

Carwyn Jones speech to Labour Party Conference

Carwyn Jones AM, Leader of Welsh Labour, First Minister of Wales, speaking at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton today, said:

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

I want to begin by extending my thanks to Christina Rees, our Shadow Secretary of State for Wales. Sadly she can't be with us this week as she's nursing a broken foot.

I don't think there's any truth in the rumour that she broke it kicking Alun Cairns around Parliament in the first week back, but we'll ask her when we see her.

We all wish you a speedy recovery, Chris.

Secondly, let me say thank you to Jeremy for his continuing friendship and leadership.

Thank you, Jeremy for the dignity you showed in a tough general election campaign.

The Tories came after you in a personal and offensive manner, and you stood up to that onslaught and led the party with great determination and defied the odds.

This time last year, the Tories thought they were marching to a 100-seat majority. Right now, they're scared of their own shadows, let alone another general election. What a turn around that is.

Conference, when I heard Theresa May was giving a speech in Florence, I thought how apt. Not so much in relation to the Renaissance, but more with a thought to the works of that great medieval poet, Dante. It has been clear to me for some time that the Department for Exiting the European Union regard the "Divine Comedy" as some sort of instruction manual. That masterpiece imagines in glorious detail the dark and terrifying journey through the nine circles of hell.

Well,
we've been going on our own journey for 15 months and still remain in the first
circle of hell – limbo – a remarkable achievement. But, then Dante did have
Virgil as his spiritual guide.

David

Davis has got Nigel Farage. The book really is worth a read as Brexit
re-interpreted. At one point, at the
close of chapter XXI, Dante witnesses a demon mobilising his troops by using
“an ass as a trumpet.” Which goes to
show that every century has its own Boris.

Conference,

this week in Wales we marked the 20th anniversary of the vote to establish
devolution in our country. It was a
turning point for Wales, and a turning point for our Party. The list of
achievements
is one of which we can be proud – and it belongs not just to Welsh Labour,
but
to the whole Party and movement who made devolution possible.

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Unemployment

in Wales – routinely lower than the UK average. More jobs, better jobs –
Welsh
Labour delivering in Government.

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Wales,

the first country to move to a deemed consent model for organ donation in the
UK. People owe their lives to that change in the law. Better laws, saving
lives, Welsh Labour delivering in Government.

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Free

school breakfasts in primary schools. Giving children the best start to the
day, giving parents a helping hand, giving teachers the attention they
deserve
in the classroom. Welsh Labour delivering in Government.

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The

attainment gap between better off and poorer pupils in England and Scotland
continues to grow – in Wales it continues to shrink. A fair start to everyone
in Wales, no matter where you're born – that is Welsh Labour delivering in
Government.

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Our

university students in Wales getting the best deal anywhere in the UK.

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And
who gets the best deal of all? Those students who can least afford university
–
that is Welsh Labour delivering in Government.

But,
it isn't just about policy. It's also about having a voice and someone to
fight
your corner. This week I gave a cautious welcome to the news that Tata Steel
and ThyssenKrupp entered the first stage of a merger deal. A deal that
should safeguard sites and
thousands of jobs in Wales.

Does
anyone honestly think that without devolution, without a Welsh Labour
Government determined to take measures to save that industry, putting money
on
the table when others looked away, that those steel jobs would still be in
Wales today?

Would
the Tories have knocked down walls for the people of Port Talbot, Shotton,
Newport or Llanelli? We all know the answer to that.

With
our colleagues in the trades unions, our MPs, our AMs and local councillors,
Welsh Labour stood up for the steel industry – and we did what those banners
and badges asked us to do – we saved our steel.

Conference,
we are proud to work with our trades union colleagues in Government.

Together
we have built a genuine social partnership and together we are making Wales a
Fair Work Nation.

And
Conference, earlier this month our Trades Union Act received Royal Assent.

That
means that the pernicious attempts of the Tory Government to attack workers'
rights in Wales have been dis-applied, and, once again, workers in Wales have
the protections we fought so hard to achieve. Protections everyone deserves.

That's
Welsh Labour delivering in Government.

