



Understanding England as it is – Inspiring England as it could be

Looking for a New England

*The Ten Shifts Labour Needs to Make To Win a
Majority in England*

Executive Summary

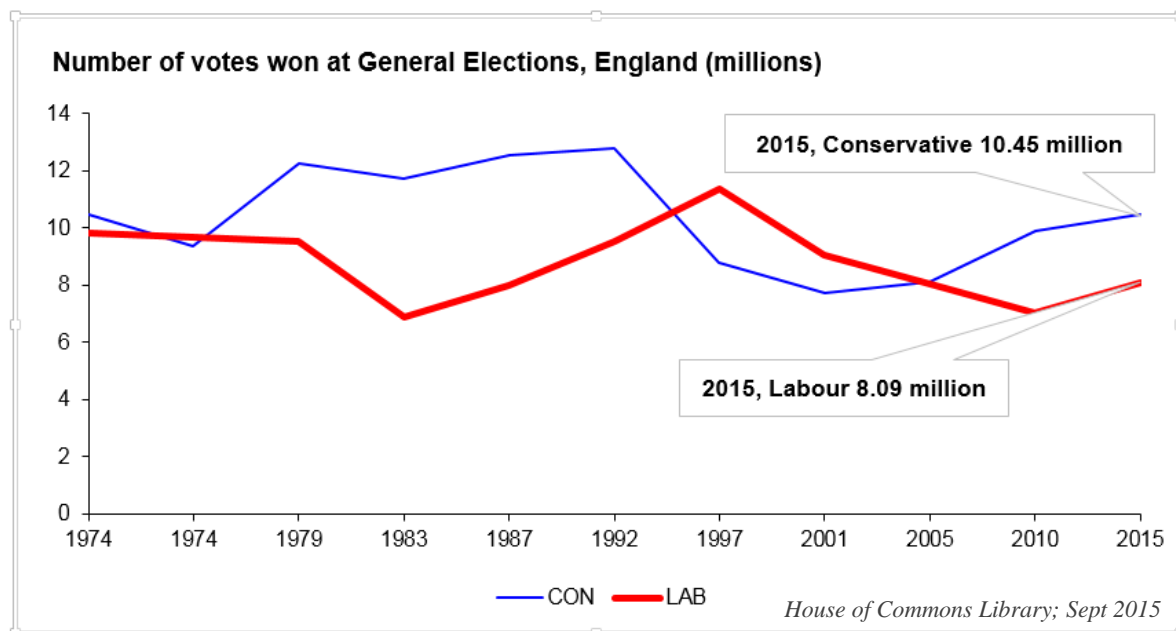
Labour's path back to power is hard. And winning a majority in England is still harder.

The last time we won a majority of English constituencies was 2005. It's been downhill ever since.

To win back a majority in England, to win the power we need to deliver a fairer, kinder country, we need to win 106 more English seats. That means a swing of 11.5%, winning back seats like Milton Keynes North where today the Tory majority stands at 9,753. Nationally our vote share needs to move from 30.4% to 42%.¹ It's a mountain to climb.

Lots of reports have surveyed why Labour lost the 2015 election. We've read them all. We've travelled the length and breadth of the country through seats we lost – and key seats we should have won. We've gone to colleges to talk to young voters. We've quizzed voters outside the local McDonalds, Costa Coffee and Tesco's. We've debriefed teams of activists and Parliamentary candidates who lost. We've surveyed key groups of 'don't knows' in our own constituencies.

What emerges is a crystal clear picture of the ten key shifts that Labour now needs to make, to win back power.



The challenges we face are stark.

In May, the electorate simply did not know who Labour stood for. One voter in Watford told us, "I don't know [who Labour] stands for anymore. I don't know if *they* know what they are about anymore."² Another in Derby said; "Labour used to stand up for working class people – but it has lost its way."³

¹ Fabian Society – The mountain to climb: Labour's 2020 challenge; page 5

² Female, 45-54, Watford – Red Shift Research

³ Male, 25-34, Derby – Red Shift Research

We're uncomfortable talking about our English identity – when voters want us to be more patriotic. We haven't figured out how to talk about our record in a way that works: we suffer a form of self-flagellating amnesia. We're simply not trusted with public money. 'Labour just wanted to waste my money' as one voter told us angrily.

We haven't grasped the enormity of the radically changing nature of work, the huge rise in self-employment and enterprise. We have little to say about how we'll create better jobs to replace the ten million British jobs set to be wiped out by technology in the next 20 years. The way we talk about public services belongs to the 20th century, not the 21st. We seem 'disconnected' as one young voter told us bluntly.

Our appeal is much too narrow. We had little to say to older voters – while the Tory majority amongst pensioners rose to over 2 million votes. We struggled to connect with people who were doing OK, 'living in the new build estates', as one party activist put it. And all too often we failed to talk to young people in a language that works – and we left the conversation much too late. Many young voters, growing up in swing voter households, simply don't feel equipped with the information they felt they needed before they would support us. And finally, our ground game, was simply out-classed. We had millions of 'transactional conversations' when voters wanted a party more serious about building a relationship.

In this report, we move from 'what went wrong', to what Labour must do next. They are big changes. Because the blunt truth is this: Labour needs a re-boot. We have to fix our broken brand, fix our position on a host of key issues, broaden our appeal and change the way we campaign.

This report shows how. We have to be clear about who we stand for, be consistent, bold and proud of our roots and our mission. We have to embrace not dodge the politics of English identity. We have to reclaim Englishness. We need to clear up our story about our record – and stand proud of it. Perhaps we argue – yes we made mistakes but we got it at least 70% right, changed our country for the better and stopped a worldwide recession becoming a global depression.

We need to weave a fundamental respect for taxpayers' money throughout our language, our narrative and our political mission – and talk in simple language about what our plans mean for spending. We need to become the party of high-tech jobs, entrepreneurs and the self-employed, and create a new, bold, visionary plan for public services in the digital age.

Crucially, we need to radically broaden our appeal. We need to redraft a new plan for older voters, many of whom now work and many of whom hunger for a return to the contributory principle in our social security system. We need policies for those doing well – the voters who live in the 'new build estates' in seats like Milton Keynes. We need to change the way we campaign amongst young people – and start the conversation long before polling day. And finally, our ground game needs to come into the 21st century. No more 'transactional conversations' when what voters respect is a relationship.

England is changing. A new England is taking shape. Unless Labour makes the ten shifts we describe, this new England will stay Tory. A majority in England will elude us. We will remain trapped out of power. So: our instruction to deliver is clear. Change or lose. So let's get on and change with it.

THE TEN RED SHIFTS NEEDED TO BUILD A MAJORITY IN ENGLAND

Fix our brand – it's been badly damaged.

- **Shift 1:** Fix our brand – from a party that has lost its way to a party that is clear, bold, and proud of our roots
- **Shift 2:** Embrace the 'politics of English identity' as a positive statement of national expression and pride in England – not as negative, divisive and dangerous

Fix the key issues – address the credibility deficit with a clear plan on the economy, public spending and public services

- **Shift 3:** From 'avoid the record' to 'proud of the record'
- **Shift 4:** Money, money, money – our economic story must be the beginning, middle and end of our offer
- **Shift 5:** Recognize how the world of work is changing – and become the party of high tech jobs, entrepreneurs and the union of the self-employed
- **Shift 6:** Invent a new statecraft – from 20th century gimmicks to a digital age vision for the state.

