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A guide to engaging
with the Labour Party

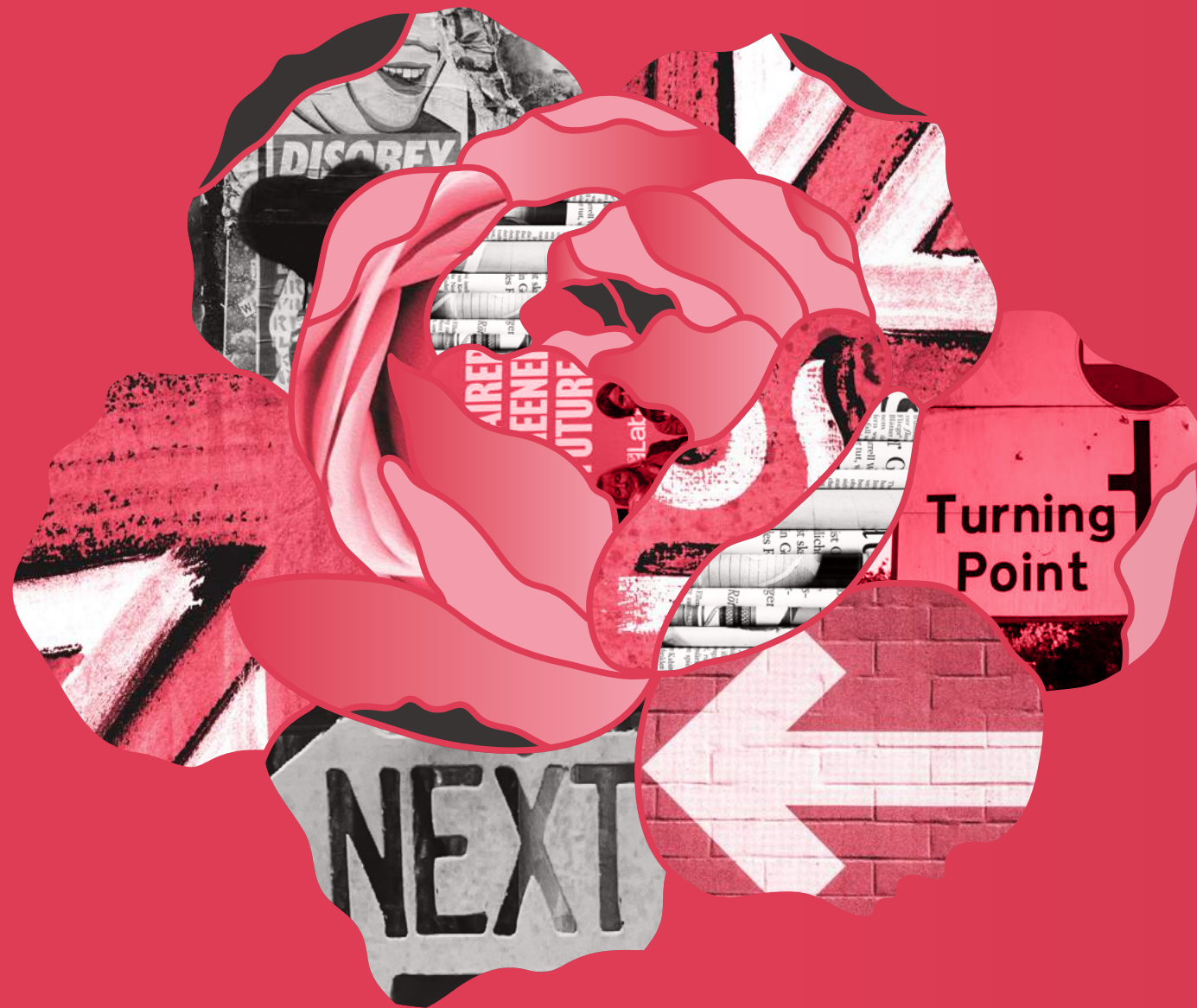


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CONTENTS

2 **HOW WILL A LABOUR GOVERNMENT SEEK TO WORK WITH BUSINESS?**

4 **A PARTY PREPARING FOR POWER**

7 **The shape of a Government in waiting**

8 **THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION'S OFFICE – AND THE DE FACTO DEPUTY**

11 **THE SENIOR ADVISERS**

13 **THE PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES TO WATCH**

15 **Labour's policy-making process**

16 **FORMULATING THE POLICY PLATFORM**

18 **CURATING THE MANIFESTO**

20 **INFLUENCERS AND OPINION FORMERS**

22 **PEOPLE POWER: THE IMPORTANCE OF POLLING AND FOCUS GROUPS**

23 **The battlegrounds for business**

24 **A RED CARPET AND RED LINES – WHAT FIRMS SHOULD EXPECT FROM A LABOUR GOVERNMENT**

In-depth sector analysis:

26 **CHILDCARE, EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

29 **ENERGY**

33 **FINANCIAL SERVICES**

37 **HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES**

42 **TRANSPORT**

47 **How to get heard**

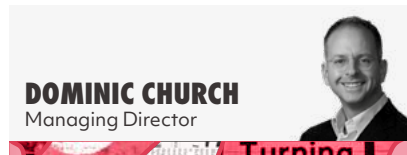
48 **CREATING MESSAGES THAT LAND**

51 **FROM SITTING ON THE FENCE TO SITTING IN NO.10? A FATE DETERMINED BY STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS**

52 **GETTING READY FOR LABOUR**

HOW WILL A LABOUR GOVERNMENT SEEK TO WORK WITH BUSINESS?

Point



Labour is preparing for power and has a realistic chance of winning.

With an election expected to be held within the next 18 months, this is the most important part of the electoral cycle for the Opposition. The build-up to an election is when a party can be hardest to read. Polls start to tighten. Public declarations are aimed at maximising electoral support. Behind the scenes subtler calculations are being made about what might be possible in government.

Under Keir Starmer's leadership Labour has made clear it wants to be a pro-business government, and is keen to engage with business leaders.

Our guide explores how organisations can make the most of that invitation.

Labour's Industrial Strategy, published last September, sets out the party's vision for the role of the state and of the private sector in achieving its grand ambitions for economic growth.

Business is put front and centre as the driving force behind better economic resilience, shared prosperity and increased living standards.

Private sector investment is also heralded as the catalyst for achieving ambitious policy outcomes – delivering clean power by 2030, harnessing data analysis and artificial intelligence to deliver better public services, and creating a care service that meets the needs of future generations.

WITH SUCH A HUGE AGENDA, THE ROLE OF BUSINESS WILL BE CRITICAL IN HELPING ADD DEEP EXPERTISE, HARD EVIDENCE AND INTERNATIONAL EXPERIENCE TO HELP LABOUR HIT THE GROUND RUNNING QUICKLY.

The next few months are the pivotal period for organisations to engage with senior Labour figures and to make sense of what a Labour government would be like in reality.

Keir Starmer and his shadow cabinet teams are starting to draw up detailed policy plans for their manifesto, but not a great deal is set in stone yet.

AUTUMN SHOULD BE SEEN AS A KEY DEADLINE – WITH THE SHADOW CABINET TOLD TO PRESENT A CREDIBLE ALTERNATIVE PLAN FOR GOVERNMENT BY THE TIME OF THIS YEAR'S PARTY CONFERENCE.

This report sets out the party's policy-making process and timings; the individuals and external bodies shaping the Shadow Cabinet's thinking; and how proposals might make it all the way to the manifesto – assessing factors from the dynamics of the Leader of the Opposition's Office, to the importance Keir Starmer places on research and focus groups, to the think tanks that 'kite fly' potential policy.

While parts of Labour's policy programme remain under development, in many cases the direction of travel is becoming clearer.

Rachel Reeves, Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer, explores how Labour would partner with business at a recent WA breakfast event



We examine the key priorities for senior members of the Shadow Cabinet; the opportunities and risks for businesses; and how to engage and align – including deep-dives by our sector specialists on Childcare, Education and Skills, Energy, Financial Services, Health & Life Sciences, and Transport.

This guide is only one part of WA's programme of insights on how to effectively engage with the Labour Party in the run-up to the general election:

WA HAS ALREADY HOSTED EXCLUSIVE EVENTS WITH RACHEL REEVES (SHADOW CHANCELLOR OF THE EXCHEQUER), WES STREETING (SHADOW HEALTH SECRETARY), PAT MCFADDEN (SHADOW CHIEF SECRETARY TO THE TREASURY), TOBY PERKINS (SHADOW MINISTER FOR SKILLS AND FURTHER EDUCATION), AND ANAS SARWAR (SCOTTISH LABOUR LEADER) – AND WE ARE PLANNING MORE BETWEEN NOW AND THE GENERAL ELECTION.

(And of course we will continue to provide the same in-depth analysis of the current Government. The Conservatives will be in power for another year at least and we should never write off the chances of Rishi Sunak leading them to one of the more remarkable electoral comebacks in modern times).

We hope you find this guide a useful framework to understand the opportunities to engage with Labour at a pivotal period, shape the direction of the party's policy development, and align your organisation with the Shadow Cabinet's priorities.

To explore our analysis in more detail, and understand how these points apply specifically to your organisation, sector and situation, please get in touch – by email at dominicchurch@wacomms.co.uk or on **020 7222 9500**.

Dominic Church has spent more than two decades advising clients on strategic public affairs. He has significant grassroots political experience, including as a Labour Councillor, activist and fundraiser.

TO BE THE FIRST TO HEAR ABOUT OUR LATEST EVENTS, INSIGHTS AND REPORTS – FOLLOW US

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WA-COMMUNICATIONS

A PARTY PREPARING FOR POWER

STEVE RICHARDS

Senior WA Advisor,
Broadcaster and Journalist



We are in the midst of the last full year before the next general election. For the main opposition party this is much the most important phase in electoral cycle. As far as Labour is concerned those at the top of the party dare to hope that this time they can win. Given Labour's poll lead, the leadership will have to mess up badly not to form the next government.

But the precise outcome of the next election will determine the nature of that administration. If there is a hung parliament Keir Starmer is still likely to be Prime Minister as the smaller parties will almost certainly refuse to prop up the Conservatives for a fifth successive term. However, in such circumstances Starmer will rule precariously, probably leading a minority government rather than a coalition – get ready for another election before very long. If Starmer wins a significant overall majority he will for a time have considerable leeway as Prime Minister. He will be the triumphant Labour leader who overturned a near-landslide Conservative victory in December 2019.

For now, the poll lead gives Starmer authority over his party. He does more or less what he wants in terms of policy development. The other two most influential figures are his Shadow Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, and Labour's Campaign Director, Morgan McSweeney. Starmer has worked closely with McSweeney from the start of his leadership. At the beginning Starmer was not close to Reeves, but since he appointed her as Shadow Chancellor he has come to admire her. He trusts her judgement and they speak most days. He tends to follow Reeves' advice on all matters. In some ways the relationship is more constructive than that between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in the early days of New Labour. Reeves does not want Starmer's job, at least for now. The same did not apply to Brown then. But Blair and Brown were weightier figures by 1997 compared with Starmer and Reeves now.