Devolution
has given Wales a voice. And with Welsh Labour that voice speaks the language
of social justice, fairness, good work, decent pay and thriving communities.

Devolution

has given us something else. A new-found confidence. It is something I see every day in young people in work, and in our schools and colleges. So where has that confidence come from? If you could personalise it, you'd have to give credit to my predecessor, Rhodri Morgan. As you know, Rhodri passed away earlier this year, leaving behind a fantastic roller coaster of a political career, a wonderful family and an ocean of anecdotes. In May the Welsh Parliament held the closest thing Wales will ever have to a state funeral, and we gave Rhodri the perfect send off.

It started late. It finished even later. In between there was a fantastic mix of poetry, politics, sport, laughter and tears. And at the end, no-one really thought about Rhodri the politician, but Rhodri as a big-hearted, intelligent and inquisitive man who loved his family above all else. A fine role model, who we all miss.

Rhodri always said that Labour did best when it managed to mix together the mushy peas of old Labour with the guacamole of New Labour. Now, I've been in Rhodri's kitchen and I can tell you that when it came to culinary combinations, Rhodri was not always the person you would go to – but on the politics, he, as so often, was absolutely right. He was absolutely right about the need for our Party to reflect all sections of our membership, and all parts of this country.

That was the key to our success in Wales in the last three elections.

When the Party at UK level was under serious pressure, our unique and united Welsh Labour identity meant we remained relevant and competitive in the Assembly and local elections, when sadly others struggled. It was the unity that gave us success against the odds. And when in the last days of the general election the whole party surged, it meant we, in Wales, were starting from a higher base-line and, as a result, achieved 50% of the vote for the first time in 16 years.

Our identity as a Party is robust, authentic and complementary to the UK Party as a whole. And, just as a country we will not countenance a roll-back of our devolution settlement; there can be no question of Welsh Labour's long fought for, and hard won voice being diluted as we look to the future of our Party. I know that both Jeremy and Tom understand this, and I welcome their unwavering support for Wales. Thank you, both.

Because

Conference, we know Labour works best when we work together. Together, we fought a hugely successful general election campaign – not just holding on to what we had, but winning back seats for Labour.

Vale

of Clwyd – according to the bookmakers, Tories were 1/5 on to win. Result? Labour Gain. Gower – according to the bookies, Tories were 1/9 on to win. Result? Labour Gain. Cardiff North – Tories were 1/9 on. Result? Labour Gain.

Working

together we have exposed the Tories on broken promise after broken promise. On

rail electrification in the north and the south – and we know what's coming next – they'll axe Swansea's Tidal Lagoon.

But,

because Welsh Labour is in Government – there are things we can do. We are already delivering on our manifesto promises.

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100,000

new good quality, all-age apprenticeships.

.

The

most generous childcare offer for working parents anywhere in the UK.

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And

20,000 more affordable homes.

We

can also deliver on priorities for the future of our NHS.

There

is no privatisation of the NHS in Wales – and whilst we have a Welsh Labour Government there will be no privatisation of the NHS in Wales. Only in Wales are ambulance crews hitting their targets – because we've worked with the service and designed a better way of working. And next week, the Welsh Government will publish new guidance for our pioneering legislation on safe nurse staffing levels in Wales.

Conference,

Wales is the first country in Europe to legislate on nurse staffing levels. I am proud that Wales has taken the lead in this area, empowering nurses and ensuring the resources are there to care sensitively for patients.

Legislation

that the Party promised in the UK manifesto in May, already being delivered by

a Labour Government in Wales.

And

working together we are making our communities better, fairer places to live.

When

Carolyn Harris MP began her brave and dignified campaign to end child burial charges in the UK, we in Wales did not wait for the Tory Government to act.

We

said, yes, that is the right thing to do, and, as a result, the Welsh Labour Government has announced the abolition of all child burial charges in our country.

That is what we can do when we work together.

And

the country needs us to work together more than ever before, as we fight the fundamentalists pursuing a hard Brexit. We are fighting tooth and nail against

the Tory power grab, dressed up as the EU Withdrawal Bill. It shows up their Government as simply incapable of listening to other people's views, or respecting their legitimate interests – in other words, as lacking the basic skills needed to negotiate successfully.

