

**New deal  
for the next  
generation**

# **Introduction**

Students' energy, creativity and skills are the building blocks of a healthy global economy and a prosperous society. We need the guarantee of opportunity in education, the prospect of meaningful work and the ability to thrive in our communities.

Over the past five years young people have been let down and disenfranchised by our elected representatives. We are offering politicians the chance to start rebuilding trust by making promises they will keep.

A passport to education no matter our background or personal circumstances. Sustainable jobs that afford a decent quality of life. Healthy communities that forge connections and civic responsibility.

With a general election less than 12 months away, the coming year will be decisive in shaping the future of the next generation. Ahead of polling day on Thursday 7 May 2015, NUS will be working to forge and win a new deal for the next generation across the themes of education, work and community.

NUS has developed a general election hub to support students' unions in developing their own general election strategy, and to ensure the student voice is too powerful to ignore.

We will offer a menu of campaigning options across the themes of education, work and community. We are putting power in the hands of students' unions to create and shape their own new deals, and then offering the support to ensure students register and mobilise to have their voices heard.

# Education

- We want government to phase out tuition fees and restore public funding to universities.
- We're calling for a new postgraduate funding system that removes the financial barriers to study and puts the diverse needs of students first.
- We want political parties to commit to creating a new and better Education Maintenance Allowance so that disadvantaged students in further education can thrive and reach their potential.
- We want government to protect and improve the Disabled Students Allowance.
- We want government to protect in law the rights of all students to independent representation in a students' union and the right to independent redress where students feel that they have not been fairly treated.
- We want political parties to recognise that not every learner needs to look the same and to restore AS levels, resits and modular learning.

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- We're asking the next government to make a commitment to adult learning by halting the expansion of 24+ fees and loans, and scrapping them instead.
  - We want government to make a commitment to public education by ensuring that no penny of public funding goes to for-profit providers of education.
  - We want government to treat asylum seekers with conditional leave to remain as home students for student finance purposes, giving them access to the funding and support they need to achieve their potential.
  - We want government to put into place a national financial protection scheme into which all education providers have to pay, to ensure that students' studies are not disrupted in the event of institutional failure, or funding sources being severed by natural or civil crises in their home country.

# Work

- We want the next government to guarantee paid work or training for every person aged 16–24 who is out of work, matched to their skills and interests.
- We want political parties to commit to include a requirement in all government contracts that all delivery companies must create a set number of new jobs and opportunities for young people in proportion to the contract size.
- We want the next government to develop and fund an independent statutory careers information, advice and guidance system that is integrated across schools, colleges training providers and universities.
- We want the next government to introduce and enforce legislation that all work experience of over four weeks should be paid at least national minimum wage.
- We want government to signal a move towards an equal national minimum wage by raising the apprentice minimum wage to the same rate as the minimum wage for 18–20 year olds.

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- To ensure young people develop the skills they need to succeed in a sustainable economy, we want the government to make sustainability competencies a compulsory part of all apprenticeship programmes.
  - To ensure zero hour employees are not a cheap source of expendable labour, we want the government to introduce and enforce a statutory code of practice on zero hour contracts.
  - To make it possible for students and young people to set up their own businesses we want the next government to set up and deliver a National Student Enterprise Scheme.
  - To ensure that work pays enough to live, we want political parties to commitment to a living wage by raising the income tax threshold to the equivalent of a full-time salary at Living Wage.
  - We want the government to provide all non-EU international students with the right to work in all industries, free from restriction, for 12 months after study.

# Community

- We are calling on political parties to repeal the Lobbying Act and to strengthen protections for citizens who want to engage in peaceful protest so that nobody ever has to be afraid of speaking up.
- We want political parties to commit to making proper provisions for elected representatives to be kicked out of office when the people who put them there believe they have not lived up to their promises.
- We want political parties to show they care what young people think by committing to lowering the voting age to 16.
- We want local authorities to be given a statutory requirement and adequate funding to provide local youth services.
- We want schools and colleges to be required by law to provide adequate citizenship and sex and relationships education.

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- We want the next government to reverse the NHS Bill, go back to the drawing board, and ensure that we have a National Health Service that is public, accountable and fit for purpose for the next century and beyond.
  - We want the next government to grant free bus travel for all 16 to 19 year olds to ensure that no young person is prevented from taking up an opportunity due to transport costs.
  - We want government to remove random stop-and-search powers from the police.
  - We want government to scrap letting agent fees so that students are clear on the costs of renting from the beginning, and are able to spread their costs across the year.
  - We want political parties to put an end to playing politics with our world-leading education system and scrap the use of arbitrary net migration targets.

# **We are the change**

Our general election strategy is underpinned by our community organising programme, We Are the Change, which equips students with the skills to organise and build power with their communities.

At its heart, community organising is about supporting people to recognise and use the power they have, in line with the very values the student movement was built on: transforming collective power into collective action and making positive change. It enhances the work that students' unions already do. It's not a new thing – many organisations do it already, and where they do they win campaigns and have more active members and supporters.

Students' unions are brilliant at bringing people together. They bridge social groups and provide opportunities through networks and communities. They broaden opinions, and give people a voice, helping them find and articulate their politics, and ultimately to change their lives. They already do this day in, day out, and community organising won't change that. However, it will help students' unions to continue to do what they do best. The power we hold as a student movement is so full of potential and this work will give us the strength to use that power to ensure students' voices are too powerful to ignore, supporting voter registration and mobilisation.

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