

## Members' briefing: The 2010 general election manifestos on law and order

The Labour, Conservative and Liberal Democrat election manifestos were published on Monday 12 April, Tuesday 13 April and Wednesday 14 April respectively.

This Criminal Justice Alliance briefing examines their proposals on crime and criminal justice issue-by-issue and then sets out, by party, the manifestos' contents on law and order.

### Summary

There are no major surprises in any of the three manifestos. Labour and the Conservatives remain committed to increasing prison capacity, although the Conservatives do not give a specific projection of future capacity. Policing is prominent in all three manifestos, while measures to tackle antisocial behaviour are highlighted by Labour in particular. The Liberal Democrat manifesto is arguably less punitive in tone than those of the other two main parties, with a greater emphasis on 'what works', and pledges to cancel the Government's prison-building programme.

In our view the most unexpected announcements included:

- Labour's pledge to bring in a Restorative Justice Act to ensure that restorative justice is available wherever victims approve it.
- Labour's proposal that failing police forces or Basic Command Units could be taken over by more successful neighbouring forces or BCUs (although it is clear this would be used very rarely).
- Labour's pledge to treble alcohol treatment places to cover all persistent criminals where alcohol is identified as a cause of their crimes.
- Labour's proposal for legislation to give people who have suffered from repeated antisocial behaviour financial support to pursue legal injunctions where the police, council, courts or other agencies have failed to act, with the costs met by the agency that let them down.
- The Liberal Democrats' proposal to introduce a presumption against short-term prison sentences of less than six months.

Labour's plan to use "the tax system to claw back from higher-earning offenders a proportion of the costs of prison" is potentially significant, although no detail is provided.

The Conservative Party's manifesto sticks very closely to the set of proposals laid out in their draft manifesto, and there are therefore few unexpected announcements.<sup>1</sup> Their pledge to examine the case for greater Parliamentary scrutiny of sentencing guidelines, which was not in their draft manifesto, has the potential to curtail the powers of the new Sentencing Council, while scaling back the criminal records and 'vetting and barring' regime to "common sense" levels has the potential to be beneficial. Some of their existing proposals, in particular plans for 'min-max' sentencing and to extend the length of custodial sentences that can be awarded in a Magistrates' Court from six to twelve months, could have very significant implications for the criminal justice system.

### Issue by issue

Some proposals may appear in more than one section, if they are relevant to more than one issue.

#### **Policing**

- **Labour's** manifesto pledges to maintain current police and police community support officer numbers (and claims that the Conservatives would cut them, although this has been

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<sup>1</sup> Further detail on the Conservative Party's draft manifesto is available in a previous Criminal Justice Alliance briefing, which is online at:

<http://www.criminaljusticealliance.org/conservativepolicybriefing3.pdf>

queried by Channel 4 News' FactCheck website<sup>2</sup>) and pledges to ensure that where a police force or local Basic Command Unit consistently fails local people, either the senior management team, including the borough commander or chief constable, would be replaced, or it would be taken over by a neighbouring force or BCU. It also promises that Labour would continue to cut police bureaucracy and inefficiency in procurement, IT and overtime and would ensure that neighbourhood police teams hold monthly beat meetings, at which local people will have a right to hold senior commanders to account.

- The **Conservative** manifesto includes proposals for making the police accountable to a directly-elected individual who will set policing priorities for local communities, with responsibility for setting the budget and the strategy for local police forces. It also promises to reduce police paperwork, including reducing the paperwork around stop and search by abolishing the stop form altogether and by having police "radioing in" reports of searches rather than filling in paperwork. Other proposals include returning charging discretion to the police for minor offences; amending the health and safety laws that "stand in the way of common sense policing"; giving the police the power to identify offenders in order to protect the public and prevent crime; processing offenders more quickly by video-linking custody cells and courts; and obliging the police to publish detailed local crime data statistics every month, in an open and standardised format.
- The **Liberal Democrat** manifesto proposes putting 3,000 more police on the beat, reducing bureaucracy at police stations through the use of technology and a review of the terms and conditions for police officer employment. It also proposes introducing the direct election of police authorities and giving more power to these elected police authorities, including the right to sack and appoint the chief constable, set local policing priorities, and agree and determine budgets. Hospitals will also be made to share non-confidential information with the police so they know where gun and knife crime is happening and can target stop and search in gun and knife crime hot spots.