And

looking at the way in which they are failing the country in their negotiations

with the EU, I guess we shouldn't be surprised.

I'm

delighted at the support we are receiving from Labour colleagues in Parliament

at fighting this real threat to devolution as we have known it for the past 20 years.

I'm

also incredibly proud of the work we have done together already – our team in Cardiff Bay has worked hand in glove with Keir Starmer and the front bench in developing our Brexit policies. As a result of that work, in Labour we now have

a sensible, evidence-based, economically sound set of principles and ideas that

can see this country through Brexit in an orderly manner.

Contrast

that with the spectacle of the Tory approach. Sorry, correction – the various Tory approaches. Does anyone really know who speaks for them on Brexit anymore?

Where

has the Prime Minister of this country gone? If, before the general election, the country felt

as though it had a robot for Prime Minister, we'd now be forgiven for thinking

we have a hologram.

She

went to the country and asked for the support of our communities for a hard Brexit, the country said no. The country said no to some other things as well –

our older people said no to being taken for granted. Wales said no to being short-changed. Scotland said no to independence. And crucially, our young people said no to being ignored. They said, through their votes, what we all feel – Britain deserves better than this. This country deserves a Labour Government in Westminster.

A

Government that actually cares about the future.

I

know that the people of Wales need that more than ever. Under the Tories, we have had to take £1 billion out of our public services in Wales. That's the annual budget of the entire North Wales health board. Our communities are resilient, but they're being unfairly punished. And with Theresa May and the Tories they will be asked to give yet more. To give up. To give up their livelihoods, their libraries, their leisure centres, and their right to a fair deal. To give up hope. Enough is enough. It is time for hope.

It

is time for Labour, in Wales and in Westminster. Standing up for Wales. Working for fairness.

Working, together. Winning, together. That's a future the country hopes for and

that's the country we can deliver. Together for Wales. Together for Britain.

[Andrew Gwynne speech to Labour Party Conference](#)

Andrew

Gwynne MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, speaking

at the Labour Party Conference in Brighton today, said:

*****CHECK**

AGAINST DELIVERY***

I'm delighted to respond to the 'Protecting Communities' debate as Labour's new Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government.

I want to begin by thanking my immediate predecessors, Graeme Morris and

Theresa Pearce, and to introduce our new CLG team in Parliament – Yvonne Fovargue, Jim McMahon, Roy Kennedy, Jeremy Beecham and my PPS Stephen Morgan, the first Labour MP for Portsmouth South, in the seat's 99 year history.

I served for 12 years as a councillor in Greater Manchester. In fact all of the Labour CLG team began our political journeys in local government.

And I want to thank our Labour councillors who do an outstanding job across the country.

I also want to thank Councillor Nick Forbes for his leadership of the LGA Labour group. Nick has long campaigned against the "scissors of doom" forced onto local authorities by this Tory Government. Thank you Nick and the LGA Labour Group team.

Let's also pay tribute to the emergency services, the volunteers and the community who rushed to the aid of Grenfell residents on the 14th June.

The support that has been shown by the community in response to this incident has continued to show how sorely lacking the response has been from Government.

Thank you, John Healey and Emma Dent-Coad, for your work following this tragedy. We will not stop until every resident of Grenfell tower has a safe place to live, and the support they need to rebuild their lives.

Conference, we know the difference Labour in local government can make.

In Bristol, Labour has pushed the social care crisis into the spotlight – leading the call for city leaders to come together to lobby central government over cuts.

South Tyneside has developed a purpose-built facility to support integrated health and care services, designed to support the needs of those with varying stages of dementia.

In London, Sadiq Khan, has called an end to Boris's vanity projects, instead prioritising the development of new affordable housing.

In Greater Manchester and Merseyside, our Metro Mayors, Andy Burnham and Steve Rotheram, understand that 'a Northern Powerhouse' is one built by local people, and by investing in our communities – and not through slogans alone.

And after one of our darkest nights this year, as Manchester woke to find children, young people and their families had lost their lives, Andy offered the unifying leadership that was needed .

