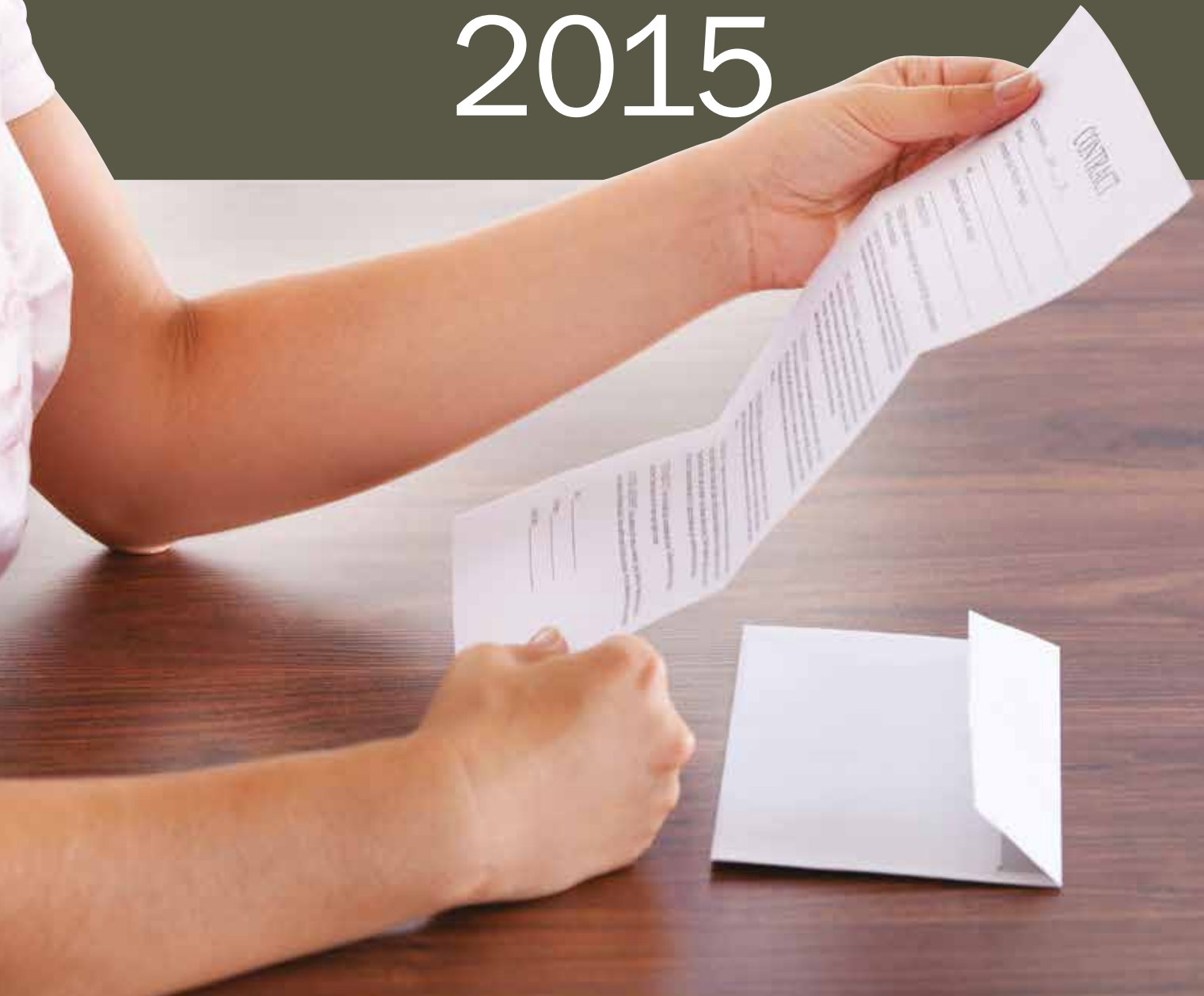


**LETTERS  
AND  
ISSUE PARAS.  
FOR YOUR  
USE**

# *Your* Letters Issue Pack 2015



**Conservatives**



# Your Letters Issue Pack

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## Ben GUMMER

A strong voice for Ipswich





Conservatives understand that we have a moral obligation to support veterans and commemorate and remember their commitment and sacrifice. In the past, the Armed Forces Covenant, the principle that no service personnel or veteran should ever have to suffer disadvantage as a result of their service, was broken. Labour had failed to enshrine it in law and, in the words of a former Chief of Defence Staff, had treated the Armed Forces with 'contempt'. We came to office determined to change this.

That is why one of the first steps we took was to enshrine the Covenant in law, with the Defence Secretary required to report annually to Parliament on how the Government is meeting its commitments and obligations. We have worked hard to improve the help and support serving personnel and veterans receive, with over £100 million being allocated to different projects and schemes in 2014 alone.

One of the biggest changes we have made is to get more local authorities and companies to sign up to Community and Corporate Covenants. Every local authority and over 200 organisations have now signed these Covenants, committing themselves to working more closely with their Armed Forces community and to do more to help veterans integrate into life outside the Forces, for example helping them to find work. We want to see councils and companies do more to honour the commitments they have made.

We have acted to improve veteran's accommodation, setting up the £40 million Veterans Accommodation Fund which has provided funding to specific projects to build or refurbish accommodation for veterans so they can always find a safe place to live. This fund has been paid for from fines levied on the banks guilty of manipulating interest rates. Projects we have been able to support include the Royal British Legion's new dementia care unit for veterans in Kent and 65 new spaces for veterans in Colchester to help those struggling to live and cope on their own.

In the 2014 Autumn Statement the Chancellor went further and announced that £10 million will be provided to help veterans suffering from hearing problems as a result of their time in the Armed Forces and £5 million to the Gurkha Welfare Trust so that they can create a third care home for Gurkha veterans in Nepal.

We have strengthened medical support for those who leave the Armed Forces either voluntarily or because of injury or ill health. Personnel now get access to the same mental health support as they get when serving for six months after leaving the Forces and if a veteran is admitted to hospital with the same medical condition as another patient, the veteran will get priority treatment. We will also continue to fund the 24 hour helpline run by Combat Stress that helps serving personnel and veterans suffering from mental health problems.

For veterans to succeed outside the Forces they need to have the skills and knowledge required by employers. We are helping personnel to get recognised qualifications whilst serving in the Forces so they are better able to adapt to civilian life when they leave. We are committed to doing everything we can to support the Covenant and make sure veterans get the help and support they need to live full, happy and productive lives. Every veteran deserves to be able to enjoy security and dignity once they leave the Forces – at the least they deserve after making sacrifices on behalf of us all.

Yours sincerely

**Ben Gummer**

Ben Gummer  
Conservative Candidate for Ipswich

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## Ben GUMMER

A strong voice for Ipswich





Conservatives believe the NHS is something to be valued, protected and improved – free at the point of use and based on need. We know that you can only have a strong NHS if you have a strong economy.

Since 2010, we have increased spending by £12.7 billion pounds, to provide world-class healthcare. We have hired thousands more clinical staff and reduced unnecessary management, to ensure better patient care. A&E departments can now handle more patients because there are 1,200 more A&E doctors. A&E departments see 2,000 more patients within the four waiting time targets daily than in 2010.

To give cancer patients access to the lifesaving treatments they would otherwise not receive, we invested in a £1.16 billion Cancer Drugs Fund. 60,000 cancer patients have benefitted by receiving pioneering drugs.

We have invested £5.3 billion into a Better Care Fund to help local health and social care services work together better. This will bring GPs, community nurses and care workers together, so that they can provide better care closer to home and keep people independent and healthy for longer.

The next Conservative government will go further. We will reintroduce named GPs for everyone in England, to give personalised care seven days a week. We have already brought back named GPs for 4 million over 75s and will extend this to everyone by 2020. We will improve access by training an extra 5,000 GPs and will expand our trail scheme of having GP surgeries open from 8am to 8pm on weekdays and at the weekends to the whole of England.

We will increase the budget of the NHS in real terms for the next five years, to continue to provide world-class healthcare. We will help to support the NHS's own Five Year Forward view and in 2015/16 we have committed to an extra £2 billion of additional funding for frontline NHS services.

We will also invest £300 million in establishing an international dementia research within five years, to lead the world to discover the next major breakthrough in treatment. We will train all 1.3 million NHS staff and 3 million volunteer dementia friends on how to provide the best possible care to people who suffer from dementia.

Our long-term economic plan means we have been able to increase the NHS budget by £12.7 billion this Parliament. This helps pay for thousands more doctors, nurses, GPs and midwives who are treating patients in cleaner, safer hospitals – with the dignity they deserve. We will increase the NHS budget in the next Parliament to help fund the changes and improvements the NHS needs to make in the years ahead.