Dramatically broaden our appeal – to include the successful, the self-employed and entrepreneurs, and the over 55s. In addition, we need to change the way we work with and communicate with young people

- **Shift 7: Older Voters** – become the party of the silver majority
- **Shift 8: The feel-good party** – become the party of people doing well and the 'new-builds'.
- **Shift 9: Young people** – educate and inspire our young people that power can be in their hands – if they are willing to turnout and vote

Change the way we campaign

- **Shift 10. The ground-war** – from 'can I have your vote' to an evidence based and innovative campaigning movement that builds two-way relationships with voters

Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP

Shabana Mahmood MP

Heidi Alexander MP

Nic Dakin MP

Caroline Badley

BRAND

Shift 1: Fix our brand – from a party that has lost its way to a party that is clear, bold, and proud of our roots

People have lots of reasons for their political choice on polling day. Those who vote tribally - the same party at every election – are an ever decreasing group. For most, the choice is a mixture of what or who the parties or candidates stand for and a combination of what's best for both the individual voter and the country as a whole.

Critical to that choice is the answer to the question; 'who does Labour stand for?'

In May the electorate did not know who Labour stood for.

- "31 per cent of voters simply don't know what Labour stands for."⁴ *Jon Cruddas Inquiry*
- "36 per cent were unclear" ... on what Labour stands for.⁵ *Policy Network*
- "More than half of people do not think it is clear 'what Labour stands for.'"⁶ *Dan Jarvis Review*

Lots of voters we met flagged this weakness.

"I don't know anymore. They don't know anymore. I don't know if they know what they are about anymore," **Female voter, 45-54, Watford – Red Shift Research**

"Labour used to stand up for working class people - but it has lost its way." **Male voter, 25-34, Derby – Red Shift Research**

Voters could be forgiven for their confusion.

During the first half of the parliament we offered a policy vacuum. Activists complained there was nothing to sell on the doorstep. In contrast, the last 12 months of the campaign saw a policy landslide. We had a policy for everything. Activists struggled to keep up and struggled to deliver a consistent message on the doorstep.

It wasn't just the quantity of pledges. Often we were not clear on the detail.

Sometimes we were only prepared to commit to something in the present, rather than make a manifesto commitment – like tuition fees at conference in 2011. At other times, repetition of the same announcement sowed confusion. Activists told us how some voters in early 2015 struggled to understand the difference between the number of nurses we promised to recruit during the next Parliament and the number of additional nurses we would fund under a Labour Government. Our message was not simple and clear enough.

⁴ Jon Cruddas Inquiry 1st finding

⁵ Policy Network – Can Labour win; page 23

⁶ Dan Jarvis – Reconnecting Labour; Page 22

There were practical communication issues too. Election addresses signed off in February were out of date by April and pledge cards were printed before all the pledges had been announced.

“We had 5 pledges and then we had 6. We printed hundreds of thousands of pledge cards with 5 pledges on and then announced a 6th pledge!” **Party activist – Red Shift Research**

A cacophony of messaging meant that voters could not hear what or who the Labour Party stood for.

“Our message lacked any kind of distinctiveness.” **Party activist – Red Shift Research**

James Morris’ report, shows that the Tory’s clear and consistent message throughout the last Parliament cut through. Between 2010 and 2015 the Conservatives had six simple messages such as ‘long term economic plan’ across the same time scale Labour had eleven including; ‘One Nation’ and ‘a better plan, a better future’.⁷

The confusion came from the top. Our leaders were specific on the micro (energy price freezes) and the macro (making Britain fairer). But vague on what lay in between – where we needed a vision of exactly what kind of future the Labour party wanted.

The contrast between Ed Miliband and Tony Blair is instructive.

When Tony Blair ran for the leadership in 1994 he knew what he wanted to achieve. Blair's conference speech in 1995⁸ rested on long intellectual heavy lifting. He was able to put forward a coherent set of policies that made their way onto the final pledge card. New Labour did not become New Labour by simply adding the word new. It became New Labour because it was.

When Ed Miliband tried 'One Nation' it was doomed.

The policies did not reflect the brand. One Nation became a label not a policy prospectus.

The One Nation pamphlet – a collection of essays by new MPs published at Conference 2013 – illustrates the point. Designed to show the direction of travel for a new philosophy, it was in fact merely an interesting collection of personal essays by MPs into which the words 'One Nation' were inserted to boost the One Nation brand.

But it was brand rooted in nothing.

One Nation had the opportunity to deliver for Ed Miliband in the same way as New Labour did for Tony Blair. Its potential can be seen in the way that David Cameron has been ruthlessly appropriating it since May. It needed to have been developed as a brand consistently and coherently across all policy areas. Instead it became a lost opportunity – a meaningless strapline rather than a coherent vision.

As the campaign drew to a close our desperation to convey clarity in an uncertain world was perfectly epitomised with the unveiling of the ‘Ed Stone’.

⁷ James Morris – Feeling Blue; page 6

⁸ <http://www.britishpoliticalspeech.org/speech-archive.htm?speech=201>

"The Ed Stone was our Sheffield rally moment – at that point I knew we had lost." **Party activist – Red Shift Research**

We must learn the lessons of the last Parliament. Voters only occasionally tune in to the world of politics, perhaps only half a dozen times a year. Labour needs a simple and clear message which we stick to and repeat time and time again.

A student from Rugby College gave us the measure of it.

"Be confident. If you can't be confident in your own policies than how can we be confident in you?" **Student, Rugby College – Red Shift Research**

Shift 2: Embrace the ‘politics of English identity’ as a positive statement of national expression and pride in England – not as negative, divisive and dangerous

“I used to think I’m a Brummie Brit, now I see myself as a Brummie Englishwoman first and foremost.” **Businesswoman, 45-50, Birmingham – Red Shift Research**

“I have never felt more English in my life.” **Male, 65+, Rugby – Red Shift Research**

Since the election, it has become fashionable in Labour circles to talk about identity. Generally, as part of a wider argument: that Labour has become a disconnected elite, out of touch with its roots, lacking emotional connection to our traditional supporters.

And there is truth in that.

But Labour is less comfortable talking about ‘English identity’. A growing number of voters across England increasingly see themselves as ‘the English’. Voters in the other home nations – the Scots, the Welsh and the Northern Irish – have long had recognition as distinct ‘people’ requiring tailored policies, special attention, and (seemingly never ending) negotiations and vows about devolved powers.

When we come to England, we revert to a narrative painted in the broad brush strokes of ‘Britain’, with a bit of what David Miliband used to call ‘double devolution’ thrown in. It becomes a ‘double dilution’ of English identity. Either rounding our story up to Britishness, negating Englishness and denying individual expression. Or rounding down to the very local, an often fragmented approach which denies collective expression.

