

2019 General Election – What have the political parties said about justice and legal aid?

Updated 10.12.19

General Pledges in plain text | **Manifesto Commitments in bold** | MOJ Legal Support Action Plan proposals built into Conservative column

Justice Issue							
<p><b>Early Legal Advice/Help</b></p>	<p>Pilot scheme to evaluate the expansion of legal aid to cover early advice in a specific area of social welfare law</p> <p><b>No mention in the Manifesto</b></p>	<p>Pledge to reverse all Conservative cuts to legal aid funded Early Legal Help</p> <p><b>Will restore all early legal aid advice, including for housing, social security, family and immigration cases.</b></p>	<p>The restitution of legal aid for first-tier appeals in social welfare cases.</p> <p>Legal aid to be available for advice before proceedings in housing cases potentially involving the loss of a home.</p> <p>Revival of the ‘Green Form’ Legal Aid system whereby litigants in person can be given initial constructive legal advice on the strengths (and weaknesses) of their cases.</p> <p>Establish a new right to affordable, reasonable legal assistance, and invest £500 million to restore Legal Aid, making the system simpler and more generous.</p>	<p>The Green Party supports a right to legal representation and advice and would provide support for law centres and other institutions offering free legal advice.</p> <p><b>No mention in the Manifesto</b></p>	<p><b>Will reverse the harsh cuts so that people who are currently unable to access legal aid can exercise their right to justice. This should include the establishment of a simpler and more generous assessment scheme for civil legal aid, ensuring all benefit recipients automatically qualify for legal aid, and making the contributions to legal aid more affordable.</b></p>	<p><b>No mention in the Manifesto</b></p>	<p><b>YOUR SEARCH FOR "JUSTICE" DID NOT YIELD ANY RESULTS</b></p>
<p><b>Access to Justice</b></p>	<p>Enhanced funding for LiPSS (£3m for the next two years)</p> <p>Removing the mandatory requirements from the telephone gateway for</p>	<p>Constitutional Convention which will look at how to give every citizen a constitutional “Right to Justice” as called for by the Bach Commission.</p>	<p>Legal aid to be available to children and vulnerable young people.</p> <p>Legal aid to be available for permission applications in judicial</p>	<p>The Green Party believes fair, equal and prompt access to justice is essential to a civilized society.</p> <p>Access to justice should</p>	<p>Plaid Cymru likely to reverse cuts to legal aid and create a justice system that reflects the needs of Wales.</p>	<p>Pending Scottish independence, we will press for the devolution of employment law so that the Scottish</p>	<p><b>No mention in the Manifesto</b></p>

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	<p>debt, discrimination and special educational needs cases which are already in scope</p> <p>Awareness campaign to be launched about accessing legal support</p> <p><b>After Brexit we also need to look at the broader aspects of our Constitution e.g. access to justice for ordinary people.</b></p>		<p>review cases without the risk of non-payment for unsuccessful applications.</p> <p>The Courts Service to provide procedural advice to litigants in person through a designated member of staff at each court centre and on-line. A ban on 'McKenzie Friends' receiving payment for their services.</p> <p>All proposed court closures to be locally assessed, having regard not only to potential savings but also to their possible impact on local access to justice.</p> <p><b>Introduce a 'somewhere safe to stay' legal duty to ensure that everyone who is at risk of sleeping rough is provided with emergency accommodation and an assessment of their needs.</b></p>	<p>not depend on a person's financial situation. Where a person would not otherwise be able to access it, the state should, through a comprehensive system of legal aid, enable access to appropriate legal advice and/or representation.</p> <p>The Green Party recognises the importance of challenges to administrative decisions, and is committed to the provision of funding to enable representation for disputes concerning housing, the police and in bringing benefits challenges.</p> <p><b>No mention in Manifesto</b></p>	<b>Manifesto (see above)</b>	<p>Parliament can protect workers' rights, increase the living wage and end the age discrimination of the statutory living wage.</p> <p><b>Will continue to press the UK government to end indefinite immigration detention. No other European country has indefinite detention.</b></p>	
<b>Means Test</b>	<p>Conducting a review into eligibility.</p> <p>Proposals for extending eligibility for non-means tested legal aid for parents, or those with parental responsibility, who wish to oppose applications for</p>	<b>Will consult on the civil legal aid means-test levels and act on the criminal legal aid review.</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>The establishment of a simpler and more generous assessment scheme for civil legal aid, ensuring all benefit recipients automatically qualify for legal aid, and making the</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>

