POLITICAL PARTY MANIFESTOS 2017

Below is a summary of the pledges most relevant to people with motor neurone disease (MND) and their families in the three main political party manifestos for the general election 2017.

LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO PLEDGES (published 16 May 2017)

1) Welfare benefits

Key pledges affecting people living with MND, their families and carers:

- End the pointless stress of reassessments for people with severe long-term conditions.
- Scrap cuts to Bereavement Support Payments.
- Increase Carer’s Allowance by £11 to the level of Jobseekers’ Allowance.
- Scrap the Work Capability and Personal Independence Payment assessments and replace them with a personalised, holistic assessment process that provides each individual with a tailored plan, building on their strengths and addressing barriers
- End the privatisation of assessments (i.e. bring them back in-house and end the contracts with Atos & Capita).

Other key pledges:

- End the benefits sanctions regime
- Cancel the Bedroom Tax
- Reinstate Housing Benefit for under-21s
- Implement the court decision on Personal Independence Payment (PIP) so that there is parity of esteem between those with physical and mental-health conditions.
- Commission a report into expanding the Access to Work programme.

2) NHS services

Key pledges affecting people living with MND, their families and carers:

- £30 billion in extra funding for the NHS over the next Parliament, plus a boost in capital funding
- Focus on addressing ‘postcode lotteries’ and making sure that the quality of care you receive does not depend on which part of the country you live in.
- Ensure all NHS patients get fast access to the most effective new drugs and treatments, and insist on value-for-money agreements with pharmaceutical companies (suggests they will oppose the recent NICE/NHS England changes around technology appraisals).
- Ensure high quality, personalised care for people approaching the end of their life, wherever and whenever they need it.
- Halt and review the NHS ‘Sustainability and Transformation Plans’ and ask local people to participate in the redrawing of plans with a focus on patient need rather than available finances
• Pledge to "scrap the Health and Social Care Act" which, if implemented in full, would effectively dismantle the current NHS structure of CCGs and NHS England etc
• Reinstate the powers of the Secretary of State for Health to have overall responsibility for the NHS (limiting the role of NHS England).

Other key pledges:
• Scrap the NHS pay cap, put pay decisions back into the hands of the independent pay review body
• Guarantee access to treatment within 18 weeks, taking 1 million off NHS waiting lists by the end of the parliament
• Increase funding to GP services
• Ring-fence mental health budgets and invest in early intervention around mental health.

3) Social care services

Key pledges affecting people living with MND, their families and carers:
• Increase the social care budgets by a further £8 billion over the lifetime of the next Parliament, including an additional £1 billion for the first year.
• Create a new National Care Service for England alongside the NHS, with a shared requirement for single commissioning, partnership arrangements, pooled budgets and joint working arrangements.
• Place a maximum limit on lifetime personal contributions to care costs. Labour will consider a range of ways it should be funded, with options including wealth taxes, an employer care contribution or a new social care levy

4) Brexit

Key pledges affecting people living with MND, their families and carers:
• Ensure that the UK maintains our leading research role by seeking to stay part of Horizon 2020 and its successor programmes and by welcoming research staff to the UK.
• Seek to maintain membership of (or equivalent relationships with) European organisations which offer benefits to the UK such as Euratom and the European Medicines Agency.

Other key pledges:
• Scrap the Brexit White Paper and replace it with fresh negotiating priorities that have a strong emphasis on retaining the benefits of the Single Market and the Customs Union
• Immediately guarantee existing rights for all EU nationals living in Britain and secure reciprocal rights for UK citizens who have chosen to make their lives in EU countries
LIBERAL DEMOCRAT MANIFESTO PLEDGES (published 17 May 2017)

1) Welfare benefits

Key pledges affecting people living with MND, their families and carers:

- Increase the amount people can earn before losing Carer’s Allowance from £110 to £150 a week, and reduce the number of hours of care per week required to qualify.
- Reverse cuts to Employment Support Allowance for those in the work-related activity group.
- Scrap the ‘bedroom tax’, while incentivising local authorities to help tenants ‘downsize’ to smaller properties.
- Uprate working-age benefits at least in line with inflation.
- Raise awareness of, and seek to expand, Access to Work, which supports people with disabilities in work.
- Improve links between Jobcentres and Work Programme providers and the local NHS to ensure all those in receipt of health-related benefits are getting the care and support to which they are entitled.
- Scrap the Work Capability Assessment for ESA and replace it with a new system, run by local authorities according to national rules.

Other key pledges:

- Abandon the two-child policy on family benefits.
- Reverse the cuts to Work Allowances in Universal Credit.
- Reverse cuts to housing benefit for 18-21-year-olds and increase the rates of Jobseeker’s Allowance and Universal Credit for those aged 18-24 at the same rate as minimum wages.
- Increase Local Housing Allowance to be in line with average rents in an area.