The bottom line is this: we are not seen in England as a patriotic party; particularly by the voters we have lost to UKIP.

- “63% say that their English or Welsh identity is important to them.”⁹ *Jon Cruddas Inquiry*
- “People who defined themselves as ‘English’ were nearly twice as likely to support UKIP as those who said they were ‘British.’” *British Social Attitudes 32*¹⁰
- “Voters would prefer Labour to ‘be more patriotic’ over ‘keeping flag-waving out of politics’ by a margin of around two to one.” *TUC/GQRR*¹¹
- “UKIP voters in 2015 also considered issues of patriotism and national identity much more important than the rest of the electorate, ranking it as the fourth most important issue.” *TUC/GQRR*¹²
- “[T]he politics of national grievance have grown more visceral following the Scottish independence referendum; English voters in particular no longer believe that Labour will speak up for their concerns”¹³ *Policy Network*

⁹ Jon Cruddas Inquiry 1st finding

¹⁰ Prof John Curtice & Rachel Ormston, *British Social Attitudes 32 – 2015 edition*, NatCen Social Research, p21)

¹¹ Trades Union Congress/GQRR, Post-Election Questionnaire – 2015 Vote: UKIP, (7-12 May 2015))

¹² Trades Union Congress/GQRR, Post-Election Questionnaire – 2015 Vote: UKIP, (7-12 May 2015))

¹³ Policy Network – Can Labour win; page 9

David Cameron has ruthlessly exploited our weakness. He used the Scottish referendum to fuel division. He played to the sense of Englishness which rose in reaction to the Scots' desire for independence. A collective sense of identity is often strongest when it is used to define against something. That's why the SNP threat was so potent – it was convenient for both the Tories – in England, and the SNP – in Scotland. Until Labour understands and embraces English identity the SNP threat and proposals on English votes for English laws will continue to damage Labour's electoral prospects in English marginal seats.

- “60% agree that they would be very concerned if the SNP were ever in government”¹⁴ *Jon Cruddas Inquiry*
- “The fear that a Labour government would be 'bossed around by Nicola Sturgeon and the Scottish nationalists' was the third biggest doubt UKIP voters had about voting Labour” *TUC/GQRR*¹⁵

To build a majority in England, we have to show English voters that we share their values, and will stand up for them. Our task is big:

- We have to show that we are English too. We have to find new ways to accommodate a positive English nationalism and pride without the divisive language and posturing of the Tories, or indeed the hatred and bigotry of far right extremists.
- England's cities are ethnically diverse and this diversity is increasing. Labour has to find a way to express an Englishness which is inclusive of all.
- We must first listen. To do this we must seek to combine the best of our Labour traditions rooted in communities and our grassroots campaigning movement – to ask the people of England how they want to be represented.
- We need to sketch out the end game of devolution – if the Government won't commission a constitutional convention to consider further devolution and the case for a federal Britain then the Labour party must get out there and do it ourselves.

¹⁴ Jon Cruddas Inquiry 1st finding

¹⁵ Trades Union Congress/GQRR, Post-Election Questionnaire - 2015 Vote: UKIP, (7-12 May 2015))

FIX THE KEY ISSUES

Shift 3: From 'avoid the record' to 'proud of the record'

Labour was on the defensive about our record for much of the last parliament - and we paid the price at election time.

Activists in key seats were unanimous that the long leadership campaign in 2010 allowed the Tories crucial space to brand us as the party that wrecked the economy. We never fought back.

No-one pretends that it's easy to swim against the tide. But the failure to defend the record was seen by activists as critical. This was echoed everywhere after our defeat in May.

Pollsters argue that the public does not believe Labour's record was good.

- "Voters didn't blame spending for causing the crash, but they did think Labour had failed to regulate the banks and spent as if growth was permanent."¹⁶ *James Morris review*
- "By the time a leader was installed in September 2010, the die was cast. Voters thought Labour should be ashamed of its record, not proud, by a margin of 50 to 28 - Labour's success on public services, poverty and equality did not overpower its perceived failures."¹⁷ *James Morris review*
- "The real failure was a lack of distance from the past on the issues that mattered, especially spending. This was most vivid in the final Question Time of the campaign, but that was just a restatement of the position for the whole parliament."¹⁸ *James Morris review*

Activists argue that we must fight to set the record straight; but they are under no illusion that we will succeed overnight. Rather, a patient, long-fought battle lies ahead.

"We used to be the party with a clear message." **Party activist, Milton Keynes – Red Shift Research**

"We did not spend too much when we were in Government – why did we not challenge that lie?" **Party activist, Derby – Red Shift Research**

"We do need to go back to our role in financial crisis; we need to confront it" **Party activist, Watford – Red Shift Research**

Rebuilding our story is not an impossible task.

One word to describe Labour? "Progress – Labour did a lot of good things" **Student, Derby – Red Shift Research**

¹⁶ James Morris – Feeling Blue; page 4

¹⁷ James Morris – Feeling Blue; page 4

¹⁸ James Morris – Feeling Blue; page 4

“Loyalists, as well as defectors to other parties (especially the Conservatives) regard Tony Blair as the best Labour leader of the last thirty years...Under Blair, people in our groups recalled, Labour “were pro-work, but they were fair”¹⁹ *Lord Ashcroft review*

How do you think Labour needs to change to win back your trust? “It’s a long haul, the Tories have done their damage. [Labour]...needed to fight the rumours and lies not cover in the background. Should not have turned against Blair.” **Female, 55-64, Milton Keynes – Red Shift Research**

There is one crucial nuance to get right. Often Labour politicians minded to defend our record on public spending argue; ‘it wasn’t Labour’s investment in schools and hospitals that caused Lehman’s Brothers to collapse’. This is true. But it misses the concern the public has. The public felt *before the crash*, that money was being wasted on immigration, welfare, and for some, the war in Iraq.

“They should have held their hands up and said we got it wrong. Switcher away from Labour”²⁰ *Lord Ashcroft review*

“The collective memory of Labour’s economic record is far from positive: “Many people still connect Labour with the recession even though the economic upturn isn’t reaching everyone . . . They thought we were anti-business.”²¹ *Policy Network*

“They were unlucky with the crash, but they didn't do the right things to solve it. Switcher away from Labour”²² *Lord Ashcroft review*

What did you not like about Labour at the last election? Blair and Brown let welfare become a lifestyle choice...Gordon Brown was a terrible chancellor. He destroyed savings by selling the gold, he killed pensions” **Male, 65+, Rugby – Red Shift Research**

Crucially, our record on immigration needs addressing, given what the public think:

Who do you think Labour stands up for? “Immigrants, it's because of Labour's open door policy that the country is in this state. I have two children - one who has just come out of the army who had no chance of a council house one rent's private and has had to move 3 times in 4 years, my son bought his house” **Female, Shard End – Red Shift Research**

“Labour would have allowed more foreigners in, for a start. Switcher away from Labour” *Lord Ashcroft review*²³

“An anxiety about immigration was inevitably linked to the previous Labour government’s legacy: “They talked about changing communities and changing society – I don’t think it was a deciding factor but it helped that people didn’t trust us – they said that it was the Labour government that let foreigners in, it was Tony Blair that started immigration.”²⁴ *Policy Network*

¹⁹ Lord Ashcroft – Red Dawn; page 6

²⁰ Lord Ashcroft – Red Dawn; page 15

²¹ Policy Network – Can Labour win; page 42

²² Lord Ashcroft – Red Dawn; page 15

²³ Lord Ashcroft – Red Dawn; page 15

²⁴ Policy Network – Can Labour win; page 43

Labour, therefore, has to evolve a defence of its record on re-building public services and running the economy before the crash, including keeping interest rates and inflation low, while acknowledging that we've lessons to learn on spending, waste, immigration and welfare reform. All successful parties go through this process of evaluating what they got right and wrong - and the balance between the two. We need to evolve a new defence of our record which incorporates what the public still see as our successes, and accommodates the reality that like any government, we didn't get everything right, and that we've learned lessons about what needs to change.

