

# A MANIFESTO FOR MILLENNIALS

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## INTRODUCTION

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It has now become a familiar rallying cry in any election cycle: when “young people” are urged to register to vote and encouraged to turn up at the election booth. “How can we get young people to be more interested in politics?” is a question that I’ve personally been asked many times. It’s the wrong question. Low voter turnout is a symptom not a cause of a deeper sense of disengagement. There are ways to improve the mechanics of voting, but until policy makers tailor their social goals and aspirations to the values, aspirations and lived experiences of the millennials, political dialogue will continue to seem irrelevant.

By seeking to explore what this sort of policy making would look like for the millennial generation, we do not intend to devalue the experiences and priorities of other age cohorts. Rather, we want to tap into the untapped potential of capturing the attention and the imagination of a demographic group amounting to one in four UK adults.

Millennials are global citizens with multiple identities that fall beyond the conventional political categories of “left” or “right”. Exercising citizenship goes far beyond the act of voting and in many ways, the millennial generation has more “everyday” political agency than generations before us. We are more educated and socially mobile than previous generations, we vote with our feet through informed spending decisions, and we are empowered to make many other choices about the kind of citizens we want to be through an online world of information and knowledge at our fingertips. In this context, politicians must be enablers and advocates of individual and collective agency and bottom-up leadership.

This manifesto does not pretend to list a comprehensive raft of all the policies which are relevant to millennials. It is a consultation document and a preview of some of the ideas we plan to develop at Common Vision. We have picked out where some of the party manifestos show promise on certain issues, but we hope that whoever forms a government after 8th June 2017 will begin to harness the opportunities to understand the drivers and attitudes of millennials, and offer focused ideas and solutions that would have direct impact on their lived experiences and life transitions. This would restore political trust and civic engagement and begin the process of co-creating an intergenerational settlement that lasts for the long term and benefits the common good of current and future generations.

## WHO ARE THE MILLENNIALS?

The millennials, also known as “Generation Y”, is a term used by market researchers and demographic analysts to define the cohort of people born or experiencing formative years just before the turn of the millennium. There are varying definitions, but at its broadest sense the term “millennials” refers to people born between the early 1980s and late 1990s, now aged around 18 to 36 years old.

## WHY DISCUSS POLICY FOR MILLENNIALS?

There are of course many differences between millennials across the globe and within the UK. The life experiences of younger millennials aged 18-24 will inevitably differ with older 25-35 year olds, not to mention the intra-generational differences in social-economic background, education, ethnicity, gender and other personal characteristics of different millennials.

Nevertheless, we find it useful to talk about millennials in relation to policy discussion for a number of reasons.

Firstly, millennials are fast becoming the largest generation in British society, set to overtake the “baby boomer” generation born after the Second World War. Making up one in four adults in the UK and

forecast to number 17 million in 2019, they are increasingly seen as a high value audience in the commercial sector and are also the focus of studies by employers and management consultancies given their increasing prevalence in the workforce. Politicians often choose to focus their attention and energies on older generations who are more likely to turn up to the election booth. Yet even if younger people do not vote in as large numbers (and we examine the reasons for this below), they remain citizens of the UK – and lower participation in elections does not mean lower participation in society as a whole.

Second, looking at the millennials as a group means analysing the key life transitions they experience, which present important indicators for policy preferences. This might be described as the “transition to adulthood” – although we would point out that with the oldest millennials aged around 36 years old they have been adult for some time! Focusing on the issues which affect the everyday lives and circumstances of millennials – such as renting or buying a first home, experiencing tertiary education, progressing in the workplace, making ever-more informed choices about where to spend income, and experiencing new parenthood – provide opportunities to engage with this age group on their terms.

Third, using a generational, or cohort lens helps us to understand what will shape our future society. There are inevitably some social and economic circumstances which differ over the life cycle, and attitudes that change with age. But there are also “cohort effects” which refer to the views and behaviours which are unlikely to change

over time – examples may include being more conscious of the environment or more comfortable with immigration than older generations. By gaining insights into these cohort effects we are able to plan for the long-term and break the cycle of short-termist policy making.