Labour in local government will continue to innovate to make a real difference to people's lives. But I also know the very difficult decisions that councillors have had to make over the past seven years as this Tory government

sneakily attempts to devolve the blame for their cuts away from Whitehall – to local councillors in town halls.

Conference, we won't be fooled. Police cuts. Fire Service cuts. SureStart closures. The crisis in social care.

They all have the same root cause: a Tory dogmatic vision of a smaller state.

Austerity is a political choice. And we also know their cuts have hit the poorest communities the hardest.

But it doesn't have to be this way. This was the simple message that our leader Jeremy Corbyn took to the country in June's Election.

If, like me, you went to see Jeremy speak, you would have seen the very real desperation for change that greeted him. The emotion in the eyes of those who, for the first time in years, felt hope. People who don't accept this country – the fifth richest in the world – should be defined by growing unfairness and inequality.

That's why a vote for Labour will always be a vote for a fairer Britain .

But conference, we cannot empower our communities if we impoverish them.

That's why we have promised to put council funding on a sustainable footing.

Councils would be £1.5bn better off under a Labour Government next year.

But seven years of savage cuts has created a hole in our public services that demands more from us than increased investment; it demands that we consider fresh ideas and approaches.

A generation of outsourcing and forced privatisation of public services, has hollowed out the capacity of our councils to deliver for our communities. For the past 3 decades, we've been told that outsourcing delivers better value for money.

But, all too often, when savings are made, it is because services are cut back, charges are introduced, and the pay and conditions of our valued public service workforce are attacked. Meanwhile, those decisions are hidden behind a cloak of commercial confidentiality.

And we know what else happens when our local services are handed over to private companies.

Our councils continue to have responsibility for local services, but they lose the ability to deliver them. So that when you report a pothole or

complain about street cleansing, it is to someone in a call centre far away who doesn't know your area, and has never walked down your streets – that's if you're lucky enough to speak to someone at all. And with every contract that's outsourced, our democratic institutions lose dedicated, qualified staff.

Across the country Labour councils are already showing that it doesn't have to be this way. Labour Councils in North Tyneside, Islington, Stockport, and many others, have shown that local services can be delivered better and more efficiently in-house.

Austerity demanded innovation from the sector – and the ideas and innovations from Labour Councils must not be forgotten as we plan for Government.

So, today I can announce Labour's radical plan to renew faith in local services and deliver a renaissance of local government. Building on the work of my colleague, Jon Trickett, the next Labour Government will deliver a Bill to rebuild our local services.

In it, we will give councils greater powers to deliver services themselves; because our services should be run for our local communities alone.

We'll extend transparency and Freedom of Information rules, so that communities know where their money is going. And we'll end the two tier workforce with a "Fair Wage" clause. Taken together, this will be some of the largest set of reforms to local government in modern times.

Empowering communities and rebuilding local institutions and local services.

Because they're our public services – and we should always put people first. It's about strengthening society. It's about putting our values – our socialism – into practice.

We understand that it is by the strength of our common endeavour that we achieve more together than we do alone. And it is communities – properly empowered and renewed – that are at the forefront of delivering that Labour vision of a better, fairer, more equal society. We are so close to having the chance to make our vision a reality.

So let's make it our sole mission – a Labour Government. Standing up for our neighbourhoods, protecting our communities. For the many, not the few. Let's get to it.

Diane Abbott speech to Labour Party Conference

Diane

Abbott MP, Shadow Home Secretary, speaking at Labour Party Conference, said:

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

Good morning conference.

It is a pleasure, and a privilege to address this conference as Shadow Home Secretary.

But I would like to begin by thanking the members and supporters up and down the country, and those of you in this hall, who helped to deliver the stunning advance in this year's General Election.

You were the architects of our success. And you were able to do it because: you believed in our values; you believed in our manifesto and, above all, you believed in the Labour party leadership.

Many commentators did not foresee the General Election result that we had.

Some even said that we would be annihilated. But today the Labour party is stronger than ever, we are still standing... I am still standing.

But there is much more to do. We have to get rid of this appalling FAILING Tory government. We have to win the next General Election. Whenever it comes. AND WE WILL.