But you can only have a properly-funded NHS if you have a strong economy. The Conservatives have a long-term plan to secure the economy and the funding of the NHS at risk – with patients paying the price. We need to stick with our plan for the future of our loved ones need it, our NHS will be there for them.

Yours sincerely

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Conservative Candidate for Ipswich

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# How to use this Pack

**People are more likely to respond to a message from you if you write to them on an issue that they are directly interested in.**

This pack aims to provide you with pre-written examples that you can use as a basis on which to write to people on issues that they may raise.

The guide is split into 3 sections

## People

These are example letters written specifically for different target groups.

The 7 groups are:

- Veterans
- Pensioners
- Teachers
- Parents
- Women
- Young voters
- Farmers

## Subjects

These are example letters written specifically for individual subjects.

The 11 subjects are:

- Small business
- Defence
- Immigration
- Europe
- NHS
- Planning
- Greenbelt
- Infrastructure
- Housing
- Fracking
- Child care

## Issue Paragraphs

These are similar to the above but a more concise and designed to be added to existing letters that you send out or to be used when sending a letter that contains references to more than one specific issue. There are versions for use in England and in Wales.



### The English subject areas are:

- NHS
- Welfare
- Helping Hardworking Taxpayers
- EU
- Childcare
- Apprenticeships
- Schools
- Immigration
- Tax
- Making Work Pay
- Greenest Government Ever
- Elderly
- Crime
- Jobs
- Deficit
- Universities
- Housing



### The Welsh subject areas are:

- NHS
- Childcare
- Skills
- Schools
- Universities
- Housing
- Greenest Government Ever

These letters are deliberately thorough as they are designed as responses to contact from constituents. If you would like pro-active direct mail letters then please contact Matt Lane [matthew.lane@conservatives.com](mailto:matthew.lane@conservatives.com)

If you require further briefing on issues please contact [briefing@conservatives.com](mailto:briefing@conservatives.com)

# Ben GUMMER

A strong voice for Ipswich



## An example 'People' letter for Veterans on one of the GE15 Letterhead templates

Conservatives understand that we have a moral obligation to support veterans and commemorate and remember their commitment and sacrifice. In the past, the Armed Forces Covenant, the principle that no service personnel or veteran should ever have to suffer disadvantage as a result of their service, was broken. Labour had failed to enshrine it in law and, in the words of a former Chief of the Defence Staff, had treated the Armed Forces with 'contempt'. We came to office determined to change this.

That is why one of the first steps we took was to enshrine the Covenant in law, with the Defence Secretary required to report annually to Parliament on how the Government is meeting its commitments and obligations. We have worked hard to improve the help and support serving personnel and veterans receive, with over £100 million being allocated to different projects and schemes in 2014 alone.

One of the biggest changes we have made is to get more local authorities and companies to sign up to Community and Corporate Covenants. Every local authority and over 200 organisations have now signed these Covenants, committing themselves to working more closely with their Armed Forces community and to do more to help veterans integrate into life outside the Forces, for example by helping them to find work. We want to see councils and companies do more to honour the commitments they have made.

We have acted to improve veteran's accommodation, setting up the £40 million Veterans Accommodation Fund which has provided funding to specific projects to build or refurbish accommodation for veterans so they can always find a safe place to live. This fund has been paid for from fines levied on the banks guilty of manipulating interest rates. Projects we have been able to support include the Royal British Legion's new dementia care unit for veterans in Kent and 65 new spaces for veterans in Colchester to help those struggling to live and cope on their own.

In the 2014 Autumn Statement the Chancellor went further and announced that £10 million will be provided to help veterans suffering from hearing problems as a result of their time in the Armed Forces and £5 million to the Ghurkha Welfare Trust so that they can create a third care home for Ghurkha veterans in Nepal.

We have strengthened medical support for those who leave the Armed Forces either voluntarily or because of injury or ill health. Personnel now get access to the same mental health support as they got when serving for six months after leaving the Forces and if a veteran is admitted to hospital with the same medical condition as another patient, the veteran will get priority treatment. From 2017, each area will also have a specialist GP who has specific knowledge of the needs of veterans so they can access better support. We will also continue to fund the 24 hour helpline run by Combat Stress that helps serving personnel and veterans suffering from mental health problems.

For veterans to succeed outside the Forces they need to have the skills and knowledge required by employers. We are helping personnel to get recognised qualifications whilst serving in the Forces so they are better able to adapt to civilian life when they leave.

We are committed to doing everything we can to support the Covenant and make sure veterans get the help and support they need to live full, happy and productive lives. Every veteran deserves to be able to enjoy security and dignity once they leave the Forces – it is the least they deserve after making sacrifices on behalf of us all.

Yours sincerely

*Ben Gummer*

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# People

## Veterans Example Letter



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We have acted to improve veteran's accommodation, setting up the £40 million Veterans Accommodation Fund which has provided funding to specific projects to build or refurbish accommodation for veterans so they can always find a safe place to live. This fund has been paid for from fines levied on the banks guilty of manipulating interest rates. Projects we have been able to support include the Royal British Legion's new dementia care unit for veterans in Kent and 65 new spaces for veterans in Colchester to help those struggling to live and cope on their own.

In the 2014 Autumn Statement the Chancellor went further and announced that £10 million will be provided to help veterans suffering from hearing problems as a result of their time in the Armed Forces and £5 million to the Ghurkha Welfare Trust so that they can create a third care home for Ghurkha veterans in Nepal. In Budget 2015 he went further and announced that over the next five years £75 million of LIBOR fines will be used to support our Armed Forces and military heritage, including veterans of the Afghanistan campaign'.

We are also committed to ensure that those who have given so much in the service of their country should receive the best possible care. This is why we included an additional £8.4 million over the next five years in the Budget 2015 to allow the NHS across England to significantly enhance current mental health and support services to the most vulnerable veterans in the community.

We have strengthened medical support for those who leave the Armed Forces either voluntarily or because of injury or ill health. Personnel now get access to the same mental health support as they got when serving for six months after leaving the Forces and if a veteran is admitted to hospital with the same medical condition as another patient, the veteran will get priority treatment. From 2017, each area will also have a specialist GP who has specific knowledge of the needs of veterans so they can access better support. We will also continue to fund the 24 hour helpline run by Combat Stress that helps serving personnel and veterans suffering from mental health problems.

For veterans to succeed outside the Forces they need to have the skills and knowledge required by employers. We are helping personnel to get recognised qualifications whilst serving in the Forces so they are better able to adapt to civilian life when they leave.

We are committed to doing everything we can to support the Covenant and make sure veterans get the help and support they need to live full, happy and productive lives. Every veteran deserves to be able to enjoy security and dignity once they leave the Forces – it is the least they deserve after making sacrifices on behalf of us all.

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# People

## Pensioners Example Letter



Conservatives believe that if you have worked hard, saved, paid your taxes and done the right thing, you deserve dignity and financial security when you retire. We want a country where you get something for something, not something for nothing.

Older people deserve the peace of mind that financial security brings. Our pension triple lock guarantees that the basic state pension will always increase in-line with the highest of earnings, prices, or 2.5 per cent. Since 2010 the annual basic state pension has risen by £950, and the triple lock will continue to protect the basic state pension in the next Parliament. This is in stark contrast to the days under Labour, when the rise could be a matter of pence.

We have also protected the winter fuel payment, free bus passes, TV licences, prescriptions and eye tests for pensioners, as we committed to do in 2010. David Cameron has committed to protect these again if he is re-elected this year.

At the same time, we are simplifying the state pension so people can be certain of what they will get. Our single tier pension reforms will introduce a single flat-rate pension, set above the means test, and based on 35 years of National Insurance contributions. It will particularly benefit women, low-earners and the self-employed.

We also recognise that older people have a wealth of experience and lots to offer society. We have taken action to improve opportunities for older people to continue working longer or to volunteer their time. It is estimated that in 2009 there were 120,000 workers who were compulsorily retired after reaching the default retirement age. Conservatives believe that older people who want to carry on working should be able to do so. That is why we abolished the default retirement age, so hardworking people cannot be forced to retire at 65 regardless of circumstances.

Because those who have saved all their lives should be free to spend their savings how they choose, we are giving people more freedom over how they access and invest their pension savings. From April 2015 those retiring with a defined contribution pension no longer have to buy an annuity, because we are removed the punitive 55 per cent tax rate people were charged for taking out more than their tax free lump sum.

The low interest rates our recovering economy needs have meant savers have faced lower returns on their investments. To address this unfairness we have introduced government-backed pensioner bonds that offer market-leading rates to over 65s who want to save. Around a million pensioners will have taken advantage of this opportunity by May 2015.

Hardworking people deserve the peace of mind of knowing that they will be cared for in their old age, so we are making sure people do not have to sell their home to pay for social care. From April 2016 the Government will pay for a person's care once the cost to them hits £72,000 - and the threshold for the means test on residential care will rise from £23,000 to £118,000. That way, those with the most serious needs can be certain that their costs will not keep piling up.

