

General Election 2017: Corbyn & Labour Myth-busting

“Jeremy Corbyn is a weak leader. He should have stepped down long ago.”

If Jeremy Corbyn was a weak leader, he would have taken the easy option and resigned long ago. He has been hounded relentlessly by the right-wing billionaire-owned UK press, who have invented smears about him and printed outright lies (many of the lies were retracted and apologised for, but only after having done plenty of damage). Few people in politics have stood firm in the face of such demonisation.

Yet, he has twice made history, receiving record-breaking mandates, larger than that of any other UK party leader. In remaining, he is carrying out the wishes of Labour members who voted for him twice over.

“Jeremy Corbyn is too unpopular and he has dragged Labour down in the polls.”

The Labour party have grown to over half a million – now getting on for 600,000 under Corbyn’s leadership, making the Labour Party the largest socialist party in Europe. In the first 24 hours of the election being called, a further 2500 people registered to join Labour. The Conservatives have been ahead in the polls recently but this is not unusual when a new leader is appointed.

Also, it is instructive to have a look at the political allegiances of those who own and run these polling companies – and look how reliable the polls have been on previous occasions.

However, there has been very little media coverage of Labour policies and instead an emphasis on trivialities – Diane made a gaff, Jeremy didn’t sing the national anthem etc. etc. When you think about it, these are not stories about how the country would be run by Labour at all. They are distractions.

“Jeremy Corbyn is incompetent, too left-wing, and under his leadership Labour have no policies.”

Jeremy has always stood up for his principles and always been on the right side of history. The policies under his leadership are not “too left-wing”; in fact, they are very popular. He wants to:

- **Abolish zero-hour contracts**, providing job stability,
- **Build 1 million affordable new homes including 500,000 council houses.** Rough sleeping has doubled. We have less affordable housing than we have had for 24 years. Labour would end the bedroom tax.
- **Force the tax dodgers to pay their fair share and tax increase for those earning over 80K** (Tax freeze for those under)
- **Introduce £10 minimum wage** to those over 18 – Britain has faced biggest drop in wages of all industrialised countries and one in five are getting less than minimum wage now.
- **Reverse cuts to schools and introduce free school meals**
Set up regional and national investment banks to invest in regional industry infrastructure and create good jobs
- **250 billion to be borrowed to invest in infrastructure – the countries are more like businesses than household and businesses borrow to invest to make money**
- **Renationalise the railways** as franchises end – our rail fares are currently the highest in Europe as fair money goes to private enterprise, whilst our trains are often over-crowded
- **End the cuts to bus services, and high fares on buses.** Allow councils to run bus services again.
- **Recognise unpaid carers** by providing another £10.00 a week benefits for them.
- **Reverse Tory Inheritance tax cuts**

- **Reverse Tory Corporation Tax cuts of £70 billion – our companies currently pay less tax than any other G7 country: Germany, France, Italy Canada, Japan or America**
- **Renationalise the NHS** and save £5bn in profits which are currently filtered off to private health companies (NHS funds currently being cut by 22 billion.¹ Meantime firms like Virgin are starting to take over GP surgeries – to be run for profit. First consideration will be what makes most money, not what patients need. (84% are against privatising the NHS) Mental Health services in crisis and just cut again. Four million people are now stuck on waiting lists. The Heart of England NHS trust is 30 million pounds in debt whilst having to pick up the pieces from GP service cuts and cuts in social care which means more people fetch up in A & E² Birmingham and Solihull Combined NHS authority will have a funding gap of £712m by 2020-21 if nothing is done.
- **Reverse tax cuts to all front line services, fire police ambulance and an extra 10,000 police**
- **Deliver Brexit which works for all – protecting valuable trading agreements – avoid sweetheart deals like Nissan** severing links with Europe will jeopardise millions of jobs.
- **Guarantee that EU nationals living here will be able to stay, and securing the future of Britons living in Europe**
- **Ban firms in tax havens bidding for government contracts.**
- **End the public sector pay freeze**
- **End investment focus on London whilst the rest of the country struggles – manufacturing here has shrunk by 2/3 over the past 4 decades and we now have the lowest output of all industrialised countries.**
- **End the gender pay gap**
- **Halt the opening of grammar and free schools** (as state school, like Ninestiles and Sheldon Heath Academy have their funding slashed)³
- **Restore the triple lock on pensions** (So that pensions keep pace with inflation/earnings)⁴ End the threat of a return to pensioner poverty and end the scandal of 50s born women sofa-surfing because they have no proper pension. Restore pensions to women aged 60-66 who have no proper pension provisions after an unexpected pension age-increase.
- **Treat Small Business Better: 1.5 billion cut in small business tax. Ban late payments to SMEs** (Jeremy Corbyn has hit out at retailers that withhold payments to their suppliers for extended periods, saying they are “borrowing interest-free from suppliers) and **scrap Tory Business Rate hikes**⁵ 1 in 5 small businesses has been forced to close down and 50,000 are closing every year whilst big firms like Amazon are getting tax breaks
- **There will be a national Education Service to introduce the training that adults need to re-build our economy**

As for incompetency or ineffectiveness, under his leadership, Labour have forced the Tories into a series of crucial U-turns.