#### Antisocial behaviour

- **Labour's** manifesto proposes guaranteeing an initial response to any complaint about antisocial behaviour within 24 hours and providing a named case worker to provide feedback. It also pledges that Labour would legislate to give people who have suffered from repeated antisocial behaviour financial support to pursue legal injunctions where the police, council, courts or other agencies have failed to act, with the costs met by the agency that let them down. It also proposes providing Family Intervention Projects for the "50,000 most dysfunctional families"; introducing a preventative element for all Asbos for under-16s; ensuring that all relevant agencies hold monthly public meetings to hear people's concerns about antisocial behaviour; giving all police community support officers stronger powers to tackle antisocial behaviour; introducing a 'Respect' standard for the private rented sector; ensuring that local antisocial behaviour champions make agencies work together to tackle cases; and ensuring that the great majority of applications for Asbos take under a month, and that whenever an Asbo is breached there is an expectation of prosecution.
- The **Conservative** manifesto proposes introducing a series of early intervention measures, including grounding orders, to allow the police to use instant sanctions to deal with antisocial behaviour without criminalising young people unnecessarily. It also includes a number of measures to tackle problem-drinking, including measures to give the police and local authorities more powers to remove licences from problematic premises.
- The **Liberal Democrat** manifesto proposes giving people a direct say in how petty criminals and those who engage in antisocial behaviour are punished by setting up Neighbourhood Justice Panels (like the one run by Liberal Democrats in Somerset).

#### Sentencing

- **Labour's** manifesto promises a Restorative Justice Act to ensure that restorative justice is available wherever victims want it. It also proposes extending nationwide the right for

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<sup>2</sup> <http://blogs.channel4.com/factcheck/2010/04/12/labour-manifesto-2010-tax-benefits-policing-pensions/>

local people to vote on what work offenders do as ‘Community Payback’ and making asset confiscation a standard principle in sentencing, to include the confiscation of houses and cars. The use of ‘virtual courts’, which move more quickly than traditional courts, would be increased.

- The **Conservative** manifesto proposes introducing a system where the courts can specify minimum and maximum sentences for certain offenders. It also proposes making it clear that anyone convicted of a knife crime can expect to face a prison sentence; extending the length of custodial sentences that can be awarded in a Magistrates’ Court from six to twelve months; giving courts the power to use abstinence-based Drug Rehabilitation Orders; and examining the case for greater Parliamentary scrutiny of sentencing guidelines.
- The **Liberal Democrat** manifesto proposes introducing a presumption against short-term prison sentences of less than six months - replaced by rigorously enforced community sentences - and ensuring that time and resources are not wasted on the unnecessary prosecution and imprisonment of drug users and addicts (with the focus instead on getting addicts the treatment they need). It also proposes championing restorative justice programmes and giving people a direct say in how petty criminals and those who engage in antisocial behaviour are punished by setting up Neighbourhood Justice Panels. Their manifesto also proposes turning the National Policing Improvement Agency into a National Crime Reduction Agency with a wider remit to also test what sentences work and spread best practice across the criminal justice system.

### The prison population

- **Labour’s** manifesto restates their commitment to provide 96,000 prison places by 2014, although it also pledges that Labour would work to reduce the number of women, young and mentally ill people in prison. More EU and other foreign prisoners would also be transferred abroad. The manifesto also proposes using “the tax system to claw back from higher-earning offenders a proportion of the costs of prison”.
- The **Conservative** manifesto promises that they would redevelop the prison estate and increase capacity as necessary to ensure that early release will not be introduced again, but does not give a specific number of places that would be provided. It also proposes extending the early deportation of foreign national prisoners.
- The **Liberal Democrat** manifesto argues that they would be able to cancel the Government’s billion-pound prison-building programme and proposes moving offenders who are drug addicts or mentally ill into more appropriate secure accommodation. It also says that the deportation of criminals should be prioritised.