We must guard against a form of self-flagellating amnesia around the record of 13 years of Labour Government – Alan Johnson has taken strong lead on this. One small, but vital example: we need to start making a coherent argument on borrowing and debt and remind voters this coalition Government racked up national debt to £1.4 trillion by borrowing more in 5 years than the Labour Party did over 13 years in Government.

We should argue we got it 70% right: we kept interest rates and inflation low, rebuilt the nation's schools and hospitals left to rot by Mrs Thatcher, returned Britain to full employment, ended pensioner poverty, invented the National Minimum Wage and tax credits for working parents to help lift a million kids²⁵ out of poverty and stopped a worldwide recession becoming a global depression.

But we weren't tough enough with the banks, and were too slow to reform welfare and introduce the Australian points systems for immigration.

²⁵ <http://press.labour.org.uk/post/90446530179/figures-show-governments-child-poverty-strategy>

Shift 4: Money, money, money – our economic story must be the beginning, middle and end of our offer

Labour will not and cannot get elected unless we're trusted with the public's hard-earned money. This failure of trust is an existential threat to the whole Labour movement.

Some in our movement reject the urgency of this. That attitude flies in the face of evidence from multiple sources, including our own research. It is inextricably linked to our ability to build a majority in England, and thereby to form a government. It is a hard truth that cannot be ignored or wished away. It must be faced.

Voters' views are clear. They see Labour as an economically incompetent party, and they don't trust us with their money. It's as simple (and as complicated) as that!

- "58% believe "we must live within our means so cutting the deficit is top priority"²⁶ *Jon Cruddas Inquiry*
- "Only 16% of voters trust Labour the most to run the economy compared to 33% for the Tories" and in the "West Midlands the Conservatives are more trusted than Labour to reduce the deficit by 44 to 10%"²⁷ *Policy Network*
- "Austerity was not unpopular at the election – according to YouGov, by 48 to 34, voters thought the government's deficit reduction strategy was good for the economy, while by 58 to 28, voters thought cuts were necessary."²⁸ *James Morris review*
- "More importantly, even anti-austerity voters don't trust Labour with spending. Overall, more than 60 per cent of voters have serious concerns about trusting Labour with taxpayers' money."²⁹ *James Morris review*

These numbers are painfully bad for Labour. Worse to hear and acknowledge are the comments of the ordinary voters we encountered during the course of our own research.

"Labour just wanted to waste my money" Male voter, aged 35-44, Watford – Red Shift Research

"The Tories stand for people who are sensible with their money – I'm careful with my money - you don't care about people like us" Male voter, aged 65+, Derby – Red Shift Research

We will only win if we can acknowledge the importance of economic credibility within our party, demonstrate fiscal discipline to the voting public, admit it is unrealistic to think that increased public spending is the solution to every problem that we face and recognise that government has to help create wealth in the first place before it can be redistributed.

First, we have to weave into our language, our narrative and our political mission a fundamental respect for taxpayer's money, something that is clearly missing given our current reputation for profligacy.

Tax is the price we pay for a civilized society but it also represents the hard work and graft of working people – we should take no more than is necessary, consider waste to be immoral and offensive, and ensure that the money spent delivers excellent services that the public are proud of.

²⁶ Jon Cruddas Inquiry 1st finding

²⁷ Policy Network – Can Labour win; page 18

²⁸ James Morris – Feeling Blue; page 3

²⁹ James Morris – Feeling Blue; page 3

We must make clear that if elected we are seeking to be the custodians of the nation's money, making decisions to either spend or save in a considered and thoughtful way. [It's not ours, it's yours]

Second, we have to level with the public about what our plans mean, in simple language that everyone outside Westminster village can understand. Two clear examples:

- Too often at the last general election we talked in “lines to take” code. We talked about balancing the books, but had a specific form of words which referred to balancing only the current budget by the end of the Parliament (part way through the campaign this changed into getting the current budget into surplus!).
- We said we would get the debt falling, as a % of GDP. Specific words with a very specific meaning, only really understood within Westminster village, and which came under stress when subjected to more forensic and blunt questioning. So even though most of the policy nuances went over the heads of the electorate, they knew that the words we were saying were not quite the full picture and decided that they simply couldn't trust us.

It is true that the Tories weren't exactly forthcoming about their plans – they did not spell out what £12billion cuts from welfare would look like, or where they would get the money for their unfunded election pledges. But because they were trusted on the economy this did not matter.

Over the coming months we will set out alternative economic platforms which can help us shift perceptions of Labour on the economy – this is the key strategic task that we face.

From learning lessons of our record, to a prospectus that focuses on growth made by the many and a new state forged in the realities of the 21st century, it will be new ideas that will help forge a modern Labour approach to taxpayer's money and the economy.

Shift 5: Recognize how the world of work is changing – and become the party of high tech jobs, entrepreneurs and the union of the self-employed