While Starmer has command of the Labour Party at the moment he is still constrained, or feels as though he is. Starmer is heavily influenced by focus groups and those who played a part in the new Labour era, including Blair and Brown. Unlike any other leader of the opposition he has hired some who worked for his predecessors. His head of strategy, Deborah Mattinson, advised Brown. His media and policy advisers, Mathew Doyle and Peter Hyman, were close

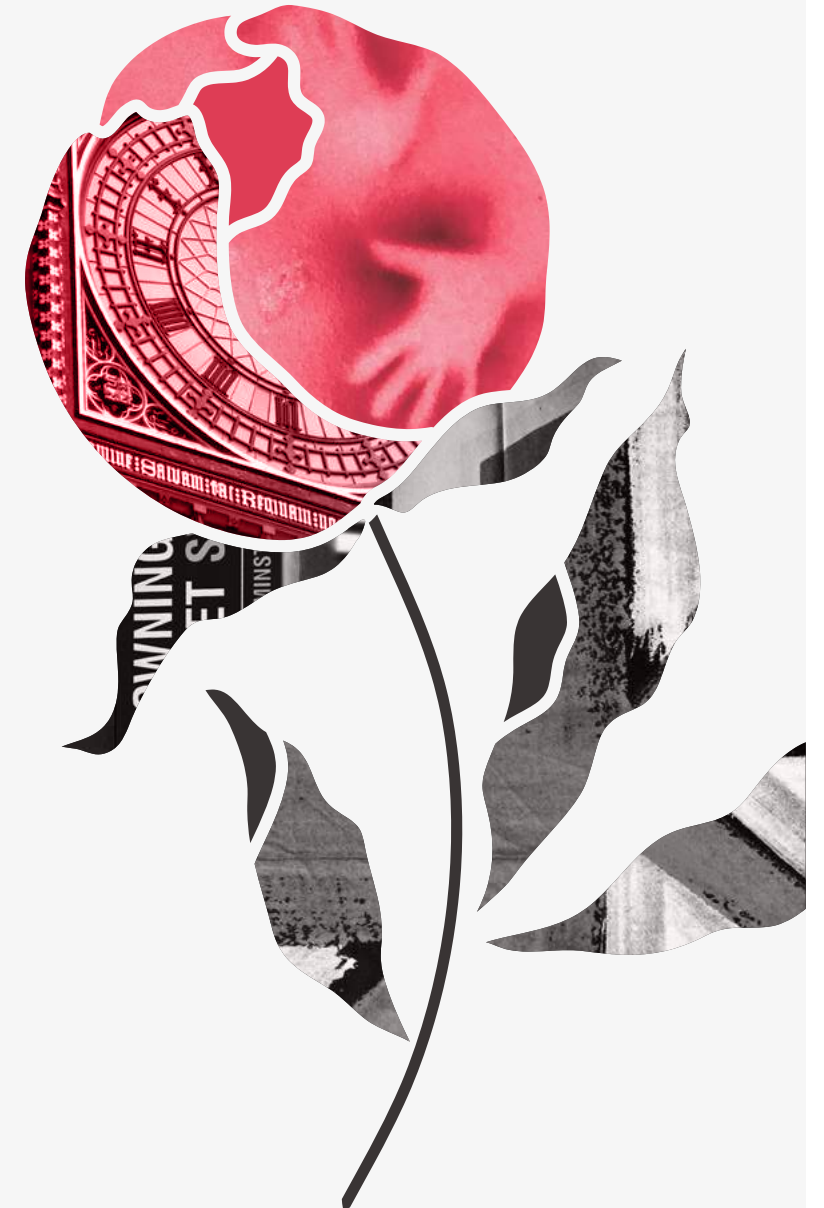
to Blair. Expect New Labour-style caution on 'tax and spend' in the build-up to the election. Brown has told Reeves that Labour must explain where every penny comes from in terms of what it pledges to spend. So far the party's proposed tax on non-doms is doing a lot of heavy lifting, to the point of incredibility. In addition some of those advising the Chancellor of the Exchequer Jeremy Hunt suggest he will propose a version of the Nom Dom tax before the election to steal Labour's protective shield.

Yet New Labour caution is not the whole story. Starmer's planned industrial strategy envisages government working with business leaders in a wider range of sectors than ever contemplated in the past. It plans to borrow £28 billion a year for its 'green recovery' programme, claiming to be as ambitious as President Biden and the EU. Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Lisa Nandy insists that Labour will give more power away to mayors and councils than any other previous government (I am doubtful whether this will happen on the scale suggested. The Treasury will want quite a lot of control). There are plans for tougher regulation in relation to some privatised sectors and for gradual public ownership of the railways. Shadow Education Secretary Bridget Phillipson is evangelical about a national childcare plan.

ALL OF THIS GOES WELL BEYOND NEW LABOUR TERRAIN, BUT A HUGE AMOUNT OF THE DETAIL HAS STILL TO BE WORKED OUT. THERE IS MUCH SPACE FOR BUSINESS LEADERS TO ENGAGE AS STARMER AND HIS TEAM DECIDE PRECISELY WHAT THEY CAN SAY IN ADVANCE OF THE ELECTION.

Starmer has told his shadow cabinet to have policies ready for this year's party conference. In some cases he wants draft legislation in place. Labour's final detailed tax and spend policies will not be in place until early next year. There is some time to go. If Labour retains a commanding lead, the sense that Keir Starmer is the Prime Minister in waiting will deepen. If its poll lead narrows, a party used to losing will struggle to keep its nerve. We need to carry on watching closely.

Steve Richards is a political commentator, writing for the Sunday Times, Guardian, Financial Times and The Independent, and appearing on Newsnight, the Today programme, and Sky News. He is a member of WA's Advisory Board, which provides regular strategic political and communications counsel to our clients.





The shape of a Government in waiting

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION'S OFFICE – AND THE DE FACTO DEPUTY

Keir Starmer has the freedom to choose his office and his senior cabinet – but he has no say over the choice of his deputy: Angela Rayner was elected by the party at the same time Starmer became leader.

Their relationship is both tense and mutually beneficial. Starmer recognises Rayner has an ebullience he lacks. She knows she must remain loyal to him in the build-up to the election in the knowledge that she will become Deputy Prime Minister if Labour wins. But the tensions are deep even if they are currently hidden. He does not wholly trust her judgement and although she is pragmatic she is to the left of him.

In contrast Starmer respects, trusts and admires his Shadow Chancellor, Rachel Reeves. They speak most days and she makes a lot of the big calls in relation to economic policy. In terms of the shadow cabinet Reeves is very much the most powerful figure after Starmer.

SIR KEIR STARMER

Leader of the Opposition



ANGELA RAYNER

Deputy Leader of the Opposition



Sir Keir Starmer (Holborn and St Pancras) and Angela Rayner (Ashton-under-Lyne) were both elected in the 2015 intake of MPs.

STARMER'S KEY TEAM IS MAINLY COMPRISED OF THOSE THAT WORKED IN HIS PARLIAMENTARY OFFICE, HIS LEADERSHIP CAMPAIGN AND OLD GUARDS FROM HIS PREDECESSOR'S TIME AS LEADER

Further details on the key figures in the Leader of the Opposition's Office (LOTO) can be found [overleaf on page 9 and 10](#).

After a slow start to establishing Labour's policy positions, Starmer has landed on five key missions to take the party into the next election, and will be judged by his ability to deliver on these. These missions are deliberately vague, but Labour's policy agenda is clearer than might be widely recognised.

LABOUR'S 5 MISSIONS FOR A BETTER BRITAIN

1. Securing the 'highest sustained growth' in the G7 group of rich nations, made up of the UK, US, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and Japan, by the end of Labour's first term;
2. Making Britain a clean energy superpower, removing fossil fuels from all of Britain's electricity generation by 2030;
3. Improving the NHS;
4. Reforming the justice system;
5. Raising education standards

RACHEL REEVES

Shadow Chancellor of the Exchequer



First elected in 2010, Reeves first rose to prominence within the party when she Chaired the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Select Committee from 2017 – 2020. After this, successful stints as Shadow Minister for the Cabinet Office and as Shadow for the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster saw her promoted to Shadow Chancellor in Starmer's reshuffle in May 2021.

The second most powerful figure in the Labour Party at present, Reeves is highly regarded across the House and seen as the most effective figure in Keir Starmer's arsenal. Reeves and Starmer move in lock-step on policy development, and Keir consults her on all major decisions taken by the LOTO.

Key to her economic agenda will be forging stronger relationships with Europe; easing the tax burden on bricks and mortar businesses; and pursuing a long-term green economy.

She is supported by a six-strong Shadow Treasury Team: Pat McFadden, James Murray, Abena Oppong-Asare, Tulip Siddiq; and in the Lords, Baroness Chapman of Darlington, and Lord Tunnicliffe.

Reeves ensures her shadow team adhere strictly to message discipline as Labour look to win on the most important battleground of any election: the economy.

ADVISERS

Katie Martin
Chief of Staff

Reeves is principally advised by Chief of Staff Katie Martin, who previously served as Chief Press Officer in No.10 during the final two years of Gordon Brown's premiership.

Heather Iqbal
Political Adviser

Another principal adviser, Heather worked on Keir Starmer's leadership campaign in 2019, and previously led Scottish Labour's digital campaigns.

Spencer Thompson
Economic Adviser

The architect of Labour's energy windfall tax and price freeze policies, Spencer has more than a decade's experience at the intersection of economics and social policy, at the GLA, IPPR, and the Work Foundation.

Neil Amin-Smith
Economic Adviser

Neil joined the Shadow Chancellor's team from HM Treasury, before which he was an economist at the Institute for Fiscal Studies... as well as the lead guitarist in Number 1 hit electro group Clean Bandit.

JONATHAN REYNOLDS

Shadow Secretary of State for
Business and Industrial Strategy



Elected in 2010, Reynolds describes himself a “moderate” in the Labour Party.

In an article for the New Statesman in 2016, Reynolds argued that Labour’s understanding of how the state, business and the market economy might interact to produce desired outcomes was “fairly poor”, but if Labour got it right it could easily “outperform the Tories on the economy” because they have a number of built-in advantages, such as instinctive sympathy towards public investment in infrastructure and skills.

Reynolds held a number of shadow ministerial roles under the leaderships of Ed Miliband and Jeremy Corbyn, including Parliamentary Private Secretary to Miliband, and Shadow Minister for Energy and Climate. Under Corbyn, Reynolds acted as Shadow Minister for Transport and Shadow Economic Secretary to the Treasury.

ADVISERS

Fionnuala 'Finn' McGoldrick has worked with Reynolds for two years, and has spent more than six years working for Labour Party HQ in various roles, including as Head of Stakeholders.



THE SENIOR ADVISERS

Morgan McSweeney Campaign Director

The most influential operator in Keir Starmer’s team after Rachel Reeves, Morgan is Labour’s Campaign Director (a position he’s held since September 2021). All policy and communications staff report into him.

He led Keir Starmer’s Labour leadership election campaign, and before taking the Campaign Director role was the Leader of the Opposition’s Chief of Staff.

Prior to this, he spent seven years at the Local Government Association, as a political adviser and Head of the Labour Group Office.

COMMUNICATIONS AND CAMPAIGNING

Matthew Doyle Executive Director of Communications

Formerly Head of Press under Tony Blair, Matthew is focused on profiling the Leader of the Opposition – conveying Starmer’s ideas and personality to the media.

While in principle he is today’s equivalent of Alastair Campbell, Doyle’s CV is rooted in the Labour Party, rather than mirroring Campbell’s wide-ranging print and broadcast experience.

He spent several years working in the party’s press office at the beginning of the last Labour government, before serving as a Special Adviser to Tony Blair; departed from Downing Street with Blair to take up a role as Political Director in his post-government private office; and worked with David Miliband to head up European Communications for the International Rescue Committee.

Stephanie Driver Communications Director

Working closely with Matthew Doyle, Stephanie is particularly focused on proactively engaging with media outlets that are traditionally hostile to Labour.

She has held senior roles in the Labour Party’s Communications team for more than a decade, including Head of Press Events for Keir Starmer and for Ed Balls as Shadow Chancellor, Spokesperson for Harriet Harman during her leadership of the party, and as Head of Regional Media.

Peter Hyman Senior Adviser

Peter served as Tony Blair’s speechwriter for nearly a decade, and has returned to work for Keir Starmer with a remit both to write his speeches and to hone the messaging of the manifesto to “tell the story” of Starmer’s policies.

In between his political roles, he set up multi-academy trust and charity Big Education and oracy education charity Voice 21, and established the Rethinking Assessment coalition of school leaders.

Deborah Mattinson Director of Strategy

A focus group expert, and the Founder of polling firm Thinks (until recently known as BritainThinks), Deborah was brought in by Starmer as Director of Strategy, specifically to advise on how Starmer could win back lost Labour voters after its crushing defeat at the 2019 election. Her focus is now on getting Labour on a stable footing to fight the next general election.

As outlined in more detail on page 22, Starmer is more influenced by the findings of focus groups than most leaders. Deborah currently runs two focus groups per week for Labour, sharing her findings directly with senior advisers the Shadow Cabinet. She will likely act as a ‘sense check’ as the manifesto is developed, feeding in ideas at an early stage from her focus groups, and testing policy proposals with voters as they are developed.

Paul Ovenden
Director of Attack and Rebuttal

Paul worked for Starmer before he was leader and immediately after his election – but while he’s taken a step back recently, he remains a pivotal figure as Starmer’s speech writer, policy adviser, and a trusted part of the team preparing for PMQs every week. He leads Labour’s attack and rebuttal communications, ensuring he has a key position at the heart of every Lobby journalist’s network.

POLICY DEVELOPMENT

Ravinder Athwal
Director of Policy

Rav is preparing Labour’s manifesto for the next election.

An ex-Treasury official (where he was the Department’s Head of Growth Strategy) and economic expert, his appointment is evidence of Labour’s desire to pursue a business-friendly, economy-focused election campaign.

Nick Williams
Head of Economic Policy

Starmer’s second hire from HMT’s Growth Strategy team (following the appointment of Ravinder Athwal in 2020), and one of several recent moves from the civil service to Labour’s team, Nick brings a strong scientific background – having also been Science and Innovation Policy Advisor at the Treasury, and Public Service Innovation Advisor at the Government’s Office for Science.