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	placement orders or adoption orders in public family law proceedings.  <b>No mention in Manifesto</b>				contributions to legal aid more affordable.		
<b>Legal Aid Deserts</b>	<b>No mention in Manifesto</b>	£20m towards a network of law centres.  Have been working on a blueprint for the future of law centres which will outline plans for securing existing law centres and boosting their provision with extra staff.  New law centres, including special units based in the “heart” of the community, such as food banks or health clinics.  <b>Will expand network of law centres</b>	A national network of providers of advice and legal support along the lines suggested by the Low Commission, funded from a combination of government, voluntary sector and private sources; such advice should include initial family advice.  <b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>
<b>Staffing and Recruitment</b>	[see police officers]	£18m to provide free legal training for 200 social welfare lawyers  <b>Will recruit hundreds of new community lawyers, promote public legal education and build an expanded network of law centres.</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>
<b>Legal Technology</b>	£5 million innovation fund to develop new ways to deliver legal support.  <b>Manifesto mentions that tech will be invested in.</b>		<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>	<b>No mention in the Manifesto</b>
<b>Police Officers</b>	20,000 more police officers 6,000 police to be recruited		<b>Invest £1 billion to restore community</b>		<b>Will recruit an extra 1,600 police officers</b>	<b>We have increased our</b>	<b>Increase police numbers — more</b>

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	<p>in 2020 (£750m more p.a.)</p> <p>Will equip police with the powers and tools they need, including tasers and body cameras.</p> <p>Will put the Police Covenant into law</p> <p>Police will be empowered by a new court order to target known knife carriers, making it easier for officers to stop and search those convicted of knife crime.</p> <p>Those who use knives as a weapon should go to prison.</p> <p>Will introduce tougher sentencing for the worst offenders and end automatic halfway release from prison for serious crimes. For child murderers, there will be life imprisonment without parole.</p> <p>Will prevent more foreign national offenders entering our country.</p>		<p>policing, enough for two new police officers in every ward.</p> <p>Invest in officers, training and technology to prevent illegal entry at Britain's borders, assist seekers of sanctuary and combat human trafficking and the smuggling of people, weapons, drugs and wildlife.</p>		<p>– two for each community.</p>	<p>total funding for the Scottish Police Authority by £42.3 million while giving police officers the best pay deal anywhere in the UK.</p> <p>Scotland's police officers received a 6.5% 31 month pay deal in comparison to only 2% for English and Welsh officers in 2018 and 2.5% in 2019.</p> <p>Will continue working with others to stop Brexit and retain criminal justice systems that we benefit from as a member of the EU. If this is not possible, we will campaign to keep as many of the existing measures as possible to keep Scotland safe.</p>	<p>visible policing, ensure focus on combating violent crime, robbery and burglary rather than enforcing restrictions on free speech.</p>
<b>Prisons</b>	10,000 more prison places £2.5 billion on creating prisons £100 million will aid	Tory cuts to prison officer numbers are to be reversed and numbers to be restored	<b>Transform prisons into places of rehabilitation and recovery by</b>	<b>We aim to halve the prison population</b>		<b>Will continue to oppose the detention of</b>	

