

Westminster isn't working...

YORKSHIRE DESERVES BETTER



Yorkshire
PARTY



2019 General Election Manifesto

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A background image showing a crowd of people holding blue and yellow diamond-shaped signs that say "VOTE Yorkshire PARTY". The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter.

YORKSHIRE DESERVES BETTER

OUR VISION FOR A YORKSHIRE OF FAIRNESS AND OPPORTUNITY

Foreword

Dear Voter,

Westminster isn't working. In my role as Leader of the Yorkshire Party I travel the length and breadth of our region, and I'm faced with the same failures. Failures caused by a system where every major political decision is made in Westminster.

In York, I see primary school pupils receive about £4,200 per year in government funding. In Hull, that figure is even lower. In London and the South East, funding per primary school pupil regularly exceeds £6,000 per year. Is there any wonder our schools perform so much more poorly than many in the south?

To travel on a train between Leeds and Sheffield - our region's two biggest cities - I usually can't even find a seat. When I do, it is often on a leaking 'pacer' train - a 1980s bus body bolted to a freight wagon. A type of train the Westminster Government promised would no longer be in service by January 2020. A promise they are going to break.

Whilst that promise is being broken, £659 million pounds is being spent by the Westminster Government on one new railway station in London. Imagine what Yorkshire and the north could do with £659 million more to spend on transport.

These are just two of many examples of Westminster failure. Be it on housing, homelessness, education, transport, health or the environment, Westminster is letting Yorkshire down. Be in no doubt though, this is not a Conservative vs Labour vs Lib Dem fight. All of those parties have been in Government in recent years. Not one of them has ever properly funded Yorkshire and the north. Whichever national party is in Government, Yorkshire is left to fight for scraps from the table.

Our region is a spectacular one and it is a place I'm proud to call home. From our stunning rural areas and our innovative, world-leading cities to our proud towns and breathtaking coast, Yorkshire is a place with tremendous potential. As a region, we have the building blocks to achieve so much more: our world-class universities and cutting-edge manufacturing and technology sectors prove that.

However, our region is being held back by the national parties. I never particularly wanted to go into electoral politics - I am a primary school teacher by training - but I could no longer stand by and see our children be failed by a political system that will never truly look out for everyone who chooses to call Yorkshire home.

That's why I, along with the record number of Yorkshire Party candidates standing in this general election, am asking for your vote this December.

The other parties might try to make this a Brexit election - and to be clear, the Yorkshire Party believes that, because the people of Yorkshire voted in favour of leaving, Brexit should be delivered - but the needs of our region extend well beyond whether we are members of the European Union or not. Whatever happens with Brexit, our children need properly funded schools. Our businesses need a functioning transport system. Our environment needs to be protected.



I believe Yorkshire deserves better. Voting Yorkshire Party on Thursday 12th December is your chance to say Yorkshire deserves better. I hope you will grasp this opportunity.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Whitwood

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...FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

**Declare a Yorkshire-wide
Climate Emergency**

Urgent action needs to be taken to address the unprecedented threat from climate change to our region, and the whole world. From rising sea-levels, and increased coastal erosion to soil degradation, Yorkshire deserves better on the environment.

OUR PLEDGE TO YOU

Achieve net-zero carbon emissions across
Yorkshire by 2030

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

We will implement a region-wide, total, ban on
fracking.

We will offset legacy CO2 emissions by planting six
million trees in a reforestation scheme.

We will invest in Off-Shore Wind and Hydrogen to
decarbonise heat and transport.



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...ON TRANSPORT

**Deliver Unprecedented
Investment in
Public and Green Transport**

Yorkshire's transport networks are failing. Be it congested roads, overcrowded trains or the fact that Yorkshire's largest city - Leeds - is the biggest city in Europe to have no mass-transit system, Westminster underinvestment is letting our region down. Yorkshire deserves better on transport.

OUR PLEDGE TO YOU

We will create a transport system which is green,
efficient and fair

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

We will fully fund Northern Powerhouse Rail, spending £39 billion to build a new railway line linking Hull, York, Leeds, Bradford and Sheffield with Newcastle, Liverpool and Manchester.

We will triple the number of electric car charging points across Yorkshire within the next 18 months.

We will launch a refund scheme for all public transport users, meaning if your train, tram or bus is 15 minutes late, you will qualify for a 50% refund.

YORKSHIRE DESERVES BETTER

...ON HOUSING

**Build a New Generation
of Green, Affordable,
Energy-Efficient Homes**

The housing crisis affects us all. From unaffordable city centre rents to homelessness and house prices that place owning a home outside the reach of many young people, Westminster's housing and planning policies are failing us all. Yorkshire deserves better on housing.

