

## WEEK IN WESTMINSTER

Week ending Friday 17 April

### General Election Manifestos unveiled

With the next General Election just weeks away (Thursday 7 May), most of the political parties released their manifestos this week. Whilst tax, spending, education and Europe are the key themes of the Conservative manifesto, the Labour party focuses on the NHS and education and inequality and the Liberal Democrats concentrate on Health, spending, policing and education. An outline of the parties' manifestos is below. The main thrust of UKIP's manifesto remains withdrawal from the European Union and tighter immigration controls and the Green Party's central focus promises an end to austerity and to bring about a more equal, democratic and humane society. It also puts tackling climate change and fuel poverty at the heart of the party's agenda. (Source: Guardian, BBC)

<http://www.theguardian.com/politics/manifestos-2015>



### Conservative Party Manifesto

The key themes in the Conservative manifesto revolve around tax, spending, education and Europe. Key points from the manifesto include:

- Lift the cap on university places
- No raise in VAT, national insurance or income tax
- Negotiate new rules with the EU to regulate immigration from the EU
- Hold an in/out referendum on Britain's membership of the EU before the end of 2017
- Continue to work with the Automotive Council and create more R&D hubs in the future

(Source: Conservative Party)

<https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto>

### Liberal Democrats Manifesto

The Liberal Democrats unveiled their party's manifesto this week. Key announcements include:

- A Zero Carbon Britain Act to set a new legally binding target to bring greenhouse emissions to zero by 2050
- Establish a National Air Quality Plan and a legal requirement to create Low Emission Zones
- Reform Vehicle Excise Duty, including the introduction of separate banding for new diesel cars
- £500m investment package to promote Ultra Low Emission vehicles
- Work to deepen the EU single market in the energy sector, the digital economy and for services
- Support EU free movement
- Double innovation spend in UK economy, making the UK a world leader in advanced manufacturing, clean technology and digital industries

(Source: Liberal Democrats)

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/libdems/pages/8907/attachments/original/1429028133/Liberal\\_Democrat\\_General\\_Election\\_Manifesto\\_2015.pdf?1429028133](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/libdems/pages/8907/attachments/original/1429028133/Liberal_Democrat_General_Election_Manifesto_2015.pdf?1429028133)

### Labour Party Manifesto

Ed Miliband launched his party's manifesto called 'Britain can be better' this week. Key aspects include:

- Cutting the deficit each year, combined with strong, fair fiscal rules
- Increase the minimum wage to more than £8 by October 2019
- Cut and freeze business rates
- Work to reform the EU, and regain a British leadership role
- Push for ambitious targets in Paris to reach the goal of net zero global emissions
- Give local authorities the powers to deal with problems of air pollution
- New long-term funding policy framework for science and innovation

(Source: Labour Party)

[http://b.3cdn.net/labouruk/e1d45da42456423b8c\\_vw\\_m6brbvb.pdf](http://b.3cdn.net/labouruk/e1d45da42456423b8c_vw_m6brbvb.pdf)

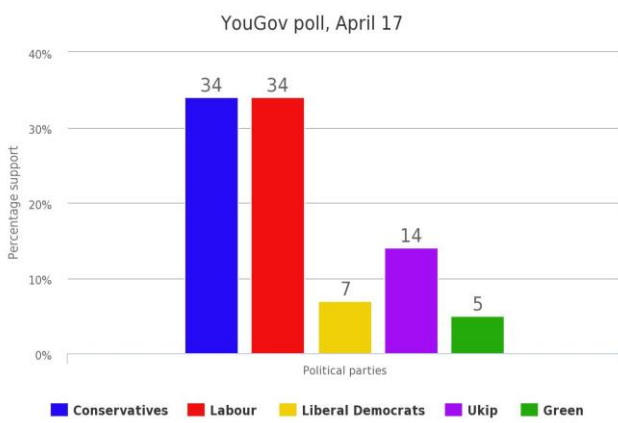
## BBC Challengers' election debate

With Conservative leader David Cameron and Liberal Democrat Nick Clegg absent, Ed Miliband and Nigel Farage joined Green Party, SNP and Plaid Cymru opposition leaders in the challengers' debate taking questions from a live TV audience. The SNP leader said she wanted a "progressive" alliance with Plaid Cymru's Leanne Wood and Green Party leader Natalie Bennett. Ed Miliband, Labour leader, said he intended to win a majority and would not form a coalition with the SNP. Nigel Farage also clashed with Ed Miliband in the BBC election debate. During the 90-minute programme the Labour leader faced repeated calls from Nicola Sturgeon and Leanne Wood to reject austerity and form a "progressive" alliance with their parties and the Greens to keep the Conservatives out of government. The debate finished with Ed Miliband issuing a direct challenge to David Cameron to take part in a debate with him. The Labour leader came out on top in a snap poll. In a survey of 1,013 viewers conducted by Survation for the Daily Mirror, 35% judged Mr Miliband to be the winner, against 31% for Ms Sturgeon, 27% for Mr Farage, 5% for Ms Bennett and 2% for Ms Wood. (Source: BBC)

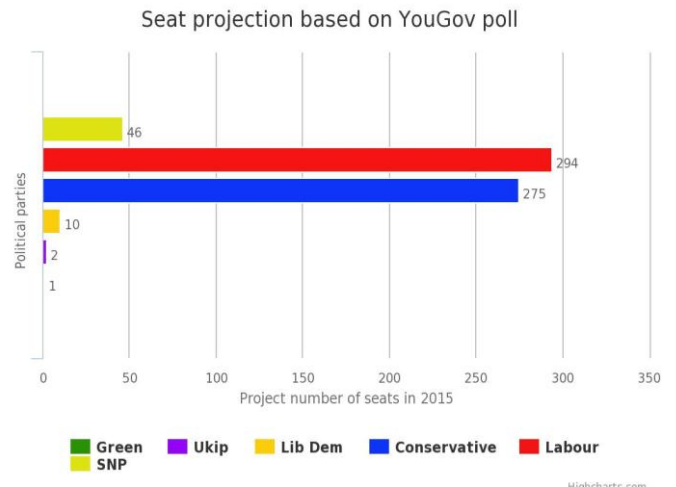
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2015-32328664>

## Latest Poll – Labour and Tories tied

Labour and the Conservatives are neck-and-neck on 34 per cent in today's latest YouGov poll. The poll was, however, taken before the TV debate which a Survation poll suggested Ed Miliband was the winner of.



If this poll is replicated on May 7, the Electoral Calculus seat projector predicts the following results - Labour would be the largest party but would still be well short of a majority:



(Source: The Telegraph)

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/general-election-2015/11544057/New-poll-on-April-17-Who-will-win-the-General-Election.html>

## SMMT – Record quarter for new CV registrations

The success of the UK's booming commercial vehicle sector was celebrated at this week's Commercial Vehicle Show, as the latest SMMT figures reveal a record high for van and truck registrations. 108,456 vans and trucks were registered between January and March 2015 – the best quarter on record – as businesses return to the market in their droves. The latest registration figures come as a huge boost to the sector which suffered badly during the recession. In 2009, just 221,132 CVs were registered – down from 388,488 in 2007. The past 12 months have seen 384,120 registrations, and demand is expected to remain strong in the months ahead. The recent surge in registrations reflects an upturn in UK economic confidence.

(Source: SMMT)

<http://www.smmt.co.uk/2015/04/record-quarter-for-new-commercial-vehicle-registrations-as-uk-business-confidence-soars/>

## Week ahead

**The new Parliament will meet on 18 May**  
**Queens Speech: 27 May**