General Election 2015: Welfare benefit and tax credit measures in the Labour and Conservative Party Manifestos

**Labour Party**

- universal credit to be paused, and reviewed to see if it is ‘affordable and fit for purpose’;
- abolition of the bedroom tax;
- no cuts to tax credits;
- retention of the household benefit cap, with the Social Security Advisory Committee to be asked to examine if it should be lower in some areas;
- a cap on structural social security spending as part of each spending review;
- a guaranteed, paid job for all young people who have been out of work for one year - and for all those over 25 years old and out of work for two years - which they have to take or lose their benefits;
- a higher rate of JSA for those who have contributed ‘over years’, to be funded by extending the length of time people need to have worked to qualify;
- testing jobseekers’ Maths, English & IT skills within six weeks of them claiming benefits, with the requirement that they take up training where this will improve their chances of getting a job;
- commissioning a replacement for the Work Programme at a more local level, working with local authorities to join up support for the long-term unemployed;
- reforming the WCA to focus it on the support disabled people need to get into work, with an independent scrutiny group of disabled people given a central role in monitoring it;
- introduction of a specialist support programme to ensure that disabled people who can work get more tailored help;
- retention of the state pension triple-lock so that it increases by higher of inflation, earnings, or 2.5 per cent;
- increasing the state retirement age, whilst ensuring that people have time to plan for changes;
- restricting winter fuel payments for the richest 5% of pensioners, with a guarantee that there will be no additional changes to the winter fuel payment, free TV licences or bus passes;
- increasing the amount of statutory paternity pay from £140 to more than £260 a week;
- capping child benefit rises for two years;
- retaining child poverty targets, and asking the OBR to monitor and report on progress;
- ending child benefit for those whose children live abroad;
- migrants to be unable to claim benefits for at least two years after entering the UK;
- allowing local authorities that negotiate rent reductions on behalf of tenants who are claiming housing benefit to retain some of the savings, on the condition that the money is invested in building homes; and
- in addition to the full implementation of the Smith Agreement, a Home Rule Bill to give Scotland extra powers over tax, welfare and jobs.

http://www.labour.org.uk/manifesto/all

**Conservative Party**

- £12bn in welfare savings on top of the £21bn delivered in this parliament;
- universal credit to be delivered to ‘provide the right incentives for people to work; target support at those who need it most; reduce fraud and error; and streamline administration’;
- a reduction in the household benefit cap from £26,000 to £23,000, with continued exemptions from the cap for those receiving disability living allowance or personal independence payment;
- working age benefits to be frozen for two years from April 2016, with exemptions for disability and pensioner benefits, maternity allowance, statutory maternity pay, statutory paternity pay, statutory adoption pay and statutory sick pay;
- an overall welfare cap limiting the amount that government can spend on certain social security benefits in the five years from 2015/2016;
- ‘Day One Work Requirements’ for young people claiming out-of-work benefits;
- jobseeker’s allowance for 18-21 year-olds to be replaced with a ‘youth allowance’ that will be time-limited to six months, after which young people will have to take an apprenticeship, a traineeship or do daily community work for their benefits;
- ending automatic entitlement to housing benefit for 18-21 year-olds on jobseeker’s allowance;
- a review of how best to support those suffering from long-term treatable conditions - such as drug or alcohol addiction, or obesity - back into work, including a review of whether people who refuse a recommended treatment should have their benefit reduced;
- the provision of ‘significant new support’ for claimants with mental health problems claiming out-of-work benefits or being supported by the Fit for Work service;
- retention of the state pension triple lock under which the pension rises in line with whichever is higher - earnings, inflation or 2.5 per cent;
- the introduction of the single-tier pension from April 2016;
- the maintenance of current pensioner benefits including winter fuel payments, free bus passes, free prescriptions and TV licences whilst implementing a ‘temperature test’ for winter fuel payments, so that those living in warmer countries no longer receive it;
- work to eliminate child poverty and the introduction of ‘better measures to drive real change in children’s lives’;
- the negotiation of new rules with the EU, including that migrants who want to claim tax credits and child benefit must have lived in the UK and made contributions for a minimum of 4 years;
- ending the payment of child benefit to EU migrants where their child(ren) live abroad;
- ending the ability of EU jobseekers to claim any jobseeking benefits at all, with jobseekers who have not found a job within six months being required to leave; and
- implementation of the recommendations of the Smith Commission in relation to new tax and welfare powers for Scotland.

https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto.aspx

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