



catch
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Putting People, Place and Purpose at the heart of Politics

OUR MANIFESTO FOR THE
2019 GENERAL ELECTION

2019



ABOUT CATCH22

Catch22 works with some of the **most vulnerable people in society**. We help build resilience and aspiration in people to help them lead fulfilling lives for themselves and their communities.

We work in justice, education, employability and with children, young people and families – and our approach is based on the 3 'Ps'. We believe everyone can thrive if they have:



PEOPLE
around them
who care



PLACE
a decent place
to live



PURPOSE
a clear purpose
in life

The 3 'Ps' provide a platform for joined up policy making. We want to see all political parties, in the run up to this general election and beyond, commit to policies that give people opportunities and support they need to be healthy, happy and active citizens.



JUSTICE

The Premise

At the heart of successful justice and rehabilitation services are strong, consistent and trusting relationships.

There must be proper investment in services that support offenders upon release in order to create the conditions that will enable people to desist from offending. We also want to see third sectors organisations given the freedom to innovate in the delivery of probation services, and for victims' rights to be enshrined in law.

We want to see:

- **Minimum standards for Through the Gate services (employment, accommodation, finance, mental health support) to ensure prison leavers are properly supported to reintegrate into their communities**

Funding should also be sequenced to avoid duplication of activities. We are aware of examples of ex-offenders who have received CV writing help from five different organisations but this didn't follow through into help securing a job. Minimum standards enshrined in law would result in better use of money and greater impact.

- **Contracts for probation services that incentivise innovative practice and are measured against how well they meet the needs of services users rather than just transactional processes**

Third sector organisations with a strong track record of delivery should be trusted to innovate and design 'good' services.

- **A commitment to publishing a revised Victims' Code – ensuring victims' rights and entitlements are enshrined in law**

We want to see the current Victims' Code published alongside the Victims' Law enacted (following consultation) to underpin it. This should be coupled with an awareness campaign so that victims are fully aware of their rights.





CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

The Premise

Ensuring that people – whatever their age – **have a good place to live, good people around them and a sense of purpose** is key to building resilient communities. Those in society who are most vulnerable all too often fail to access the right services, or the services they can access are short in supply.

Of particular concern is the current state of children's care homes. Too many children are being placed in inappropriate care settings, largely due to the growing demand and the relative lack of preventative services. Latest figures show that the number of children being taken into care is at a 10-year high, with over 75,000 looked-after children in England, 4% higher than the previous year. Support for these children therefore needs urgent attention.

What we want to see:

- **Increased investment in 'edge of care' services and 'children in need' interventions**

These are designed to support children at risk of entering the care system and include prevention and intervention programmes, parenting support services, and intense sessions with children and families. We recommend interventions, such as Fact22 (a holistic, whole family approach focusing on improving outcomes for children aged 0 to 19-years-old who are identified as children in need), that are proven to work. Re-referral rates to social services in the local authority where this was piloted dropping from 24% to 14% during the last five years.

- **Holistic family support targeted at the most vulnerable families**

This should include ring-fenced funding for children with four or more adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) – as evidence shows it is these children who at greater risk of poor outcomes. Targeted funding would help reduce the number of children requiring more intensive interventions, which comes at a greater cost.

- **Investment in physical spaces in communities**

Communities need safe physical spaces for support services and to build a sense of togetherness. This may be a community centre, youth centre, park or even the post office. Isolation is a key factor in poor mental health for people of all ages and in order for people to 'belong' they need a safe place to live and work and have the opportunity to take an active role in shaping their communities.

- **Every children's care home (whether regulated or unregulated) to be registered on a central database which is readily available to Local Authorities**

Currently there is no central database, meaning children are being placed in homes based purely on available spaces and with no information on the quality of that provision.

- **The regulation of all 'homes' for under 18 year olds**

Children in care are already vulnerable and at greater risk of going missing and being subjected to exploitation. Too many care homes are not regulated (largely because they provide care for over 16s in the form of 'supported accommodation'). This means there is no way of a local authority knowing the quality of the provision when they place a child. There needs to be more transparency and appropriate regulation – so that placements are safe and best practice can be effectively shared.





VOCATIONAL TRAINING, APPRENTICESHIPS & EMPLOYABILITY

The Premise

Apprenticeships, vocational training and employability programmes are all vital ways for people to enter sustained employment.

