuts elsewhere” (Conservative Party, *Press Release*, 1 October 2007).

11. Matched funding to boost savings

- *Labour proposal*

Give people on low pay access to a national savings scheme where each pound saved is matched by Government.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“To get more people into the saving habit, we will create a new Lifetime Savings Account in which government contributions top up the money that people save themselves” (Conservative Party, *It's Time for Action – Conservative Election Manifesto*, 2005)

12. New power to rescue banks

- *Labour proposal*

The introduction of a ‘special resolution regime’ to allow the authorities to intervene when a bank gets into severe difficulties.

- *Conservatives got there first*

“We also have to look urgently at the other legislative obstacles to a bank rescue identified by Mervyn King, the Bank Governor. In my view that includes establishing a new pre-emptive power that would allow the authorities to intervene and seize control of a financial institution when it is close to failing” (George Osborne, *Financial Times*, 17 December 2007).