It is also worth noting that traditional groupings used to study differences and inequalities in society, such as socio-economic class, gender, or party political affiliation, are in today's world more fluid and unable to define. Social solidarity and affinity within these groupings has declined accordingly, whether this is a cause or a consequence, and this may be one of the reasons for intensification of individualist attitudes.<sup>1</sup> Understanding where there is behavioural and attitudinal coherence within the cohort of millennials may help understand and predict the sorts of social policies and nudges that would create unity and solidarity within a vast number of people, and perhaps even reverse the trend of rampant individualism and institutional "anomie".

By discussing the millennials we are not declaring “generational warfare” or seeking to devalue the interests and priorities of other age groups. People of all ages want a better future for the young, and a system which cares for the old. For society to function well we need to prioritise an intergenerational balance of interests and positive aspirations for the common good. Millennials, as a generation representing both parents of young children, and children of the generation entering and experiencing retirement, have a key linking role to play in shaping and maintaining this intergenerational settlement.



## MILLENNIALS AND THE BALLOT BOX

There are many assumptions about the behaviours and attitudes of the millennials, who are often described in the media as more entitled and apathetic than other generations.

While it is hardly helpful to make generalisations about the personality traits and characteristics of a group made up of one quarter of the whole UK population, there are trends in broader social attitudes we can identify. Millennials are more likely to hold socially liberal, “progressive” outlooks, and to regard multiculturalism, feminism, the gay rights movement and the green movement as positive forces. However they simultaneously hold views which could be seen to be more “right-wing”, such as being more individualist and distrustful of institutions and the role of the state. Overall this means that traditional political notions of “left” and “right” are even less helpful than they ever were.



It is a well-observed fact that younger generations do not vote in as high numbers as older people. Whilst voter turnout has been declining across the developed world as a whole, it has fallen fastest among younger generations, and may mask a growing gap in turnout by age whereby young people's *share* of the vote has reduced. This age gap is particularly prevalent in the UK.

Whilst there is declining party support across the population as a whole, this is again more prevalent amongst the millennials than older groups. Some of these changes are due to life cycle stages (for example younger people are more likely to be more transient in terms of living circumstances, and may not have yet formed set voting habits), whilst other behaviours look likely to be more set responses to technological and social influences. Ipsos MORI has attributed lower levels of party political loyalty to the wider trend that millennials no longer see "monolithic, institutional approaches" as the ideal or logical solution,<sup>2</sup> being able to exercise choice and customisation in other spheres of life.

If millennials are less likely to hold strong party affiliations, then courting their approval may result in political wins for whichever party chooses to do so. But is it worth tailoring policies for millennials if they do not turn up?

There have been numerous research pieces, commentary and initiatives dedicated to trying to increase the voter turnout of young people at election time. Our recommendations for increasing the vote amongst young people are by no means new ideas. In fact there are wide-ranging similarities across academic literature and policy research on how to increase the “youth vote” - the most compelling of which are as follows.



### VOTES AT 16

*The arguments for this contend that age 18 is not the most effective time to start voting because young people of this age are often not in a stable or familiar environment (such as being in a new job or in their first year of university). As voting habits are formed early—in a person’s first two elections, then adopting a strong voting habit at this life stage will have implications for future turnout too as the cohort ages.<sup>3</sup> Votes at 16 would also allow for complementary political education in schools.*



### AUTOMATIC ELECTORAL REGISTRATION

*In 2014 the electoral registration system moved from a system of household registration of voters to individual electoral registration, leading to up to an estimated million fewer registered voters in 2015.<sup>4</sup> The Electoral Reform Society argues that this disproportionately lowered registration rates among students, private renters and young adults.<sup>5</sup> Calls for reversal of this move advocate automatic sign up to the electoral roll so as to remove a barrier to voting.*



## EXTENDING VOTING DAY

*Holding elections over more than one day or weekend would help overcome common reasons for not voting including illness, work duties or being too busy.*

Other suggestions include increasing the availability of reputable and neutral information on what parties and candidates stand for<sup>6</sup> and rolling out voter advice applications, although we would be reticent of apps which merely seek match policies to individual preferences without a wider overview of party values and ideology, within the framework of how the UK Parliamentary democracy operates.

Compulsory voting, as in Australia is also seen as a solution to low turnout amongst people of all ages. However a widespread argument against compulsory voting is that it could potentially mask rather than solve the underlying reasons for low turnout. The same could be said for the other “mechanical” interventions proposed above.