Conservatives believe in a society where older people receive the dignity and respect they deserve, and where they are provided with the support they need. They have worked hard, saved and done the right thing, and that is why they deserve to feel financially secure and have the confidence to plan for their retirement.

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# People

## Teachers Example Letter



Conservatives want a Britain that gives every child the best start in life. Our plan for education would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our teachers. England is fortunate to have the best generation of teachers we have ever had.

But we know that currently too many teachers are working long hours and have to focus on tasks which detract from the classroom. 44,000 teachers responded to the workload challenge survey we conducted and, as a result, we've committed to a concrete plan to reduce teacher workload - by reducing regulatory and administrative burdens on teachers and schools and identifying the root causes of unnecessary activities, so teachers can focus on giving our young people their full attention. Similarly, we've made it easier for teachers to learn from other schools, increased opportunities for coaching and mentoring and stopped changes being made during an academic year.

There are many excellent teachers and heads, but we want to work with the profession to improve the quality of teaching and school leadership even further. We want to make sure that teachers receive solid training that gives them the practical skills they need, and that they have access to high-quality professional development, so they can continue to improve throughout their careers. Since 2010 we have raised the quality of teaching, through the creation of a national network of nearly 600 teaching schools and attracting a record number of first-class graduates and teachers from other professions. In the next Parliament we will be working with the 'Claim your College' consortium, in support of their proposals to establish a brand new, teacher-led College of Teaching. Fully independent of Government, this new body will give teaching the sort of leadership that other professions have enjoyed for decades.

Over the past five years we've raised standards, improved discipline and given head teachers and parents the freedom to improve and expand their schools, and as a result there are now a million more children being taught in good or outstanding schools.

But we want to do more, and the next Conservative government would introduce a National Teachers Service, ensuring that some of the most deprived areas of the country benefit from excellent teaching. In the next five years we want to build on our record of success and ensure that every young person leaves school prepared and able to succeed, especially in the subjects that employers value most. To help this, we will train 17,500 new science and maths teachers. We will continue to demand the best of our schools and give teachers, who rise early every day, and turn our plans into action, the tools they need to deliver the highest standards.

Because we trust teachers and heads to know what is best for their schools, we have put professionals in the driving seat over what they teach, when they teach it as well as who is best to teach it. We will continue to give school leaders greater freedom and responsibility to lead and manage their schools and staff, including giving them the flexibility to pay the best teachers more.

We can only afford to fund our schools properly if we have a strong economy. Only the Conservatives have the clear economic plan and credible leadership to secure a better future for families. Ed Miliband doesn't have a plan for schools. Labour would undo all the work we've done and our children's education would suffer.

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# People

## Parents Example Letter



Conservatives are on the side of parents. Over the last five years we have been backing them with more help on childcare, shared parental leave and tax cuts so their money goes further.

We want to make sure that every family can send their child to a good local school where they will gain the skills they need to get on and succeed in life. Where parents aren't happy with the local schools on offer, we've given them the power to set up their own schools through our Free Schools programme. We've been raising standards in schools, improving discipline and giving teachers and parents the freedom to improve local schools. As a result, we have more good or outstanding schools than ever before and a million more children being taught in schools that give them the best start in life.

We have also worked with the profession to improve the quality of teaching in schools, with a record number of first-class graduates and people from other walks of life joining the profession. We've toughened the National Curriculum, so that young people leave schools with the skills they need to succeed in work or university study. Our EBacc at GCSE has resulted in a 71 per cent increase in the number of students studying the core academic subjects which are valued by employers. All this means parents can have confidence that our schools are giving children the skills they need to succeed. We have stopped people studying qualifications with no value to employers and made sure the only qualifications which count are those which can lead to a job. That means those who choose not to go to university can have a choice of good quality vocational courses which will equip them with the skills they need to get good job.

We know that money can sometimes be tight for parents. Because we have taken difficult decisions to restore our national finances, we have been able to take steps to help hardworking families. We are saving parents £400 on childcare bills by increasing free education and care for 3- and 4-year olds. We have increased the tax-free personal allowance, meaning a typical tax cut of £825 and no income tax at all for the lowest earners in our country. By cutting and freezing fuel duty, we have saved the typical motorist around £10 on petrol every time they fill their tank.

The next Conservative Government will go further to ensure our teachers have the tools they need to deliver the highest standards of education to our young people. We're protecting the money schools receive for every child and guarantee that as pupil numbers rise, the amount of money that schools get will go up too. In contrast, Ed Miliband's spending plans for schools fail to take account of a rapid increase in pupil numbers, meaning that over the next five years schools would see a significant cut in the amount of money they receive per child.

We will continue to demand the best of our schools and continue to give school leaders greater freedom and responsibility to lead and manage their schools and staff, so that they can lead schools that meet the needs of local communities and individual children, rather than a one-size-fits all approach.

Strong, well-funded schools and more help for parents can only be achieved by staying on the road to a stronger economy. Only the Conservatives have the clear economic plan and credible leadership to build a better future for families. Ed Miliband doesn't have a plan, so the security of our children's future, would be at risk under Labour.

Our commitment is to build a Britain that gives every child the best start in life. Over the next five years, we want to build on our record of success and ensure that every child is able to succeed and every parent gets the support they deserve.

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# People



## Women Example Letter

Conservatives are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for men and women in all aspects of their lives.

We are supporting women in work and providing greater financial security by reducing taxes, cutting the cost of childcare, addressing the gender pay gap and introducing shared parental leave. We will continue to work to break down the barriers that hold women back, supporting girls to enter careers traditionally dominated by men, and improving transparency over pay and conditions to ensure that women are being treated fairly.

Women are vital to the success of the British economy, and because our long-term economic plan is working, there are now more women in work and more women running their own business than ever before. There are also more women on FTSE Boards than ever before and the gender pay gap is at its lowest ever level.

We are working hard to end violence against women and girls. Far too often women have to endure domestic violence, sexual violence, intimidation and maltreatment, and are denied basic rights and opportunities. We have invested £10 million in women's refuges, introduced new powers to protect people from abusive relationships, criminalised forced marriage and introduced various initiatives to protect girls from Female Genital Mutilation (FGM).

There is more to be done on these important issues and we are actively pursuing ways in which we can prevent violence against women and girls happening in the first place, do even more to help victims, bring perpetrators to justice and eradicate these appalling crimes.

The Conservative Party has a proud record of promoting women in politics. The first female MP to sit in the House of Commons was a Conservative and we were the first party in the western world to elect a female leader and Prime Minister. Under David Cameron's leadership the number of Conservative female MPs has almost trebled, but we want to do much more. We are working hard to attract female candidates in local and national elections and to participate in our Party.

Equality is at the heart of the Government's agenda and we remain committed to working to increase the representation of women, and other minority groups, at all levels of politics. Over the next five years we want to build on our record of success and ensure equal opportunities for men and women in all aspects of their lives in order to secure a better future for Britain.

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# People

## Young Voters Example Letter



We want to help the next generation get on in life and succeed.

That starts with getting a good education and gaining the skills to get on in life. We are raising education standards, improving the quality of teaching and creating a more credible exam system, so school-leavers are in a stronger position to go on to further study or get a good job.

Graduates earn more over the course of their lives than non-graduates, so getting a degree can be a good option. We have removed the cap on the number of university places there are, so more young people can have the chance to get a degree. Our changes to student funding, though controversial, have made university more affordable and attainable. There are no upfront fees, more generous grants and bursaries for poorer students, and graduates only start to repay their fees when they can afford to. The richest graduates contribute more, and those who earn less will have their liability written-off after 30 years. Since we made our changes, more young people from disadvantaged backgrounds have started university study.

For those who choose a vocational route, we have created a new, independent, employer-led, careers and enterprise company which offers young people the best advice on their options. Since 2010 we have already created over 2.2 million apprenticeships, enabling more young people to learn a trade and get on in life. In the next five years we will deliver 3 million more.

Under Labour, youth unemployment rose by 45 per cent. But since 2010 the number of young people not in education, employment or training has fallen by almost 150,000 to its lowest level for more than eight years. Youth unemployment is down by 181,000 over the past year. This hasn't happened by accident – it has been because of the hard work of the British people and because the government has been working to a long-term economic plan.

Because we have a credible plan for the economy and we have been prepared to take difficult decisions on public spending, we've been able to take action to make life easier for young people. To help young people who cannot afford a deposit for a flat or a house to get on the housing ladder, we have established the Help to Buy scheme, which has already helped over 88,000 people, mainly first time buyers, achieve their dream of owning their own home.

We have also been able to cut taxes, making the first £10,000 year you earn each year free of income tax, meaning a typical tax cut of £825 a year. And we want to go further, and raise it to £12,500 in the next Parliament. We have also frozen fuel duty, which means drivers save around £10 each time they fill up their tank.