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	<p>the crackdown on crime within prisons.</p> <p>Ending the automatic release of the most serious violent and sexual offenders at the halfway point of their sentence.</p> <p><b>Will cut the number of foreign nationals in our prisons, and increase penalties to stop them returning.</b></p>	<p>to 2010 levels.</p> <p><b>Will restore total prison officer numbers to 2010 levels, and phase out dangerous lone working</b></p> <p><b>Will bring PFI prisons back in-house and there will be no new private prisons.</b></p> <p><b>Will tackle the prison maintenance backlog and develop a long-term estate strategy.</b></p> <p><b>Will set new standards for community sentences and introduce a presumption against prison sentences of six months or less for non-violent and non-sexual offences.</b></p> <p><b>Will invest in proven alternatives to custody, including women's centres, expand problem-solving courts and plug the funding gap in the female offender strategy.</b></p> <p><b>Will further consider the evidence for effective alternatives and rehabilitation of prolific offenders.</b></p> <p><b>Will reunify probation and guarantee a publicly run, locally accountable probation service.</b></p>	<p><b>recruiting 2,000 prison officers and improving the provision of training, education and work opportunities.</b></p> <p>Reduce the number of people unnecessarily in prison, including by: introducing a presumption against short prison sentences; ending prison sentences for the possession of drugs for personal use; and increasing the use of tough community sentences and restorative justice where appropriate.</p>	<p><b>Will significantly reduce the number of short-term prison sentences handed out, replacing them with restorative justice projects that have a better record of preventing reoffending.</b></p>		<p><b>children and vulnerable people, including pregnant women and people with mental illnesses.</b></p> <p><b>Will continue to call for the UK government to pursue alternatives to detention - we need a new approach which prioritises compassion and fairness over punishment and isolation.</b></p>	
<b>Inquests</b>	Consulting on proposals for separate guidance for families which sets out the inquest process and legal	Automatic legal aid funding for the bereaved at inquests where their relative has died under the control of state	<b>Not mentioned in manifesto</b>	<b>Not mentioned in manifesto</b>	<b>Not mentioned in manifesto</b>	<b>Not mentioned in manifesto</b>	

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	<p>aid system in lay terms. Changes to the ECF application process as a whole to address the complexity of the forms and the time needed to complete them. Consulting on introducing a provision for the backdating of the legal help waiver, so that all such payments can be backdated to the date of application should a waiver be granted.</p> <p><b>*No mention in Manifesto</b></p>	<p>agencies, such as in prison or a police station.</p> <p><b>Will ensure legal aid for inquests into deaths in state custody and the preparation of judicial review cases.</b></p>					
<b>Rights of Women</b>	<p><b>Will pass and implement a Victims' Law to guarantee victims' rights and the level of support they can expect.</b></p> <p><b>Will support all victims of domestic abuse and pass the Domestic Abuse Bill. - Will increase support for refuges and community support for victims of rape and sexual abuse.</b></p> <p><b>Will pilot integrated domestic abuse courts that address criminal and family matters in parallel.</b></p> <p><b>Will continue to fight crime against women and girls, including rape, Female Genital Mutilation and forced marriage.</b></p> <p><b>Support for the main carer</b></p>	<p>£20m to funding women's justice campaigners to plug the gap in the government's female offender strategy.</p> <p><b>Will set new standards for tackling domestic and sexual abuse and violence, and appoint a Commissioner for Violence against Women and Girls.</b></p> <p><b>Will establish a National Refuge Fund, ensure financial stability for rape crisis centres and reintroduce a Domestic Abuse Bill.</b></p> <p><b>Will improve the safety of the family court system for domestic violence victims and prohibit their cross-examination by their abuser.</b></p>	<p>Simpler procedures for legal aid in domestic violence cases.</p> <p><b>Manifesto: Introduce a right to no-fault divorce.</b></p> <p><b>Establish a Women's Justice Board and provide specialist training for all staff in contact with women in the criminal justice system.</b></p> <p><b>Prevent violence against women and girls and domestic abuse, and support survivors, by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ratifying and bringing into law the Istanbul Convention.</li> <li>- Legislating for a statutory definition of domestic abuse that</li> </ul>	<p>Continuing encouragement of mediation and ADR, particularly for family matters.</p> <p><b>Will also reverse cuts to legal aid to prevent survivors of FGM being forced to represent themselves against their abusers in court</b></p> <p><b>Will introduce a new Domestic Abuse Bill, which enables prosecution of economic abuse.</b></p> <p><b>Reverse cuts to domestic violence support centres and women's refuges, and increase funding to provide more safe and</b></p>	<p><b>Will use suspended sentences for those women who are charged with non-violent crimes.</b></p> <p><b>Will support a dedicated, small, prison or secure centres for female prisoners in Wales, to ensure access to family support networks as we accept that there will be occasions where a custodial sentence is appropriate.</b></p> <p><b>Will continue to work hard for:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- a domestic abuse register for abusers have been convicted of abusing two or</li> </ul>	<p><b>Will continue to fight for the abolition of the two-child cap and the rape clause.</b></p> <p><b>Will continue to campaign for the Government to implement the Istanbul Convention.</b></p>	