### **2017 Manifesto Watch**

The Labour, Liberal Democrat and Green Party manifestos advocate votes at 16. The Conservatives on the other hand, make an explicit commitment to retain the current voting age of 18.

The Lib Dems manifesto also mentions trials of weekend voting to help raise turnouts in elections.

We conducted a representative study of voters after last year's EU referendum, asking people why they did or did not vote. When asking those who did vote why they voted, under 35s were much more likely to say they voted in order to have their voice heard, compared to over 35s who were more likely to say it is important to vote as the duty or responsibility of a citizen. This suggests that older generations are more likely to see the intrinsic, or "moral" value of voting, and therefore will try harder to ensure they vote, even where they are busy or unwell. Other studies have also noted that millennials do not see voting as a duty or a moral obligation.<sup>7</sup> Instead, they are more likely to vote in order to have their opinion heard, or because they feel strongly about a certain issue.

This is also reflected in the fact that millennials are more likely to sign a petition, attend a protest and join a campaign on a singular issue.

Therefore, if issues are what hold political currency for millennials, it would stand to reason that policies should be tailored to this age cohort and promoted on this basis. We are aware that this is somewhat a vicious cycle – if younger people vote less, then parties are less likely to target them. The Resolution Foundation has described the propensity of the baby boomers to turn out in greater numbers as resulting in a "ballot box advantage" whereby subsequent tax and benefit policies over the last Parliament delivered a net benefit to those aged 55-75, set against large losses for those aged 20-40.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, we think there is an “untapped market” when it comes to policy making. In a global comparative study of millennials the Millennial Dialogue project found that:

**17%**  
of UK millennials are “very” interested in politics

**65%**  
are “fairly interested” or “not that interested”

**18%**  
are “not at all” interested.

That said, in the same study, 77% of the UK millennials highlighted that the “decisions made by politicians” is the second most important factor affecting future quality of life (second only to economic circumstances).<sup>9</sup> This indicates that millennials understand the *importance* of policy decisions, but aren’t engaged by the current system, whether in terms of the policy making process, the substance of ideas, or the nature of public dialogue and political rhetoric.

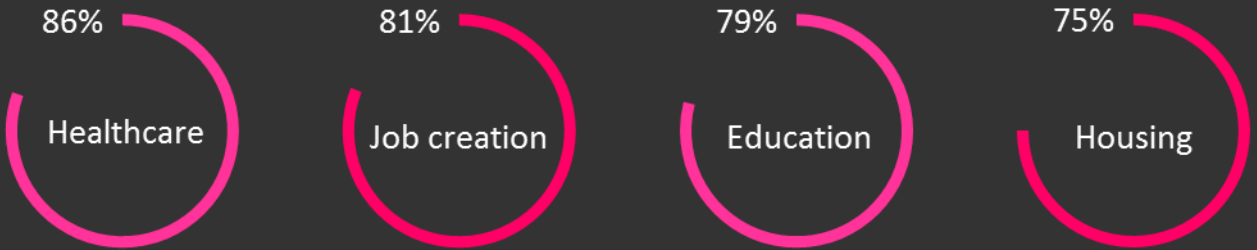


## POSITIVE POLICIES FOR THE MILLENNIALS

Only 42% of millennials feel their generation will have a better standard of living than their parents, compared to 79% of the pre-war generation.<sup>10</sup> However, when policy making for the millennials, we do not advocate focusing on the challenges of the past or blaming previous generations for the circumstances in which we live today. Negative public rhetoric has been shown to alienate people of all ages from politics – not least in the case of the 2016 EU referendum. Work by academics found that citizens would be more likely to shift to greater interest in politics if given “positive triggers”, or a sense that politics could be better, rather than “negative triggers” based on stopping something bad from happening.<sup>11</sup>

What, therefore, could positive policies look like that which appeal to millennial interests? The following is not a comprehensive set of social and economic policies and we accept that many issues are perennial throughout generations, whilst other are of keen interest to all age groups. This is a snapshot of how policy could appeal to the current life circumstances, and attitudes as a cohort, of the millennials.