And we are taking decisions for the long-term. We have invested in green and low carbon energy, and taken action to help tackle climate change, because we have a responsibility to the next generation to for the world we will pass on. And we've kept our promise to the world's poorest people, by meeting our commitments on international development aid.

Our plan is working, with more jobs, more apprenticeships, and more university places. Only the Conservatives have the clear economic plan and credible leadership to build a better future for the next generation. Ed Miliband doesn't have a plan, so the security of Britain's future would be at risk under Labour.

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# People

## Farmers Example Letter



Food and farming is our biggest manufacturing sector, worth £100 billion to the economy and employing one in eight people. It's a vital part of our economy and that's why, as part of our long-term economic plan, the Conservative Party has worked hard to support all those who live and work in the countryside.

British food and drink is some of the best in the world and since 2010 we have helped open up more than 600 new markets in 109 countries. This has seen the value of British food and drink exports increase by £1.2 billion to around £19 billion a year, providing our farmers and food producers with more opportunities to sell their top-quality produce.

We also want to see more people in Britain buying British produce. From April this year, compulsory country of origin labelling on pork, lamb, poultry and goat will help consumers make an informed choice about what they buy. Our Plan for Public Procurement will, from 2017, see all of central government buying fresh, locally sourced, seasonal food, so that all food that can be bought locally will be bought locally. Along with the wider public sector, the Plan will unlock £400 million of potential new business for British farmers and producers.

Conservatives have also been taking action to clear up the mess left by Labour. Between 1997 and 2010, the last government allowed regulation and red tape to be imposed on farmers, increasing costs and making it harder for farmers to stay in business. In contrast, we have reduced the number of farm inspections by 34,000 a year and the volume of DEFRA guidance by 80 per cent. There is of course more to do. At the same time, we continue to put in place 'earned recognition' for farmers, enabling those who farm to a high standard to benefit from fewer inspections and less bureaucracy.

Despite Labour's promises to reform the CAP, and giving up £7 billion of Britain's rebate in the process, very little was achieved. We will continue to press for reform of the CAP and work hard to make sure that its rules are as simple as possible to follow for farmers, placing the least possible burden on their businesses. An urgent review of the Three Crop Rule is key.

In addition to the many opportunities for British farming, we recognise the challenges and are determined to help farmers overcome them. Many dairy farmers continue to struggle with low milk prices, so as well as creating the Groceries Code Adjudicator to stand up for the interests of producers, we have now given the Adjudicator the power to levy fines of up to 1% of turnover. We are also supporting dairy farmers to negotiate collectively with retailers to obtain better prices. To help ease short term cash flow pressures, we have asked the banks and HMRC to take a sympathetic stance towards farmers.

Animal and plant health is vital to the future of our farming industry – that's why it is a priority for this Government. After thirteen years of inaction under Labour, we now have the highest rates of bovine TB in Europe. We are determined to tackle this disease and are pursuing a comprehensive strategy, supported by leading vets, which includes cattle movement controls, vaccinating badgers in the Edge Area and culling badgers in areas where bovine TB is rife. This is all part of our responsible plan to eradicate the disease in England by 2038.

We are on the side of hardworking farmers. We are determined to boost British food and drink, helping the industry take advantage of the opportunities that exist at home and abroad, as well as overcoming the challenges. We want to help farmers grow their businesses, so that they and their families can enjoy a more secure future. This in turn is helping our rural communities to grow so that they offer the people living there more opportunities to find work and training and the ability to get on in life.

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# Ben GUMMER

A strong voice for Ipswich



## An example 'Subjects' letter for the NHS on one of the GE15 Letterhead templates

Conservatives believe the NHS is something to be valued, protected and improved – free at the point of use and based on need. We know that you can only have a strong NHS if you have a strong economy.

Since 2010, we have increased spending by £12.7 billion pounds, to provide world-class healthcare. We have hired thousands more clinical staff and reduced unnecessary management, to ensure better patient care. A&E departments can now handle more patients because there are 1,200 more A&E doctors. A&E departments see 2,000 more patients within the four waiting time targets daily than in 2010.

To give cancer patients access to the lifesaving treatments they would otherwise not receive, we invested in a £1.16 billion Cancer Drugs Fund. 60,000 cancer patients have benefitted by receiving pioneering drugs.

We have invested £5.3 billion into a Better Care Fund to help local health and social care services work together better. This will bring GPs, community nurses and care workers together, so that they can provide better care closer to home and keep people independent and healthy for longer.

The next Conservative government will go further. We will reintroduce named GPs for everyone in England, to give personalised care seven days a week. We have already brought back named GPs for 4 million over 75s and will extend this to everyone by 2020. We will improve access by training an extra 5,000 GPs and will expand our trail scheme of having GP surgeries open from 8am to 8pm on weekdays and at the weekends to the whole of England.

We will increase the budget of the NHS in real terms for the next five years, to continue to provide world-class healthcare. We will help to support the NHS's own Five Year Forward view and in 2015/16 we have committed to an extra £2 billion of additional funding for frontline NHS services.

We will also invest £300 million in establishing an international dementia research within five years, to lead the world to discover the next major breakthrough in treatment. We will train all 1.3 million NHS staff and 3 million volunteer dementia friends on how to provide the best possible care to people who suffer from dementia.

Our long-term economic plan means we have been able to increase the NHS budget by £12.7 billion this Parliament. This helps pay for thousands more doctors, nurses, GPs and midwives who are treating patients in cleaner, safer hospitals – with the dignity they deserve. We will increase the NHS budget in the next Parliament to help fund the changes and improvements the NHS needs to make in the years ahead.

But you can only have a properly-funded NHS if you have a strong economy. The Conservatives have a long-term plan to secure that stronger economy. A vote for any other party is a vote for the chaos of Ed Miliband as Prime Minister. He would put our economy and the funding of the NHS at risk – with patients paying the price. We need to stick with our plan for the future of our economy and NHS. This will help secure a better future for Britain – one where people can be confident that when they or their loved ones need it, our NHS will be there for them.

Yours sincerely

*Ben Gummer*

Ben Gummer  
Conservative Candidate for Ipswich

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# Subjects

## Small Business Example Letter



Conservatives know that small businesses are the lifeblood of our economy, bringing jobs and economic security to villages, towns and cities across the UK. Small business owners work tirelessly, take risks, and make sacrifices to help their businesses grow, succeed and take on staff. They are the hardworking heroes and heroines of our economy.

Our long-term economic plan is backing small businesses all the way with lower taxes, less red tape and better access to the finance they need to grow. The result is that small businesses are leading our economic recovery like never before, creating jobs, driving growth and helping us build a better community where everyone contributes.

Small businesses need to be able to take on skilled employees to help them grow. That is why we introduced our Employment Allowance, which has cut employers' national insurance contributions - the jobs tax - of every business by up to £2,000. This means 450,000 small businesses will pay no jobs tax at all in 2014/15. We are training up the next generation to have the skills that small businesses need, creating over 2.2 million apprenticeships in this Parliament and committing to deliver 3 million more by 2020. We're also making it easier for businesses to employ young people by abolishing the jobs tax on under 21s from April 2015 and on apprentices under 25 from April 2016.

From October 2010 to April 2016 small business rate relief has been doubled, helping more than half a million small firms, with an estimated 385,000 small firms paying no rates at all. A further 190,000 business will benefit from tapering relief.

Small businesses also need less red tape so that they can have the freedom to grow. Since 2010, whenever new regulations have been introduced we have identified existing ones to scrap through the Red Tape Challenge. This has already saved business £10 billion. We are the first government in modern history to have reduced, rather than increased, domestic business regulation.

Labour's Great Recession made it difficult for small businesses to get the finance they need. Our Funding for Lending programme, which incentivises banks to lend more money to businesses, has been extended to January 2016 to focus solely on supporting small and medium-sized enterprises. We have also set up a British Business Bank with over £4 billion of resources, including a £150 million Start-Up Loans scheme to help people start new businesses. We will build on this in the next Parliament, tripling the number of Start Up Loans to 75,000 by 2020 and plugging a £1 billion funding gap for fast-growing businesses with our new Help to Grow scheme.

The action we have taken is helping small businesses go from strength to strength. According to a recent survey carried out for the Department of Business, small firms' profits have bounced back to pre-2008 levels: 78 per cent of small businesses that employ at least one person have made a profit or surplus in the last 12 months, back to 2007 and 2008 levels and up 6 per cent on 2012. And small businesses are taking on more staff, with 22 per cent of SMEs taking on more staff over the last 12 months.