### Rehabilitation and resettlement

- **Labour’s** manifesto proposes the use of mentors, including vetted ex-prisoners, to meet offenders ‘at the gate’. It also proposes switching investment in drug treatment towards those programmes that are shown to sustain drug-free lives and reduce crime, and trebling alcohol treatment places to cover all persistent criminals where alcohol is identified as a cause of their offending.
- The **Conservative** manifesto proposes introducing payment-by-results in using the private and voluntary sectors to train and rehabilitate people leaving prisons; allowing prisoners to carry out properly-paid work (with deductions to be paid into the Victims’ Fund<sup>3</sup>); and piloting a scheme to create Prison and Rehabilitation Trusts so that one organisation is responsible for preventing reoffending. It also proposes reviewing the criminal records and ‘vetting and barring’ regime and scaling it back to “common sense” levels.
- The **Liberal Democrat** manifesto proposes increasing the number of hours prisoners spend in education and training, as resources allow, and making prisoners work and contribute from their prison wages to a compensation fund for victims.

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<sup>3</sup> Although Channel 4 News’ FactCheck website has queried whether it would raise a significant amount of money: <http://blogs.channel4.com/factcheck/2010/04/13/conservative-manifesto-2010-inheritance-tax-crime-unemployment/>

### Youth crime and youth justice

- The **Labour** manifesto proposes “US-style street teams which use youth pastors and vetted ex-offenders to reach out to disaffected young people” and doubling the availability of organised youth activities on Friday and Saturday nights. It also proposes expanding joint working between police and the probation service to supervise prolific young offenders after they get out of prison and expanding the use of Youth Conditional Cautions, which focus on rehabilitation and reparation.
- The **Conservative** manifesto proposes introducing a series of early intervention measures, including grounding orders, to allow the police to use instant sanctions to deal with antisocial behaviour without criminalising young people unnecessarily. It also pledges to engage with specialist organisations to provide education, mentoring and drug rehabilitation programmes to help rehabilitate young offenders and to introduce payment by results into the youth justice system. It also proposes allowing councils and the police to shut down permanently any shop or bar found persistently selling alcohol to children and doubling the maximum fine for under-age alcohol sales to £20,000.
- The **Liberal Democrat** manifesto proposes strengthening the Youth Service by making it a statutory service, and encouraging local authorities to provide youth services in partnership with young people and the voluntary sector.

### Drugs and alcohol<sup>4</sup>

- The **Labour** manifesto proposes trebling alcohol treatment places to cover all persistent criminals where alcohol is identified as a cause of their crimes and switching investment in drug treatment towards those programmes that are shown to sustain drug-free lives and reduce crime. It also highlights the steps that they have already taken to reduce problem drinking.
- The **Conservative** manifesto proposes giving courts the power to use abstinence-based Drug Rehabilitation Orders; introducing a system of temporary bans on new ‘legal highs’ while health issues are considered by independent experts; and engaging with specialist organisations to provide drug rehabilitation programmes to help young offenders go straight. It also proposes a number of measures to tackle problem drinking, including overhauling the Licensing Act to give local authorities and the police much stronger powers to remove licences from any premises that are causing problems and raising taxes on those drinks linked to antisocial drinking.
- The **Liberal Democrat** manifesto proposes ensuring that financial resources, and police and court time, are not wasted on the unnecessary prosecution and imprisonment of drug users and addicts, with the focus instead on getting addicts the treatment they need. The police would instead concentrate their efforts on “organised drug pushers and gangs”. It also states that the Liberal Democrats would always base drugs policy on independent scientific advice and would make the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs completely independent of government.

### The DNA database

- **Labour** successfully passed the *Crime and Security Act 2010* during parliamentary ‘wash-up’. It contains provisions on the retention of DNA profiles, including a 6-year retention period for the profiles of unconvicted adults. Their manifesto pledges that “Labour will ensure that the most serious offenders are added to the database no matter where or when they were convicted - and retain for six years the DNA profiles of those arrested but not convicted”, while saying that “the Tories talk tough but vote soft on issues from gun crime to DNA retention”. During the election campaign, Gordon Brown has accused the Conservatives of turning their backs on being tough on crime by refusing to support Labour plans for the DNA database, with Home Secretary Alan Johnson adding: “The Tories might try to talk tough on crime but their actions are weak”.<sup>5</sup> Brown also described the