Ten priorities for public spending according to UK millennials (FEPS Millennial Dialogue, 2016) <sup>13</sup>



Which of the following outcomes are most important for you in next week's General Election? (ComRes, June 2017) <sup>12</sup>

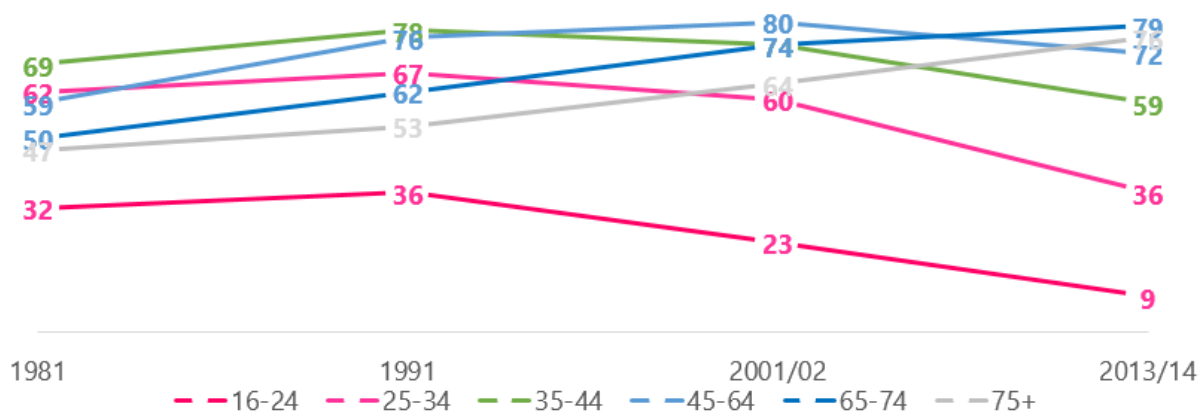




## HOUSING AND COMMUNITY LIFE

With the average age of a first-time buyer risen from 26 in 1974 to 30 in 2016,<sup>15</sup> it can be said that millennials no longer experience a “property owning democracy”. For the “older millennials” aged 25-34, 38% of households are owner-occupied, whilst 59% of households live in rented accommodation. Longer term support for the aspirations to own a home remains important, both for the economic resilience of the millennials and their security in later life, as well as the wider social gains in terms of civic engagement and increased participation in local community life. But in the near term, improving renting and co-living conditions for “Generation Rent” would have a direct benefit on quality of life.

**Percentage of each age group that are home owners, UK, 1981 to 2014**  
(Source: English Housing Survey (EHS) 2013 to 2014, cited by ONS, 2016)<sup>14</sup>





## 2017 Manifesto Watch

The Conservative manifesto mentions building enough homes to meet demand, freeing up more land for house building, and reforming the home-buying process so it is more efficient and less costly. It advocates improved protections for those who rent, "increasing security for good tenants" and encouraging landlords to offer longer tenancies.

The Labour Party would build "thousands more" low-cost homes reserved for first-time buyers and would guarantee Help to Buy funding until 2027. They would introduce controls on rent rises, new consumer rights for renters and new legal minimum standards for properties.

The Green Party manifesto advocates a "living rent" for all through rent controls and more secure tenancies for private renters, an end to letting fees and the introduction of mandatory licensing for all landlords. They would also support the development of renters' unions.

The Liberal Democrats would work towards a housebuilding target of 300,000 homes a year by 2022. As well as banning lettings fees for tenants, cap upfront deposits and increase minimum standards in rented homes, they would introduce a new Help to Rent scheme providing government-backed tenancy deposit loans for all first-time renters under 30. They would also introduce a new Rent to Own model where rent payments contribute to an ownership stake in the property.

The Liberal Democrats, Labour and the Greens would reinstate housing benefit for under-21s.

All the main political parties have a focus on housebuilding and renting conditions in their manifestos. But we would encourage policy makers to move beyond the binary models of either “renting” or “owning”, and go discussions of supply and demand on a top-down basis alone. Whilst the Conservatives commit to “supporting specialist housing where it is needed”, and the Greens mention “backing community-led approaches to building affordable homes”, references to different models often seem to focus on older people’s housing needs, when young people would also benefit from innovation in housing. There are lessons to be learned from communities in the UK and internationally who have already taken their housing needs into their own hands through self-build, community housing and co-living models.

In the absence of owning local assets which tie millennials to a given neighbourhood or community in the economic sense, we are also interested in looking at how local agents can enable and foster the *experiences* which shape a sense of place and social engagement in public spaces and civic life.