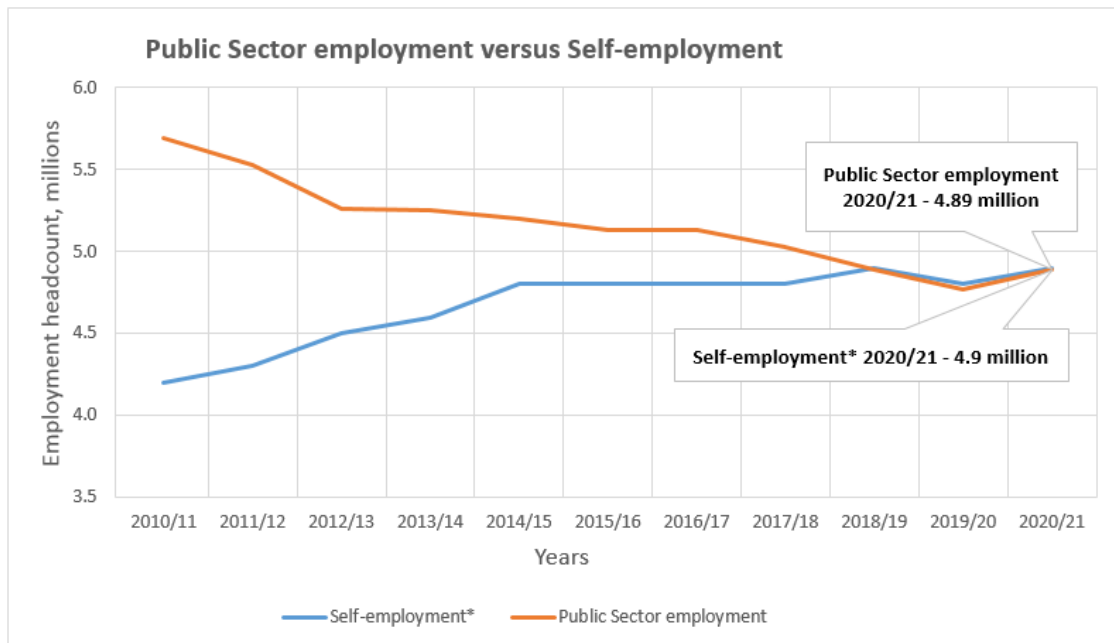
Labour does not have policies for the new world of work and enterprise that is fast taking shape around us. The Tories on the other hand were seen as the party of working people by many swing seat voters. There is not much love lost amongst voters for big business. But people know that business needs to be successful to create new jobs. That’s why Labour needs to be the party of new business, new jobs and new chances – offering people security and opportunity as the world of work changes.

The world of work is radically changing:

- Ten million British jobs could be taken over by computers and robots over the next 20 years, wiping out more than one in three roles.³⁰ Oct 2014
- Boston Consulting Group predicts that by 2025, up to a quarter of jobs will be replaced by either smart software or robots.³¹ Sept 2015
- A study from Oxford University has suggested that 35% of existing UK jobs are at risk of automation in the next 20 years.³² March 2014

The implication is that millions may need help re-training – and if we want these workers to get better jobs, we need to foster an economy that is creating more, not fewer, jobs, in knowledge intensive, high tech industries.

Meanwhile, in this new world, self-employment is growing so fast that it is projected that there will be more self-employed people than public service workers by 2018³³
 Today, many swing voters see the Conservatives as the party of business success.



House of Commons Library - Sept 2015

³⁰ Oct 2014 - <http://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/uk/Documents/uk-futures/london-futures-agiletown.pdf>

³¹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-33327659>

³² Sept 2015 - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-33327659>

³³ <https://www.thersa.org/about-us/media/2014/03/numbers-of-self-employed-set-to-outstrip-public-sector-workers/>

Who do you think the Conservatives stand up for?

- “[They] Speak for small business, growing country” **Female, 25-34, Milton Keynes – Red Shift Research**
- “Businessmen” **Male, 45-54, Milton Keynes – Red Shift Research**
- “The middle classes, businesses, self-employed business” **Female, 45-54, Rugby – Red Shift Research**

Some argue that Labour’s anti-business stance did not hurt us. James Morris, for instance argues;

- “Only around 36 per cent of voters say a party’s approach to big business and the banks is important to their vote choice, compared to 54 per cent for immigration and 69 per cent for the NHS. The polls did not move a point when Tory-supporting business people led the news.”³⁴ *James Morris review*

However, the Cruddas Inquiry and Policy Network pointed to different evidence:

- ‘...in attitudes toward business, 49 per cent of the 2015 electorate agree that they are, ‘most likely to vote for the political party that knows the importance of supporting businesses to grow’. Just 10 per cent disagree’³⁵ *Jon Cruddas Inquiry*
- ‘The collective memory of Labour’s economic record is far from positive: They thought we were anti-business.’³⁶ *Policy Network*

The way to square to circle is this:

- Put Labour firmly on the side of those big businesses creating high quality, high paid jobs – especially in science-based, knowledge intensive industries
- To develop a strong suite of policy offers for entrepreneurs
- To become the party of the self-employed who often have very different needs from their public services, after all they are paid, on average, much less than the average employee

In the UK, the annual earnings of self-employed workers are 50% lower than of standard workers.³⁷ The Labour Party should be the union for the self-employed. They are ‘our people’.

³⁴ James Morris – Feeling Blue; page 2

³⁵ Jon Cruddas Inquiry 4th finding

³⁶ Policy Network – Can Labour win; page 42

³⁷ OECD – May 2015

Shift 6: Invent a new statecraft – from 20th century gimmicks to a digital age vision for the state.

The 21st century is an amazing place. Technology is all pervasive. We can use our phones to pay for groceries; download a new book in bed, manage our gas bills online.

It's a consumer driven revolution as businesses engage with customers ever more efficiently – and for some it makes life easier, and hassle free. Technology is only speeding up; by 2030 we will have contact lenses monitoring our blood sugar levels, an estimated 6.5 billion of us will own a mobile and there could be a £28 billion market for driverless cars.

Yet, the machinery of the state and ambition for policy making has become stuck in the past.

Here and there we see the odd move towards the 21st century. Tax discs can be renewed online. Real-time reporting of payroll is a massive step forward to real-time information about an employee's tax position.

But on the whole the state feels like an anachronism - and not just technologically.

- We have a welfare system that only really works if you go to work 9am to 5pm.
- Tax credits are a great way to reward work but if you have anything other than a traditional 1950s working pattern then forget it.
- If you are unemployed and looking for work you'll probably get into all sorts of trouble for managing to find the odd days' work here or there.
- Schools still take almost 7 weeks off in one go in the summer because centuries ago it was all hands to the pump to get in the harvest in.

This didn't matter when the traditional family had one parent working and the other at home. Now most families need a Masters' degree in organisational management just to get through the week – plus significant investment from the time bank of mum and dad.

No wonder that voters are frustrated with the system. It's a system they pay for and, up to a point, vote for.

But if you started from scratch to build a safety net for people who through no fault of their own are not able to work then voters would not design something that looked like this. Voters wouldn't design a school day or year so out of kilter with the lives of ordinary working families that meant that parents frequently pass each other like ships in the night. And voters wouldn't build a tax and benefits system that assumed the job you were in or the job you were trying to get was a regular 37.5 hours a week.

Because voters understand the world they live in. They're baffled that politicians don't.

“It needs to move with the times, we workers aren't all cloth cap wearing Yokels...” Male, Shard End – Red Shift Research

One word to describe the Labour Party: “Disconnected” Student, Derby College – Red Shift Research

The shift the Labour Party needs to make is to take off the blinding lens of the 20th century and start to think like a citizen and dream about what could be.

We need to move from a manifesto of micro-offers and gimmicks to a digital age vision for the state.

In the last election Labour was parodied as 'vote Labour and get a microwave'. From freezing energy bills to stronger rules on immigration to reducing tuition fees to £6,000 our policies were often small, vague and unambitious.

We were not bold, we were not radical.

“Only 19 per cent of voters thought Labour radical, four points below the share who thought the Tories 'radical'³⁸ *James Morris review*

The electorate wants a state fit for the 21st century. The questions we need to ask are not should we introduce a 50p rate of tax but if we were to write a tax system from scratch today, what would it look like? It's not should we have a benefit cap or not? It is how can we protect and support those in our society who need the state's help?