In order to reduce the barriers to work that many people face, these schemes and programmes must be accessible and properly incentivised. Where underserved groups are identified, support should be targeted.



What we want to see:

- **Apprenticeship levy payers should dedicate at least half of their levy expenditure to under-30s**

Latest statistics shows that there has been an increase in the number of starts on higher level apprenticeships, with fewer young people and new starters benefitting from apprenticeship places. We're concerned that if this trend continues, apprenticeships will no longer be a core way in which young people who choose not to go down the university route, or face barriers to social mobility, can access employment.

- **Any unspent apprenticeship levies ring-fenced to youth employment services**

This year HM Treasury clawed back over £300m from the Department for Education from unspent apprenticeship levies. With youth unemployment currently around 12%, investing this money in services to support young people in finding employment would make both economic and moral sense.

- **The apprenticeship minimum wage should be increased to the living wage, to improve take up**

The financial burden of an apprenticeship – which can manifest itself in travel, accommodation and subsistence costs – can greatly affect the ability of young people to take them up. In particular, for those underserved groups for whom money is often tight, these costs can prove prohibitive. Increasing the minimum wage would help break down these barriers and incentivise young people to apply for apprenticeships who otherwise might not.

- **Incentives for employers to take on underserved groups**

Care leavers, those with a disability, people with criminal records and minority ethnic groups traditionally face greater barriers to work than others. These groups disproportionately contribute to unemployment figures and often struggle to find support when seeking employment. We want to see incentives for employers who take on staff from underserved groups – in the vein of the £1,000 bursary currently given to employers and training providers who employ care leavers.



EDUCATION

The Premise

Exclusion from mainstream schools should be a last resort, but for those young people struggling in mainstream education, **alternative provision schools are vital in helping them progress** and succeed in sustained education training or employment.

These schools must be supported to deliver education of the highest standards, but inspections should focus on wider factors rather than solely emphasising academic attainment.

We want to see:

- **Alternative Provision schools judged against broader criteria, rather than on academic results**

This would involve changing OFSTED's inspection criteria to cover measures such as: how successfully it re-integrates pupils into school life; whether or not it provides suitable and tailored lessons; emotional wellbeing and development; and how progress is being made against a pupil's predicted grades upon entering the school. By embedding such measures in the OFSTED framework, Alternative Provision schools would be assessed on the needs of their pupils (which are often very different to those in mainstream schools) – therefore driving up standards.

- **Capital funding allocated directly to schools (rather than local authorities) to support vulnerable pupils early**

Schools know their pupils, and this approach would deliver greater impact and reduce the chances of pupils being excluded unnecessarily.

- **Longer contracts (10 year minimum) should be issued for services to allow Alternative Provision providers to make longer term investment plans and secure appropriate accommodation**

Currently many AP providers are faced with no option but to rent buildings that are in need of repair. This detracts from their main purpose of delivering good quality education and facilities to their pupils.





NATIONAL CITIZEN SERVICE

The Premise

The National Citizen Service (NCS) has seen over 500,000 16 and 17 year olds from all walks of life gain valuable skills. Raising thousands of pounds every summer for local charities and take steps towards securing future employment – NCS is far more than just a four week youth programme.

Ensuring every young person is aware, and has the opportunity to participate in an NCS programme will help build the active citizens of the future.

What we want to see:

- **All school children to be made aware of the National Citizen Service through school engagement programmes**

Not all schools in all regions promote NCS to their pupils. The nature of the programme and what it offers to young people should be highlighted as part of the citizenship curriculum and included in the OFSTED inspection framework.

- **Greater transparency on the cost benefit of NCS programmes**

There have been concerns within the youth sector about the impact of NCS and question around whether money directed at NCS could be better spent elsewhere (such as youth clubs). However, the amount of money raised by participants for local charities and causes as part of the Social Action aspect of NCS is huge. The opportunities that NCS presents young people from all walks of life in terms of skills and employability should also be quantified. All this information should be made publicly available via the NCS Trust and Department for Culture, Media and Sport websites.

For more information about Catch22 and our services visit **www.catch-22.org.uk** or email Melissa Milner, Director of Communications and Engagement: **melissa.milner@catch-22.org.uk**

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