

TaxPayers' Alliance Manifesto



www.taxpayersalliance.com

Our promise to the taxpayer

The TaxPayers' Alliance will hold any Government to account and represent taxpayers' interests. We will keep fighting for lower taxes and better value in public services.

Over the last decade, British taxpayers have been saddled with hikes in taxes on everything from driving to work to buying a new home. Business has also been hit, driving investment and jobs overseas. Despite that, the country is facing a fiscal crisis with a huge structural deficit in the public finances. Public spending is simply far too high and there need to be cuts.

Public sector staff are now paid more, get better pensions and work fewer hours than people in the private sector. Bureaucracies in councils and the quangos have grown out of all proportion and are increasingly beyond the control of the public who pay the bills. Public sector pay and perks need to be controlled and public services need to be made more accountable to ordinary people. Many organisations in the public sector should be scrapped.

The TaxPayers' Alliance will keep working to change things so that taxpayers can get lower taxes and better services, now and in the future, so they can keep more of their money. This manifesto presents a benchmark against which we will judge the Government in the years to come.

*Britain's independent grassroots campaign
for better services & lower taxes*



TAX & SPENDING

WITHIN 3 MONTHS



Scrap the 50p tax rate



Independent forecasters such as the Institute for Fiscal Studies don't think it will raise any revenue.



Cut government advertising spend in half



Ineffective advertising and propaganda should be ditched and money should be saved on essential advertising by shifting to lower cost channels such as the internet.



Institute clear fiscal rules with expenditure targets



Research by international institutions shows they help Governments balance the books.



Abolish a range of quangos



There are 1,148 quangos spending £90 billion of taxpayers' money a year. Some could be scrapped, for example the School Food Trust, the Office for Fair Access, the Carbon Trust and the Government Equalities Office.

FIRST YEAR



Introduce a 2 year public sector pay freeze, increase contributions to unfunded public sector pensions from 6 to 8% of salary and cut pay for the top 10% of earners in the public sector by 5%



Public sector staff are better paid, get better pensions and work fewer hours than workers in the private sector.



Scrap Regional Development Agencies and cut other business spending



We can help businesses more by keeping down taxes rather than sustaining costly business support bureaucracies.



Cut middle class welfare



With the scale of the fiscal crisis, it can't be sustainable to take money from middle class families in taxes and then give it back in benefits.



Reform climate change policy



Abandon the wasteful 2020 renewables targets and the EU Emissions Trading Scheme so that families aren't hit with big rises in energy bills.

WITHIN FIVE YEARS



Cut Corporation Tax to 15% or lower



Steady, pre-announced cuts in corporate tax will rapidly pay for themselves and mean big increases in economic growth.



Reform taxes and benefits



Make the system simpler, improve incentives to work and cut costs. The income tax threshold should be increased so that we don't take people's money in tax then give it back in benefits.



Abolish Inheritance Tax

Inheritance Tax is an unjust tax on the unwise and unlucky. It raises very little revenue, relative to the costs it creates.

REFORMING SERVICES

WITHIN 3 MONTHS



Reform Quangos

Giving select committees control over quango budgets and appointments would mean greater accountability for how quangos regulate and spend taxpayers' money.



Cancel Prevent grants from local authorities

They aren't an effective way of confronting extremism and a lack of control means some of the money may have supported extreme Islamist groups.



Drop the 0.7% target for foreign aid spending and focus on results

With huge amounts of aid money being wasted, spent on advocacy in the UK or supporting hate education overseas, big increases in the budget can't be justified.



FIRST YEAR



Reform prisons

Give greater independence to public and private prisons, with performance based contracts. The prison service needs stronger incentives to rehabilitate offenders.



School choice

Give schools freedom from government control, with accountability to parents.



Scrap fixed speed cameras

Follow Swindon's example. Speed cameras are ineffective and an unfair burden on motorists.



Introduce elected police commissioners

The police have to be accountable to ordinary people.



Refocus transport spending on high use commuter rail and roads

Despite motorists facing excessive taxation, far more is spent on railways per passenger kilometre. Resources should be focused where they will do the most to ease congestion. Approve a third runway at Heathrow.