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<sup>4</sup> Transform Drug Policy Foundation has analysed the party manifestos’ commitments on drug policy on their blog at <http://transform-drugs.blogspot.com/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/election-2010/7571760/Labour-to-make-crime-lords-pay-jail-costs.html>

differences in the two parties' policies as "a big dividing line at this election".<sup>6</sup> However, the *Guardian's* 'Reality Check' service has described Brown's claims about the DNA database as "misleading".<sup>7</sup> *The Times's* Election Fact-Check service gave Labour's claims on the merits of the DNA database a "pork pie rating" of "4 pork pies out of 5".<sup>8</sup>

- The **Conservatives** have opposed the extent of the National DNA Database. They chose not to block the passage of the *Crime and Security Act 2010*, but did say that: "A Conservative government will legislate in the first session in order to make sure that our DNA database will only include permanent records of people who are guilty, instead of those who are innocent."<sup>9</sup> Their manifesto states that "the indefinite retention of innocent people's DNA is unacceptable", adding that they will "legislate to make sure that our DNA database is used primarily to store information about those who are guilty of committing crimes rather than those who are innocent. They also promise to "collect the DNA of all existing prisoners, those under state supervision who have been convicted of an offence, and anyone convicted of a serious recordable offence" and to "change the guidance to give people on the database who have been wrongly accused of a minor crime an automatic right to have their DNA withdrawn."
- The **Liberal Democrats** have also proposed ending the permanent retention of innocent people's DNA. Their manifesto states that they would "Remove innocent people from the police DNA database and stop storing DNA from innocent people and children in the future, too". Henry Porter has said that "by far the best undertakings on liberty come in the Liberal Democrat manifesto".<sup>10</sup>

### The manifestos - party by party

#### **Conservative Party**

The Conservative Party manifesto states that they will fight back against the crime and antisocial behaviour that blights our communities; take steps to reduce the causes of crime, like poverty and broken families; put the criminal justice system on the side of responsible citizens; take tougher measures against knife criminals and crack down on the binge-drinking that leads to violence; cut paperwork to get police out on the street and give people democratic control over local policing; and introduce honesty in sentencing and pay voluntary and private providers to reduce reoffending.

Their proposals are:

- *Targeted measures to reduce the causes of crime*
  - Overhauling the Licensing Act to give local authorities and the police much stronger powers to remove licences from, or refuse to grant licences to, any premises that are causing problems.
  - Allowing councils and the police to shut down permanently any shop or bar found persistently selling alcohol to children.
  - Doubling the maximum fine for under-age alcohol sales to £20,000.
  - Raising taxes on those drinks linked to antisocial drinking, while abolishing Labour's new 'cider tax' on ordinary drinkers.
  - Banning off-licences and supermarkets from selling alcohol below cost price.
  - Permitting local councils to charge more for late-night licences to pay for additional policing.
  - Introducing a series of early intervention measures, including grounding orders, to allow the police to use instant sanctions to deal with antisocial behaviour without criminalising young people unnecessarily.

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<sup>6</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/apr/09/brown-tories-soft-crime-dna>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/blog/2010/apr/09/reality-check-conservatives-dna-bowman>

<sup>8</sup> <http://timesonline.typepad.com/election10/2010/04/fact-check-dna-testing.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/apr/07/dna-database-reform-alan-johnson>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/henryporter/2010/apr/14/liberal-democrats-lead-liberty>