## MONEY, SAVINGS AND TAXATION

Millennials have seen their formative years overshadowed by economic collapse and the effect on the labour market of the 2008 financial crisis. Take-home pay has decreased in real terms compared to older generations, possibly because of shifts in employment structures.<sup>16</sup> A large proportion of millennials who have attended university have experienced higher student loans, posing knock-on effects on attitudes to debt and saving for a home and retirement. We welcome the sentiment behind initiatives such as the Lifetime ISA which launched in 2017 for 18-40 year olds, but the implementation so far has not been without criticism. Creative, and flexible approaches which make the most of technology and peer-to-peer models allow for small-scale, incremental and “micro-saving” initiatives, would be more apt in accounting for the everyday behaviours and lifestyles of millennials.

### **2017 Manifesto Watch**

The Conservative manifesto pledges to promote long-term savings and pensions products, including the Lifetime ISA.

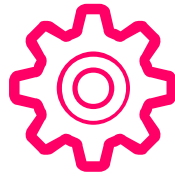
In relation to the public purse, policy making could also be more responsive to millennials, who expect instant knowledge and transparency of information. Making specific pledges around the tax levels that would deliver on spending commitments remains the prerogative of politicians.

### **2017 Manifesto Watch**

The Conservative manifesto calls for simplification of the tax system.

The Liberal Democrats would conduct a full-scale review into the burden of taxation and spending between generations “to ensure that government policy promotes fairness between generations”.

We welcome broader discussions about the rationale and details about the objectives of tax policies, and much more must be done to ensure that tax issues in general are not seen as the realm of “experts” or “too technical” for public discussion. Tax hypothecation, whereby revenues from specific taxes would be ringfenced for a particular expenditure purpose – and publicly communicated in this way – would be a step towards fostering greater trust in government amongst millennials and the population as a whole.



## SHARED RESOURCES

As consumers and citizens, millennials are increasingly exercising their economic citizenship and “voting with their feet”. There is a wealth of untapped policy levers when it comes to giving millennials more individual and collective agency in the future use of natural resources and development of national infrastructure around them.

In the food industry for example, we are seeing the emergence of a new kind of “food citizenship” as an increasing focus on personal diet and consumption is developing into broader awareness of responsible sourcing and supply chains.

### **2017 Manifesto Watch**

The Liberal Democrats would introduce a national food strategy to promote the production and consumption of healthy, sustainable and affordable food, and would focus support for farming towards producing healthy food and channel subsidies towards land management which has public benefits. They also pledge to reduce waste and prioritise the ‘circular economy’ by encouraging recycling and reuse.

The Labour manifesto prioritises “sustainable, long-term future for our farming, fishing and food industries”.

Many have argued that current consumption patterns, particularly in relation to meat and protein, are unsustainable. If, as accordingly to the UN, the World must sustainably produce more food by 2050, the opportunity is for policy makers to co-creative solutions with citizens to take action now for the long-term benefit.

Any future settlement around the distribution of economic resources must be based not only on the limits of supply of those resources, or even ownership or control of the infrastructure behind their distribution, but also include the positive actions which citizens could take now and in the future to change these factors.

### **2017 Manifesto Watch**

Both the Liberal Democrats and the Labour Party have a 60% target of energy generated by renewables by 2030.

The Conservative manifesto mentions an ambition for the UK to have the lowest energy costs in Europe.

Both the Labour Party and the Green Party manifesto call for bringing energy, water, railways, the Royal Mail into public ownership.

When discussing our future energy and water systems for example, we are not convinced the "trilemma" of keeping the lights on, consumer costs and environmental sustainability is multi-dimensional enough. Neither are we convinced that binary debates around whether services should be run by the State or the private sector reflect the real concerns or opportunities at hand, not least because millennials are sceptical of both types of institutions.

We need policy which centres not only on future consumption patterns based on the trends we see today, but the innovations which might change our perceptions of these resources, and different, “bottom-up” supply models, such as increased citizen engagement in local energy generation. More active, tangible relationships with natural resources could shift perceptions and use patterns in radical ways in the future.

Finally, there is much public dialogue on the use and distribution of financial resources and assets, and of natural resources, but an alarming absence of policy interest in the uses and value creation cycles of data and digital transactions. Many people do not understand the nature of data transactions made with online providers, and public debate tends to revolve around data privacy rather than ownership.