OUR PLEDGE TO YOU

Reshape the housing market so it is accessible to all, with the right houses being built, in an environmentally friendly way, in the right locations

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

We will see 23,000 new, energy-efficient, homes built every year for the next 20 years, of which 8,000 are available at social rent levels.

We will deliver a first-time buyer deposit match scheme, where for every £1 saved, up to £8,000, the Government will contribute another £1, to make deposits more affordable for young people across the region.

We will apply a No First Night Out approach across the whole of Yorkshire in order to prevent people who have become homeless from sleeping rough.

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...ON EDUCATION

**Deliver Fair Funding for
Yorkshire's Schools, Investing
in Mental Health Services and
Ensuring the Curriculum is Fit for
the 21st Century**

In 2016, 26% of schools in Yorkshire and the Humber were rated 'requires improvement' and 5.9% 'inadequate' for teaching, learning and assessment, compared with 7.4% and 1.6% of schools in Greater London. The issue is, in part, exacerbated by a disparity in education spending. In 2017/18, the ten highest-funded schools in the country were all in Greater London, receiving between £6,003.47 and £6,965.12 per pupil per year, whereas schools in York received only £4,162.98 per pupil. Yorkshire deserves better on education.

OUR PLEDGE TO YOU

End education poverty across Yorkshire.

HOW WILL WE ACHIEVE THIS?

We will institute a 'funding floor' of £5,250 per pupil - meaning the chronic underfunding of schools will end.

We will ensure mental health support is easily accessible for staff and students alike.

We will ask teachers and education experts to thoroughly review the current curriculum, to ensure it is fit for the 21st century.

YORKSHIRE DESERVES BETTER

...ON BREXIT

**Respect the Referendum, Secure a
Good Deal for Yorkshire and Take
Powers Back from Westminster**

Westminster politicians have failed on Brexit. A repeated refusal to compromise has led our country to the edge of disaster. The Yorkshire Party seeks to reflect the fact that people voted to leave, and agree a future relationship based on the principles of free trade. Yorkshire deserves better on Brexit.

THE REFERENDUM

In 2016, the Yorkshire Party did not campaign either for or against Brexit. Instead, we left our individual members to act according to their consciences.

However, in the referendum, Yorkshire voted heavily to leave - with the leave vote in Yorkshire well above the national average. As a party, in 2016, we pledged to respect whatever decision the electorate made. Given that, we believe we must respect the instruction the electorate gave us, and leave the European Union.

The debate we need to have now is what the future should look like after we leave. 'Brexit' can mean many different things to different people. The Yorkshire Party believes it is time for the country to come together and have an adult debate - moving beyond the culture of abuse that has infected our politics in recent years - about what the UK's future relationship with the EU should look like. Yorkshire deserves better than endless political failure over Brexit.

THE FUTURE

Respecting the Referendum

People voted to leave in 2016. It is important to respect that. However 'leave' can mean many different things. We believe many of the UK's current problems stem from Theresa May and the Tory Party's wrongheaded and unpleasant focus on immigration above all else when negotiating the Brexit deals. By attempting to reduce Brexit to a way to be tough on immigration, Theresa May's Government failed in its duty to debate, and ultimately agree, what trade-offs should be made when negotiating the UK's future relationship with the European Union.

Securing a Good Deal for Yorkshire

Every vision of the UK's relationship with the EU after Brexit involves trade-offs. The more autonomy the UK has, the less European market access it enjoys. This is a formula which applies to trade across the world. Those who advocate for a future relationship based on World Trade Organisation (WTO) rules are, in effect, calling for a massive barrier to be placed on the UK's ability to trade freely with Europe. We believe creating massive barriers to trade is a bad thing, which would likely lead to job losses. Yorkshire deserves better than a form of Brexit that means job losses.

Instead, we believe the UK's relationship with the EU should be modelled on the principles of free trade - where UK businesses can freely trade with Europe, but the UK has the ability to also strike free trade deals with other countries around the world, much like our relationship with Europe before we joined the European Economic Community in 1973. To that end, we support the option of, after Brexit, the UK joining the Free Trade Association which non-EU countries like Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein participate in. Those countries are not in the EU, and have autonomy on issues like fishing, justice, the military and foreign affairs, but are able to trade freely with Europe and strike their own trade deals across the world.

Taking powers back from Westminster

We believe powers that are returned from Europe after Brexit should be devolved to Yorkshire, where appropriate, to ensure our economy can thrive in a post-Brexit world.