Muneera Lula
Head of Domestic Policy

A former trade policy adviser at DIT and BEIS (where she was responsible for agreements covering Government Procurement and Labour Markets, and was regarded as one BEIS’s brightest civil servants) and more recently political adviser to Angela Rayner, Muneera joined Starmer’s office as Head of Domestic Policy in April 2022 – where she’s built a reputation as a key figure in his top team.

Tom Webb
Director of Policy and Research

Tom is a former civil servant, who has previously worked in the Department for Work and Pensions, and the Prime Minister’s Implementation Unit in the Cabinet Office.

Further members of the Shadow Cabinet and their advisers are profiled in more detail from [page 26 onward](#) – where we examine the key influencers and emerging thinking around the Labour Party’s policies on Childcare, Education and Skills; Energy; Financial Services; Health & Life Sciences; and Transport.



THE PARLIAMENTARY CANDIDATES TO WATCH

The next election is likely to see a number of experienced political figures and talented rising stars join the Labour benches – including those who held cabinet roles under Tony Blair and Gordon Brown; former special advisers and well-known SW1 names; and senior local government leaders.

Many also bring specialist sector expertise, including candidates with an in-depth understanding of energy, health, financial services, skills and transport policy.

Douglas Alexander
East Lothian

Douglas’s highly probable return to Parliament – he is standing in the #1 Scottish target seat – would allow Labour to draw on his considerable experience as a senior minister in the last Labour government.

With only two current Shadow Cabinet ministers having previously held cabinet roles, such first-hand government experience is in short supply. However, Starmer’s team also remain unsure how (or even whether) to utilise senior figures returning to the Commons should Labour win.

Heidi Alexander
South Swindon

The former MP for Lewisham East, Heidi served as the Deputy Mayor of London for Transport, and Deputy Chair of TfL for three and a half years – coordinating the organisation’s response to Covid lockdowns, negotiating multiple rounds of government funding for London’s transport system during the pandemic, and overseeing the opening of the Elizabeth Line.

Rachel Blake
Cities of London and Westminster

Rachel has been a cabinet member at Tower Hamlets Council for seven years and was a former policy adviser in the Treasury under Gordon Brown.

Emily Darlington
Milton Keynes South

Emily is Milton Keynes Council’s Cabinet Member for Adults, Housing and Healthy Communities, and Deputy Leader of Milton Keynes Labour group.

She was a Special Adviser in the last Labour government, serving in both the Treasury and DTI, and before that was a senior trade union official with the GMB union.

Shaun Davies
Telford

Shaun was recently elected leader of the Local Government Association Labour group – a role that includes acting as local government’s representative in Keir Starmer’s Shadow Cabinet.

It is anticipated he will become Chairman of the LGA after the May 2023 local elections, with Labour expected to become the largest party in local government.

Miatta Fahnbulleh
Camberwell and Peckham

Miatta has been Chief Executive of New Economics Foundation since 2017, before which she was Director of Policy and Research at the IPPR. Prior to this, she was a policy advisor to Ed Miliband when he was Leader of the Opposition, where she shaped Labour's strategy on issues ranging from devolution to climate change.

Before joining the LOTO team, Miatta was a senior civil servant in the Cabinet Office, working in the PM's Strategy Unit under Gordon Brown; and heading the Coalition Government's Cities Policy Unit, which worked with local authorities to drive economic growth by devolving business, housing, skills and transport powers.

She is one of the 50 women who received support and grants from MotheRED, a campaign set up by Stella Creasy MP to break down the barriers to mothers becoming MPs.

Hamish Falconer
Lincoln

Hamish worked as a diplomat with the Foreign Office between 2014 and 2020, and at the Department for International Development between 2009 and 2013 – including roles in the FCO's terrorism response team, and on UK efforts to start a peace process in Afghanistan.

He is the son of Labour peer, Blair-era Minister, and close Keir Starmer ally Lord Falconer. Hamish has been endorsed by trade unions including ASLEF, Community, GMB, NUM, and TSSA.

Kirsty McNeill
Midlothian

Kirsty is a former Special Adviser to Gordon Brown, and Chairs the Advisory Board of Brown's Unionist campaign group Our Scottish Future. She is currently Save the Children's Executive Director of Policy, Advocacy and Campaigns.

Emma Reynolds
Wycombe

Emma was the MP for Wolverhampton North East from 2010 to 2019, during which time she spent two years as Shadow Housing Minister and then Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

She is currently the Managing Director, Public Affairs, Policy & Economic Research at TheCityUK, the trade body for Britain's financial services sector.

Labour's policy-making process



FORMULATING THE POLICY PLATFORM

The Shadow Cabinet have been instructed to present credible alternative plans for government by the time of this year's party conference.

THIS MEANS MUCH OF THE PARTY'S DETAILED POLICY DEVELOPMENT WORK WILL TAKE PLACE BETWEEN NOW AND SEPTEMBER.

TIMELINE

APRIL / MAY 2023

POLICY DOCUMENTS CIRCULATED

Following the Spring National Policy Forum consultation in April policy documents will be circulated to Labour members and affiliate groups.

National Policy Forum (NPF) representatives are then allowed to submit a limited number of amendments, with a deadline in May.

THIS IS INTENDED AS THE MAIN TIME FOR STAKEHOLDERS TO REACH OUT TO THE NPF, AHEAD OF THE JOINT POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING.

The Joint Policy Committee then meets to make recommendations on which amendments should be accepted and which require further consideration. It then produces a draft policy platform.

21ST – 23RD JULY 2023

NATIONAL POLICY FORUM (NPF)

The Joint Policy Committee's draft platform is submitted to a meeting of the National Policy Forum.

Roughly 200 members will come up with a final platform to take to conference.

This process will be accompanied by significant input from the Leader's office and Shadow Cabinet.

Read more about the NPF and its Policy Commissions [on the next page.](#)

8TH – 11TH OCTOBER 2023

ANNUAL LABOUR PARTY CONFERENCE

The final National Policy Forum platform will be voted on at Annual Conference 2023 – forming part of the party programme which is drawn from when producing the general election manifesto (although as outlined on [page 19](#), there is not a direct link between conference motions and manifesto policies).

STARMER REGARDS THIS AUTUMN'S CONFERENCE AS A KEY STEPPING STONE TOWARDS THE ELECTION – WITH SHADOW CABINET MEMBERS ANNOUNCING MORE DETAILED POLICIES TO THE WIDER ELECTORATE THIS AUTUMN.

Read more about the role Annual Conference plays [on the next page.](#)

LATE 2023 / EARLY 2024

The manifesto development process itself is normally led by a handful of senior party advisers, with input from members of the frontbench.

This process is usually highly secretive and tightly controlled by the Leader's office.

2024

CLAUSE V MEETING

Once the general election is called, a Clause V meeting – bringing together representatives from every part of the party – signs off the election manifesto.

Read more about the composition of the Clause V Meeting [on the next page.](#)

CURATING THE MANIFESTO

Labour’s formal policy-making process includes a role for every part of the party – but Keir Starmer is currently in a strong enough position to make all the big calls on what to include in the manifesto.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (NEC)

Overall responsibility for policy sits with the NEC – Labour’s governing body.

The NEC meets regularly to review the work of the party and is responsible for setting Labour’s strategic objectives on an annual basis.



NATIONAL POLICY FORUM

Led by these broad strategic objectives, Labour’s National Policy Forum (NPF) plays a leading role in drafting policy documents ahead of the party’s annual conference – which are then subject of debate and voted on by party members.

The National Policy Forum (NPF) meets several times a year to make sure that the direction of Labour’s policy reflects the broad consensus of the party. It is Chaired by Anneliese Dodds and made up of around 200 representatives of Constituency Labour Party (CLP), Labour Councillors, affiliated trade unions and socialist societies, and the Parliamentary Labour Party (PLP).

The NPF oversees the Policy Commissions outlined to the right.

Between meetings, NPF representatives liaise with the members, supporters and the public who respond to Labour’s National Policy Forum Consultation. This year’s consultation closed on 17 March. NPF representatives respond to submissions and send out further inquiries when necessary.

POLICY COMMISSIONS

Labour’s Policy Commissions – part of the National Policy Forum – are tasked with developing policy ideas within specialist areas.

Commission membership is drawn from the NEC, NPF and Shadow Cabinet. The commissions meet regularly to consider submissions made through the Labour Policy Forum, consult experts, and are responsible for drafting Challenge Papers and Policy Documents.

The current commissions are:

- A green and digital future
- Better jobs and better work
- Safe and secure communities
- Public services that work from the start
- A future where families come first
- Britain in the world.

LOCAL AND REGIONAL POLICY FORUMS

Members may be invited to attend local and regional informal policy discussions throughout the year.

ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Annual Conference helps to shape the policy framework that the next manifesto will be centred on and establishes party regulations.

Conference also considers the policy papers prepared by the commissions and members choose delegates to represent and vote for motions on their behalf.

The policy platform agreed at conference “informs policy development work” as the party produces its election manifesto. However, there is no requirement that passed motions must be reflected in the upcoming manifesto.

But – notably unlike the 2017 and 2019 General Elections – the next manifesto has benefited from a timely, structured process to explore and reconcile different viewpoints within the party (and country).

Equally, the strong oversight from the Leader’s office and Labour HQ, and their control of party structures such as the NEC and NPF, means that the policies passed at this autumn’s conference have Keir Starmer’s blessing.

THE NPF POLICY PLATFORM VOTED ON AT THIS YEAR’S CONFERENCE IS THEREFORE LIKELY TO BE AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO ACCURATELY UNDERSTAND THE DIRECTION OF THE ELECTION MANIFESTO.

However, proposals that entail spending commitments or might be electorally risky may be adopted but vaguely phrased, to allow the party leadership room for manoeuvre as it develops both the manifesto and, if appropriate, a programme for government.

THE DRAFT MANIFESTO

Whilst the manifesto would normally be based on elements of policy developed by the NPF and voted on by members at the party’s annual conference, there is no formal obligation for the manifesto to include policy put forward by the NPF and the party’s membership.

CLAUSE V MEETING

Clause V:
Party Programme
Labour Party Rule Book

When not in Government the NEC, the Shadow Cabinet, the Parliamentary Committee of the Parliamentary Labour Party (‘PLP’), the Leaders of the Scottish and Welsh Labour Parties, and the Chair and three vice Chairs of the NPF and eight Trade Union members of the TULO Contact Group shall decide which items from the Party programme shall be included in the manifesto.*

*Labour Party Rule Book 2022

INFLUENCERS AND OPINION FORMERS

Like any new leader of a political party, Keir Starmer has sought to make his own mark in the role from the outset. While his parliamentary rise has been spectacularly rapid, he, unlike many parliamentarians, can draw on wider experience in a senior high-profile public position before entering Westminster. This means while he is by no means fully developed as a politician, he is very clear on what he wants to achieve and where he will look for advice, guidance and examples of successful social democratic policies in action.

FORMER LEADERS

In very different ways, his four predecessors as Labour leader have all played their part. Ed Miliband plays an important and supportive in his Shadow Cabinet – in the way William Hague did for David Cameron. Whereas his immediate predecessor, Jeremy Corbyn, has inadvertently played his part by allowing Starmer to make a clear break with a regime that spectacularly failed to connect with the electorate.

However, the most important influencers have been former Labour Prime Ministers Tony Blair and Gordon Brown. They were both turned to following the disastrous Hartlepool by-election and their subsequent influence cannot be underestimated, not only on Keir Starmer but on other senior Shadow Cabinet members, many of whom grew up under the last Labour government.

Blair has been particularly influential in advising on how to win from a long period of opposition and on preparing for transition to office, as can be seen by the appointment of the senior staff in Starmer's office.

Brown has published detailed and wide-ranging recommendations on constitutional reform, which in many ways reflect the radical constitutional reform agenda in the 1997 manifesto. In addition, the long-serving former Chancellor is in regular contact with Rachel Reeves, particularly over how to deal with the thorny 'spending commitment' issues Labour will face in the run-up to the next election.

LABOUR IN POWER

Over the past decade, while suffering defeat in general elections, Labour has increasingly won Mayoral control of some of the UK's largest city regions, including Sadiq Khan as Mayor of London, Andy Burnham as Mayor of Greater Manchester and Tracy Brabin as Mayor of West Yorkshire, while continuing its long-running leadership of the Welsh parliament.

While some of these Labour administrations have better relationships than others with the Labour leadership, a future Starmer government would look to replicate some of the political and policy achievements of these Labour administrations.