The challenge will be marrying the online world with the offline world. Take something like careers advice for example where there is an assumption that online access delivers everything. Well it doesn't - young people still crave personalised guidance to supplement the ubiquitous access to information.

We must move away from gimmick, give-away policies and we must not allow our policy proposals to be shaped by the minutia of the Westminster media cycle or the prevarications of a thousand focus groups. Instead we must set out a bold and radical vision for what our state can be in the digital age, tackling big topics like the housing crisis or how we can prepare our young people for the jobs of the future.

Once we were a bold and radical party that shaped the future. It's time that we did that again.

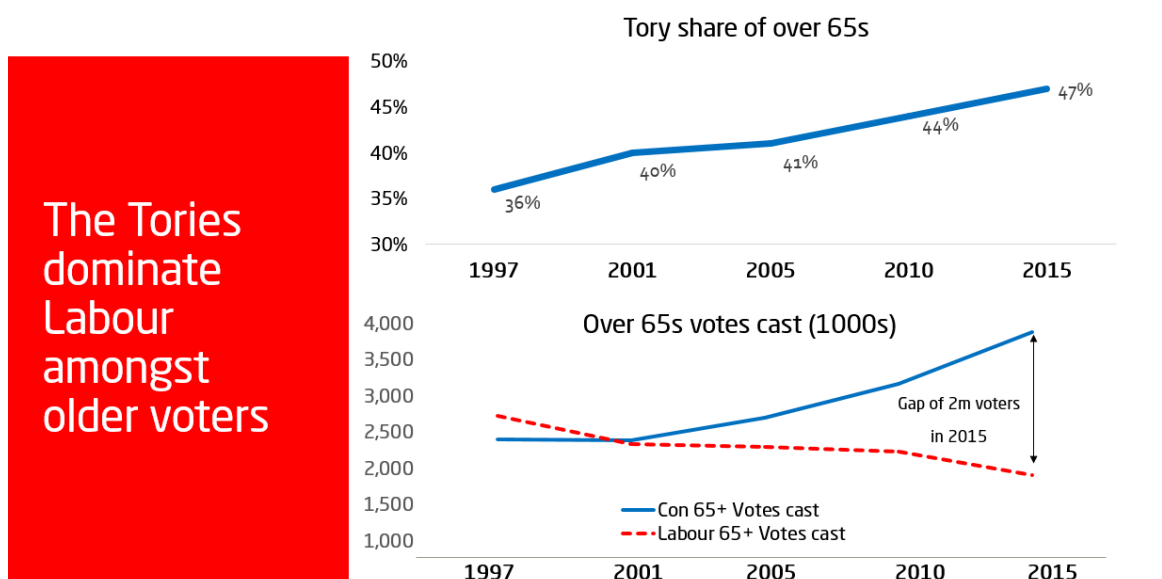
³⁸ James Morris – Feeling Blue; page 2

BROADEN OUR APPEAL

Shift 7: Older Voters – become the party of the silver majority

Labour cannot win unless it wins back older voters. It is as simple as that.

The Tory majority amongst the over 65s at the last election was an incredible 2 million votes - and Tory support amongst over 65s has been rising since 1997. At the next election, the *majority* of voters may be over 55 for the first time³⁹.



Source: House of Commons Library, IPSOS MORI (How Britain Voted since 1974)

*NB: Data on +65 voters cast based on Electoral Commission analysis of registration of over voters 2010-2014

At the last election, Labour had almost nothing to say to older voters and we were weak on the key issues that matter to the over 55s - as a slew of reports now confirms. Research by IPSOS Mori shows that over 55's see the top three issues facing Britain as immigration (52%), the NHS (42%) and the economy (26%);⁴⁰ on two out of three issues the Tories were ahead.

“Since 2005 voters who are socially conservative are the most likely to have deserted Labour.” On the whole these tend to be older voters. And their priorities are: “immigration, toughness on welfare, standing up for our country, Europe (either a referendum or pulling out) and fiscal responsibility.”⁴¹ *Jon Cruddas Inquiry*

“More than half of the UKIP vote came from people over the age of 50, exacerbating Labour’s broader weaknesses with silver voters. This is an issue that must be addressed ... there will be 1.6 million additional voters over the age of 65.”⁴² *Dan Jarvis review*

³⁹ <http://liambyrne.co.uk/re-shaping-the-radical-centre-lessons-from-the-2015-election/>

⁴⁰ Bobby Duffy - Source: Ipsos MORI Issues Index

⁴¹ Jon Cruddas Inquiry 2nd Finding

⁴² Dan Jarvis – Reconnecting Labour; page 26

“Labour is seen as not as close to older voters... (44 per cent see the party as close to the over 65s and 38 per cent do not, compared to 49 to 35 per cent for the Conservatives).”⁴³ *Policy Network*

“[Amongst the over 60s]... 45 per cent say they will never vote Labour [while] just 30 per cent say they will never vote Conservative. Unless Labour detoxifies its brand with the grey vote it will find it all but impossible to win a majority again.”⁴⁴ *Jon Cruddas Inquiry*

Our research amongst party activists and older voters confirms these conclusions:

“We had very little to say to older pensioners” **Party activist, Watford – Red Shift Research**

How do you think Labour needs to change to win back your trust? “They need an OAP strategy, something to offer people like me.” **Male, 65+, Derby – Red Shift Research**

“Make us believe – I miss old fashioned people who said what they believe - even if I don’t like the answer I will respect people and trust people who say what they think.” **Female, 65+, Rugby – Red Shift Research**

Labour has to recognise that thanks to many of the reforms made by the Labour Government the silver vote’s priorities are changing. They still look to Labour for help with the challenges of living longer or coping with a disability but now they are also looking for help with new challenges as older employees, buy to let landlords, or entrepreneurs.

- Today’s workforce is significantly older – 30% of the workforce is over the age of 50
- There are now over 1.1 million over 65s still in work, an increase of almost a quarter of a million since 2011.⁴⁵
- Over 400,000 people aged over 65 are now in self-employment.⁴⁶
- Around 1 in 10 over 50’s are now buy-to-let landlords;⁴⁷ the average age of a buy to let landlord is 56⁴⁸ - this is set to rise as Government reforms to pensions mean many over 55s are investing their pension pots in buy to let property.⁴⁹ Many predict an emerging generation of ‘pensioner landlords.’

Crucially, older voters no longer see the welfare system as ‘fair’. Overall, older voters do not think the ‘system’ gets the right help to the right people – or that we spend enough on the right help or support.