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	receiving Universal Credit will help give greater independence to individuals, most often women, trapped with coercive partners.	<p>Will introduce protections for victims of so-called revenge porn.</p> <p>Will introduce a no-fault divorce procedure.</p> <p>Will uphold women's reproductive rights and decriminalise abortions.</p>	<p>includes its effects on children.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expanding the number of refuges and rape crisis centres to meet demand.</li> <li>- Ensuring sustainable grant-funding for specialist independent support services.</li> <li>- Giving local authorities the duty and funding to provide accommodation and support for survivors of abuse.</li> <li>- Establishing a national rape crisis helpline.</li> <li>- Ensuring access to special measures for survivors in all courts and preventing direct cross-examination of survivors by their abusers.</li> </ul>	<p>secure accommodation for women and their children.</p> <p>Make funding for Rape Crisis Centre Services sustainable We will increase and ring fence the Rape Support Fund</p> <p>Support and develop a network of specialist women's centres in order to reduce the female prison population. These small-scale custodial centres will offer pastoral support to women to address the issues that led to them offending.</p>	<p>more victims, administered by the police.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the prevention of the disclosure of the address of the victim or witness of domestic abuse, coercive or sexual assault to the perpetrator;</li> <li>- Training for police forces and A&amp;E Departments on domestic violence; and</li> <li>- ensuring that migrant and BME victims of domestic abuse have tailored support.</li> </ul> <p>Educating police, magistrates, children and juries on the nature of consent and rape.</p>		
Courts	No mention of court reform. Will end the role played by the ECJ.	<p>Promised to halt the sale of the courts estate.</p> <p>Will halt court closures and cuts to staff, and undertake a review of the courts reform programme. We will facilitate a more representative judiciary while upholding its independence, and review funding for the Crown Prosecution Service.</p>	Not mentioned in manifesto	<p>The streamlining and simplification of all court and tribunal procedures, using accessible digital technology as appropriate.</p> <p>Not mentioned in manifesto</p>	Not mentioned in manifesto	Not mentioned in manifesto	Not mentioned in manifesto
Offending		Promised to tackle the root	Reduce the number of	Will enhance the	Community- based		Abolish

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and Rehab		causes of offending.	<p>people unnecessarily in prison, including by: introducing a presumption against short prison sentences; ending prison sentences for the possession of drugs for personal use; and increasing the use of tough community sentences and restorative justice where appropriate.</p> <p>Improve and properly fund the supervision of offenders in the community, with far greater coordination between the prison service, probation service providers, the voluntary and private sectors and local authorities, achieving savings in the high costs of reoffending.</p> <p>Ensure that all prison-leavers have a suitably timed release and are supported with suitable accommodation, a bank account and employment or training, and are registered with a local GP.</p>	rehabilitation services on offer to long-term prisoners, commissioning rehabilitation services that have a track record of success.	<p>interventions</p> <p>Preventative approach across health, criminal justice, education and other setting.</p> <p>Will implement a long-term substance use harm reduction strategy</p> <p>Will fully implement the findings of the Lammy Review.</p>		distortive targets and introduce sentence 'ranges' for young offenders, to encourage rehabilitation
Independent Reviews	We will conduct a root-and-branch review of the parole system	(a) how our justice system is handling rape (b) a "root and branch	No mention of Justice reviews in Manifesto	A review of LASPO. A review of court fees			No mention of Justice reviews in Manifesto

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	<b>Will establish a Royal Commission on the criminal justice process.</b>	<p>review” of the Legal Aid Agency chaired by former LAG director, Steve Hynes.</p> <p><b>Will establish an independent review into shamefully low rape prosecution rates.</b></p> <p><b>Will establish public inquiries into historical injustices including blacklisting and Orgreave, and ensure the second phase of the Grenfell Inquiry has the confidence of all those affected, especially the bereaved families and survivors. We will also consider a public inquiry in the case of Zane Gbangbola.</b></p>		<p>and their impact on Access to Justice.</p> <p>A review of the financial and administrative arrangements for legal aid work, in consultation with the professions and the Government leading to an end to reductions in real terms in fees for both criminal and civil legal aid work.</p>			
<b>Exceptional cases</b>	<p>Considering simplification of the ECF process.</p> <p>Consider if necessary to introduce a new emergency procedure for urgent matters to access Exceptional Case Funding .</p>		<p>Clarification of the exceptional case funding rules and procedures to ensure that qualifying litigants access exceptional funding.</p>			<b>Not mentioned in manifesto</b>	