THINK TANKS

Think tanks were integral to the social policy agenda of New Labour in the mid-'90s, and their time in government was often referred to as "government by think tanks". Since then, think-tanks have held an increasingly important role in policy development of the UK's major political parties.

Under Starmer, think tanks have held a reduced role in policy development, as the LOTO has taken direction from successful progressive policies implemented by governments around the world. Having said that, left-leaning think tanks continue to be important.

- **The Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR)** has historically held significant say within Labour's policy development, particularly during the New Labour era.
- **The Fabian Society**, an affiliated socialist society of the Labour Party, has traditionally been a vehicle for policy ideas from senior Labour figures. For example they recently published Shadow Foreign Secretary David Lammy's 'Britain Reconnected' paper, covering issues ranging from his stance on the security of supply chains, to proposals for a global clean power alliance.
- **The New Economics Foundation**, led by Camberwell and Peckham PPC Miatta Fahnbulleh ([profiled on page 14](#)), is a regular left-leaning 'kite-flyer' in discussions about a future Labour government's approach to taxation and spending – including a suggested tax on 'economic rent' (such as increases in land values), and proposals to scrap the investment allowance that has on occasion allowed energy firms to pay nothing towards the sector's windfall tax.

- **The Resolution Foundation** is led by former Ed Miliband policy chief Torsten Bell and has focused heavily on the impact of austerity on day-to-day living standards – with its research behind Labour attack lines claiming that the average British household will be more than £1,000 worse off due to Conservative policies during this parliament, and is forecast to be worse off than an average Slovenian household by 2024.
- **The Tony Blair Institute for Global Change** is a regular contributor to Labour's policy discussions, across a number of sectors – reflected in the influence the former Prime Minister has in the Leader of the Opposition's office.

TRADE UNIONS

The trade union movement has always been central to Labour's identity, even when the relationship has been turbulent, as it has proven to be many times over the decades. The 11 affiliated trade unions are a key part of Labour's funding and hold significant sway in Labour's democracy and policy-making process.

Nine of these unions sit on Labour's ruling National Executive Committee, and the 'Clause V' meeting that will decide which policies from the party

programme are included in the final election manifesto includes eight Trade Union leaders in the form of the national Trade Union & Labour Party Liaison Organisation 'contact group'.

Beyond this though, the influence of the wider trade union movement on a future Labour government cannot be underestimated. Friendly and constructive trade unionists will be very much brought into the tent under a Labour administration, with their sector expertise being sought out on policy development working groups and commissions. You only have to look at the policy successes that the trade union movement achieved under the last Labour government on everything from workers, rights through to pension reform to understand the importance they can have.

A number of other think tanks and trade unions have strong relationships with specific Shadow Cabinet ministers and their advisers – [these are outlined on pages 26 to 46](#), where we explore who is shaping the development of Labour's policies on Childcare, Education and Skills; Energy; Financial Services; Health & Life Sciences; and Transport.

PEOPLE POWER: THE IMPORTANCE OF POLLING AND FOCUS GROUPS

As Sir Keir Starmer’s chief strategist, Deborah Mattinson has a crucial role in shaping Labour’s policy and priorities. But who is she and what makes her tick?

As far as job interviews go, Mattinson played the long game. Disenchanted with Labour’s 2010 defeat, she wrote Talking To A Brick Wall, a book detailing the disconnect that had developed between New Labour and the voters.

“THE GAP BETWEEN WESTMINSTER VILLAGERS – POLITICIANS, POLICY WONKS, COMMENTATORS AND JOURNALISTS WHO LIVE, EAT AND BREATHE THEIR OWN BREED OF POLITICS – AND EVERYONE ELSE, HAS NEVER BEEN GREATER.

POLITICIANS AND THOSE AROUND THEM MUST NEVER, EVER SEVER THE CONNECTION WITH VOTERS. WHEN THEY LOSE THAT CONNECTION, THEY LOSE.”

Deborah Mattinson, writing in Talking to a Brick Wall

Ten years later, while in charge of the research agency BritainThinks, she penned the follow-up: “Beyond The Red Wall”. The book is a deep-dive into the real people in those politically pivotal parts of England, based again on insights from primary research.

In it, often using their own words, she sets out a five-point plan for Labour to win back those disenfranchised voters who were, for so long, irrevocably red. So, perhaps it was no surprise that in 2021 Sir Keir made her his Director of Strategy.

Mattinson’s appointment speaks volumes about the approach that Starmer’s Labour will take towards policy-making, engagement and, ultimately, the business of governing: one that is rooted in evidence and verified by the opinions of real people across the country.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR INFLUENCING LABOUR?

This approach implies the businesses with the greatest chance of success will be those who demonstrate a commitment to evidence and can show how real people are best served by a proposition.

As a pollster and advocate of qualitative research, Mattinson will look for proof in the insight from all types of data, while trying to weigh the following questions:

- Is this grounded in what real people want and need?
- How can it be achieved so that it will enable Labour to build / maintain as close a relationship as possible with voters?

This approach implies the businesses with the greatest chance of success will be those who demonstrate a commitment to evidence and can show how real people are best served by a policy proposition.

The battlegrounds for business



A RED CARPET AND RED LINES – WHAT FIRMS SHOULD EXPECT FROM A LABOUR GOVERNMENT

LIZZIE WILLS
Partner



Keir Starmer knows that if he is to deliver on his national mission to secure the highest sustained growth in the G7, buy-in to his vision from business will be absolutely crucial.

The Labour Party's relationship with business has shifted significantly, with the language now being used by the party leadership unthinkable only a few short years ago. From a position of borderline hostility towards the private sector under Jeremy Corbyn, under Starmer, has transitioned the party to a place where businesses are proactively being courted and invited to partner with a Labour government in the delivery of key policy initiatives.

IT HAS BEEN WELL ESTABLISHED THAT STARMER IS TRYING TO RECREATE THE BUSINESS-FRIENDLY DAYS OF NEW LABOUR, HOSTING A LARGE NUMBER OF ROUNDTABLES WITH BUSINESSES OF ALL SIZES ACROSS THE COUNTRY, TO ENSURE WIDESPREAD TRUST AND SUPPORT FOR LABOUR'S POLICY AGENDA.

PARTY SOURCES HAVE SAID LABOUR IS IN "LIVE CONVERSATIONS" OVER SECURING PUBLIC ENDORSEMENTS FROM PROMINENT BOSSES FOR THE RUN-UP TO THE ELECTION.

The Labour leader and his immediate team, notably Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves and Shadow Health Secretary Wes Streeting, are embracing language reminiscent of the party's New Labour heyday. Perhaps unsurprisingly, given the level of influence of some of New Labour's key figures on the left of the party point to the more socialist agenda that got him elected leader in 2020, much of which has been junked to make way for a more moderate, pro-business platform. His charm offensive at Davos and regular meetings with City giants haven't gone unnoticed, nor did his pledge to the CBI conference in November that a Labour Party in government would be "not just a pro-business party but a party that is proud of being pro-business."

Strategically this shift in position is important for the party, setting it up to capture disaffected Conservative voters and to demonstrate it is no longer shackled by the ideological constraints of the past. But equally this is a shrewd practical decision and a recognition of the political and economic realities the party will face in government.

Labour's Industrial Strategy, published last September, sets out the party's vision for the role of the state and of the private sector in achieving its grand ambitions for economic growth. Business is put front and centre as the driving force behind better economic resilience, shared prosperity and increased living standards. Private sector investment is also heralded as the catalyst for achieving ambitious policy outcomes – delivering clean power by 2030, harnessing data analysis and artificial intelligence to deliver better public services, and creating a care service that meets the needs of future generations.

STARMER IS BEGINNING TO PUT SOME FLESH ON THE BONES OF WHAT THE 'MISSIONS' IN THE INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY WOULD MEAN IN PRACTICE.

For example, a new Green Prosperity Plan to attract private sector investment, a reformed planning system to reduce barriers to investment in emerging industries, and a new National Wealth Fund to ensure the British people will benefit from the returns on investment in British industry.

To ensure that businesses can access the talent and expertise they need to drive growth, the party has also committed to increasing the flexibility of the apprenticeships levy, introducing a new expert body – Skills England – to oversee the national skills effort, tackling disincentives in the benefit system and investing in specialist employment support to help people – including the over-50s and those with ill health – back into work.

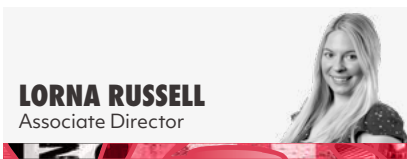
But for all the pro-business rhetoric, it won't be a free ride for the private sector under a Labour government. Starmer backed the government's corporation tax increase – from 19% to 25% – which came into effect in April 2023, and the Shadow Chancellor has previously spoken in favour of a global minimum corporation tax rate. Whilst Rachel Reeves has stated that the party currently has "no plans" to increase Capital Gains Tax, other senior figures – including deputy leader Angela Rayner – have refused to rule out such a move. Whilst aligning CGT with income tax rates immediately is unlikely (capital flight is something Labour will be keen to avoid), a significant uplift would be an important step in ending "the unfairness that sees incomes from wealth taxed at lower rates than incomes from work" that the party has identified as being both a moral and economic imperative.

The ability for private equity investors to benefit from what Labour sees as the tax loophole on carried interest will also be a top target, with Labour estimating removing the preferential tax treatment would generate an additional £440 million for the Exchequer. Non-doms and Big Business have also been identified as potential revenue raisers, with a removal of non-dom status and an extension of the windfall tax on energy companies planned.

Starmer is keen to demonstrate that the UK economy would be in safe hands under a Labour government, with a fiscally responsible captain who understands the responsibilities of sound economic principles at the helm. In the run-up to the election we'll see much more detail about how the Labour Party plans to deliver on its grand economic plans, but Starmer is keen we understand one thing: Labour means Business.

Lizzie Wills is a political and policy risk expert, with more than a decade's experience guiding clients through highly regulated and complex policy environments. She leads WA's Investor Services practice, which advises firms on political and regulatory due diligence and M&A issues.

CHILDCARE, EDUCATION AND SKILLS



LORNA RUSSELL
Associate Director

“CHILDCARE HAS TO BE PART OF A COUNTRY’S ECONOMIC STRATEGY.”

Bridget Phillipson
Shadow Education Secretary



BRIDGET PHILLIPSON
Shadow Secretary of State
for Education

Elected in 2010, Phillipson first joined the Shadow Cabinet in 2020, as Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury and promptly rose through the ranks to Shadow Education Secretary in November 2021.

Phillipson has been quick to assert that childcare reform should be Labour’s top priority for education, having recently travelled to Estonia and Australia to look at different models of care.

ADVISERS

Tim Waters is a longstanding Labour staffer with more than 12 years’ experience in Labour HQ, who first joined Phillipson’s office when she was Shadow Chief Secretary.

Vicky Salt has a background in the charity sector, having previously worked in policy and campaigns for Action on Smoking and Health UK and for the Salvation Army in public affairs.

Owain Mumford was previously an adviser to the Shadow Justice Secretary and worked in public and external affairs at the Post Office and Arthritis Research UK.

Shadow frontbench:

- **Toby Perkins** – Shadow Skills and Lifelong Learning Minister
- **Matt Western** – Shadow Higher Education Minister
- **Helen Hayes** – Shadow Children’s Minister
- **Stephen Morgan** – Shadow Schools Minister
- **Lord Michael Watson of Invergowrie** – Shadow Education Spokesperson

Influential parliamentarians:

- **Lord David Blunkett** – Chair of Labour’s Council of Skills Advisers
- **Emma Hardy** – Chair of the Apprenticeships APPG
- **Lord Jim Knight of Weymouth** – Former Schools Minister
- **Ian Mearns** – Deputy Chair of the Education Select Committee
- **Baroness Estelle Morris** – Labour’s Bright Future Taskforce

External influencers:

- **Mary Bousted** – Joint General Secretary of the NEU
- **Sian Griffiths** – Education Editor, Sunday Times
- **David Laws** – Executive Chairman, Education Policy Institute
- **Fiona Millar** – journalist and campaigner

One of the most significant challenges facing the country today is the need to rebuild the economy and ensure that workers have the right skills required to support the jobs of the future. However, at present the outlook looks uncertain; the UK has a serious skills gap.

Addressing this and creating a so-called “skills revolution” is one of the current government’s key priorities, being championed by Skills Minister Robert Halfon. This is likely to come to the fore in the coming months as the Government formally responds to the Augar Review and publishes the long-awaited Higher Education Bill to rebalance the focus and funding of post-18 education.