⁴³ Policy Network – Can Labour win; page 25

⁴⁴ Jon Cruddas Inquiry 5th Finding

⁴⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/older-peoples-day-1-million-in-work-over-65-3-years-since-end-of-default-retirement-age>

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ <http://www.saga.co.uk/insurance/home-insurance-products/landlord-insurance/grandlord-guide.aspx>

⁴⁸ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/investing/buy-to-let/11176988/1996-the-birth-of-buy-to-let-Britain-in-numbers.html>

⁴⁹ <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/finance/personalfinance/investing/buy-to-let/11697289/Britain-will-have-generation-of-pensioner-landlords-experts-predict.html>

- Amongst the over 55s, the end of the contributory welfare system means that a man in his early fifties will have paid in around £107,000 of National Insurance yet get no extra help getting back to work.⁵⁰
- Generally, older voters want to see the help you get much more closely linked to the contributions that people have made, and many wanted to see the quality of the help – like Carers’ Allowance, and back to work support for the over 50s – improved. In surveys in Hodge Hill for instance, 75% said that benefits should be linked to contributions.⁵¹
- The most popular changes to the welfare system included, fairer tax relief on paying in for a pension (today most goes to the richest), a flexible retirement age (for instance, allowing retirement after a fixed period of paying National Insurance), tailored back to work support, and an increase in Carers’ Allowance.⁵²

Labour needs to go back to the drawing board and re-design its offer to older voters. We need to think long and hard about how to use older workers moving into retirement to support younger workers joining the workforce and a move through part-time into retirement. We have to look at the issues that matter to older voters – and put forward strong policies. And we need to look hard at the new generation of older voters – who want a very different set of policies to help them get the most out of life.

⁵⁰ Cited, Liam Byrne, *The Road to Full Employment*, Fabian Society, 2013

⁵¹ Cited, Liam Byrne, *The Road to Full Employment*, Fabian Society, 2013

⁵² Cited, Liam Byrne, *The Road to Full Employment*, Fabian Society, 2013

Shift 8: Become the feel-good party – the party of people doing well, living in ‘new-builds’.

After the election, there was a lot of talk about reconnecting with aspirational voters. And lots of it was waffle.

Most people are aspirational. We need to be clearer about what we mean. As James Morris, the party’s pollster noted, “Anti-aspiration? This concern was seventh out of seven doubts tested about the Labour party.”⁵³

We believe Labour has to be seen as on the side of those doing well, as well as those who are struggling. **Bluntly: we have to be seen as pro-success.** If people who are doing well in life believe that they should ‘graduate’ to voting Conservative, then our voter base will fast erode. This is acutely felt by activists battling for votes in key marginal seats.

“We had nothing to say to the people in the new builds.” **Party activist, Milton Keynes – Red Shift Research**

“People want a feel good factor; look at Trump and Corbyn” **Party activist, Milton Keynes – Red Shift Research**

As Jon Cruddas’ inquiry noted: “Widening Labour’s electoral base means vigorously reaching out to those on middle-incomes and the struggling working and middle class...People don’t vote in an altruistic way so we have to demonstrate how society is better when we help people who are struggling.”⁵⁴ The Tories’ ‘rhetoric on being a party of the workers is designed to solidify their support among Prospectors, and lock Labour out of this aspirant group.’⁵⁵

The reality is that at the last election, the Tories, not Labour was the party seen as pro-success.

Who do you think the Conservatives stand up for?

“The rich, but also anyone that wants to work and get on in life, I don’t like all their ideas but something had to be done about the welfare bill, there were too many freeloaders, that’s why the migrants in France want to come here” **Female, Shard End – Red Shift Research**

“Everybody - I voted Tory - ordinary working people prosper under Tories.” **Male, 65+, Rugby – Red Shift Research**

“They stood up for people who are working and who are trying to find work.” **Male, 35-44, Watford – Red Shift Research**

“Hard working people. Rewarding going out to work and not relying on the state for handouts.” **Male, Shard End – Red Shift Research**

⁵³ James Morris – Feeling Blue; page 3

⁵⁴ Policy Network – Can Labour win; page 50

⁵⁵ Jon Cruddas Inquiry 3rd finding

By contrast, Labour was seen as the party of the past, for those new to Britain or out of work.

“[Labour] needs to move with the times, we workers aren't all cloth cap wearing Yokels, it's not shameful to want to get on in life, that's why we go to work, not to look after someone whos' never worked and has lots of kids regardless or just landed here and gets everything on a plate” **Male, Shard End – Red Shift Research**

“We've got an aspirational society now. Labour hasn't got a new voice. Labour Loyalist voter.”⁵⁶ – *Lord Ashcroft review*

“Labour voters were probably in the public sector or people who need benefits. Labour Loyalist voter⁵⁷” – *Lord Ashcroft review*

The conclusion is very simple.

Labour needs a range of policy offers to the mainstream middle who are doing well. We need to show we can improve their lives, not just the society around them. We need to sound determined to let them keep more of their hard-earned wages, and show how we'll help them access opportunities and assets which are beyond them without public, collective help.

⁵⁶ Lord Ashcroft – Red Dawn; page 13

⁵⁷ Lord Ashcroft – Red Dawn; page 13

Shift 9: Young people – educating and inspiring our young people that power can be in their hands – if they are willing to turn out and vote

Young people are a vital component of Labour's coalition - and while Labour cannot win an election with young people alone, the truth is that social mobility is going into reverse because young people today are so let down by government.

It's our job to stand up for them.

Young people were hammered by the Coalition government. One in six were out of work. For young people in a job, pay was worth £1,750 a year LESS than it was in 2010. That means they have to work an extra MONTH this year to make what they did at the last election. Millions can't afford a house and are still living with their parents.

Education Maintenance Allowance was cut, apprenticeship numbers for the under 25s actually fell in 2014, and university tuition fees have TREBLED. The average graduate now won't pay back their student debt until they're in their 50s. All in all, it meant our young people today are the first generation in a CENTURY to be poorer than the last.

Research work carried out by Liam Byrne in February 2015 confirmed that the key challenge for young people today is to find a new footing in a Labour market that requires both qualifications and experience, and to assemble enough money to buy a home of their own.

The image of lazy youngsters is a myth. They're often managing A-levels, a Saturday job and two evenings a week on the shop floor - and often dreaming of starting their own business.

"Westfield Stratford wouldn't open every morning without my students." Principal, NewVIC College in Newham, Feb 2015

As a result, young people want proper careers advice (like what jobs are going locally), work experience that might help figure out what they'd like to do in life, a real option to *earn while they learn* their degree, lower college fees and proper help with day-to-day bills so they can study to get the best job they can.

"If Government know where we need the jobs, then why doesn't anyone tells us which jobs to get the qualifications for?" Student, PROCAT College, Basildon, Feb 2015

"I want to start earning as soon as possible, not racking up debt." Student, Palmers College, Grays, Feb 2015

"You finish University with a huge debt hanging over your head and then it is still really hard to find a job – is it worth it?" Student, Barking & Dagenham College, Barking, Feb 2015

Yet Labour has not crystallised an offer that maximises our young support, and as a result voter registration and turnouts rates amongst young people are low. In 2010 turnout of 18-24's was

44%.⁵⁸ In 2015 turnout of 18-24's fell by a point to 43%,⁵⁹ rising amongst 18-34 years olds, to 48.5%⁶⁰

We found plenty of interest among young people in politics. Young people recognise that politics is important – but they are not inspired by what Labour has to say. Despite Labour's youth campaign and manifesto in 2015, turnout actually fell amongst 18-24's from 2010 to 2015.