- *Putting the criminal justice system on the side of the public*
  - Making it clear that anyone convicted of a knife crime can expect to face a prison sentence.
  - Introducing mobile knife scanners on streets and public transport.
  - Extending the length of custodial sentences that can be awarded in a Magistrates' Court from six to twelve months.
  - Ensuring that victims and their families are better informed about the progress of criminal proceedings and release of offenders.
  - Examining the case for greater Parliamentary scrutiny of sentencing guidelines.
  - Carrying out a fundamental review of legal aid to make it work more efficiently.
  - Changing the law so that anyone acting reasonably to stop a crime or apprehend a criminal is not arrested or prosecuted.
  - Giving householders greater legal protection if they have to defend themselves against intruders in their homes.
  - Implementing the *Prisoners' Earnings Act 1996* to allow deductions from the earnings of prisoners in properly paid work to be paid into the Victims' Fund.
  - Using the Victims' Fund to deliver up to fifteen new rape crisis centres and give existing rape crisis centres stable, long-term funding.
  - Ensuring that the school curriculum includes teaching young people about sexual consent.
- *Reforming the police*
  - Reducing police paperwork, starting by scrapping the stop form and reducing the burden of stop and search procedures.
  - Amending the health and safety laws that stand in the way of common sense policing.
  - Giving the police the power to identify offenders in order to protect the public and prevent crime.
  - Returning charging discretion to the police for minor offences.
  - Processing criminals more quickly by video-linking custody cells and courts.
  - Making the police accountable to a directly-elected individual who will set policing priorities for local communities.
  - Obliging the police to publish detailed local crime data statistics every month, in an open and standardised format.
  - Creating a dedicated Border Police Force, as part of a refocused Serious Organised Crime Agency, to enhance national security, improve immigration controls, and crack down on the trafficking of people, weapons and drugs.
  - Working with police forces to strengthen arrangements to deal with serious crime and other cross-boundary policing challenges, and extending collaboration between forces to deliver better value for money.
- *Prisons with a purpose*
  - Redeveloping the prison estate and increasing capacity as necessary, to ensure that early release will not be introduced again.
  - Extending the early deportation of foreign national prisoners.
  - Introducing a system where the courts can specify minimum and maximum sentences for certain offenders.
  - Using the private and voluntary sectors, under supervision, to train and rehabilitate people leaving prisons. Providers will be paid using payment-by-results. This will also be applied to the youth justice system.
  - Giving courts the power to use abstinence-based Drug Rehabilitation Orders.
  - Introducing a system of temporary bans on new 'legal highs' while health issues are considered by independent experts.
  - Engaging with specialist organisations to provide education, mentoring and drug rehabilitation programmes to help young offenders go straight.
  - Piloting a scheme to create Prison and Rehabilitation Trusts so that just one organisation is responsible for helping to stop a criminal reoffending.
- *Restoring our civil liberties*
  - Legislating to make sure that the DNA database is used primarily to store information about those who are guilty of committing crimes rather than those who are innocent.

- Collecting the DNA of all existing prisoners, those under state supervision who have been convicted of an offence, and anyone convicted of a serious recordable offence.
- Changing the guidance to give people on the database who have been wrongly accused of a minor crime an automatic right to have their DNA withdrawn.
- Reviewing the criminal records and ‘vetting and barring’ regime and scaling it back to common sense levels. The manifesto states that “Labour’s new system goes too far”.
- Replacing the *Human Rights Act* with a UK Bill of Rights.

#### *What’s not in the Conservative Party manifesto?*

As the Conservative Party published a draft manifesto, it is possible to see what ideas have been abandoned since it was published earlier this year. The only proposals that appear to have been dropped are:

- Creating a new offence of breach of bail and ending the presumption of bail for persistent offenders or those accused of serious crimes.
- Strengthening stop and search powers to make it easier for the police to get knives off the streets.
- Reforming the *Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act*, which regulates police surveillance, so that authorisation is not needed in routine cases.

Proposals to reintroduce prison ships, which were not in the draft manifesto but were subsequently endorsed by David Cameron, are not specifically included in the final manifesto (although the proposal to redevelop and expand the prison estate could potentially include prison ships).

#### *And what’s new?*

The majority of the manifesto commitments appear in the draft manifesto, or are updated or adapted from proposals in the draft manifesto. The main new proposals are:

- Ensuring that victims and their families are better informed about the progress of criminal proceedings and the release of offenders.
- Examining the case for greater Parliamentary scrutiny of sentencing guidelines.
- Carrying out a fundamental review of legal aid to make it work more efficiently.
- Reviewing the criminal records and ‘vetting and barring’ regime and scaling it back to common sense levels. The manifesto states that “Labour’s new system goes too far”.
- Engaging with specialist organisations to provide education, mentoring and drug rehabilitation programmes for young offenders.
- Applying payment-by-results reforms to the youth justice system.

The last two of these extend existing proposals to include the youth justice system.

The full manifesto is available at:

[http://media.conservatives.s3.amazonaws.com/manifesto/cpmanifesto2010\\_hires.pdf](http://media.conservatives.s3.amazonaws.com/manifesto/cpmanifesto2010_hires.pdf)

#### **Labour Party**

The Labour Party manifesto’s leading pledges on law and order are: Providing the funding to maintain police and police community support officer numbers, with neighbourhood police teams in every area spending 80% of their time on the beat visible in their neighbourhood, improving police performance through online police report cards, and ensuring failing forces are taken over by the best; intervening earlier to prevent crime, with no-nonsense action to tackle the problems caused by the 50,000 most dysfunctional families; guaranteeing fast and effective action to deal with antisocial behaviour, including a right to legal injunctions for repeat victims, funded by the police or council who let them down; and expanding tough ‘Community Payback’ for criminals who don’t go to prison, giving everyone the right to vote on the work they do.