But we know there's much more government can do to help small businesses. In the end, small business owners want to know they have a government which understands their needs and wants to help them succeed. That is what you get with the Conservatives. We have a long-term plan which is turning our economy around. Our goal is to make the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a business. That way we can create the jobs that give hardworking people the security of a pay packet and a better future for their families. A vote for any other party puts that, and all the progress we have made over the last five years, at risk.

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# Subjects

## Defence Example Letter



Keeping our country safe and secure is the first duty of any government. Conservatives take this duty seriously. Britain has world-class armed forces, able to defend our interests and project power across the globe. We have the fifth largest defence budget in the world, the second largest in NATO and the largest in the EU. We continue to meet the NATO target to spend 2 per cent of GDP on defence.

No country can invest in, maintain and support its armed forces without a strong economy. The last Labour government not only lost control of our national finances, but also left a £38 billion black hole in the defence budget – those were two major threats to our ability as a country to defend ourselves in the future.

Over the last five years, in place of the chaos we inherited from Labour, we have been taking action to make our defences strong and secure once again. We conducted the first Strategic Defence and Security Review for 12 years. Putting our defences back on a sustainable footing involved taking some difficult, painful decisions. But these decisions have paid off, with the defence budget now back in balance, with a small surplus built in each year to ensure that unexpected costs can be met.

This means we can now invest in our armed forces to ensure they have the equipment and capabilities they need for the future. Over the next 10 years, more than £163 billion will be spent on new equipment that will deliver: new Type 26 frigates; the new F-35B Joint Strike Fighter; the two new Queen Elizabeth class aircraft carriers, the largest ships ever to sail with the Royal Navy; new Hunter-Killer submarines; and the very latest armoured vehicles.

We are turning our armed forces into a more flexible, adaptable force, better able to respond to new and emerging threats across the globe. Now that combat operations have ended in Afghanistan and our soldiers have come home, this is all the more important. As part of this plan, the Reserve Forces are being doubled in size, to a trained strength of 35,000 by 2018, with reservists being given access to better training alongside regulars and the latest equipment. This will give the UK the ability to deploy sufficient personnel on operations of any length and ensure that we are able to call upon specialist skills, such as in cyber warfare, should they be necessary.

We've also taken action to improve defence procurement. We have given the organisation that buys the equipment our forces need more freedom to recruit the staff and skills they need to make sure suppliers deliver on time and on budget, so that taxpayer's money is not wasted. This approach is working, with the National Audit Office reporting in January this year that the cost of the 11 biggest defence projects fell by nearly £400 million in 2014. We are showing that by holding suppliers to account we can achieve better value for money.

By taking a realistic approach on the defence budget and investing in the equipment and capabilities of the future we are ensuring that Britain retains some of the most capable armed forces anywhere in the world. We have closed the budget black hole, at the same time as we have invested in new technology and better resources for our troops. This gives the British people the peace of mind of knowing that our national security and our overseas interests are properly protected, and that our soldiers sailors and airmen and women – who put their lives at risk to secure our safety – are properly equipped and rewarded.

All this is only possible if we have a strong economy. Only the Conservatives have the credible plan and the strong leadership to secure a stronger economy and a better future for Britain.

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# Subjects



## Immigration Example Letter

Immigration benefits Britain but it needs to be controlled, and fair. Under Labour our borders were badly managed, net migration increased more than five-fold and 2.5 million more people came to this country than left. Uncontrolled immigration puts pressure on our public services, affects social cohesion, and can keep wages down.

We set a target to reduce net immigration from the hundreds of thousands it reached under Labour, back down to the tens of thousands. We are disappointed that we have not been able to achieve this, but we have made the system much more robust and effective.

We have taken action to tighten all the immigration routes of entry into the UK. We have put a cap on work visas and strengthened the rules for immigrants coming from outside the EU. Student migrants now have to prove they can speak English and can only stay if they have a well-paying job, and people who want to bring family from outside Europe now have to show they can support them.

We have tightened access to welfare, so people come here for the right reasons. We are limiting what benefits new migrants can access and have toughened the test migrants must pass before they can claim benefits, including quizzing them about what they have done to find work before coming here, and on their English.

We have been cracking down on those here illegally, so the system is fair. Our Immigration Act makes it easier to deport people who shouldn't be here and harder for illegal immigrants to get rented accommodation, bank accounts, and driving licences.

But we know there is much more to do. The Prime Minister has set out plans to deliver the toughest system on welfare for EU migrants anywhere in Europe. Under our plans, EU job seekers will not be supported by UK taxpayers and they will have to leave if they don't have a job after six months. EU workers will not get in-work benefits or social housing until they have been here for four years. And they will not get child benefits and tax credits for children living elsewhere in Europe.

Our plans for change also include tougher and longer re-entry bans for rough sleepers, beggars and fraudsters; stronger arrangements to deport EU criminals and stop them coming back; no access to our labour market for nationals of new member states joining the EU until their economies have converged more closely with current members; and a new fund to help meet the additional demands on local services in communities that are heavily reliant on migrant labour.

We also need to make sure people who come here on time-limited visas leave at the end of their visa. We've taken action to make it harder for illegal immigrants to remain in the UK, and our plan to introduce exit checks will help us to ensure that people leave the country when their visas have expired.

We inherited an immigration system that was open to widespread abuse and the immigration system today is very different. Labour pursued a deliberate policy of higher immigration, whereas we have worked hard to control and reduce immigration. There is more we must do to build a system that is fair to British citizens and legitimate migrants and tough on those who abuse the system or flout the law. Only the Conservatives have a plan to achieve that. A vote for any other party would risk a Labour government which would return us to the days of open-door, mass immigration.

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# Subjects



## Europe Example Letter

People feel that the European Union is heading in a direction we never signed up to; that it's costing British taxpayers too much and that we have lost control of our own affairs. Conservatives feel the same way, and we are determined to do something about it.

Businesses value the single market, but find EU interference excessive. The British people see decisions being taken far away, rather than by their elected representatives in Parliament, and they worry that European rules have allowed people to claim benefits without ever working here. As a result, democratic consent for Britain's membership has worn wafer thin.

Conservatives have a credible plan to negotiate a new deal for Britain in the EU. This renegotiation will include cracking down on benefit tourism and tightening the rules for migrants, securing more trade, ensuring a greater role for national parliaments, and freeing the UK from the concept of 'ever closer union'.

We will put the outcome of this renegotiation to the British people in an in/out referendum by the end of 2017. This is a red-line for the Conservatives – David Cameron has made it clear that he won't be Prime Minister of a government unless it is committed to an in/out referendum. We have already introduced a legal 'referendum lock' to ensure no more power goes to Brussels without a referendum.

Our plan to renegotiate and improve our relationship with Europe is credible because we have a track record over the last five years of achieving positive change in Europe, even when sceptics told us we were bound to fail.

- When David Cameron was presented with an EU fiscal treaty which was not in Britain's interests, he vetoed it – the first time a British Prime Minister had ever taken that step.
- We secured a cut in the EU budget – the first one ever – saving British taxpayers over £8 billion.
- And we kept Britain out of the EU bailouts, so taxpayers' money was protected.

It is time we settled this question by negotiating the best deal we can get for Britain and then letting the British people have their say in a referendum. Only the Conservatives can and will deliver an in/out referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union: UKIP can't and Labour and the Liberal Democrats won't. A vote for any party other than the Conservatives puts at risk your chance to have a say.

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# Subjects

## NHS Example Letter



Conservatives believe the NHS is something to be valued, protected and improved – free at the point of use and based on need. We know that you can only have a strong NHS if you have a strong economy.

Since 2010, we have increased spending by £12.9 billion pounds, to provide world-class healthcare. We have hired thousands more clinical staff and reduced unnecessary management, to ensure better patient care. A&E departments can now handle more patients because there are 1,200 more A&E doctors. A&E departments see 2,000 more patients within the four waiting time targets daily than in 2010.

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But you can only have a properly-funded NHS if you have a strong economy. The Conservatives have a long-term plan to secure that stronger economy. A vote for any other party is a vote for the chaos of Ed Miliband as Prime Minister. He would put our economy and the funding of the NHS at risk – with patients paying the price. We need to stick with our plan for the future of our economy and NHS. This will help secure a better future for Britain – one where people can be confident that when they or their loved ones need it, our NHS will be there for them.

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# Subjects



## Planning Example Letter

Conservatives believe that local people are best placed to determine planning priorities and what development is appropriate for their areas. But under Labour top-down planning diktats and Regional Spatial Strategies imposed housing quotas on local communities and made it too easy for developers to get local objections overturned. This meant communities could do little to stop unwanted and inappropriate development in their areas.

Since 2010 we have taken action to abolish Labour's top-down diktats and targets and publish the National Planning Policy Framework, which sets out planning policy clearly and concisely. We also consolidated over 7,000 pages of planning practice guidance into a simple, online resource that everyone can access and read. This has created a truly locally-led planning system.