### **2017 Manifesto Watch**

The Conservative manifesto’s plan for a “digital charter” would seem to be a move between a new regulatory measures which focus on data privacy and protection for users.

We are seeing the emergence of new platforms which allow users to choose how their data is used, and where the revenue received from their clicks and adverts goes. Perhaps the increased policy focus on data use by internet providers will eventually lead to heightened awareness and deliberation around how to harness the value creation and exchange which takes place on the internet to generate resources for individual citizens, local communities and the public purse.



## EDUCATION, SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

As a generation, millennials have enjoyed higher levels of education in comparison to their parents. Overall almost 40% of the population in their late 20s and their 30s were graduates compared to just over 30% of those in their 40s and just under 35% of those aged 50 plus.<sup>17</sup> Higher levels of education also point to increased life confidence, resilience, and openness to social and cultural mixing. Often attitudinal analysis of the millennials as a cohort overlaps with the trends we see in people of similar education levels in other age groups. Perhaps this does not matter too much, as long as the trend of younger generations being more educated does not reverse, a potential risk given that university education has become more expensive for students. While it may be unrealistic to ever expect policy consensus on tuition fees, we would like to see focused policies, perhaps as part of discussions or trials of a Universal Basic Income, which would assist choices and level the playing field in relation to further and higher education and initial career opportunities.



### 2017 Manifesto Watch

Labour's proposal for a National Education Service would focus on making all learning free at the point of use. They would abolish university tuition fees and restore the Education Maintenance Allowance for 16 to 18-year-olds from lower and middle income backgrounds.

The Green Party would also scrap university tuition fees and restore the Education Maintenance Allowance.

The Liberal Democrat manifesto mentions a review of higher education finance in the next parliament, and pledges to reinstate maintenance grants for the poorest students.

The Conservatives also pledges to launch a review of funding across tertiary education as a whole, which would look at the availability and accessibility of financial support for students.

The increased levels of education do not necessarily translated into higher skilled or higher quality jobs in all cases however. A report by PwC found that 72% of millennials feel they made some sort of trade-off to get into work. This may have implications for turnover - 38% of millennials who are currently working said they were actively looking for a different role and 43% said they were open to offers. Only 18% expect to stay with their current employer for the long term.<sup>18</sup>

Therefore policy wins can be found in focusing on job prospects and a diversified labour market that stands the test of time in the longer term. When thinking about job prospects for a generation that is likely to be active in the labour market for at least another thirty years, concentrating now on how automation will affect the workplace and providing education and skills which enable resilience, flexibility and creativity is key.

### 2017 Manifesto Watch

The Conservatives outline an aspiration for a modern industrial strategy that “will help young people to develop the skills they need to do the high-paid, high-skilled jobs of the future” and include a wider pledge to help all workers seeking to develop their skills in their existing jobs by introducing a new right to request leave for training for all employees.

Labour’s industrial strategy also prioritises high skilled and high-paid “in the sectors of the future such as renewables.”

As automation progresses across different industries, human time will become increasingly more important than exertion. Human-centred jobs such as caring and teaching may hold a premium in future, jobs which are directly related to public investment.

We should also note that traditional notions of employment do not always apply to millennials and personal development and work life balance are seen as more important than financial reward<sup>19</sup> - and so a focus on workplace conditions and flexibility is as important as a focus on pay.

There are countless opportunities for a generation who are used to using technology to just “get on with things” and be entrepreneurial in making their own fortunes and futures. The “gig” economy has been the focus of recent policy debate - however this is geared towards a very negative focus on the challenges around employment status and workers rights.

These are not unimportant concerns, but we would also emphasis creative thinking around the ways in which so-called "sharing economy" platforms could enhance worker experience and collective bargaining powers – perhaps taking up roles as the Unions of the future.

### **2017 Manifesto Watch**

The Conservative and Liberal Democrat manifestos calls for modernised employment rights in relation to the 'gig' economy. Labour would introduce a dedicated commission to "modernise the law around employment status".



## PARENTING

Many of the millennial generation are already parents, and experience key differences in family structure and circumstances to the generation of parents before them. Young children are more likely than ever to have both parents in full time work, and there are some key differences in the divisions of caring responsibilities between mothers and fathers, and between other family members too, such as grandparents who take on caring responsibilities for grandchildren.