The theme of this session is "Protecting Our Communities".

And there is no greater responsibility for government than keeping the nation safe from the menace of TERRORISM. Tragically last week we saw the fifth terror incident this year at Parsons Green tube station. This comes after the terrorist atrocities at: Westminster; the Manchester Arena; London Bridge; Borough Market and Finsbury Park. Looking back we must pay tribute to: the brave police officers; firefighters; NHS workers and transport police who ran towards danger

and rose to the challenge of keeping us safe.

The Tories have no respect for public sector workers as their unfair public sector pay cap shows. But in its moments of greatest peril the nation turns to its public sector workers. They should NOT be played off against each other and they should ALL be paid properly.

Because you cannot keep the nation secure on the cheap.

Yet only on Friday the Chair of the National Police Chiefs Council warned that that counter-terror funding to police forces was to be cut by seven-point-two per-cent over the next 3 years.

Yet, Home Office documents reveal that the budget for the Office for Security and Counter Terrorism will fall by more than fifty million pounds over the next two years.

We oppose these cuts and Labour will reverse them in Government.

And, as part of combatting terrorism effectively, Labour is committed to a thorough review of the "Prevent" strand of counter-terrorism policy. Increasingly there is a concern that Prevent is a tainted brand and not fit for purpose.

Trampling on our civil liberties will do the terrorists work for them.

What makes us free is what makes us safe.

And what makes us safe is what will make us free.

Another key aspect of protecting communities is POLICING. I have represented an inner city constituency for thirty years. I know it is the poor, women and minorities who suffer most from crime.

I have always taken fighting crime very seriously, and will continue to do so as Labour Home Secretary.

And the reality of the Tory record on law and order is a long way from their rhetoric. Since 2010 Theresa May has been Home Secretary and now Prime Minister. But ON HER WATCH: the number of police officers has dropped by twenty thousand. Two-point-three-billion has been cut from police budgets.

The truth is austerity undermines

policing in exactly the same way that it undermines our health service. We see the consequences of this around us, with rising levels of homicide, knife, and gun crime. And the police themselves are suffering from spiralling levels of overwork and stress.

Labour in government will work to make communities safe. And we will recruit ten thousand new police officers working in the community.

Another key aspect of protecting communities is keeping them safe from FIRE risk. Once again, this is something where this Tory government has let the people of this country down.

And the extent of their failure is symbolised by the Grenfell Fire.

Who can forget those images of Grenfell tower ablaze? And this did not happen in a slum in an impoverished country far away. It happened here in Britain, in one of the wealthiest areas of the country, in one of the richest countries in the world.

The Tory controlled Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea treated the residents of Grenfell like second class citizens.

And when the disaster struck the Royal Borough's response was shameful. Even now, out of the all the families made homeless only a handful have been offered permanent homes. And this in a borough with over two thousand empty properties. Am I the only person wondering why Commissioners have not been sent into the FAILING Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea?

But Tory failure in relation to Grenfell goes further than the borough council. Events at Grenfell are also a direct consequence of: deregulation of fire standards and inspection; privatisation and outsourcing.

We demand justice for the Grenfell survivors. They will not be **FORGOTTEN**. We demand an immigration amnesty for former Grenfell residents so they ALL feel able to come forward for help.

Labour in government will recruit three thousand additional firefighters. We fully support the campaigning of the Fire

Brigades Union, against the cuts. We all saw the photographs of the brave smoke blackened firefighters insisting on going back into the flames to save lives. We relied on our fire brigade at Grenfell. And the fire brigade must be the lead agency for assessing risk, fire inspections and proper sign-off for all major works and refurbishment.

No more outsourcing to the private sector.

And I cannot leave this subject without paying tribute to my colleague Emma Dent Coad, the MP for Kensington.

As a new MP, she found herself having to deal with a national tragedy on the scale of Grenfell. She has offered love and leadership to her community in full measure and conference should applaud her.

Emma has shown that Labour can make a difference EVERYWHERE. And that Labour can WIN anywhere.