Some of the Tory U-turns Labour have forced:

(For more details see a very handy list put out by *The Daily Mirror*

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/24-screaching-u-turns-david-7935230>)

- Forcing schools to become academies

¹ <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/secret-plans-massive-nhs-cuts-11895692>

² <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/nhs-meltdown-blame-30-million-10219907>

³ <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/nhs-meltdown-blame-30-million-10219907>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/money/2017/apr/27/pensions-triple-lock-questions-answered>

⁵

<https://www.retailgazette.co.uk/blog/2017/03/jeremy-corbyn-brands-late-payments-to-smes-a-national-scandal/>

- Cuts to PIP
- Cuts to tax credits
- Pensions tax relief form
- Sunday trading
- Solar panel tax
- Cracking down on freedom of information laws
- Granny flat tax
- Measurement of child poverty statistics ⁶
- 'Tampon tax'
- Scrapping feminism from A-levels
- Human rights priority countries
- Scrapping of animal welfare codes
- Axing wildlife crime unit
- Repealing the ban on fox hunting
- Rent cuts to supported housing
- The housing bill
- Legal aid contracts
- Criminal courts charge
- Saudi prisons contract
- Scrapping human rights in the Tories' first 100 days
- Pay cuts for interpreters
- Nurses from outside the EU
- Plans to raise national insurance contributions

“Jeremy Corbyn did nothing to stop Brexit; he secretly supported it. Brexit is all his fault!”

Jeremy campaigned tirelessly for the Remain campaign. In fact, Corbyn made more appearances than any other member of Labour to campaign for EU membership (giving 122 speeches up and down the country, travelling 2,768 miles during the referendum campaign).

He recognised faults within the EU, speaking of reforms in a plea to reach Brexiteers and demonstrate ways in which their concerns could be recognised. However, these were rarely broadcasted on television, as the mainstream media had a political bias towards the government.

Corbyn's constituency voted Remain, along with two thirds of Labour members. The Conservative party could not garner such results in their constituencies and so the overall vote was lost.

Labour's remain vote not much less than Lib-Dems or Greens, who both also campaigned for remain.

“I voted for Brexit. Jeremy Corbyn and Labour do not represent me.”

Jeremy was never under the illusion that the EU was perfect. He spoke about the serious flaws in the way it operated. He advocated a campaign to reform the EU, to make it democratic and transparent. He, along with the rest of Labour, has since recognised that the majority of the public wish to leave the EU and therefore will not fight this. Labour want to seek a 'soft Brexit' and find the best possible deal for the British people with full access to the single market without expensive tariff arrangements which will make it very difficult to trade. We currently depend on the EU for about 44% of our trade.⁷

⁶ <http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/iain-duncan-smith-forced-u-7448846>

⁷ <https://fullfact.org/europe/uk-eu-trade/>

“Jeremy Corbyn is a terrorist sympathiser.”

Jeremy has **never** supported terrorism! He has pursued diplomatic and political solutions, rather than putting the lives of British soldiers and innocent civilians at risk. He has always believed that war must be last course of action and peace is always preferable.

- On the IRA

Along with John McDonnell (and numerous other Labour MPs), Jeremy Corbyn, Margaret Thatcher and SDLP leader John Hume held secret talks with Adams and McGuinness in an attempt to broker a peace deal.

However, as an ordinary MP, Corbyn’s meetings with Sinn Feinn were not afforded the same level of secrecy. In a time when the two sides were so dogmatic, certain tabloids spun this to the British people as a betrayal. Without the work of *all* those involved, peace would never have been possible, as many in the ‘Real IRA’ pushed for a ‘long war’ and a victory by any means. This would have resulted in further bloodshed.

- On the Middle East

On Syria, Corbyn believed that bombing was the wrong course of action, because at the time, it was unclear which groups on the ground in Syria were working alongside ISIS and which were not.

Backing the wrong group could have resulted in the British government actually arming ISIS and providing opportunities for them to overpower less powerful Kurdish and Syrian forces following airstrikes.

Instead, at a time when other members of the original coalition had halted their attacks, Corbyn favoured the ceasing funding, oil revenues and arms supplies from ISIS in the territory it currently held, whilst pursuing political resolutions.

Following a speech he made in which he welcomed “our friends from Hezbollah to have a discussion and a debate”, the media seized upon the term “friends” despite this being a well-worn diplomatic term.