### **2017 Manifesto Watch**

The Conservatives pledge to take steps to improve take-up of shared parental leave and help companies provide more flexible work environments. They are currently implementing 30 hours of free childcare for three and four-year-olds for working parents “who find it difficult to manage the costs of childcare.”

Labour would extend the 30 free hours of childcare to all two year olds, and move towards making some childcare available for one year-olds and extending maternity pay to 12 months. They would also double paid paternity leave and increase paternity pay.

The Lib Dem manifesto advocates a “presumption of flexible working” amongst employers. They would extend 15hours of free childcare to all two-year-olds and to the children of working families above nine months, and a long-term goal of 30 hours’ free childcare a week for all parents in England with children aged from two to four years. They would also instigate an additional month’s paid paternity leave.

The Green Party manifesto includes a pledge for free universal early education and childcare for all children.

We welcome the focus of all the political parties on shared parental leave, flexible employment and childcare provision. Beyond these policies, there is much potential for policies which support strong parenting and family life in local communities, the wider social realm and in home environments, which is where children spend 70% of their time until they go to school and still the most significant influence on early years development.



## HEALTH AND WELLBEING

It is widely recognised that the health prospects of individuals are shaped by a number of social determinants. There are a number of transitions to adulthood experienced by young adults which will affect their future health prospects. This includes moving out of the family home, supporting oneself independently for the first time, and navigating financial challenges and employment transitions. Long term policy interventions in relation to health requires understanding these lived experiences and the cohort trends in health-related behaviours.

### **2017 Manifesto Watch**

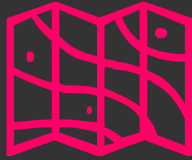
The Conservative manifesto talks about empowering patients to have a greater role in their own treatment and care.

The Green Party manifesto mentions improving young people's access to sexual health services, and Labour focus on investing in children's health and increased mental health support for children and young people.

The Liberal Democrats manifesto is the only one with a notable focus on preventative health, and pledges to promoting healthy living and working "to improve the wider factors that affect people's health such as warm homes, clean air and access to exercise and healthy food so that everyone can have the best chance to lead a healthy life." They would publish a National Wellbeing Strategy and develop a public health campaign promoting the steps people can take to improve their own mental resilience.

Much of the fervent political debate on healthcare and the NHS is understandably about the systems in place now and the consequential experiences on current patients. Citizens are changing the ways they go about appraising their healthcare options, and using technology to assist their pathways through healthcare and relationships with professionals. This empowerment could extend to pathways beyond healthcare to include awareness of preventative health and lifestyle.

Public services, and healthcare in particular, is a key political and public spending priority for millennials, even though many of them have not had detailed first-hand experiences of healthcare due to their life stage. There is a clear window for policy makers to capitalise on this interest and widespread support to raise awareness of the benefits of preventative measures and individual agency to influence their healthcare futures. This would support NHS England's Five Year Forward View's heavy emphasis on prevention strategies. Of course, not all behavioural interventions or lifestyle nudges can be effectively implemented through public policy directly, however government and policy makers have a role to play in enabling the discussion to happen.



## BREXIT

The 2017 snap election was called, ostensibly, in order to put the UK in the best negotiating position for Brexit. Yet open discussion about the options for negotiating the UK's withdrawal from the EU has been woefully low during the election campaign. For the generation who voted overwhelmingly to remain in the EU in last year's referendum, this has not served to restore confidence in the forthcoming process around Brexit.



Contrary to some of the analysis immediately after the referendum, turnout among under 35s in the referendum was almost certainly higher than in any recent general election. Many younger voters spent the days and months after the referendum frustrated, sad, angry with the motives of others and increasingly disillusioned with the electoral process. Brexit presents an opportunity for politicians to engage with millennials, many of whom rarely would have publicly announced an interest in politics before the referendum. In a nationwide survey we conducted in January 2017, only 28% of 18-34 year olds are somewhat or very confident that the UK's exit from the European Union is being negotiated in a way that best suits their interests. This compares to over half (57%) of 18-34 year olds who say they are either not very confident or not at all confident that the negotiations will suit their interests.

We do not think political energy should be spent on trying to reverse the referendum vote. However, the vote last year was a binary decision between the status quo and the "unknown". It was not a democratic mandate for a particular type of Brexit or set of negotiating priorities with the EU. The process of Brexit will be as important as the outcome in ensuring trust and assurance for a large demographic of the population.

