

28 tinkerings at the edge of relevance

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Ed Miliband has, [according to the Guardian](#), embraced IPPR's new report, launched today and entitled 'The Condition of Britain'. I was, therefore, duty bound to take a look.

IPPR's recommendations are (from their own press release via the Guardian) ([and in full here](#)):

Families - raising children and nurturing relationships

- A month off for fathers when their child is born, paid at least the minimum wage, plus paid time off for fathers to attend antenatal appointments
- A guaranteed full-time, year-round affordable childcare place for all 1-4-year-olds, including a free 15 hour entitlement for all 2-4-year-olds
- All staff working with two-year-olds to hold at least a level 3 child development qualification, and 30 per cent to hold an early years degree
- Child benefit to rise with prices for under fives but frozen for older children
- A separate work allowance for second earners in universal credit
- A lifetime entitlement to one course of couples counselling for all adults and an end to marriage notice fees

Young people - enabling secure transitions into adulthood

- A youth allowance for 18-21-year-olds in education or looking for work, rather than access to out-of-work benefits
- A youth guarantee for 18-21-year-olds, with access to education, training or help to find work, and compulsory work experience after six months
- Half of young people aged 16 or 17 taking part in National Citizen Service by 2020

- Young adults brought under the remit of youth offending teams, rather than adult probation services

Working life - promoting work and rewarding contribution:

- An independent National Insurance Fund to restore the link between contributions and entitlements
- A higher rate of JSA and access to support for mortgage interest for those who have paid into the system
- A Work Programme focused on the long-term unemployed and people recovering from a health condition
- A locally-led 'New Start' supported employment programme for people with a long-term health condition or disability
- Sick pay recovery for small firms hiring people from ESA, plus greater back-to-work engagement during sickness absence
- An independent Affordable Credit Trust to endow local affordable lenders as alternatives to high-cost payday lenders

Housing - mobilising local leadership to build more homes:

- New powers for towns and cities to bring forward land for development
- Financial incentives for councils to reduce housing benefit spending by meeting affordable housing needs more efficiently
- New powers for councils to set the level of housing benefit in the private rented sector
- Control over housing capital budgets for combined authorities who want to shift from 'benefits to bricks'
- In time, enabling combined authorities to take control of all housing spending in their area, with responsibility for meeting affordable housing needs

Crime and exclusion - putting people and places in control:

- An entitlement to 'restorative justice' to give a voice to victims of crime and antisocial behaviour
- Neighbourhood justice panels in every area to mobilise local volunteers to help tackle low-level crime and antisocial behaviour
- A new locally-led 'Troubled Lives' programme to address the root causes of deep

social exclusion

Older people - living well together in an ageing society:

- A right to adjustments in working arrangements for people providing a significant amount of unpaid care
- An entitlement to means-tested support for older people with 'moderate' care needs
- An independent review to consider how the national insurance system could protect people from high care costs in old age
- Backing for older people who want to establish a 'neighbourhood network' in their local area to help tackle loneliness and isolation

What can I say? Where is the big idea? Either this press release really undersells the ideas or they just aren't present - [unless the small state is the theme](#).

The stuff on housing is useful, I admit - but not transformational. And that's it, to be honest (bar a disastrous dedication to an NIC fund, on which I will blog separately). Some of rest might be portrayed as negative in my view.

If this is the agenda then it is one of 28 tinkerings on the edge of relevance. No wonder Ed Miliband is not sure he will make it to government.

Surely Labour can do better than this?