Corbyn later went on to tell channel 4 News:

“I’ve met with many organisations with which I profoundly disagree, but if you want to bring peace, you have to have conversations.”

Hamas and Hezbollah are part of a peace process. The former head of Mossad (right-wing Israeli intelligence agency) even agreed that talks with Hamas and Hezbollah were vital.

⁸

- Russia and the U.S

Corbyn has concerns over a ‘proxy war’ developing between the US and Russia in Syria.

Boris Johnson failed in recent talks with foreign ministers to impose sanctions on Russia; Johnson then later cancelled his trip to Russia.

⁸ <https://www.opendemocracy.net/luke-davies/re-examining-corbyns-dangerous-friendships>

Corbyn said of this:

"[Johnson] should go to Moscow, have a very strong and very robust conversation with the Russian government about their support for Assad and what they're doing there [...] Going back to the Cold War mentality won't bring peace."

"Jeremy Corbyn doesn't support Trident and is a threat to national security."

Corbyn takes the security and defence of the UK very seriously. His approach to security is significantly different from many other leaders – emphasising the importance of security, not only for us in the UK, but for our troops in foreign countries. He sees conflict as a last resort.

From the Defence Policy Review 2016:

"The safety and security of the British people must always be our first priority. This can only be achieved by a defence and security policy which is strategic, informed by expert opinion and supported by a strong evidence base."

It is Labour policy to continue to spend 2% of GDP on defence.

On Trident: Jeremy believes that the £205 Billion cost is not cost-effective and would be better spent in other areas of defence.

He believes that the UK has a duty to join others in getting rid of weapons that can never be used or could destroy our planet. As a Trade Unionist and potential Prime Minister, Jeremy would ensure that the skilled scientists and engineers currently building weapons will be assigned new roles, building the technology of the future.

"Labour will bankrupt the country. Labour have a poor track record with economics."

From 1997 – 2010, child poverty was relatively low. It has rocketed since 2010. Austerity has been doggedly and irresponsibly pursued. The national debt and borrowing is far higher than it ever was under Labour. The Tories have consistently missed targets for eliminating the deficit and borrowing is higher than it has been for decades. Recently, Philip Hammond performed a U-turn on National Insurance Contributions in the latest budget statement; one which he said he hadn't realised broke the Tory Party's manifesto until a journalist brought it up.

"How will Labour pay for all of their policies?"

According to the PCS and the Tax Justice Network, up to £120bn a year is lost through tax avoided, evaded and uncollected.

As Jeremy said recently, "We're not broke, we're being robbed."

Closing loopholes and stopping Britain from becoming a tax haven will ensure that everyone, not just the working people, pay their fair share. A lot of companies here have got away with paying no tax here at all. E.g. Amazon and Starbucks.

Savings can also be made. There have been many costly mistakes with the public purse over the last seven years. Top-down reorganisation of the NHS has wasted approximately £3bn. £140M of public money was wasted on 62 free schools, grammar schools or University technical colleges which closed, partially closed or failed to open at all.

The Labour manifesto has been fully costed. Economic growth in high skill, high tech and low carbon enterprises stimulated and led by the National and Regional Investment Banks combined with changes to the tax regime.

Increase corporation tax – we currently pay one of the lowest corporation taxes in the world at 20% and Phillip Hammond is planning to cut this to 17%⁹

“Labour is in turmoil and is too split to get my vote; how can we trust them to rule the country?”

Labour is a broad church just like the British public. In that respect, they are very representative. Labour have a shadow cabinet that is comprised of 50% female MPs and with representation of the BAME community. The Labour party refuse to simply accept policies handed down from above as other, more hierarchical parties would; they debate, they disagree and continue to shape political dialogue.

Ultimately, the arguments are about how best to get elected. A lot of MPs, who come from a very different political tradition from Jeremy Corbyn, believe the only way to get elected is to closely mirror the Tory Party because people are too (small c) conservative to understand different kinds of policies. Unfortunately these policies, which tend to favour big tax breaks for the rich, and making cuts in public services to fund these have not been working. Labour has been losing votes ever since the famous 1997 landslide – when people just wanted to get rid of the Tories. This decreasing popularity with almost Tory policies resulted in a full Tory government in 2015. Instead, Corbyn’s team has stayed loyal to the wishes of the huge new membership. We believe that we need new policies which take us back to a more traditional Labour stance of helping the poorer in society. If Labour wins, the big argument about how to win by actually winning then the main divisions should be at an end anyway – the topic of the argument will be finished.

“The Conservatives have done a good job of governing the country and have been a ‘safe pair of hands’ so far on the economy.”

The Tories have not paid off any of the National Debt. In fact, they have doubled it to £1.7 trillion.