The reasons why millennials were more likely to have voted to remain in the EU was the subject of detailed analysis Common Vision conducted last year.<sup>20</sup> We also drew conclusions around why the campaigns did not mobilise more millennials to turn up and vote in the same numbers as older generations.

Having grown up in an age of globalisation and technological advancement, millennials care about global issues such as environmentalism, human rights and humanitarian aid – often more strongly than national policy issues. National sovereignty and immigration are both issues of lower importance compared to older generations. Indeed, in our polls conducted since the referendum, immigration has been rated as a lower priority compared to other social and economic issues across all age groups. Yet immigration continues to permeate the debate on Brexit, rather than the priorities of younger people.

Brexit is a key opportunity to formulate long term policy that looks to the next generation first. We would therefore emphasise the following recommendations, some of which are re-iterated from Common Vision's 2016 report:



### EXPLICIT COMMITMENT TO MILLENNIAL PRIORITIES

Negotiations with the EU must take account of the priorities of younger people. Across a range of studies and surveys (including those undertaken by UK Youth, the British Youth Council and campaigning groups My Life My Say and Undivided), freedom of movement and ongoing opportunity to live, work and study abroad has been a resounding priority for millennials and the generation even younger. The continuation of EU funding programmes for education and training, such as Erasmus+, has also received widespread support. Upholding EU environmental standards is a third area of consensus across these age groups.

## 2017 Manifesto Watch

### ***Signing off on the Brexit deal***

Both the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party pledge to campaign for a vote on the final terms of the Brexit deal. The Labour Party would legislate to guarantee a Parliamentary vote on the terms of the final deal.

### ***Jobs, freedom of movement and Erasmus***

The Labour Party would prioritise jobs and the economy in a future deal with the EU. They also emphasise the benefits of the Single Market and the Customs Union.

The LibDem and Green Party manifestos advocate freedom of movement and continued membership of the single market. They explicitly mention the right to study, work, live and travel in the EU.

The Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats and the Green Party specifically mention Erasmus as a priority. The Conservative manifesto says “there may be specific European programmes in which we might want to participate and if so, it will be reasonable that we make a contribution.”

### ***Brexit and environmental standards***

The Conservatives would produce a comprehensive 25 year Environment Plan that will chart how the UK will improve our environment as we exit the EU.

The Liberal Democrats pledge to maintain environmental standards and the Green Party would “put environmental protection at the heart of any future trade deals”.

### ***Immigration***

The Conservatives commit to controlling both immigration from the EU and from outside the EU, but note the priority that the 140,000 health and care workers from EU countries can carry on working in the UK.

The Lib Dem manifesto mentions “making the positive case for immigration”.

Labour notes that it “values the economic and social contributions of immigrants”. It would institute a new system “balancing controls and existing entitlements” around economic need.



## OPEN PUBLIC CONSULTATION

We also urge whichever party who forms a Government after the 8<sup>th</sup> of June to launch a detailed public consultation before entering into firm Brexit negotiations. To account for the political behaviours of younger people, the process should be conducted online, for an extended period, and seek to encourage deliberative rather than binary decision making.



## FUTURE REFERENDUM

We also support a future referendum on the options for Brexit that is coupled with an unbiased public education process and open to 16 and 17 year olds. The government should set out clearly how different options and plans meet what we know empirically about younger people's priorities.



## CONTINUED CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Preserving European solidarity and shared values should be an explicit goal of the Brexit negotiations, and may require a new public-facing vehicle to ensure ongoing opportunities for cultural and educational exchange.

## READ THE PARTY MANIFESTOS IN FULL HERE:

[CONSERVATIVE PARTY MANIFESTO](#)

[LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO](#)

[LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MANIFESTO](#)

[GREEN PARTY MANIFESTO](#)

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## A COMMON VISION FOR OUR SHARED FUTURE.

Common Vision (CoVi) is a think tank with a mission to inspire civic engagement and policy understanding amongst the millennial generation. Our core team has expertise in research techniques as well as extensive experience of convening discussion and digital engagement. We extend our in-house capabilities with crowdsourced deliberative policymaking methods and which draw on the wisdom and agency of civil society.

[www.covi.org.uk](http://www.covi.org.uk)

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