2) NHS services

Key pledges affecting people living with MND, their families and carers:

- £6bn investment in the NHS and social care, funded with an immediate 1p rise on the basic, higher and additional rates of Income Tax. In the longer term, develop a dedicated health and care tax.
- Priority areas for investment are: social care, primary care (and other out-of-hospital care), mental health and public health.
- Provide more choice at the end of life and move towards free end-of-life social care, whether at home or in a hospice.
- Evaluate the work of hospices with a view to putting them on a more sustainable financial footing and allowing them to expand their services.

Other key pledges:

- New waiting time standards for mental health services to match those in physical health care.
- Introduce a statutory independent budget monitoring agency for health and care, similar to the Office for Budget Responsibility.
- Guarantee the rights of all NHS and social care service staff who are EU nationals to stay in the UK.
• End the public sector pay freeze for NHS workers

3) Social care services

• Implement a cap on how much people have to pay for social care.
• Introduce a statutory code of conduct for care workers, backed up by a care workers’ suitability register.
• Place a legal duty on the NHS to identify carers, and develop a Carer’s Passport scheme.
• Establish a cross-party health and social care convention and move towards single place-based budgets for health and social care by 2020.
• Remove perverse incentives by moving away from payments for activity and introducing tariffs that encourage joined-up services.

4) Brexit

• When the terms of the future relationship with the EU have been negotiated, put that deal to a vote of the British people in a referendum, with the alternative option of staying in the EU on the ballot paper.
• Maintain membership of the single market and customs union
• Retain freedom of movement and unilaterally guarantee the rights of EU nationals in the UK.
• Recognise the value of international staff to universities and promote international collaboration in research.
• Fight to retain access to Horizon 2020 and Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions funding.
CONSERVATIVE PARTY MANIFESTO PLEDGES (published 18 May 2017)

1) NHS services

Key pledges affecting people living with MND, their families and carers:

- Increase NHS spending by a minimum of £8 billion in real terms over the next five years.
- Implement the recommendations of the Accelerated Access Review (which aims to speed up access to new treatments).
- Improve care at the end of life so that every person should receive attentive, high quality, compassionate care and their wishes for their closing weeks are respected.
- Build and upgrade primary care facilities, mental health clinics and hospitals “in every part of England.”
- Retain the 95% A&E target and the 18-week elective care standard so that those needing care receive it in a timely fashion.
- Strengthen the entitlement to flexible working to help those with caring responsibilities for young children or older relatives.

Other notable pledges:

- Introduce a Mental Health Bill and recruit up to 10,000 more mental health professionals. Publish a green paper on young people’s mental health before the end of this year.
- Reform Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services so that children with serious conditions are seen within an appropriate timeframe and no child has to leave their local area and their family to receive normal treatment.

2) Social Care

- Give workers a new statutory entitlement to carer’s leave.
- Align the future basis for means-testing for care at home with that for residential care, so that house value is taken into account when calculating a person’s assets.
- Enable those receiving care at home to defer payments until after death so that no-one will have to sell their home in their lifetime to pay for care.
- Introduce a single capital floor, set at £100,000, so that people will always retain at least £100,000 of their savings and assets, including value in the family home.
- Means test Winter Fuel Payments for pensioners.

3) Welfare, wages and employment

Key pledges affecting people living with MND, their families and carers:

- Legislate to give unemployed disabled claimants or those with a health condition personalised and tailored employment support.
- Get 1 million more people with disabilities into employment over the next ten years.
- Harness flexible working and the digital economy to generate jobs for those whose disabilities make traditional work difficult.
- Offer a holiday on employers’ National Insurance Contributions for a full year to businesses employing former wards of the care system, someone with a disability, those with chronic
mental health problems, those who have committed a crime but who have repaid their debt to society.

- Review disabled people’s access and amend regulations if necessary to improve disabled access to licensed premises, parking and housing.
- Work with providers of everyday essential services, like energy and telecoms, to reduce the extra costs that disability can incur.
- No plans for “further radical welfare reform” in this Parliament.

Other notable pledges:

- Increase the National Living Wage to 60 per cent of median earnings by 2020 and then by the rate of median earnings.
- Act to ensure that the interests of employees on traditional contracts, the self-employed and those people working in the ‘gig’ economy are all properly protected.
- Legislate for tougher regulation of tax advisory firms.

4) Research

- Meet the current OECD average for investment in R&D of 2.4% of GDP within ten years, with a longer-term goal of 3%.
- Increase the number of scientists working in the UK and enable leading scientists from around the world to work here.
- Continue to support research into the diagnosis and treatment of rare cancers and other diseases, including Genomics England’s work in decoding 100,000 genomes.

5) Brexit

- Britain will no longer be members of the single market or customs union but will seek a “deep and special partnership” including a comprehensive free trade and customs agreement.
- Remain signatories to the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Seek to replicate all existing EU free trade agreements.