The number of children in absolute poverty has increased by 0.5 million since 2010. Billions of pounds have been wasted on pet projects like reorganising the NHS, paying outside providers in the NHS, not taxing big foreign companies like Amazon, or taxing big corporations as other countries do. whilst ‘the working poor’ and pensioners struggle to pay for essentials.

As a direct result of tax and benefit decisions made since 2010, the Institute for Fiscal Studies project that the number of children in relative poverty will have risen by more than a million from 2.3 to 3.6 million by 2020 (poverty figures before housing costs).

The number of people on zero-hours contracts in the UK has hit a record high of 910,000 (nearly a million) perpetuating poverty and stress (see below).

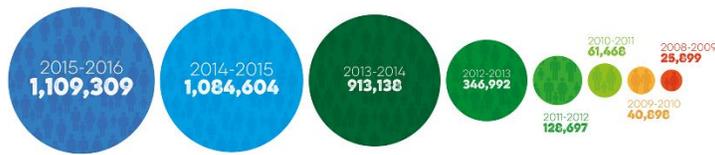
Among the welfare changes for new claimants that started this month were:

- child tax credit payments, restricted to two-child families
- “first child” premium Universal Credit payment abolished
- cuts in weekly payments sick or disabled and looking for work
- housing benefit axed for 18-21 year-olds
- reduced payment periods for parents of bereaved children
- all parents with a youngest child aged 3, including lone parents, expecter
- No child benefits for third child unless mother can prove rape.

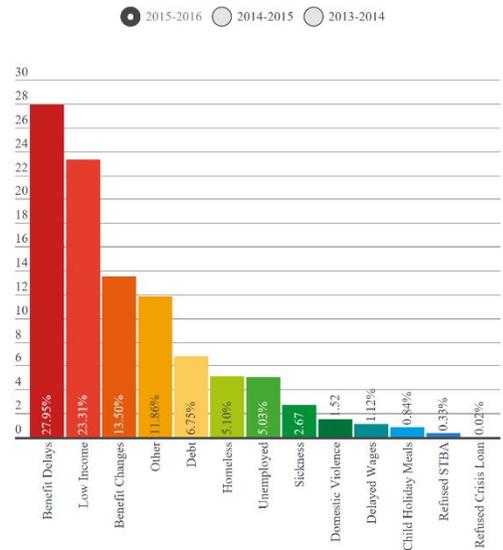
Foodbanks

Above and right: Latest Trussell Trust figures show over a million

NUMBER OF THREE-DAY EMERGENCY FOOD SUPPLIES GIVEN BY TRUSSELL TRUST



(1,109,309) three-day emergency food supplies given to people in crisis by our network of 424 foodbanks in 2015/16.



Food banks did not exist before the Tories came to power in 2010. Now there are 420 across the United Kingdom, with people in low-paid and insecure work (zero hours contracts) often the hardest hit, together with those with no work now having to wait for payments to kick-in and accumulating debt. Their usage was up 7% last year.¹⁰

Iain Duncan Smith also tried to bury fatality figures as a result of benefit sanctions and disability benefit cuts.

Our economy is suffering in this country because refugees and immigrants come here and cost us loads, claiming benefits and luxury accommodation – we need a hard Brexit to keep them out

Net immigration is up mainly because net emigration is down. Actually, the highest year of immigration this century was 2002. There has been a net rise in immigration since 2014 but not by much – 2,000 people. It is true there has been more EU immigration, but there has also been less non-EU immigration so it almost balances out.

As for refugees we take in fewer refugees than other European countries – only a tiny percentage of those displaced by war end up here - and our highest year for taking refugees was actually 2002.

Recent immigrants haven’t taken out of the economy overall – they have made a net contribution of 20 billion – we are 20 billion better off for having them here.

Students and asylum seekers don’t get benefits, and there are a number of benefits foreigners are not entitled to. Overall there are less than 38,000 EU migrants across the whole country claiming benefits – that’s fewer people than live in the Constituency of Yardley.

The University College of London did a survey which suggested that migrants are 43% less likely to claim Benefits than people born here – they tend to be younger and better-educated and they come here *to work*.

But I know these things because I have seen on TV/Read in the paper – I’m telling it was on TV. It’s in the paper You’re telling me wrong. Think a minute about who owns the TV Stations and the papers. Do you honestly

¹⁰

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/food-bank-use-uk-rise-continue-poverty-family-children-income-benefits-cuts-report-a7703451.html>

believe they are on the side of ordinary working people? They are multi-millionaires who are all of them Tories – and the BBC has to keep the Tory government happy too – it pays them. All these people have a huge interest in keeping the Tories in power. Blaming immigrants for the Tories failings is a great way of doing it.¹¹

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<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-migration-six-myths-about-immigration-debunked-as-latest-figures-show-fall-in-non-eu-arrivals-a6895341.html>