But Labour see a number of other education policy challenges facing the country today that policymakers must address:

- The need to ensure that every family has access to high-quality, affordable childcare
- The recruitment crisis in schools, early years, and children’s social care
- The knock-on disruptive impact that Covid-19 has had on students and learners
- A need to act on university tuition fees.

Labour are taking a holistic approach to education, seeking to create a culture of lifelong learning from early years through to retirement.

EARLY YEARS

Currently at the top of Bridget Phillipson’s list is the cost of childcare – the Shadow Education Secretary is thought to be buoyed from recent trips to Estonia and Australia to explore their affordable and flexible approaches to child care provision.

Labour’s [Children’s Recovery Plan](#) also promises a “renewed focus on the early years” and an increase of the Early Years Pupil Premium by more than 400%.

The sector wants to secure a stable future – through reforms to, and funding for, childcare. The difficulty for the Opposition, however, will be funding their ambitions for a childcare revolution, as all funding commitments that make it into Labour’s manifesto will need to be costed and signed off by the Labour Leader and Shadow Chancellor.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Beyond the childcare challenge, another key focus of the Labour Education frontbench is the skills and reskilling agenda, to ensure that adults across the country have the skills they need to gain good jobs and boost local and regional economies.

“LABOUR WANTS TO SEE A MORE BALANCED SKILLS SYSTEM, RECOGNISING THE NEEDS OF BOTH THE LEARNER AND THE EMPLOYER. ALL STAKEHOLDERS MUST WORK TOGETHER TO CREATE A HOLISTIC OFFER FOR LEARNERS AND EMPLOYERS.”

Toby Perkins
Shadow Skills Minister

Last September Keir Starmer set out [Labour's plan for skills](#), announcing that the party would reform the Apprenticeships Levy into a 'Growth and Skills Levy' and would also establish a new expert body, Skills England, to oversee the national effort to meet the skills needs of the coming decade across all regions, and ensure the party can deliver its Climate Investment Pledge.

In December, [Labour's Council of Skills Advisors](#), led by Lord David Bunkett, published its report and recommendations on policy initiatives to improve education and skills delivery at all levels to generate economic growth and accelerate productivity.

Reforming the skills agenda will favour apprenticeship providers and FE colleges – but could have implications for universities if funding is diverted away from higher education.

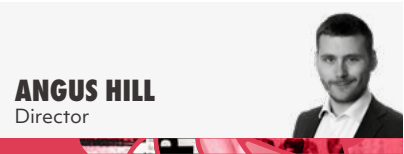
At the last two elections Labour had promised to abolish tuition fees, but it is very likely that Labour will reverse this pledge in its next manifesto and instead set out a sustainable funding plan for universities, perhaps similar to the 'graduate tax' that was once proposed by former leader Ed Miliband.

RISKS	OPPORTUNITIES
<p>Universities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Higher Education could lose out to FE and apprenticeship providers in post-18 education reforms, so they will need to demonstrate how they can work alongside skills providers and local FE colleges to play a critical role in delivering on the reskilling agenda.	<p>Childcare providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Engaging with the National Policy Forum's 'supporting families' group and responding to their open consultation document, 'A future where families come first' is a key opportunity to shape Labour policy. <p>Skills providers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Labour's promise of flexibility in their approach to the apprenticeship levy presents significant opportunities for skills and FE providers to expand their training.

Lorna Russell specialises in advising clients on education, early years, and skills policy. She served as a Labour Councillor for eight years in the London Borough of Camden, is the trustee of a local Sure Start centre, and served as the governor of an education charity.

In-depth sector analysis

ENERGY



Decarbonisation and addressing the climate crisis is Ed Miliband's number one priority. He's driven by decarbonising the UK's power sector by 2030 – just over five years after Labour could potentially form the next government, leaving little room for error.

ED MILIBAND
Shadow Secretary of State for Climate Change and Net Zero



An MP since 2005, Miliband is one of the few Shadow Frontbenchers to have previously served in Government – as Minister for the Cabinet Office under Gordon Brown and then as Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change, until the 2010 General Election.

Having served as Leader of the Labour Party and Leader of the Opposition between 2010 and 2015, Miliband returned to the Labour frontbench after the appointment of Keir Starmer as Leader of the Party – first as Shadow Secretary for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy, and now as Shadow Secretary of State for Climate Change and Net Zero.

He is known for his passion for energy policy, committing a future Labour government to creating a zero-carbon electricity system by 2030, five years ahead of the incumbent government's target, powered by a combination of renewables and nuclear.

Jonny Reynolds and Rachel Reeves share the commitment to achieving clean power by 2030, but see this as about more than just climate targets. For them, green industrial strategy is central to Labour's growth plans. They're framing this agenda as a project to deliver new high-quality jobs in long-term sustainable sectors, with the UK getting the supply chain gains as well as new infrastructure.

ADVISERS

Jonty Leibowitz has been in post for more than two years. Leibowitz previously worked for independent think tank the Centre for Local Economic Strategies and was a Social Innovator Fellow for social innovation accelerator Year Here.

Tobias Garnett is a Former Human Rights Lawyer, who served as a Policy Adviser to Keir Starmer during his Leadership Campaign, before being appointed to Miliband's office.

In addition, two other party advisers are highly influential on Energy and Net Zero issues:

John Bachelor is the Leader of the Opposition's economic policy advisor on Net Zero, having joined Keir Starmer's team from the civil service, where he worked as an Economist at BEIS, and as a Senior Policy Adviser at HMT.

Finn McGoldrick, Political Adviser to Jonathan Reynolds, Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Industrial Strategy ([profiled on page 10](#)).

Shadow frontbench:

- **Kerry McCarthy** – Shadow Minister for Climate Change
- **Alan Whitehead** – Shadow Minister (Climate Change and Net Zero)
- **Jonny Reynolds** – Shadow Business Secretary (not in Miliband's Climate Change and Net Zero team, but a key frontbench influencer on energy)

Influential parliamentarians:

- **Bill Esterson** – Shadow Minister for Business and Industry (with a particular focus on green industrialisation)
- **Darren Jones** – Chair, BEIS Select Committee
- **Clive Lewis** – from the left, but will hold a future Labour government to account on energy policy
- **Charlotte Nichols** – member of the BEIS select committee and champion for nuclear and hydrogen sectors
- **Alex Sobel** – Chair, Net Zero APPG

External influencers:

- **Paul McNamee** – Director, Labour Climate and Environment Forum
- **Luke Murphy** – Head of the Environmental Justice Commission, IPPR
- **Joss Garman** – Executive Director, European Climate Forum (former Labour energy adviser)
- **Simon Evans** – Carbon Brief

WHILE LABOUR HAS MADE A BIG PLAY OF MOVING AWAY FROM RENATIONALISATION – PARTICULARLY OF NETWORKS AND SUPPLIERS – THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT INTERVENTIONS THEY CAN MAKE THAT ARE SHORT OF THIS, BUT WHICH STILL IMPACT HOW THESE FIRMS OPERATE.

Achieving Net Zero will require a fundamental change to our energy system, at extraordinary pace: significant investment in low-carbon generation, combined with major reforms to our infrastructure and changing consumer behaviour. The expectations on the energy sector in delivering this are huge.

Energy is in the political and media spotlight. The war in Ukraine has driven a renewed focus on energy affordability and security – the government have made securing cheap and reliable 'homegrown energy' their priority, with a commitment to the UK having the cheapest wholesale power costs in Europe by 2035.

The Labour Party don't disagree on either objective – cost or security of supply. Labour's national mission on making the UK a clean energy superpower reflects this. Where the two parties fundamentally differ is on the pace of change. Labour have put forward an ambitious target of achieving power decarbonisation by 2030, five years ahead of the Government's ambition, which is already widely perceived by industry as unachievable.

THERE ARE TWO OTHER KEY DIFFERENCES:

1. Labour would be much more willing to put Net Zero and decarbonisation front and centre of their agenda. This may not fundamentally change policy, as the reality is that low-carbon generation is the best route to achieving the government's two objectives, but it will change the framing.
2. A Labour government would mean a much greater role for the state as an 'enabler' in achieving these targets. The establishment of Great British Energy and the £28bn public investment through the Green Prosperity Plan reflect this increased appetite for intervention.

The sector should be providing solutions to Labour now on how proposals such as Great British Energy can make the greatest contribution to achieving their objectives, without deterring other investment. Firms should demonstrate how they are aligned with Labour's priorities – particularly on pace of delivery towards decarbonisation targets and the creation of high-quality, long-term jobs through strategically important green supply chains.

Angus Hill delivers integrated communications campaigns across the energy sector, working across generation technologies, networks and grids, and to support the development of new clean tech solutions.

RISKS

- **Tougher on UK supply chain requirements:** Labour has focused on the jobs and economics benefits from the green energy transition. It's possible to expect this to present itself in a tougher policy approach, with UK component part requirements increasing for renewables developers, for example.
- **Risk of unfair competition from a publicly owned energy company:** Great British Energy will be a critical part of Labour's plans, but private firms face a risk that it operates on unequal terms, at an advantage compared with competitors.
- **Continuation of windfall taxes and scrutiny over profits:** Starmer has been outspoken on the level of returns overseas energy generators operating in the UK are achieving. Labour's response to this has been the development of GBE, but it also led the way in calling for windfall taxes to apply to clean power generators, as well as oil and gas producers. The big question is whether they push for the continuation of these interventions beyond 2028.
- **Potential for tougher regulation:** Ofgem has come under scrutiny for its regulation of the retail market and how effectively it has held networks to account for the pace at which they are supporting the move to Net Zero. It wouldn't be a surprise to see tougher regulation and a change in Ofgem's remit in both these areas.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Unblocking the barriers to deploying low carbon generation:** to meet the 2030 power decarbonisation target, Labour will need to take an aggressive and robust approach to removing the barriers to new generation capacity, particularly around planning and grid connections. Whether this is achievable is another question, but the hope for the sector is that they will be more willing to drive through reform quickly.
- **Greater public funding to kick-start new technologies:** Labour's £28bn per year in capital investment to support the green transition will mean more funding available to unlock new projects and technologies, be that nuclear, CCUS or hydrogen.
- **Moving faster should mean support for more projects:** the current Government has taken a relatively cautious approach to the number of projects they are backing – particularly in areas like nuclear or CCUS. To hit 2030 power decarbonisation, Labour will need to move much faster and at a greater scale. It should mean there are fewer 'losers' and more projects can progress at once.

In-depth sector analysis

FINANCIAL SERVICES

NATASHA EGAN-SJODIN
Director



In comparison with the Conservatives, Labour's financial services platform puts a much greater emphasis on promoting better outcomes for consumers. Labour have also been explicit in their ambition to improve access to capital, markets and growth opportunities by removing regulatory barriers.

RACHEL REEVES

Shadow Chancellor the Exchequer



As a former Bank of England economist, the Shadow Chancellor is no stranger to the inner workings of the Square Mile and the unpredictable winds of the financial markets.

Firmly in control of the party's economic and fiscal policies, Rachel has expressed the need to partner with the financial services sector to unlock institutional investment and incubate high-tech start-ups in order to balance public finances and strive for growth.

From the start, Reeves has attempted to establish Labour as the party of sound money, and she has made collaboration and an "open door policy" the centre-piece of her engagement with the financial services sector.

ADVISERS

Katie Martin – Chief of Staff

Spencer Thompson – Economic Advisor

Heather Iqbal – Political Advisor

[Biographies for Rachel Reeves' advisors can be found above on page 9.](#)

Senior advisors to other members of the Shadow Treasury team include:

Oliver Denton managed Tulip Siddiq's local campaign and is now her Chief of Staff.

Liam Taggart is Head of Office to Tulip Siddiq and has a wealth of parliamentary experience.

Henna Shah is Political Advisor to Pat McFadden and councillor for the London Borough of Lambeth.



Shadow frontbench:

- **Pat McFadden** – Chief Shadow Secretary to the Treasury – focused on future fiscal policies that keep pace with the evolution of the sector and uphold consumer duty
- **Tulip Siddiq** – Shadow Economic Secretary to the Treasury – leading the opposition charge on the Financial Services and Markets Bill
- **Abena Oppong-Asare** – Shadow Exchequer Secretary – working to make the UK an attractive financial hub
- **James Murray** – Shadow Financial Secretary – remit covers new financial legislation and tax reform
- **Lord Tunncliffe CBE** – Shadow Treasury Spokesperson – currently holding the government to account on financial resilience and inclusion
- **Baroness Chapman of Darlington** – Shadow Treasury Spokesperson – shaping legislation around the UK's divergence from the EU

Influential parliamentarians:

- **Sir Stephen Timms** – Vice-Chair of the FinTech APPG, and Vice Chair of the Financial Markets and Services APPG
- **Darren Jones** – Chair of the BEIS Select Committee
- **Dame Meg Hillier** – Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
- **Stella Creasy** – active campaigner for more regulation in the financial services sector and staunchly vocal on consumer protection
- **Angela Eagle** – Member of the Treasury Select Committee, and former Chair of Labour's National Policy Forum
- **Siobhain McDonagh** – Member of the Treasury Select Committee and Financial Services and Markets Bill Committee
- **Emma Hardy** – Member of the Treasury Select Committee and Financial Services and Markets Bill Committee

The UK now has an established financial services framework post-Brexit and the future debate is over how far – and how fast – these reforms will go. Whilst Labour has been vocal about its plan to unlock “Brexit dividends”, there remains tension within the party between those who are calling for further deregulation and those who champion a more cautious, consumer-centric approach to future regulatory policy.

