

2015 Election Implications for Corporate Responsibility & Sustainability Professionals

Conservative Party

[The Conservative Party Manifesto 2015](#)

Overall Positioning

Securing the economic recovery is the key theme of the Conservatives' manifesto. The overall tone champions economic success, comparing Labour's record with Conservative commitments.

Amid the pledges on tax cuts and welfare caps, there is some interesting detail around the social responsibilities of companies. The Big Society – a popular term for Conservatives in 2010 – re-emerges as a significant theme. Buried in the detail of the 83-page document, there are commitments that many would not automatically associate with Conservatives: more volunteering in company time; new gender pay requirements; and increased scrutiny of companies' tax affairs.

Particular issues

Volunteering: A new “workplace entitlement” for everyone working in large companies or the public sector for 3 days a year of volunteering, “on full pay”. Volunteering for a local charity or serving as a school governor are cited as examples, but no further details on the implications for businesses are given. Separately, the manifesto includes pledges to roll out the National Citizen Service (**Page 45**) and treble the size of the International Citizen Service (**Page 79**), and support for the Prince of Wales' Step up to Serve initiative. (**Page 45**)

Gender and Pay: Requirement for companies with more than 250 employees to publish details on the average pay for male and female employees. (**Page 19**)

Tax: Promise to “lead international efforts to ensure global companies pay their fair share of tax”; new laws to make it a crime for companies to fail to stop tax evasion; a push for all countries to sign up to the Extractives Industries Transparency Initiative; and more capacity building and access to information for developing countries to tackle corporate tax issues. (**Page 11**)

Energy: Commitment to expand nuclear, shale gas and “good value green energy”. There is a pledge to “halt” onshore wind farms through the removal of public subsidy and ensuring a local veto over any plans – alongside commitments to greater funding for renewables; smart meters for every business and home by 2020; and a “strong global climate deal” in Paris in December. (**Page 57**)

Competition: Continue to promote competition in both the banking (**Page 11**) and energy markets. (**Page 57**)

Public Service Delivery: Continue to innovate in public service delivery, involving charities and social enterprises and mechanisms like social impact bonds. (**Page 46**)

Apprenticeships: commitment to create 3 million new apprenticeships over the next five years. (**Page 18**)

Farming: Promise to work with industry on a new 25-year vision for the future of British farming – and a “science-led” approach to GM (**Page 21**). Also a commitment to push for high animal welfare standards to be incorporated into international trade agreements. (**Page 55**)

Marine & Biodiversity: a new blue belt to preserve sensitive marine habitats around Britain and certain overseas territories, as well as a 25-year plan to restore biodiversity. (**Page 55**)