WITHIN FIVE YEARS



Decentralise government finance

We can get a fairer and more efficient public sector and faster economic growth if local authorities are given the kind of financial autonomy they have enjoyed before.



Privatise Royal Mail

This would deliver better value for customers.



Reform the NHS

A less centralised, politically managed and monopolistic NHS would deliver better results.



DEMOCRACY & TRANSPARENCY

WITHIN 3 MONTHS



Implement the Kelly proposals in full

The Kelly Review produced a practical and sensible set of reforms of the MPs' expenses system which should be enacted in full, immediately.



Start EU reforms

A strengthened EU FOI law, changes to development aid and improvements in scrutiny in the British parliament would greatly improve things pending a more fundamental change in Britain's relationship with the EU. The Government should also undertake a full cost-benefit analysis on EU membership.



End all taxpayer funding for the trade unions

The unions are gearing up to fight spending cuts, now more than ever they shouldn't be receiving public subsidy.



Publish full data on spending

Follow the example of the US government and councils in the UK. Taxpayers have a right to know how their money is being spent.

FIRST YEAR



Recall and citizens' initiatives

If the public don't like their MP they should be able to get rid of them. And a sufficient number of people signing an online petition should be able to trigger a referendum.



Reform lobbying

End taxpayer funded lobbying and political campaigning and require greater transparency for lobbying by public affairs companies.



Strengthen the Freedom of Information act

Impose sanctions for unwarranted delays, remove the time limit on prosecution for breaches, and provide proper resources for the Information Commissioner's Office.



Hold a referendum on fundamental renegotiation of our relationship with the EU

Britain should move towards a looser kind of association with the EU: free trade and friendship rather than political integration.

RECOMMENDED READING

These are some of the key policies that the TaxPayers' Alliance will be campaigning for in the coming years. Electronic copies of all the research papers referred to in this manifesto, and details of how to buy the books, can be found at: www.taxpayersalliance.com/manifesto.html

- 1. *How to cut public spending*** (and still win an election), BiteBack Publishing, April 2010
- 2. *RDA Grants***, TPA, March 2010
- 3. *Ending the Green Rip-Off***, TPA, December 2009
- 4. *Council Spending Uncovered II, No. 5: The Prevent Strategy***, TPA, September 2009
- 5. *Lost along the way***: The cost of the UK's international development programme, TPA, November 2009
- 6. *The Plan***: Twelve Months to Renew Britain, Carswell and Hannan, September 2008
- 7. *Fake Aid***, IPN, September 2009
- 8. *The Great European Rip-Off***, Random House, March 2009
- 9. *HM Prison Service is failing***: A new approach is urgently needed, TPA, February 2008
- 10. *Relative transport spending***, TPA, September 2009
- 11. *Speed cameras***, TPA, March 2010
- 12. *The cost of crime***, TPA, July 2008
- 13.** TPA submission to the Kelly Review and final proposals
- 14. *Wasting Lives***, TPA, January 2008
- 15. *Making the NHS the best insurance policy in the world***, Reform, September 2008
- 16. *Privatisation***: Reviving the momentum, ASI, April 2008
- 17. *Unequal Shares***: The Definitive Guide to the Barnett Formula, TPA, September 2008
- 18. *Can tax increases solve the United Kingdom's public finance crisis?***, TPA, July 2009
- 19. *How Cutting Corporation Tax Would Boost Revenue***, TPA, September 2008
- 20. *Dynamic Model of the UK Economy***, TPA, April 2007
- 21. *Benefit simplification***, CPS, August 2009
- 22. *A Closer Union***: The Political Abuse of Foreign Aid, IPN, January 2010
- 23. *Reforming EU Development Assistance***, TPA, April 2009
- 24. *Ten Years On***, TPA, November 2009
- 25.** Public Administration Select Committee report

About the TaxPayers' Alliance

The TaxPayers' Alliance was founded in 2004 as a grassroots campaign for better services and lower taxes. Under the leadership of Matthew Elliott, it has grown from operating as a small group of volunteers meeting in various coffee shops around London, to being "arguably the most influential pressure group in the country" according to The Guardian. With 35,000 supporters and fifteen members of staff working from offices in London and Birmingham, it attracts an average of 700 high-quality media hits every month and is a significant force in local government, Westminster and Brussels.

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