Local councils now set the planning policy for their areas through Local Plans which, provided they are up-to-date and meet the needs of the local area, prevent developers automatically appealing the decisions of councils and getting rulings overturned. This has put control over planning decisions back in the hands of the people who know and understand the needs of their area.

Through Neighbourhood Plans local communities can now draw up their own planning priorities and work out themselves how to meet the development needs of their area. The effect of these changes is to give people a bigger stake in the decisions that affect their community.

We have also worked to address some of the hostility to new development. Under Labour if new houses were built in an area the wider community saw little or no benefit. This gave them no incentive to welcome or approve these developments. But now, thanks to the Community Infrastructure Levy and the New Homes Bonus, the local council receives money for each new house that is built in an area which can be spent on improving local infrastructure, such as transport, roads or street lighting, building new schools or expanding local NHS services. By showing that new development can benefit the whole community we have made it more likely local residents will want to see that development take place.

This approach is working with 253,000 new homes in England given planning permission in 2014, the highest since 2008, while the number of planning appeals are down showing our changes have helped to increase house building and local support for development.

When people feel powerless to stop developments or influence decisions they will become disengaged from community life, feeling they can't make a difference. But by giving people the chance to have a say, we have encouraged more people to participate in their community, knowing that they can make a difference and won't simply be ignored.

Our changes to create a locally-led planning system have given power back to local residents to decide the future of their areas for themselves, not have it imposed on them by government, and given people back the feeling that they can make a difference in their community.

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# Subjects



## Greenbelt Example Letter

Conservatives are committed to maintaining the Green Belt and protecting it for future generations. It protects against urban sprawl and provides a green lung around our towns and cities.

However, under Labour the Green Belt was threatened. Their top-down Regional Strategies sought to abolish Green Belt protections in thirty different areas in order to meet housing targets imposed by Whitehall. If this had gone ahead, many other areas of Green Belt land would have had their protections removed as well.

Conservatives opposed these attempts to abolish Green Belt protections, which is why since 2010 we have worked to strengthen these protections. Through the National Planning Policy Framework and our new planning practice guidance, we have made it clear that nearly all types of development on Green Belt land are inappropriate, allowing councils to reject planning applications in the knowledge that national policy supports their decision.

We have made it clear that a need for housing in an area does not alone justify building on Green Belt land. In addition, planning guidance now states that traveller sites and waste facilities should not be built on Green Belt land, which has helped stop speculative planning applications by developers. Only in exceptional cases can Green Belt boundaries be adjusted – but this is a matter for local councils working with their local community.

Instead trying to build on Green Belt or green field sites, councils and developers must now do more to identify brownfield land and derelict sites and earmark them for redevelopment. The Government has released enough surplus and redundant public sector land since 2010 to build 103,000 new homes. In the next five years we will go even further by releasing enough land to build 150,000 new homes. This is in addition to the 200,000 new Starter Homes that we will deliver for young first-time buyers that will also be built on vacant, brownfield land.

This approach will deliver hundreds of thousands of new homes for hardworking taxpayers across the country and help to redevelop derelict and run-down sites which will improve the attractiveness and desirability of local areas.

Our changes to planning guidance and our focus on developing brownfield land is helping to protect and preserve our beautiful countryside and Green Belt land. This will mean that future generations can enjoy this precious resource while still being able to enjoy the security and peace of mind that comes from being able to find a home of their own.

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# Subjects

## Infrastructure Example Letter



Investing in our long-term infrastructure has been a vital part of our long-term economic plan to deliver a better future for Britain. We know that good infrastructure is a vital part of a successful economy as well as everyday life – but in previous years there has been insufficient investment from Government, so Britain has fallen behind.

Over the last five years we have been taking action to turn that around. We've prioritised infrastructure investment over day-to-day spending, and made sure we cut down on the inefficient and ineffective spending that gets in the way of investment. That has meant we've been able to reduce the deficit by a half, while at the same time we have increased investment in infrastructure. We've spent an average of £47 billion a year, up 15 per cent on the last parliament – with £460 billion future investment in the pipeline.

This includes investment in our energy infrastructure, so we ensure the lights stay on; in flood defences to keep communities safe; and in science and research, so that Britain can be a world leader, creating the high skilled jobs and growth our economy needs. These are all essential to keep our economy growing, so that more people can have the security of a good job, and those already in work can feel more secure in their job.

One of the areas which has been most in need of investment has been our transport infrastructure. We have funded the biggest investment in transport infrastructure since the Second World War – with more than £70 billion committed over the next five years. This money is going towards improving and maintaining our roads and railways, as well as delivering ambitious infrastructure like the new north-south rail line – the first new railway north from London in 120 years.

As part of this investment, we are resurfacing 80 per cent of our strategic roads, adding 1,300 lane miles of new road, and making improvements at over 60 junctions on the strategic road network. Through our investment in the railways – the biggest investment since the great Victorian railway boom – hundreds of miles of track will be electrified and new trains will be delivered on many lines, meaning faster, more regular, and more comfortable services for passengers.

The only way we can afford to keep making this much-needed investment is if we maintain a strong economy. That's why, with many risks to the recovery remaining, we need to stick to the Conservatives' long-term economic plan which is working and delivering growth in the economy. That way we can keep investing in infrastructure and backing businesses to create the jobs we need, so that everyone who wants the security of a job and a regular pay packet can have it. A vote for any other party would put all of this at risk.

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# Subjects



## Housing Example Letter

Picking up the keys to your own home is a moment which stays with you forever. Home is not just a place to live – it is a place where you can feel safe, bring up a family and put down roots in your community. Conservatives are the party of homeownership.

When we came to office in 2010, for many people owning a home of their own was a pipe dream. Thanks to Labour's Great Recession, house building had collapsed to its lowest level since the 1920s. Many people could afford mortgage repayments, but not the huge deposits demanded by lenders.

We were not willing to accept this, so we resolved to get Britain building again. This began by restarting housing developments where construction had stalled by giving builders the short-term finance they needed. £1.5 billion has been invested so far, which has helped to re-start construction on sites that will eventually deliver around 260,000 new homes.

We launched a £19.5 billion affordable homes programme to deliver 170,000 new affordable homes by 2015. Not only have we met this target, but overall, over 217,000 affordable homes have been delivered since 2010. We have also introduced new rules requiring councils to help people in their area who want to build their own home get the land they need to start building.

Simply building homes is not enough - we want people to be able to buy their own home. That is why in 2013 we launched Help to Buy. Using government guarantees and loans, people previously unable to afford the huge deposit for a house can now get an affordable mortgage with a 5 per cent deposit. This scheme has helped over 88,000 families get on the housing ladder.

Over 80 per cent of the homes purchased under the scheme have been bought by first-time buyers. The average price of the homes purchased under the scheme is well below the national average and 94 per cent of sales have been outside of London.

We have also reinvigorated Right to Buy. Labour did their best to undermine this Conservative policy, which has given millions of people the chance to own their own home. They cut the discounts available to tenants and allowed sales to collapse to only 3,100 in 2009/10. By contrast, in 2012 we increased the discounts to £75,000 (£100,000 in London) and now these discounts will rise in line with inflation each year. Since 2010, over 33,000 people have been able to buy their council house thanks to this policy.

Britain is now building homes faster than at any time since 2007, with over 700,000 new homes delivered since the end of 2009, and more first-time buyers than at any time since 2007. But we are not stopping there. The next Conservative Government will build 275,000 more affordable homes by 2020. And to create the next generation of home owners we will build 200,000 new Starter Homes for first-time buyers that will be 20 per cent cheaper than the market price, and extend the equity loan part of Help to Buy until 2020.

We believe that everyone who works hard deserves to be able to have a home of their own. Only the Conservatives have a long-term economic plan that is delivering a better future for Britain, with that and with it the security and peace of mind for families so they can plan for their future with confidence.

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# Subjects

## Fracking Example Letter



Shale gas represents a huge economic opportunity for the UK. According to Ernst and Young, shale gas could support 64,000 jobs. The benefits would extend beyond oil and gas to other manufacturing sectors – to construction, engineering and others. And because we want to make sure our young people have the skills needed to benefit from the opportunities from Shale we have co-funded with industry a new National College for Onshore Oil and Gas.

Shale gas could also support UK energy security. We have significant shale gas resources – with 1,300 trillion cubic feet in the north of England alone, according to the British Geological Survey. Based on a very conservative illustrative recovery rate of 7 per cent, this resource could meet over 30 years of UK gas demand.

Shale gas could help us in the low carbon transition. 9 out of 10 UK homes use gas central heating – and using UK gas rather than imported gas could mean lower emissions. The Committee on Climate Change has said that: ‘Given appropriate regulatory arrangements, and carefully targeted use, [shale] could bring economic benefits without adversely affecting the UK’s carbon footprint’.