We finally had an Inquiry into the Hillsborough tragedy, thanks to tireless campaigning of the people of Liverpool with the support of my colleagues Andy Burnham and Steve Rotherham. But as Labour Home secretary I promise: a full Inquiry into Orgreave; an inquiry into the trials of Shrewsbury twenty-four AND an inquiry into what happened to the thirty-seven Cammell Laird workers.

They ALL deserve justice

Another vital Home Affairs issue is IMMIGRATION.

Tory opportunism on immigration is a disgrace. They continue to talk about bogus immigration targets, which they have not met and will never meet.

The Tories have weaponised immigration.

They have pandered to anti-immigrant sentiment whatever the cost to the economy and communities.

Many of you will have seen the Panorama program which revealed the brutal regime at Brooke House detention centre.

Labour will put an end to indefinite immigration detention.

There ARE real labour market issues. But the Labour party under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn will not scapegoat immigrants for these issues.

Labour in government will work across departments to counter the effects of deregulation, liberalisation and weakening of trade union rights and freedoms.

Far from immigrants being a drain on the public sector the truth is that, without immigrants, and the children of immigrants we would not have a National Health Service we have today.

And of course EU citizens in this country also play a vital role in the economy.

The willingness of the Theresa May to use them as bargaining chips in the negotiations is shameful. We will guarantee the rights of EU nationals living in this country. It is both vital for our economy and it's the right thing to do.

I have visited refugee encampments in Calais, Greece and Lebanon and seen the pitiful conditions that so many refugees live in.

And even in Britain the current arrangements for housing refugees are not fit for purpose. They are not fair to refugees and they are not fair to our communities. We will review these arrangements.

Labour under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn will fulfil its responsibilities to refugees, in particular child refugees. Parliament passed the Dubs Amendment and we will implement it fully.

The watchword for our approach to immigration in government will be fairness and the reasonable management of migration.

But as the child of immigrants, Conference must believe me when I say that, under Jeremy Corbyn's leadership, immigration policy will always be shaped by enduring Labour values.

Conclusion

Thank you again, Conference. For coming to Brighton, for listening to me, for participating in the debates to come and helping to formulate policy.

We know the difference Labour in local government can make – Andrew Gwynne will today address Labour Party Conference

Andrew

Gwynne MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, speaking at the Labour Party's Annual Conference in Brighton, will say:

On the work of Labour councils, Andrew Gwynne will say:

"We know the difference Labour in local government can make.

"In Bristol, Labour has pushed the social care crisis into the spotlight – leading the call for city leaders to come together to lobby central government over cuts.

"South Tyneside has developed a purpose-built facility to support integrated health and care services, designed to support the needs of those with varying stages of dementia.

"In London, Sadiq Khan, has called an end to Boris's vanity projects, instead prioritising the development of new affordable housing.

"In Greater Manchester and Merseyside, our Metro Mayors, Andy Burnham and Steve Rotheram, understand that 'a Northern Powerhouse' is one built by local people, and by investing in our communities – and not through slogans alone.

"Labour in local government will continue to innovate to make a real difference to people's lives. But I also know the very difficult decisions that councillors have had to make over the past seven years as this Tory government sneakily attempts to devolve the blame for their cuts away from Whitehall – to local councillors in Town Halls."

On funding

for local government, Andrew Gwynne will say:

"Police cuts. Fire Service cuts. SureStart closures. The crisis in social care. They all have the same root cause: a Tory dogmatic vision of a smaller state.

"We cannot empower our communities if we impoverish them. That's why we have promised to put council funding on a sustainable footing. Councils

would be £1.5bn better off under a Labour Government next year.”

On empowering local communities, Andrew Gwynne will say:

“A generation of outsourcing and forced privatisation of public services, has hollowed out the capacity of our councils to deliver for our communities.

“Today I can announce Labour’s radical plan to renew faith in local services and deliver a renaissance of local government.

“We will give councils greater powers to deliver services themselves – because our services should be run for our local communities alone.

“We’ll extend transparency and Freedom of Information rules, so that communities know where their money is going.

“And we’ll end the two tier workforce with a “Fair Wage” clause.

“Taken together, this will be some of the largest set of reforms to local government in modern times: empowering communities and rebuilding local institutions and local services. Because they’re our public services – and we should always put people first.”