YORKSHIRE DESERVES BETTER

**...ON
DEVOLUTION AND
CONSTITUTIONAL
REFORM**

**Build a Stronger Yorkshire in a
Fairer United Kingdom**

Time after time London has decided what's best for Yorkshire – and got it wrong. This has to change. People in Yorkshire themselves must set their own priorities and determine how their money is best spent.

A YORKSHIRE ASSEMBLY

We believe only an Assembly for Yorkshire with meaningful powers to impact proactively on people's lives in Yorkshire can deliver the economic, social and democratic change we so desperately need here.

Only a devolved Assembly, directly elected using proportional representation, can empower our residents and represent our diversity. We also believe that, just as we want devolved powers from London, power should be devolved within Yorkshire itself.

In short, the Yorkshire Party's vision is one of subsidiarity – where powers are exercised as close to the people as possible.

NATIONAL REFORM

The United Kingdom's constitution is not fit for purpose. A country with an unelected Parliamentary chamber, a voting system which fails to properly represent people's votes, and an unwritten constitution open to abuse, is in desperate need of reform.

We support elections to the House of Lords, a move towards a system of proportional representation for elections at all levels of Government, and the creation of a Royal Commission to explore options for codifying Britain's constitution.



YORKSHIRE DESERVES BETTER

...ON THE ECONOMY

Create a Balanced and Sustainable Economy

The economy in Yorkshire is underperforming significantly. In 2017, our economy grew by only 1.2% – the second-lowest rate of any region of the UK. It was little better in 2018 and 2019.

These statistics show that our economy is not working properly. Hampered by decades of underinvestment, Yorkshire's tremendous businesses are struggling under the weight of inadequate infrastructure. Meanwhile, our residents suffer with underfunded and disjointed public services which condemn too many people to social exclusion and misery.

Our economy can thrive only if the public and private sectors work together. Our vision is an inclusive one: where a dynamic and innovative private-sector creates the jobs and growth our region needs, whilst a well-funded public sector delivers a universally accessible welfare state.

We are committed to curbing inequality of opportunity and enhancing social mobility, ensuring that everyone within Yorkshire is given the tools to succeed in life. Too many people in Yorkshire do not have access to these tools, and have been left behind by successive governments.

We believe that private sector growth is best delivered with the support of a well-funded public sector, and that the public sector can be well-funded only if the private sector is thriving.

We will support economic growth in Yorkshire by working with businesses to deliver the infrastructure they need, reinvesting the proceeds of this growth in our public services.

By developing an inclusive economy, where employees, business owners and the government work together, Yorkshire can thrive on the world stage.



YORKSHIRE DESERVES BETTER

...ON HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

**Support a Compassionate and
Reliable Health and Social Care
System for All**

Our NHS is too centralised and too distant. It is also plagued by short-term, top-down initiatives. Our social care systems are chronically underfunded.

We believe control over the NHS should be devolved to Yorkshire – just as it is in Scotland, Northern Ireland, Wales and Greater Manchester.

We are proud of the principles upon which the NHS was founded – that people receive healthcare based on need, not on the ability to pay.

We believe these principles can be delivered only with increased funding to an NHS, led by the public sector.

We believe in a properly funded, integrated Health and Social Care system, led by the public sector and supported, as appropriate, by properly qualified alternative providers.



YORKSHIRE DESERVES BETTER

...FOR FAMILIES

**Ensure Opportunities for Families
Empowered by the Knowledge
That They Have Purpose and Value**

Every family is different. The assumption that mothers are the caregivers and fathers are the breadwinners is outdated. The first three years of a child's life play a hugely significant role in future development. We must therefore support parents to ensure the best for their children's future.

We will introduce balanced parental leave where parents (including same-sex couples and adoptive parents) have the option of splitting mandatory leave in the way that best suites them, including through a phased departure and return to work.

We will reinvest in Sure Start and similar programmes – which are practitioner-led and designed with parental input – to empower parents and enable children in Yorkshire to thrive.

We believe that flexible working hours and working from home offers opportunities to both businesses and employees. By working with businesses to make flexible working the norm, we aim to increase productivity and allow parents and carers more time as a family.

We believe that carers play a vital role in our society - nurturing our children, offering support throughout adulthood and ensuring dignity at until death. Rather than being classed as economic inactivity, national statistics should recognise the skills carers develop and the contribution they make to our families and communities.

The Yorkshire Party is founded on the social democratic principles of subsidiarity, dignity, community and cooperation.

We believe that by moving powers as close to people as possible, we can empower communities to be ambitious and allow individuals freedom for creativity and enterprise

We believe service to humanity should be the foundation of government and that as members of society we share a responsibility to participate in building a region of fairness and opportunity.