Their proposals are:

- *Protecting frontline policing*
  - Giving the police the resources to maintain current numbers of police officers and police community support officers.

- Continuing to cut police bureaucracy and inefficiency in procurement, IT and overtime.
- Ensuring neighbourhood police teams hold monthly beat meetings, at which local people will have a right to hold senior commanders to account.
- Ensuring that where a police force or local Basic Command Unit consistently fails local people, either that the senior management team including the borough commander or chief constable is replaced, or it is taken over by a neighbouring force or BCU.
- *Early intervention and preventing crime*
  - Expanding Family Nurse Partnerships to all vulnerable young mothers, reducing future crime and behavioural problems.
  - Providing Family Intervention Projects - proven to tackle anti-social behaviour - for the “50,000 most dysfunctional families”.
  - Expanding the use of Youth Conditional Cautions, which focus on rehabilitation and reparation.
  - Expanding “US-style street teams which use youth pastors and vetted ex-offenders to reach out to disaffected young people”.
  - Doubling the availability of organised youth activities on Friday and Saturday nights.
  - Expanding joint working between police and the probation service to supervise prolific young offenders after they get out of prison.
  - Expanding the use of mentors, including vetted ex-prisoners, to meet offenders ‘at the gate’ so they don’t slip back into crime.
  - Trebling alcohol treatment places to cover all persistent criminals where alcohol is identified as a cause of their crimes.
  - Using Social Impact Bonds to encourage private investors to support social entrepreneurs and the third sector, harnessing additional investment for crime prevention.
  - Introducing a Restorative Justice Act to ensure that restorative justice is available wherever victims want it.
  - Switching investment in drug treatment towards those programmes that are shown to sustain drug-free lives and reduce crime.
- *Tough action on crime and antisocial behaviour*
  - Guaranteeing an initial response to any complaint about antisocial behaviour within 24 hours and providing a named case worker to provide feedback.
  - Introducing a preventative element for all Asbos for under-16s.
  - Ensuring that all relevant agencies - not just neighbourhood police teams - hold monthly public meetings to hear people’s concerns about antisocial behaviour.
  - Giving all police community support officers stronger powers to tackle antisocial behaviour.
  - Introducing a ‘Respect’ standard for the private rented sector.
  - Ensuring that local antisocial behaviour champions make agencies work together to tackle cases.
  - Ensuring that the great majority of applications for Asbos take under a month and that whenever an Asbo is breached there is an expectation of prosecution.
  - Legislate to give people - who have suffered repeated antisocial behaviour and where the police, council, courts or other agencies have failed to act - financial support to pursue legal injunctions, with the costs met by the agency that let them down.
- *Using technology to cut crime*
  - Adding the most serious offenders to the DNA database no matter where or when they were convicted and retaining for six years the DNA profiles of those arrested but not convicted.
- *Punishment and reform*
  - Transferring more EU and other foreign prisoners abroad.
  - Working to reduce the number of women, young and mentally ill people in prison (although the commitment to increase prison capacity to 96,000 places by 2014 is retained).
  - Extending nationwide the right for local people to vote on what work offenders do as ‘Community Payback’.

- Continuing to develop a National Victims Service to guarantee all victims of crime and antisocial behaviour seven day-a-week cover and a named, dedicated worker offering one-to-one support through the trial and beyond.
- Ensuring that victims receive their compensation from offenders up front.
- Finding greater savings in legal aid and the courts system.
- Increasing the use of successful ‘virtual courts’ which move from arrest, to trial, to sentencing in hours rather than weeks or months.
- Using “the tax system to claw back from higher-earning offenders a proportion of the costs of prison”.
- Making asset confiscation a standard principle in sentencing, extended from cash to houses and cars. Every community would have the right to vote on how these assets are used to pay back to the community.