To bridge this gap, Labour has steadily distanced itself from the language of de-regulation, and its financial services ambitions centre around generating Inward Investment, delivering Green Prosperity and building long-term sustainable growth across the country.

At the heart of this ambition is Keir Starmer's economic mission: To secure the highest sustained growth in the G7.

The Shadow Treasury team, headed by Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves, has been clear that the financial services sector is central to achieving this and we can expect a steady and measured pace to regulatory and policy reforms that will remove barriers to growth. Shadow Economic Secretary Tulip Siddiq's work on the scale-up investment review and the plethora of amendments the party tabled to the Financial Services and Markets Bill are early indicators of this.

The party is also very conscious of the implications of geo-political policies on the UK's competitiveness, including how Biden's Inflation Reduction Act and the EU's response will influence the UK investment landscape. The party's Green Prosperity plan, launched in 2022, is a major part of their response to this and it is clear that Labour wants to work in partnership with the financial services sector to head off any future challenges.

However, there are still large areas of policy and regulation where Labour has yet to set out its vision and whilst policy development is well underway, we can see the direction of travel from interventions on regulatory changes in recent months. In Opposition, Labour have made consumer protection a flagship mission for their position on financial services, most notably seeking a secondary objective on consumer duty for the FCA in the Financial Services and Markets Bill.

DIVERGENCE FROM GOVERNMENT POLICY ON EU REGULATORY REFORM, BNPL AND CRYPTO INDICATE THAT LABOUR WILL PURSUE A MORE INTERVENTIONIST POSITION ON SIMILAR ISSUES.

It is clear Labour is in listening mode and keen to re-establish its economic credibility to achieve this. Since being made Chancellor, Rachel Reeves has been on the charm offensive with businesses across the Square Mile. She has met with more than 180 senior figures in business and finance including the likes of FTSE 100 companies and global giants like NatWest, HSBC, and EY – often in one-to-one meetings to discuss areas of mutual interest.

Her Shadow team has followed suit, appearing at a number of industry engagements in recent weeks, and they are increasingly turning to industry for solutions in this highly regulated and technically complicated market.

For those seeking to engage there is clearly appetite for fresh thinking and ideas, as well as the technical expertise to help shape long term thinking. Firms should come armed with a clear view on regulatory barriers and risks, particularly in light of the FCA's increased remit, and on how success in the sector can help drive economic growth across the country.

RISKS

- **Consumer protection over innovation:** Labour's commitment to driving consumer outcomes – as evidenced in recent interventions on BNPL and crypto – could lead them to prioritise protectionist policies over driving investment.
- **Critical of bad consumer outcomes:** This same focus means that there is a high risk of reputational damage for firms that get it wrong with consumers, as backbench Labour MPs use bad outcomes to push for tougher action.
- **Tough on regulatory requirements:** Under a Labour Government firms could face tighter regulation around things like capping bankers' bonuses, consumer protection and climate change. The party has already demanded that financial institutions and FTSE 200 companies publish their carbon footprints.

OPPORTUNITIES

- **Reform to unlock investment:** Labour has set out plans to unlock private sector investment and reform the British Business Bank, with detail still to follow.
- **Positions on technical issues are still being developed:** Crypto, digital assets and consumer credit continue to be a focus for vocal Labour backbenchers, meaning there is room to influence long-term thinking as current HMT and FCA consultations come to an end later this year.
- **Pensions are a key battleground:** Labour's commitment to reverse the Government's latest pension reform indicates there is likely to be a big announcement in this space ahead of the election.



In-depth sector analysis

HEALTH AND LIFE SCIENCES

CAROLINE GORDON
Partner and Head of Health



"REFORM IS NOT A CONSERVATIVE WORD. IN RECENT ELECTIONS, THE LEFT HAS GIVEN A LOT OF PEOPLE THE IMPRESSION THE ANSWER TO EVERYTHING IS TO POUR MORE MONEY IN. OF COURSE, INVESTMENT IS NEEDED IN THE NHS, BUT ASK ANY PATIENT ABOUT THEIR MISERABLE EXPERIENCES AND IT'S PARTLY ABOUT CULTURE AND SYSTEMS. THAT'S GOT TO CHANGE TOO."

Wes Streeting

Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care

WES STREETING

Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care



With his working-class roots and colourful family backstory, Streeting has a strong Labour heritage story.

Elected in 2015, he was quickly earmarked for a senior role. He was promoted to Shadow Secretary of State for Health by Starmer in 2020, having previously served in the frontbench team as a Shadow Minister for Schools and Child Poverty and as Shadow Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury. Prior to his election held various third-sector roles and was President of the National Union of Students.

Seen as being on the right of the party, Wes is a strong advocate for the healthcare sector, knowledgeable about NHS challenges and thoughtful in considering solutions. He draws on his own recent experiences of surviving kidney cancer to highlight the importance of early diagnosis, but also the pressures facing the NHS.

Although still light on detailed policy, he has not shied away from proposing reforms needed to modernise the NHS, voicing views that go beyond recent holders of the shadow health brief. Primary care reform, workforce, prevention and innovation are key watchwords, alongside a strong desire to finally address the social care conundrum.

Yet, like all frontbenchers, he is cautious in committing to unfunded promises. This has limited his scope for reform, and led to caution on all-out support for striking NHS workers.

ADVISERS

Sarah Ellys Harrison, Political Adviser, joined Wes Streeting's team in 2021, prior to which she worked for the Prime Minister's Council for Science and Technology, and as a Grants Adviser on Genetics and Molecular Sciences at the Wellcome Trust.

Tom Gardiner, Policy Adviser, is a medical doctor – working in Wes Streeting's office while also working as a GP trainee in London. He is an Executive Committee Member of the Fabian Society, alongside leading Labour figures including Keir Starmer and Anneliese Dodds.

Will Prescott, Adviser to the Shadow Health Secretary, has previously worked for a board-level executive search firm, and the Government of South Australia.

Shadow frontbench:

- **Rosena Allin-Khan** – Shadow Minister for Mental Health
- **Feryal Clark** – Shadow Minister for Primary Care & Patient Safety
- **Andrew Gwynne** – Shadow Minister for Public Health
- **Liz Kendall** – Shadow Minister for Social Care
- **Baroness Merron** – Shadow Spokesperson for Health and Social Care
- **Baroness Wheeler** – Shadow Spokesperson for Social Care

Influential parliamentarians:

- **Chi Onwurah** – Shadow Minister for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
- **Paul Blomfield** – Member, Health and Social Care Select Committee
- **Taiwo Owatemi** – Member, Health and Social Care Select Committee
- **Daniel Zeichner** – Chair, APPG for Life Sciences
- **Carolyn Harris MP** – Campaigner on women's health

External influencers:

- IPPR
- NHS Confederation
- King's Fund
- The Resolution Foundation

With the next government set to inherit an NHS stretched to its limits, it could be argued that more currently unites Labour and the Conservatives on NHS policy than divides them. Funding, for example. Aside from Labour's pledge to boost the NHS workforce with funds raised by closing the non-domiciled tax status, neither party is currently arguing for an increase in spending on the NHS beyond the current settlement.

There is also no intention for wholesale reform or restructuring of the NHS from a Labour government, despite Streeting being outspoken on the need for modernisation. In part, there is a recognition that the endless revolution of NHS structures is unhelpful for strategic planning. And in part it is an acknowledgement that recent changes to formalise integration were largely asked for by NHS England itself.

Combined, this may suggest that there is limited ambition for major changes in health policy under a Labour government.

However, there is no doubt that an incoming Labour administration will want to make a strong, early impact on health outcomes and direction of travel.

Healthcare is always political and given the current and worsening crisis in the NHS, Labour will, of course, focus on the Conservative Party's record, the impact of austerity on services and any number of statistics showing the current state of care. Labour's solutions will need to be costed – but expect to see a small number of defined early 'wins' that can show rapid progress, alongside longer term plans for workforce and social care. For example, the reintroduction of key 'Blair-style' targets and using the independent sector to quickly drive down waiting lists have already been proposed.

Streeting is outspoken on the need for health service modernisation, with a vision of making the UK a world leader in patient outcomes. He has said he is excited by healthcare innovation coming from outside the NHS, and has been interested to explore with partners how to embed new solutions for patients.

THIS PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY FOR INNOVATORS FROM LIFE SCIENCES AND MEDTECH TO DRAW LINES BETWEEN NATIONAL AND LOCAL POLICY THAT CAN MOVE BEYOND SIMPLY PROPPING UP EXISTING SERVICES, TO FOCUSING ON ACHIEVING REALISTIC MODERNISATION OF NHS CARE.

Focus on success stories and opportunities to support the issues that matter to Labour – economic growth and an NHS built for the future – without reinventing the wheel or requiring big investment.

But despite Streeting's ambition, he is also aware that achieving meaningful reform will take time and will be even more challenging while the NHS is still struggling to address the backlog, cut waiting times and secure sufficient workforce capacity.

This means that rather than committing to whole-system, radical reform, Streeting is instead focusing on specific elements that he believes require the most urgent change.

1. PRIMARY CARE

Streeting believes the front door to the NHS is fundamentally broken and has not shied away from his view that reform is vital to drastically improve access. This includes an increased role for pharmacies, enabling patients to directly access specialist care without requiring GP referral, and – most boldly – an overhaul of the GP contract to phase out GP partners and introduce NHS salaried GPs. This has drawn the ire of the BMA, but Streeting has been bullish in response: "I want to listen to the profession and take people with us but, most importantly, I want to get this right for patients."

2. PREVENTION

Streeting also wants to prioritise prevention, both as a means of addressing health inequalities and to reduce pressures on primary and secondary care. This is closely linked to his vision for primary care, where GP surgeries are replaced with health centres able to provide a wide range of services and facilities in the community or in people's homes. Don't expect this to encompass secondary or tertiary prevention – this is primary prevention in its traditional sense to address ill health upstream. There is, however, a clear role within this vision for medtech and diagnostics. Showing how patients can receive access to faster care, interventions and diagnosis, without needing to go to hospital for minor issues or simple scans and tests, can open doors.

3. BUILDING CAPACITY

The NHS workforce has long been a priority for Labour and Streeting has been clear on his concerns about the use of agency staff across the NHS to fill capacity gaps. The party's plan to use funds generated by the removal of the non-dom tax status to increase medical school places is an example of the fully costed policies it is keen to land with the public.

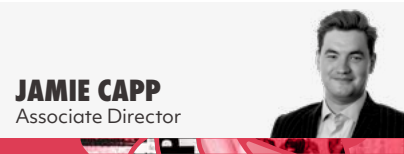
Crucially, Streeting is also pragmatic. He knows that this plan will not address the immediate NHS staffing crisis. And he knows that reforms to primary care and a drive on prevention will not resolve existing backlogs and long waiting times. This means an acceptance of the need to work with the private sector to provide additional capacity while protecting the core principle of an NHS that is free at the point of use. This type of approach would have been unthinkable under the previous party leadership, but it's one that is likely to be welcomed by an electorate that is tired of waiting for essential care.

Health care providers and the life sciences industry need to tap into this appetite to work with business, while also demonstrating how their products, medicines and services can positively contribute to improved patient outcomes in the long run.

Caroline Gordon provides senior counsel and insight to clients including pharmaceutical and med-tech clients, healthcare providers and patient groups. Before joining WA, she led high-impact campaigns in the voluntary sector, provided political insight and communications guidance to London's local authority Labour Leaders and elected Mayors as an adviser at London Councils, and was an advisor to Labour Minister Yvette Cooper.