[Labour will take action to end period poverty – Dawn Butler speech](#)

Dawn Butler MP, Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities, speaking at the Labour Party Women’s Conference in Brighton today, said:

*****CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY*****

Welcome to the start of Conference – yes Labour Party Conference starts today, starts now – and starts with you.

In celebration of Jeremy’s new, kinder politics, I wanted you to be the first ones I share my cleanest political joke with. What have Theresa May and a circle got in common? There’s just no point in them.

Good morning. My name is Dawn Butler, and I am your new Shadow Minister for Women and Equalities.

In this new role, I want to tackle all injustices – my teachers told me I wouldn’t amount to anything – racism and sexism has always featured heavily in my journey. I have always worked in male-dominated industries, and it was the trade union movement that taught me that others will stand beside me in

my times of despair. It taught me that united we stand, divided we fall.

Today, at our new transitional Women's Conference, be united in our fight against injustice.

All of you in this room are phenomenal women – what are you?

Our Conference today is to discuss policy, but also to empower you and for you to empower others.

We are all on a journey and, as Martin Luther King said, "I cannot be where I ought, until you are where you ought to be, that is the interrelated structure of reality."

Therefore, how you travel your journey is vital. Your dream should not be built on the pain of other women. You should not travel your journey on the backs of women, so they are looking down whilst you climb up. You should aim to travel your journey on the shoulders of women. Let other women look up to you as you progress.

If you are on the ladder of success, lay the foundations for an escalator.

If you are on the escalator, lay the foundations for a lift. Ensure that the women following behind you have an easier journey, and be proud that you have helped smooth her journey. Be a friend of women.

We may have a female Prime Minister, but she is no friend of women. She says all the right things, but her deeds are destructive – 86% of her Government's cuts have fallen on women. Black and Asian women have suffered particularly badly. And disabled women really suffered, so much so that a UN panel criticised our Government for not protecting the rights of disabled people in this country.

Since 2010, women's life expectancy has worsened. We will not live as long as other women around Europe. This Government is literally killing us.

I want us at this Conference to commit to helping women and young girls; females who can't afford to buy sanitary products. I want us at the start of Labour Conference to lead the way and say no more period poverty. Say it after me – no more period poverty.

On average, every female spends around £5000 in their lifetime on sanitary products. In the year 2000, Labour reduced the VAT on sanitary products from 17.5% to 5%. It was a good start, but we could have done better. David Cameron was pressured by the tampon tax campaign, helped by one of my team, the MP for Dewsbury. But the response has been lacking in real commitment.

Low income families shouldn't have the additional burden of struggling to afford sanitary products; or homeless women suffering on the streets; or young girls having to use socks in their pants; or missing school once a month because they just can't afford sanitary protection.

There are many solutions to this problem: free sanitary products in schools and colleges; free prescriptions for sanitary protection or reusable cups.

With all of our efforts, we could eradicate the problem in our lifetime. After all, it's not our choice whether we have periods. It's far from a luxury, so why should we suffer? If men had periods, this would have been resolved a long time ago – period.

I am proud to announce here today that you are now part of Labour's official launch on period poverty.

The next Labour Government will provide funding for free sanitary products for secondary schools, foodbanks and homeless shelters,

I will work with Monica Lennon MSP, Member of the Scottish Labour Party, who has tabled an excellent Bill on period poverty.

The Labour Party wants all women, regardless of age, social status or background, to be able to easily access the sanitary products they need.

We will pay for it by scrapping vanity projects like grammar schools and free schools.

I am a phenomenal woman.

Intersectionality, is about double, triple or quadruple discrimination. I will admit at first, I didn't like the word, mainly because I could hardly say it. But I realised during my journey I have suffered triple discrimination. I used to be discriminated against because I was black, being a woman and I was young. OK, one of those is no longer an issue, although in Parliament with the average age still being around 75, I am still quite young

Just imagine, a working class, trade unionist, black woman, I became an MP against the odds, and I became the first black woman in the House of Commons to ever be a Minister in the UK. It was not easy, but as time goes on, I realise we are all phenomenal women, and anything is possible.