Equally, many more young people today grow up in households where their parents are not 'party identifiers' any more. As a result, there was a real thirst from young people to be given the tools to make political choices. What we might call citizenship education. They wanted more information, earlier, and delivered in a straight-forward style.

"I did not have enough time to work out who to vote for ... we should have politics lessons from year 9 onwards." **Student, Derby College – Red Shift Research**

"I didn't know enough to make an informed decision" **Student, Rugby College – Red Shift Research**

"I find it hard to follow politics when no gives you a straight answer." **Student, Rugby College – Red Shift Research**

"Russell Brand was great because he is brutally honest with everyone, why aren't politicians more like that?" **Student, Derby College – Red Shift Research**

When we asked, young people were clear that social media has to be central to delivering this information. Young people (18-24) see social media as the second biggest influence on their vote.⁶¹

"Young people want to get involved with politics but are scared off, you need to use things like social media to show them it's not scary." **Student, Derby College – Red Shift Research**

"If you want to use social media well; you have to ask more questions, that's your way of communicating with people who are going to vote for you." **Student, Derby College – Red Shift Research**

Labour has to put together an offer that allows a far better, smoother journey from school and training to work, and crucially deliver a transformational offer for young first time buyers. Our political education work has to start on a huge scale with young people who are still in their early teens, transforming the way we use social media will be central to this.

⁵⁸IPSOS MORI How Britain voted in 2010 <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/2613/How-Britain-Voted-in>

⁵⁹ IPSOS MORI How Britain voted in 2015 <https://www.ipsos-mori.com/researchpublications/researcharchive/3575/How-Britain-voted-in-2015.aspx?view=wide>

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Bobby Duffy – Political Generations - <http://www.ipsos-mori-generations.com/Assets/Docs/ipsos-mori-political-generations-2015-infographic.pdf>

FIX THE WAY WE CAMPAIGN

Shift 10. The ground-war – from 'can I have your vote' to an evidence based and innovative campaigning movement that builds two-way relationships with voters

There is much to praise in the 2015 field operation. Especially given where we started.

The 2010 field campaign was poor. Too few contacts were made by too few activists helped by too few organisers. Perverse incentives were the order of the day (the less a CLP or candidate did the more likely the national or regional party was to try and bail you out). Many MPs reported having less than 10 activists on polling day - not that it mattered much as very few had meaningful up to date data anyway.

2015 was different. There were more organisers; we saw the advent of the volunteer mobiliser. Far more voter ID was collected. Local parties and candidates were incentivised - the more you actually did the more help you got – at least in terms of financial support for literature.

“We definitely reached saturation point in terms of the numbers of leaflets and literature.”
Party activist, Watford – Red Shift Research

This was reflected in the polling. Labour appeared to outgun the Tories in the ground war. Consistently in our key seats voters had heard more often from us than from our opponents.⁶²

So far, so good.

But when polling day came and went, it was clear the bigger, better field operation yielded little extra. Let's be clear. With a leader that was behind on every indicator that mattered and a message that was all over the place we never really stood a chance of winning in many of these seats. Organisation can make a difference at the margins of a campaign - it can't be the campaign.

But we should have seen more of a bounce than we did. Any organiser knows it is possible to lose the war but win some individual battles; any decent organiser will be tell you exactly which parts of the battle they won, how they did it and how they measured it. Activists said to us that the Tories were better at targeting key swing voters e.g. UKIP promises with a clear, attractive switch message. They also used social media, particularly Facebook, far more effectively than we did in our somewhat whimsical, well-meaning twitter #Labourdoorstep

The General Election 2015 post mortem has understandably focused on policy, message and leadership. But it's crucial we reflect scientifically on the lessons to be learnt from our ground war.

There are three principal lessons. First, we need a proper research programme to test the impact of our turnout techniques, brand awareness and message should be the corner stone of our organisational strategy.

“We won the ground war over the Tories but perhaps our ground war doesn't actually work.” **Party activist, Milton Keynes – Red Shift Research**

⁶² <http://lordashcroftpolls.com/category/marginal-seats/>

Fool me once, shame on you; fool me twice, shame on me. We need to ensure we have the evidence to explain to activists their time isn't being wasted.

Second, to ensure that our volunteer's time is not being wasted we also need informed leadership. The upskilling of our organising staff both in terms of campaigning skills and evidence based knowledge of what works is vital. Too much organising is still done on a hunch and a wing and a prayer – we need to retain experience and build leadership.

Third, our message and our brand must be embedded in our organising. Data collection without a decent brand or relationship building strategy yields nothing. And that brand has to be in part local. In an era where tribal loyalties are weakening the ability to devise a local message that is relevant, resonates and responds to local conditions is vital.

"We had a campaign driven by the treadmill of Voter ID targets; all about quantity not quality." **Party activist, Watford – Red Shift Research**

"Maybe we should spend 100 hours painting fences or litter picking rather than just collecting voter id." **Party activist, Milton Keynes – Red Shift Research**

Nothing shows how far we were from message led communication in 2015 than the early print deadline for most of the print packages. No key seat organiser in their right mind would ever believe that a leaflet to be delivered in early April should be signed off in February. The SNP hadn't even become a factor in England by then.

"It was a textbook campaign but it was the wrong textbook."⁶³ *Policy Network*

It was a textbook without a local message.

"We were mapping the political landscape rather than seeking to influence it. It was all about turnout, but we should have had textbooks about how to convert people, how to spend time with the undecideds . . . We mostly spoke to Labour people."⁶⁴ *Policy Network*

These three lessons will cultivate a cadre of organising staff who can think for themselves, take the initiative and run local campaigns integrated with our national messaging.

Campaigning by numbers will simply not cut it. Of course, organisers must be able to understand data, they must make contacts, mobilise volunteers, be technically adept, understand the communities in which they work, develop local messages and brands that complement but sit independently of the national brand – an effective part of this is community campaigning.

But most importantly organisers must understand that they are building a two way relationship with voters.

Voters are not numbers in a voter contact chart; they are human beings who respond and who can be influenced by responsive two way communication with another human being. This takes time and effort.

⁶³ Policy Network – Can Labour win; page 47

⁶⁴ Policy Network – Can Labour win; page 47

About Red Shift

England is changing – and to win back power, Labour must change too.

At the last election, England decisively shifted blue. Labour now needs a plan for a red shift.

We believe progressive parties win when we own the future. But too many people think we belonged to the past. The electorate is changing rapidly. The world of work is dramatically altered. Communities are changing shape. Generational shifts in values are under way. Many feel left behind. Yet vast new forces of trade and technology are speeding up.

So we need to go back to basics. To draw on the real experience and insights of English people today, inside and outside the workplace. To show how we can re-energise the ways that Labour values can transform real lives.

Red Shift brings together a group of English Labour MP's and activists determined to shine a spotlight on how England is changing, how peoples' ambitions are changing – and how Labour needs to change to win.

Looking for a New England is the group's first report on the changing world of work and politics

Rt Hon Liam Byrne MP

Shabana Mahmood MP

Heidi Alexander MP

Nic Dakin MP

Caroline Badley

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