General Election briefing for BMA members

Conservative manifesto 2019
Overview
The Conservative Party has published its manifesto following an official launch by Boris Johnson in Telford, Shropshire on Sunday 24 November. The manifesto confirms the party’s previous commitment to increase NHS spending by a minimum of £34 billion in cash terms (i.e. not taking into account inflation) by 2023-24, contains commitments to increase GP and nurse numbers and pledges to introduce an NHS Visa alongside an increase in the immigration health surcharge.

Key manifesto pledges
- Increase NHS spending by a minimum of £34 billion in cash terms by 2023-24.
- Hold an urgent review of the doctors’ pensions ‘taper problem’ within first 30 days, working with the BMA and Academy of Medical Royal Colleges.
- Build 40 new hospitals across the country.

The full picture
The manifesto document can be found here. The summary below provides a full overview of the pledges impacting upon the health and social care sectors, NHS staff and patients. Most, but not all, of this information is taken verbatim from the manifesto (please check before using).

NHS funding
- Increase NHS spending by a minimum of £34 billion in cash terms by 2023-24.
- Build and fund 40 new hospitals over the next 10 years.
- Roll out cancer diagnostic machines across 78 hospital trusts.
- End hospital car parking charges for disabled people, frequent outpatient attenders, parents of sick children staying overnight and staff working night shifts.
- Provide £74 million, over three years, for additional capacity in community care settings for those with learning disabilities and autism.
- Double research funding into dementia.
- Provide a £5,000-£8,000 annual maintenance grant to student nurses every year during their course to help with their cost of living.

NHS workforce
- Deliver 50,000 more nurses, 6,000 more doctors in general practice, and 6,000 more primary care professionals (e.g. physiotherapists and pharmacists), on top of the 7,500 extra nurse associates and 20,000 primary care professionals already announced.
- Increase funding for professional training and more supportive hospital management.
- Introduce an NHS Visa for qualified doctors, nurses, and allied health professionals with a job offer from the NHS, and who have been trained to a recognised standard, with a good working English, to gain fast-track entry, reduced visa fees and dedicated support to come to the UK with their families.
- Hold an urgent review of the doctors' pensions 'taper problem' within first 30 days, working with the British Medical Association and Academy of Medical Royal Colleges.
- Legislate to allow parents to take extended leave for neonatal care.
- Look at ways to make it easier for fathers to take paternity leave.
- Fund more high-quality childcare before and after school during the holidays.
NHS policy and standards of care

- Focus on helping patients with multiple conditions to have simplified and more joined-up access to the NHS.
- Extend the Cancer Drugs Fund into an Innovative Medicines Fund.
- Improve the early diagnosis and treatment of all major conditions.
- Facilitate the discharge from hospital for people with learning disabilities and autism and improve how they are treated in law.
- Improve NHS performance by bringing down operating waiting times, improve A&E performance and increase cancer survival rates.
- Study carefully the recommendations of the ongoing review led by NHS clinical staff into A&E and clinical performance.
- Increase the use of frontline technology to improve patients’ experience, provide flexible working for clinicians, and help save lives.
- Support the hospices.
- Develop personalised and high-quality support to families giving birth.
- Uphold the commitment to extend healthy life expectancy by five years by 2035.
- Ensure that new GP places are delivered ahead of people moving into new housing developments.

Brexit and Immigration

- Start putting the Withdrawal Agreement through Parliament before Christmas and leave the European Union in January.
- Introduce an Australian-style points-based immigration system.
- End freedom of movement.
- Raise standards in areas like workers’ rights, animal welfare, agriculture and the environment.
- Recover the cost of medical treatment from people not resident in the UK.
- Increase the NHS surcharge from £400 to £625 a year paid by all non-EU migrant workers and extend it to all EU citizens who migrate to the UK after Brexit.
- Introduce a student visa to help universities attract talent from across the world and allow students to apply for work in the UK after they graduate.

Social care

- £1 billion of funding every year for more social care staff, infrastructure, technology and facilities.
- Build a cross-party consensus in order to bring forward the necessary proposal and legislation for long-term reform, including the condition that nobody needing care should be forced to sell their home to pay for it.
- Extend the entitlement to leave for unpaid carers to one week.

Mental health

- Treat mental health with the same urgency as physical health.
- Introduce legislation to give patients suffering from mental health conditions, greater control over their treatment.
Public health

- Develop a long-term strategy for empowering people with lifestyle-related conditions such as obesity to live healthier lives, as well as tackling childhood obesity, heart disease and diabetes.
- Introduce a new national vaccination strategy.
- Extend social prescribing and expand the new National Academy of Social Prescribing.
- Overhaul NHS screening and use new technology and mobile screening services to prevent ill health.
- Tackle gambling addiction.

Environment

- Maintain the commitment to the target of Net Zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- Invest £9.2 billion in the energy efficiency of homes, schools and hospitals.
- Set strict new laws on air quality.
- Prioritise the environment in the first Budget by investing in research and development; decarbonisation schemes; new flood defences; electric vehicle infrastructure and clean energy.

Global policy

- Maintain the commitment to spend 0.7% of GNI on development and do more to help countries receiving aid become self-sufficient.
- End preventable deaths of mothers, new-born babies and children by 2030 and lead the way in eradicating Ebola and malaria.