RISKS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Showing progress on the pressures facing the NHS is a key election priority for both parties. As a result, any commitments or priorities within healthcare that are seen as too politically risky may be avoided.• Despite the Labour Party being significantly more open to engaging with businesses and industry overall, the private sector is likely to be seen as a resource to help with overspill capacity, meaning businesses need to demonstrate the longer-term value of their services.• The Labour Party will not be immediately able to capitalise on innovative ideas and opportunities for system reform.	<p>The NHS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Show how industry can help achieve improvements around Labour's goals – on access to GPs, the elective care backlog, more effective use of community pharmacy – without requiring complete system reform.• Start seeding more innovative longer-term solutions for the system into engagement with key Labour stakeholders. <p>Life Sciences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The pandemic has demonstrated Britain's strength in life sciences, and Labour will be focused on how innovation (including in R&D, in science, in technology) can drive national and local prosperity.• Conscious of trying to achieve big policy ambitions while having limited funding, Labour is more likely to focus on encouraging private sector investment to bolster public spending e.g., investing 3% of GDP on R&D.• The party's Industrial Strategy proposal is at the heart of this vision for public-private partnership. The Life Sciences sector is interlinked in all aspects of this ambition, with a focus on how the Covid-19 vaccine 'mission based' strategy helped achieve a specific goal.



Labour's priorities in transport are to achieve a fairer and greener sector, reducing carbon emissions and driving economic growth across the UK.

This means supporting the transition to electric vehicles and creating a vibrant UK manufacturing base and supply chain. Ambitious reforms to public transport via rail nationalisation and bus franchising, seemingly radical in nature, will be badged as meeting the needs of passengers by providing better value and reliability.

Funding constraint will be the biggest limiting factor, perhaps driving a slower and more incremental pace of reform than anticipated.



LOUISE HAIGH
Shadow Secretary of State for Transport

Since her election in 2015, Haigh has served various roles in Opposition, including Shadow Police Minister, drawing on her experience as a former Special Constable, and Shadow Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, before she was appointed Shadow Transport Secretary in November 2021.

In her current brief, Louise has been vocal over the perceived failings of HS2 and transport workers' rights, particularly during the handling of P&O Ferries controversial sackings last year. Although Louise, alongside the majority of the Shadow Cabinet, has been relatively quiet around the ongoing rail industrial action, other than urging the Transport Secretary to be more proactive in his conversations with Trade Unions.

ADVISERS

Danny Coyne is Haigh's principal adviser and also supports her with some constituency matters.

Tim Bliss, former Parliamentary Assistant to Shadow Minister for Climate Change Kerry McCarthy, was recently hired to help with the brief.

Shadow frontbench:

- **Tan Dhesi** – Shadow Minister for Railways
- **Gill Furniss** – Shadow Minister for Roads
- **Mike Kane** – Shadow Minister for Aviation and Maritime
- **Simon Lightwood** – Shadow Minister for Buses and Taxis

Influential parliamentarians:

- **Ben Bradshaw** – Member, Transport Select Committee
- **Ruth Cadbury** – Member, Transport Select Committee
- **Andy McDonald** – Former Shadow Transport Secretary
- **Lord Darling** – Former Chancellor of the Exchequer and Transport Secretary

External influencers:

- **Zoe Billingham** – Director, IPPR North
- **Anthony Smith** – Chief Executive, Transport Focus
- Combined Authority Mayors ([see page 20](#))
- **Norman Baker** – External Affairs Director, Campaign for Better Transport, and former Transport Minister

Who to speak with depends on the sub-sector and which of Labour's national missions it can best support. This is also driven by many policy areas being intertwined with the responsibilities of other senior figures e.g. electric vehicles and decarbonisation with Ed Miliband; Levelling Up and Local Authority powers with Lisa Nandy; and infrastructure investment with Rachel Reeves and Jonathan Reynolds.

“TRANSPORT IS A HIGH-PROFILE AREA FOR REFORM UNDER AN INCOMING LABOUR GOVERNMENT. ONGOING PERFORMANCE, INDUSTRIAL AND WORKFORCE CHALLENGES, PARTNERED WITH INCREASING PRESSURE TO DECARBONISE, MEAN TRANSPORT IS A CRITICAL SECTOR TO WATCH.”



RAIL

Widespread frustration at the spiralling cost and unreliability of public transport is driving a consensus within Labour to take bold action, starting with the renationalisation of rail. This is the only commitment to nationalisation remaining from the Corbyn era, signifying the extent to which the party is willing to make this a flagship policy. Detail is light at present, but Louise Haigh's 2022 party conference speech confirmed that Labour would bring rail back into public ownership as current contracts expire.

The lack of clarity surrounding the funding model Labour would use and whether there would be sufficient operational capacity creates uncertainty for rail operators, where the commercial model is unclear.

The same applies to Great British Railways - which already has more than 200 employees despite not yet having a legislative foundation, and may still be in that situation at the point Labour came to power. Lord Darling, who served as Transport Secretary between 2002 and 2006, has urged Haigh and Starmer to be supportive of GBR's potential role as a state-owned public body, warning that "government departments aren't good at operating because that's not what they're set up to do". The latest intelligence suggests Starmer is likely to press ahead with GBR, acknowledging that it is a model Labour's plans can accommodate - indicating a more incrementalist approach to increasing public control of the rail network than some might expect - if the scope of its powers and contractual relationships with operators are in place in time. Questions therefore arise over potential changes to GBR's remit under nationalisation and whether its powers could increase or be scaled back under a strengthened DfT.

Darling has also warned Labour to steer clear of "trophy projects" such as HS2, and instead concentrate on the fundamentals, such as fare prices, overcrowding and punctuality. Despite commitments to deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail, HS2 and electrification, this approach would cast uncertainty over the future of rail infrastructure projects, including new routes and which traction technologies will be appropriate for new rolling stock.

Current thinking indicates that Labour will look to maintain the 'rosco' model rather than paying for new rolling stock directly. With considerable pressure on the public purse, Labour could still be reliant on the private sector for external investment and operational expertise.

BUSES

A second priority is Britain's buses, where Labour has stressed the unreliability of service in terms of fares, route coverage and punctuality.

Labour is steadily leaning on the perceived success of its Metro Mayors, including Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham, who have set out visions for a London-style transport system in Manchester and Liverpool, and with Tracey Brabin following suit in West Yorkshire.

The franchising scheme will formally come into effect in Greater Manchester in September this year following a lengthy period of discussions and legal challenges. Meanwhile in Liverpool, the Combined Authority recently voted unanimously to confirm franchising as the region's preferred future model. How this might influence the uptake and format of franchising in other non-metro areas is a critical question for the bus sector. The Shadow Transport team has indicated this is a key priority for the coming months as it looks to garner support in the run up to local elections and party conference.

ELECTRIC VEHICLES

The final priority for now is electric vehicles, which is also a shared focus of Miliband and Reynolds, with strong ties to the party's Green New Deal and Industrial Strategy. Both of these are reliant on new jobs created within the wider supply chain arising from the new gigafactories Labour committed to following the high profile collapse of BritishVolt.

Haigh has briefed industry that their three priority areas for EVs are charging installation targets, funding mechanisms to incentivise EV uptake, and the disposal of old vehicles. Labour therefore needs answers to critical questions such as how to deliver more power to increase the availability of chargers, EV affordability and battery reliability in the emerging second-hand market. Meanwhile other issues, like transport innovation and aviation have remained off the party's radar, with no clarity as to whether or when the party will set a direction.



Jamie Capp delivers industry-leading campaigns in transport and infrastructure. He specialises in helping his clients' campaigns cut through, delivering successes on micro-mobility, public transport and infrastructure regulation that make tangible commercial impact for the industry.

It is critical that industries keep up regular contact with their Shadow Ministers, whilst keeping a close eye on PPCs making local transport their battleground, and those who have strong sector credentials, including Heidi Alexander, the Greater London Authority's former Deputy Mayor for Transport, and Douglas Alexander, former Transport Secretary.

Transport businesses across all sectors need a plan to inform Labour's transport thinking now. Tying into its national missions, aligning to a positive reform agenda and setting out deliverable plans that break the current status quo can help deliver this. Campaigns that cut through and bring to life the sector, its challenges and preferred solutions, will give Labour the platform it wants and build lasting relationships that inform the future programme for government.

RISKS	OPPORTUNITIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Renationalisation will permanently change the rail industry. The pace and scale of Labour's plans are still unclear, including what the future holds for rail operators, rolling stock providers and the wider supply chain. Organisations should leverage their expertise, investment capabilities and bolster their corporate profiles to establish a route forward that is mutually beneficial for Labour's policy and their businesses.• Labour's 'Take Back Control Bill' could grant all local areas the opportunity to franchise bus services. A one-size-fits all approach is not favourable for bus operators, passengers or many local authorities. It is critical that businesses get on the front foot and engage with Labour whilst policy is still in draft.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are a wealth of opportunities for the EV industry, with strong political buy-in from Labour. Labour will inherit the government's existing targets for banning sales of new petrol and diesel cars and increasing the number of publicly available charging devices. Despite good intentions, Labour doesn't yet know the road to getting there, presenting businesses with the opportunity to shape the direction of policy.• Labour's big-picture ideas are sitting with rail, bus and EVs, creating space for other sub-sectors to help define their agenda. This is particularly the case for transport issues that are less popular amongst Conservative voters, such as e-scooters, which have long awaited legislation. Polling has shown that Labour's core votership are not necessarily against e-scooters and can see the merits of stronger regulation, presenting businesses with a prime opportunity to shape what this could look like under a government that is more ideologically invested.



CREATING MESSAGES THAT LAND

LEE FINDELL
Partner and Head
of Corporate



As with any messaging strategy, the critical element is to say the things you want to say in a way that your intended audience will listen. Communicating with the Labour Party is no different – you just need to understand the audience and the language that will engage them.

While the current Labour Party leadership and shadow ministerial team are actively pro-business and politically far removed from those who held these positions under the Jeremy Corbyn regime, it would be an error to think that the messages you use with current government ministers can be simply translated across.

IN SIMPLE TERMS, THE VALUES AND POLITICAL PHILOSOPHIES THAT UNDERPIN THE POLICIES OF THE CONSERVATIVE GOVERNMENT AND LABOUR OPPOSITION ARE VERY DIFFERENT, AND THEREFORE THE LANGUAGE THAT BUSINESSES AND ORGANISATIONS NEED TO USE TO ENGAGE EFFECTIVELY WITH LABOUR ALSO NEEDS TO BE VERY DIFFERENT.

The first thing to recognise is that a Keir Starmer government would not be a rehash of Tony Blair's, and so looking to 1997 is also not necessarily right. Starmer's instincts are much closer to the Labour tradition that encompassed Harold Wilson and Jim Callaghan - Prime Ministers who ran very different governments from that of New Labour.

Bearing all this in mind, these are the key factors to recognise when creating messages that will land with Labour.

- **Tackling Inequality** – this is at the core of all Labour politicians. If you are going to propose a policy change you must be able to define what is the benefit to society and how it could help reduce inequality. It could be providing skills and jobs; investing in left-behind communities; or enabling innovations that lead to better outcomes for people.
- **Public sector first** – while Labour shadow ministers are under no illusion about the impact of austerity, Covid and recession on the resilience and capability of the public sector, they instinctively believe in public service as a force for good. If your proposals involve engaging with the public sector, then frame them as supportive or enabling, thinking in terms of partnership not competition.

- **Interventionist by instinct** – in a period of 'big state', it is easy to forget the ideological differences between the Conservatives and Labour on the role of the state, but after 14 years of a Conservative government which reaches for the levers of the state as a last resort, a Labour government who will reach for those levers as a first instinct will be a profound change. From headline interventions such as the green prosperity plan and rail nationalisation, through to lower-profile in-sourcing and regulatory interventions, understanding these instincts is vital for your messaging.
- **Invest to grow** – Labour are very conscious of both the weak economy they will be inheriting and the tax-and-spend reputation they need to shake off. Rachel Reeves has learnt from Gordon Brown the importance of costed and contained spending commitments. However, unlocking investment in infrastructure to drive growth – energy, housing, technology, transport – will be critical. If you can home in on the policy and regulatory changes needed to unlock private investment then you will get a hearing.

For most businesses and organisations, their ask of government is the same irrespective of its political shade. However, how you frame that ask is critical, and an incoming Labour administration will want to hear different messages from their predecessors.

Lee Findell has been a corporate reputation adviser to some of the world's most recognisable firms, leading high-profile and award-winning communications campaigns. He has an extensive understanding of the Labour Party's structures and decision-making processes, locally and nationally – having served as a party member in a number of campaign, organisational and elected officer roles at local, regional and national levels.



FROM SITTING ON THE FENCE TO SITTING IN NO.10? A FATE DETERMINED BY STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS

RACHEL FORD
Associate Director



Labour's overarching communication goal, on the face of it, is a simple one – to convince voters that this is a party ready for government.