We are committed to exploring shale gas’s potential safely and responsibly. The UK has over 50 years’ experience in regulating onshore oil and gas, with over 2000 onshore wells, and we are confident that the regulatory system will continue to provide robust protection for the environment.

We require planning permission and new environmental approvals for every separate phase of the extraction of shale gas: exploration; testing; and production. Companies will have to get planning permission and environmental permits, pass scrutiny by the Health and Safety Executive, get the Energy Department’s consent, have an Environmental Impact Assessment, and 12 months of monitoring before they can drill, and companies wanting to explore for and extract shale will have to use the best available technologies to monitor and minimise the emissions from producing shale gas. On top of that, we are committing to an outright ban on fracking in protected areas

We are also committed to supporting shale gas in a way that benefits local people. We have put in place a comprehensive community benefits package of at least 1 per cent of revenues from every single well, which could be a million pounds a year for a typical 10-well site.

By taking these steps we will ensure that the UK benefits from our natural resources, and the jobs and growth that they can bring, while also giving local communities the reassurance that all the necessary protections are in place, and that they will directly benefit from any exploration in their area. This is part of our long-term plan to secure a healthier economy and a better future for you, your family and Britain.

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# Subjects

## Child Care Example Letter



Conservatives want to see a society where opportunities are equal, regardless of background, and everyone has a chance to get on in life. For children, high-quality childcare has a lasting impact on their development and life chances. Parents want to know they can rely on their children being safely looked after while they go out to work or fulfil other caring responsibilities.

That's why over the last five years Conservatives have taken action to make more high-quality, affordable childcare available to families. Our measures have been aimed at taking some of the pressure off household budgets and helping families achieve peace of mind.

We know that parents also need to have confidence that their children are going to be safe and happy while they are being looked after, so improving the quality of childcare has been a priority. We are raising standards in the childcare profession by imposing more rigorous entry requirements, so parents can feel confident that their children are being well cared-for.

To help new mums and dads make the best choices for their families, we are introducing a new system of shared parental leave, which will allow parents of a new-born to take their time off work in up to three blocks, instead of all at once. Our offer has given parents a choice whether to go to work or stay at home and enabled fathers as well as mothers to be primary carers and take extended time out of work, giving families more flexibility.

Parents need strong, well-funded childcare provision so they can go out and work – and so work pays. Parents of all 3- and 4-year olds can now access free childcare for 15 hours a week; worth £2,400 to each family, as can over a quarter of a million 2-year-olds from low-income families. To help families make their money go that bit further, from autumn 2015 tax-free childcare will be available to nearly 2 million households. Under the scheme, for every 80p parents pay for childcare costs, the Government will top up an extra 20p.

As well as making childcare more affordable, we've taken steps to make it more widely available to parents. We are encouraging more schools to offer nursery provision and to open from 8am to 6pm. We have also made it easier for schools to teach children under three by getting rid of the requirement to register separately with Ofsted if they want to do that.

Good quality, affordable childcare provision that suits parents' needs is what everyone should have a right to expect. Conservatives understand this and have been working to a plan to make that a reality. But this can only be achieved by staying on the road to a stronger, healthier economy. Only the Conservatives have a clear economic plan, and the competent leadership to secure a better future for families.

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# Standard Issue Paragraphs **England**

## NHS

I believe the NHS should be valued and protected. It should be there for you and your family, free at the point of use, whenever you need it. A strong NHS needs a strong economy, and our plan for the economy means we have been able to protect the NHS budget this Parliament, increasing it by £12.9 billion. And in last year's Autumn Statement the Chancellor announced £2 billion of additional funding for frontline NHS services every year for England from 2015/16. We've cut the number of managers and increased the number of doctors by more than 9,000, so patients have access to a doctor when they need it. Hospital infection rates have halved and mixed sex wards have been virtually eradicated, ensuring people get high-quality care in our hospitals. Our £1 billion Cancer Drugs Fund, which Labour opposed, is giving tens of thousands of people access to potentially lifesaving treatments. In the next Parliament, a Conservative government will increase spending in every year in real terms and will also ensure everyone can see a GP seven days a week by 2020. This will help secure a better future for Britain – where people can be confident that when they or their loved ones need it, our NHS will be there for them.

## Welfare

The Conservatives are ending the something-for-nothing culture created by Labour and building a welfare system that provides a safety net for those in need, while rewarding the willingness to work. We've capped benefits to reward work – so that no out-of-work household can receive more than the average family earns in work. This includes housing benefit to stop unlimited pay-outs. We are rolling out Universal Credit – a new, single system of means-tested support for working age people who are in or out of work. It will make sure that people are better off in work by making sure work always pays more than benefits. While Labour let down those who play by the rules, we're creating a welfare system that's on the side of hardworking taxpayers.

## Helping hardworking taxpayers

We are doing all we can to help hardworking taxpayers provide for themselves and their families. Our increases to the personal allowance means the typical taxpayer is now paying £825 less income tax than in 2010 because we have lifted the threshold at which people pay income tax. More than 26 million people have benefitted from tax cuts, with 3 million of the lowest paid people taken out of income tax altogether – helping hardworking taxpayers to be more financially secure. And we've announced a future Conservative government would go even further – raising the personal allowance to £12,500 and the higher rate threshold to £50,000. As a down payment on that commitment we increased the personal allowance to £10,600 this April – this time passing the benefit on in full to higher rate taxpayers. And as announced at the recent Budget it will rise further to £10,800 in 2016 and £11,000 in 2017 – with the higher rate threshold rising above inflation too. We're also having the longest fuel duty freeze in over 20 years, saving you around £10 every time you fill up your car. Meanwhile, we have increased the amount of free childcare available to 3 and 4 year olds from 12.5 to 15 hours, and from autumn this year families with two children under 12 will be able to save up to £4,000 on their childcare bills with our Tax-free Childcare scheme. We've also offered funding to councils so they have the power to freeze council tax and avoid the huge increases seen under Labour. All these measures mean that hardworking taxpayers are more financially secure and have more to spend on the things that matter.

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# Paragraphs England

## EU

Only the Conservatives are committed to renegotiating Britain's membership of the EU and then holding a referendum with a clear choice: to stay in or come out. We've already taken action to stand up for Britain in Europe by:

- Vetoing an EU Fiscal Treaty because it wasn't in Britain's interests;
- Securing the first real-terms cut to the EU budget to protect British taxpayers;
- Refusing to spend British taxes bailing out the euro.

We've delivered for Britain and we will now go further by renegotiating our membership of the EU and then giving the British people their say in an in-out referendum by the end of 2017.

## Childcare

The wellbeing of our children is so important. Labour left parents facing childcare costs that were too high. But the Conservatives are doing all we can to help hardworking taxpayers. We've increased early education for 3 and 4 year-olds from 12.5 hours a week to 15 hours a week and we are introducing tax-free childcare – saving a family with two children under 12 up to £4,000 a year - from autumn next year. We want families to have a choice of affordable, high-quality childcare and we're committed to giving you that choice.

## Apprenticeships

The Conservatives are delivering the best skills for young people so the next generation can succeed in the global race. We have created over 2.2 million apprenticeships so young people can learn a trade and get on in life, and have announced plans to deliver 3 million more by the end of the next parliament. To back that up we are abolishing employer national insurance contributions on apprentices aged under 25 from April 2016. We're also rolling out new degree apprenticeships which combine the academic study of a degree with practical experience of high-skilled jobs so apprentices can earn a bachelor's or even master's degree because it's vital that the next generation has the chance to fulfil their potential. By standing up for young people, we're securing a better future for Britain.

## Schools

The Conservatives are delivering the best schools so the next generation can get on in life. We're raising standards in GCSEs and A-Levels and ensuring more young people study the core subjects they need to get a good job. And we've restored rigour in the curriculum to ensure our exams command the respect of universities and employers. We have record levels of top graduates becoming teachers and one million more children being taught in good or outstanding schools than in 2010. We're committed to building a Britain that gives every child the best start in life. That's what every parent wants and every child deserves.

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# Paragraphs England

## Immigration

Under Labour our borders were badly managed, net migration increased more than five-fold and 2.5 million more people came to this country than left. Uncontrolled immigration puts pressure on our public services, affects social cohesion, and can keep wages down. That's why controlling immigration is a key part of our long-term economic plan. We have strengthened the rules for immigrations coming from outside the EU, shut down hundreds of bogus colleges, and changed the law to make it harder for illegal immigrants to remain in the country. But we know more needs to be done. A future Conservative government will go further and renegotiate to reform the EU and Britain's relationship with it – and will deliver the toughest system on welfare for EU migrants anywhere in Europe. EU job seekers will not be supported by UK taxpayers. EU workers will not get in-work benefits or social housing until they have been here for four years – and they will not get child benefits and tax credits for children living elsewhere in Europe. We also need to make sure people who come here on time-limited visas leave at the end of their visa. Our Immigration Act makes it tougher for illegal immigrants to remain in the UK, and introducing exit checks will help us to ensure that people leave the country when their visas have expired. We want an immigration system that is fair to the British people and legitimate migrants, and tough on those who flout the rules.