The full manifesto is available at:

<http://www.labour.org.uk/manifesto/uploads/TheLabourPartyManifesto-2010.pdf>

### **Liberal Democrats**

The Liberal Democrat’s manifesto states that they will “focus on what works to cut crime”, arguing that “Labour and the Conservatives posture on penalties, which do not deter criminals” and that “once a criminal has been caught, it is vital that the punishment they are given helps to turn them away from crime, and set them back on the straight and narrow”.

Their proposals are:

- *Cutting crime with more and better police*
  - Putting 3,000 more police on the beat, paid for by cutting other spending, such as scrapping ID cards.
  - Reducing time-wasting bureaucracy at police stations with better technology that can be deployed on the streets.
  - Introducing the direct election of police authorities. Authorities would still be able to co-opt extra members to ensure diversity, experience and expertise.
  - Giving far more power to elected police authorities, including the right to sack and appoint the chief constable, set local policing priorities, and agree and determine budgets.
  - Strengthening the Youth Service by making it a statutory service, and encouraging local authorities to provide youth services in partnership with young people and the voluntary sector.
  - Reforming the police, with a full review of the very restrictive terms and conditions for police officer employment.
  - Turning the National Policing Improvement Agency into a National Crime Reduction Agency with a wider remit to test what policing techniques and sentences work and spread best practice across police services and the criminal justice system.
- *Practical steps to make you safer*
  - Making hospitals share non-confidential information with the police so they know where gun and knife crime is happening and can target stop-and-search in gun and knife crime hot spots.
  - Bringing in stop-on-request for night buses, so that the driver can let passengers off between stops so they are as close to home as possible.
  - Requiring better recording of hate crimes against disabled, homosexual and transgender people, which are frequently not centrally recorded.
  - Ensuring that financial resources, and police and court time, are not wasted on the unnecessary prosecution and imprisonment of drug users and addicts; the focus instead would be on getting addicts the treatment they need. The police would concentrate their efforts on organised drug pushers and gangs.
  - Always basing drugs policy on independent scientific advice, including making the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs completely independent of government.

- *Making the justice system work to rehabilitate criminals and reduce crime*
  - Making prisoners work and contribute from their prison wages to a compensation fund for victims.
  - As resources allow, increasing the number of hours prisoners spend in education and training.
  - Introducing a presumption against short-term sentences of less than six months - replaced by rigorously enforced community sentences which evidence shows are better at cutting reoffending.
  - Moving offenders who are drug addicts or mentally ill into more appropriate secure accommodation.
  - Cancelling the Government's billion-pound prison building programme.
  - Giving people a direct say in how petty criminals and those who engage in antisocial behaviour are punished by setting up Neighbourhood Justice Panels (NJPs), like the one run by Liberal Democrats in Somerset where 95% of offenders have been turned away from further crimes.<sup>11</sup>
  - Championing restorative justice programmes, like NJPs, which make offenders confront their behaviour and are more successful at reducing crime than traditional forms of punishment.
- *Firm but fair immigration*
  - Prioritising deportation efforts on criminals, people-traffickers and other high-priority cases.
- *Restoring your freedoms*
  - Removing innocent people from the police DNA database and stopping storing DNA from innocent people and children in the future.

The full manifesto is available at:

[http://network.libdems.org.uk/manifesto2010/libdem\\_manifesto\\_2010.pdf](http://network.libdems.org.uk/manifesto2010/libdem_manifesto_2010.pdf)

### Analysis

Existing analysis of the manifestos' contents on law and order includes:

- Channel 4 News' FactCheck website has examined all three manifestos, including their proposals on crime and justice: <http://blogs.channel4.com/factcheck/>
- Transform Drug Policy Foundation has analysed the party manifestos' commitments on drug policy on their blog: <http://transform-drugs.blogspot.com/>
- 'Party promises - crime' by Jackie Lowthian (15/4/10) - <http://www.newstatesman.com/2010/04/crime-young-support-prison>
- 'Politics and pragmatics in managing the prison population' by Simon Bastow (14/4/10) - <http://blogs.lse.ac.uk/election/?p=1200>

**Criminal Justice Alliance**

**April 2010**

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<sup>11</sup> Although Channel 4 News' FactCheck website has queried this reoffending rate: <http://blogs.channel4.com/factcheck/2010/04/14/lib-dem-manifesto-2010-planes-poverty-football/>