However, Labour's track record on communications since the Alastair Campbell era has been patchy to say the least. The fatal flaw of the 2019 election, according to the brutal assessment of National Campaign Co-Ordinator, Shabana Mahmood, is that the Labour Party of 2019 didn't keep up with modern Britain electorally, politically or digitally.

However, communicating with 'modern Britain' is no easy feat when Labour's voter base has evolved dramatically in the 13 years since it was last in power. The Labour communications strategy is looking to address this change, not with identity politics, but by showing the personality of the party. This means getting 'modern Britain' to buy in to passionate yet competent leadership, and by showcasing a leadership team that reflects 'Modern Britain'.

Labour's communications team is headed up by Matthew Doyle, Executive Director of Communications and an experienced media handler and New Labour loyalist, who cut his teeth as a Labour Party press officer and special adviser during the Blair years. Working alongside him is Sophie Nazemi, Head of Press and Broadcast. Between them, they have made huge progress both in making Labour a credible choice and in building the profile of key shadow cabinet figures.

For journalists, the core media team in the Leader of the Opposition's Office, along with the media advisers working for senior Shadow Cabinet Ministers, are the crucial relationships – compared to the New Labour era, the Opposition's central party media team is significantly underpowered.

Starmer himself has often come under fire for not showing his personality, relying instead on his legal brain and ability to perform in the courtroom – this ability neatly translating to the theatre of the Commons, but not so easily translating to set-piece media appearances, which rely on the personality coming through.

This personality vacuum is something his communications team have set out about countering, with his press appearances in recent months focusing on communicating the person as much as the policy.

A recent New Statesman op-ed by Starmer showed just how hard Labour is pushing on this, with Starmer's frustration at the current 'sticking plaster politics' clearly coming through – a marked departure from the long-form 'vision papers' he previously relied on. And of course, his interview with The Times in which he discusses his mother's illness and his father's work in factories in an effort to show voters, who according to the piece are "finally starting to notice the opposition and its leader", a more relatable side.

BEYOND STARMER HIMSELF, THE CABINET-IN-WAITING ARE BEING MOULDED BY THE SAME PERSONALITY-BUILD STRATEGY.



Both Angela Rayner and Rachel Reeves landed large interviews in the Sunday Times Magazine and the New Statesman over the past few months (and made it onto The Independent's Influence list on International Women's Day this year). As with Starmer, the interviews offered a chance for voters to see the people behind the policies and gave us insight that felt personal and almost exclusive, for example when Rayner discussed her difficult start in life, making a more direct connection to the personal experiences of average voters.

Labour's communication strategy is cutting through, with the party performing well in polls. Maintaining momentum will now be vital. Historically, the polls narrow as we approach a general election, and any party communications needs to be nimble and reactive to weather any change in the wind.

Rachel Ford is a strategic communications specialist. She has extensive experience working at the intersection of government and the media, to promote policy, manage reputations and influence public opinion – most recently as the Chief Communications Officer at the Ministry of Defence.

GETTING READY FOR LABOUR

MARC WOOLFSON

Partner, Head
of Public Affairs



Labour are maintaining a consistently healthy lead in the opinion polls – the last time they were behind the Conservatives was back in November 2021. With the strong likelihood of Labour being in a position to lead the next government, the business community is well advised to think seriously about what that would mean in practice, and to prepare accordingly.

In detoxifying the party after the disastrous Corbyn years, Labour Leader Keir Starmer and Shadow Chancellor Rachel Reeves have gone to great lengths to put a business-friendly, pro-growth agenda at the heart of their plans for a decade of renewal to rebuild public services, restart economic growth, a massive decarbonisation programme and rebuild the UK supply chain and skills-base as part of a long-term industrial strategy.

Key to shifting the perception away from being anti-enterprise has been their critique of economic mismanagement under Conservative leadership. Central to their case is that in key areas of the economy a more pro-active role for the state would promote

growth whilst protecting the consumer interest and solving the long running productivity issues in the UK economy. But despite strong commitments on a wide range of policy areas from education and housing to energy and infrastructure, there remain big gaps when it comes to the substance.

The Shadow Cabinet have been tasked to get to work now on bottoming out the details of a first term's legislative programme – Lisa Nandy is working on a 'Taking Back Control Bill' to redistribute power, Jonny Reynolds is developing detailed thinking on Labour's Industrial strategy and Ed Miliband has advanced plans on the 'green economic recovery'.

With such a huge agenda, the role of business will be critical in helping add deep expertise, hard evidence and international experience to help Labour hit the ground running quickly.

Given the likely state of the public finances they will inherit, Labour are preparing to govern under very tight spending constraints and limited scope for borrowing. In this context, creating the climate for business investment to drive economic performance and create the ability to invest in public services will be essential.

There is also a real concern that the public sector's capacity to implement innovative and ambitious reform programmes is very limited. Over decades of austerity and funding cuts, the experience and capability of officials in central and local government has been hollowed out. Again, the role for business with expertise to contribute will be critical to help address this shortfall.

BUT DESPITE A FRIENDLIER APPROACH TO BUSINESS THAN IN THE PAST, IT WOULD BE MISGUIDED TO ASSUME THIS WILL COME WITHOUT HIGH EXPECTATIONS ON THE COMMERCIAL SECTOR TO PLAY ITS PART. IN PRACTICE, THE NEXT LABOUR GOVERNMENT WILL BE WILLING TO BE MORE INTERVENTIONIST, DRIVING A HARDER BARGAIN WITH TOUGHER REGULATORY INSTINCTS.

So what should business do now to prepare for this eventuality and make sure they can capture opportunities to engage and shape both short and long-term direction of Labour policy?

1. The starting point has to be an understanding of current perceptions. What do those in the party who will be making decisions that may affect your license to operate, define your future market opportunities and its regulatory parameters, think about the sector you operate in and its contribution to their change agenda? A deep analysis of risks and opportunity will highlight any misunderstandings and gaps in reputation that can be addressed and corrected where necessary.
2. Next, set out a clear explanation of the ways in which you see the potential to improve your sector and the wider economy in line with the principles of fairness and equitable growth. Set out clear views on what could be done better, and link this to the stated priorities for reform the party has set out. Define your position around an offer that aligns with their thinking – what are the underlying points of commonality, what do you agree on, and what contribution can you make that supports the party's five 'core missions'?
3. Move fast to engage with the Business Relations Team and the Shadow Frontbench. At this point in the political cycle, time is short. There is less than 18 months until the likely date of the next election, and the party needs detailed and thought-through policy suggestions. This process is already well underway with the need to present a credible alternative plan for government by the time of this year's party conference, likely to be the last before the election.

Marc Woolfson is a campaigner and strategist with an instinct for impactful public affairs and communications programmes that help business leaders manage policy, reputation and political risk – and deliver real commercial outcomes.

SO IN SUMMARY, HERE IS A QUICK CHECKLIST:

- **Assess and address reputational risks** that will undermine your ability to build credibility as a partner with ideas that Labour can work with.
- **Build a forward-looking and constructive vision that aligns with Labour's priorities**, showing that you understand and are committed to positive economic and social change.
- **Have a point of difference and fresh thinking on what you can offer and showcase this.** Acknowledge the need for a new deal between Government and the private sector in your specific sector, and be ready with the detail and evidence to support your technical policy recommendations.
- **Understand who can help you make your case**, and build a wide network of allies from within your sector and the stakeholders, you work with – supply chain, employees, consumer groups, academics, think tanks and campaign groups that have an interest in your area.

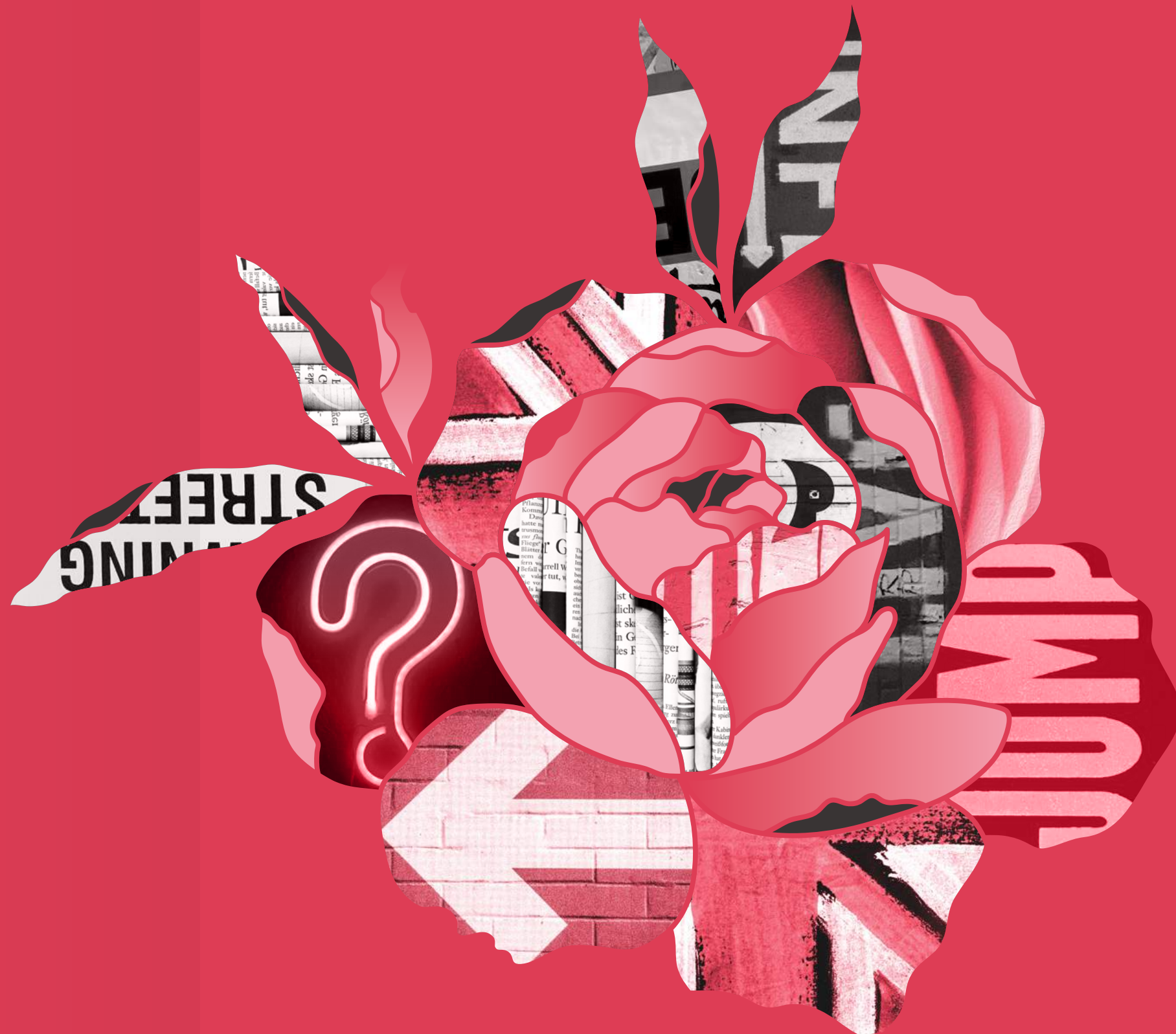
DESIGN BY WA CREATIVE

Understanding our clients' needs and finding thought-provoking and creative solutions that solve communication issues is the cornerstone of our offer. At WA, our integrated approach provides us with valuable insights into how our clients work and their business goals.

In a fast-paced world that constantly bombards you with messaging, creative solutions that tell your story in a consistent and engaging way have never been so important. We apply our brand expertise and creative intelligence to explore authentic ways to connect and promote understanding, providing a clear path to action that truly delivers memorable and significant commercial results.

Our award-winning creative team works across all design disciplines including branding, corporate literature, campaign development, digital and film content.

If you would like to have a conversation about how design and creative thinking can help your business, please contact our Head of Creative garyneale@wacomms.co.uk.



WA is a strategic communications consultancy helping organisations achieve policy and reputational outcomes.

We're integrated in approach, bringing together public affairs, corporate communications, digital, research and creative services.

We're specialists in sectors where government action, media interest and public impact are often interlinked, including energy, education, financial services, healthcare and transport.

Our clients, whether global giants, leading charities or blue-chip brands, come to us for help navigating the complex communications challenges of these multi-stakeholder environments.

We bring about change for clients and communicate their impact in society – from strengthening involvement of patients in their treatment, to helping to secure free school meals funding, to promoting net-zero public transport.

Our success is underpinned by our independence and partnership model – giving us the flexibility to advise, invest and innovate around what clients need.



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