## Tax

The Conservatives are cutting tax to create jobs and help hardworking taxpayers feel more financially secure. We're cutting income tax for over 26 million people, taking over three million of the lowest earners out of income tax altogether and putting money back in people's pockets. We've also announced a future Conservative government would go further, raising the personal allowance to £12,500, and the higher rate threshold to £50,000, so that people can keep more of the money they earn and be more financially secure. As a downpayment on that commitment we increased the personal allowance to £10,600 this April – this time passing the benefit on in full to higher rate taxpayers. And as announced at the recent Budget it will rise further to £10,800 in 2016 and £11,000 in 2017 – with the higher rate threshold rising above inflation too. As well as income tax we've cut the jobs tax too – saving business owners up to £2,000 and helping them take on more people. We've also cut corporation tax to 20 per cent – the lowest rate of any major economy in the world. At the same time, the richest are making the biggest contributions to cutting the deficit, with the top 1 per cent of earners paying more income tax than under Labour.

## Making work pay

The Conservatives are changing our welfare system so it provides a safety net for those in need while rewarding the willingness to work. We've capped benefits so that no out-of-work household receives more in benefits than the average family earns in work. We're also ensuring most working-age benefits and tax credits don't increase faster than wages. Our plan is ending the something-for-nothing culture created by Labour – who still don't get it and oppose all of these vital changes.

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# Paragraphs England

## Greenest Government Ever

The Conservatives pledged to be the greenest government ever and we're delivering on that pledge. We have insulated 1 million homes, supported the planting of 8 million trees, cut carbon emissions and created green jobs. We've taken action to support green businesses by starting the world's first Green Investment Bank – supporting green jobs and giving the security of a regular income to thousands in Britain. Our reforms of the energy market are providing new financial support for low carbon energy. And there are now a million people living in homes with solar panels on the roof. Allowing our country to have power that is cleaner and more affordable will ensure hardworking people have the peace of mind that comes from greater financial security.

## Elderly

People who have worked hard and done the right thing all their working lives deserve security and peace of mind in retirement. We've introduced the Triple Lock to protect the Basic State Pension – ensuring pensions rise every year in line with wages, prices or by 2.5%, whichever is highest. The Triple Lock has helped deliver the biggest cash rise in the Basic State Pension ever, increasing the annual pension by £950 since 2010. We're also ending the unfairness of people having to sell their homes in their lifetime to pay for their care in old age – capping the cost of care and giving people the right to defer payment. The Conservatives are committed to protecting pensioners and giving people security in retirement.

## Crime

Under Labour the police were getting bogged down in too much paperwork, often leaving the victims of crime second and cases not dealt with. The public didn't feel safe on the streets. That's why we're making Britain an even safer place to live, work, and raise a family with our action plan to tackle crime. Crime is down by more than a fifth – to its lowest level on record – thanks to our plan, and the hard work of police officers. Families are safer and more secure – and communities can enjoy a better, brighter future.

## Jobs

By backing businesses with better infrastructure and lower jobs taxes as part of our long-term economic plan, there are now 1.9 million more people in work than in 2010. That means more people taking home a pay packet and providing for their families. Since 2010 the private sector has created over 2.3 million new jobs, with businesses helping to drive our recovery. However, we realise there's still more to do. That's why we've introduced the largest welfare to work programme since the 1930s and will continue to give jobseekers all the help they need.

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# Paragraphs England

## Deficit

Labour left Britain with the biggest deficit in our peacetime history. But by making realistic assessments, and taking the long term decisions, the Conservatives have reduced the deficit by a half as a share of national income this year. And as the latest figures from the Office for Budget Responsibility show we will end this parliament with debt as a share of the economy starting to fall. Dealing with our debts is essential to help keep mortgage rates low. Labour's plans for more spending, more borrowing and more debt would burden families with higher taxes and higher mortgage rates, making people less financially secure, and leaving our children with more debt than they can ever pay. Our plan to reduce Labour's deficit is working and building a stronger, healthier economy for our children's future.

## Universities

The Conservatives have changed how universities are funded to ensure they can succeed in the future. The new system is fairer because it's better-off graduates, not ordinary taxpayers, who bear the burden of funding their tuition. Graduates won't have to pay anything back until they are earning over £21,000 a year and monthly payments are less than they were before. At the same time we're ensuring that universities widen access to higher education by increasing scholarship grants for less advantaged students. And we're giving more help for post-graduate students too - making government-backed loans available for the first time ever from next year.

## Housing

The Conservatives are backing hardworking taxpayers who want to achieve their dream of owning their own home. Our Help to Buy schemes are helping those who can afford mortgage payments but not a huge deposit onto the housing ladder. Already these schemes have helped over 88,000 families to buy their own home, the majority of them first-time buyers. We are now going further to help first-time buyers by introducing new Help to Buy ISA's, which will help people to get the money together they need for a deposit for a house, and will deliver 200,000 new starter homes that will be 20 per cent cheaper than the market price and reserved only for first-time buyers under the age of 40. We have already delivered over 700,000 new homes since the end of 2009, including nearly 217,000 new affordable homes while house building is at its highest level since 2007. To all those who want to buy their own home and get on in life - the Conservatives are on your side.

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# Standard Issue Paragraphs **Wales**

## NHS

I believe the NHS should be valued and protected. It should be there for you and your family, free at the point of use, whenever you need it. Unlike in Wales, where Labour runs the NHS and has cut spending on it, the Conservatives in England are making the NHS more efficient and effective whilst also increasing investment by £12.9 billion this Parliament. We've cut the number of managers and increased the number of doctors, so patients have access to a doctor when they need it. Hospital infection rates have halved and mixed sex wards been virtually eradicated, ensuring people get high-quality care in our hospitals. The £1 billion Cancer Drugs Fund in England is giving tens of thousands of people access to potentially lifesaving treatments and it is shameful that Welsh Labour are against introducing a similar fund in Wales. The Conservatives are standing up for the NHS so people can be confident that when they or their loved ones need it, our NHS will be there for them.

## Childcare

The wellbeing of our children is so important. Labour left parents facing childcare costs that were too high. But the Conservatives will stand up for families by improving the quality of childcare and giving parents more choice. Families in Wales will benefit from our tax-free childcare policy as we work to make childcare more affordable, providing financial security for parents.

## Skills

The Conservatives are fighting to deliver the best skills for young people so the next generation can succeed in the global race. We will work with businesses, schools, colleges and universities to ensure future generations meet the growing demands of industry and give our country the competitive edge. By standing up for young people, we will secure a better future for Wales.

## Schools

The Conservatives are fighting to deliver the best schools so the next generation can succeed in the global race. We want every child to realise their potential and every teacher to have the freedom to take decisions about what is best for their pupils. In Wales Labour is in charge of education and international rankings show the Welsh education system is the worst in the UK. In England we will encourage the very best graduates and professionals to become teachers and restore rigour into the curriculum to ensure our exams command the respect of universities and employers. Above all, we're committed to helping children get the best start in life. That's what every parent wants and every child deserves.

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# Paragraphs Wales

## Universities

The Conservatives want to improve standards in education, establish world-class universities and give students every chance to succeed in life. We're committed to ensuring university fees are no barrier to young people fulfilling their potential. In England we have introduced a fair and affordable system, which balances the importance of well-funded universities with the needs of students. In Wales Labour are in charge of education and their policy on subsidising university tuition fees has failed to support Welsh universities at significant cost to the taxpayer.

## Housing

The Conservatives are backing hardworking taxpayers who want to achieve their dream of owning their own home. Wales is benefiting from the Mortgage Guarantee part of our Help to Buy scheme which is helping those who can afford mortgage payments but not a huge deposit onto the housing ladder. Since this part of Help to Buy was launched, over 40,000 families, the majority first-time buyers, have been able to get onto the housing ladder and thousands of others have applied for an affordable mortgage. We will now go further to help first-time buyers by introducing new Help to Buy ISA's, which will help people to get the money together they need for a deposit for a house. To all those who want to buy their own home and get on in life – the Conservatives are on your side.

## Greenest Government Ever

The Conservatives recognise our responsibility to the environment and our commitment to tackle climate change. We also know that the views of local communities cannot be ignored if we are to develop renewable energy and technologies. Politicians and businesses should work with local people, not against them, as we grow the green economy. We've taken action to support green businesses by establishing the world's first Green Investment Bank, while our reforms to the energy market will allow Britain to have power that is cleaner and more affordable.

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# Further Help & Advice

If you have any questions on how to use any of these items please contact  
**[GEPack@conservatives.com](mailto:GEPack@conservatives.com)**



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