

# My vision to rebuild trust

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*Labour's new leader Ed Miliband pledges to regain the support of families and Middle Britain and to learn from the party's past mistakes*

Yesterday the Labour Party committed to start the long journey back to power.

A new generation was entrusted with transforming our party and making sure that, once again, we stand up for the interests of families across Britain. We have a lot of ground to make up if we are to rebuild the broad coalition of support that swept us to power in 1997.

Our journey will be hard and it will take time. To succeed we will need to do three things.

We will need to learn the right lessons about our record in government; we will need to be a responsible opposition and we will need to set out a constructive alternative to the Government.

I am proud of much that we achieved in office, but I am not someone who thinks that we have to defend every step we took. We made mistakes. We have to acknowledge them if we are to move on and address the challenges of the future.

As I crisscrossed the country during the four months of the leadership election, talking to mums and dads, small business owners and business

leaders, students and pensioners, I heard a lot about why our party lost trust. People found themselves working harder than ever but it became no easier to get by. They wanted their children to have better opportunities than they enjoyed, but were stung by tuition fees and the lack of affordable housing for first-time buyers.

They played by the rules, but did not feel that society rewarded responsibility and were anxious about immigration.

They wanted a government that would stand up for Britain, but when it came to Iraq – the defining foreign policy test of our time in office – they lost trust in us.

We need to accept the mistakes we made in these areas and show that we have changed. We must never again lose touch with the mainstream of our country.

The second task facing us is to be a responsible opposition.

It is essential for our democracy that this Government is held to account for its actions.

But I will do that in a way that doesn't fall into the trap of opportunism. On the deficit, we will not oppose every cut. After years of expansion that transformed our public services from the days of leaky roofs and portable cabin classrooms, our public services will now need to learn to do more with less.

But, that does not mean simply swallowing the programme of cuts the Government is setting out.

It is not just that too often they penalise people who had no hand in causing the crisis, while protecting those that did. It is also that the wrong cuts at the wrong time will put recovery at risk.

It is faulty economics to scrap school building projects and put construction workers out of a job at time when the industry is struggling.

It is faulty economics to scrap government loans to British businesses that can create manufacturing jobs in the industries of the future.

This approach is dangerous for our country and it is important that we make that case.

As well as setting out an alternative when the Government gets it wrong, we will support it when it is right.

That is the approach I have taken through this leadership campaign, supporting the Government's timetable in Afghanistan, Ken Clarke's proposals on crime and Vince Cable in his battle to do away with tuition fees. To move on, we will do more than just acknowledge our errors and provide a constructive opposition.

We will set out our plans for the future so we provide a constructive alternative to the Government. This will take time, but is a core part of showing that we are a government in waiting.

We will set out a new approach to aspiration that boosts the availability of housing and addresses students' concerns about debt by replacing tuition fees.

A new approach to society that protects the things we value in our communities that free-market Conservatism places no

value on. A new approach to

equality that will help forge a less divided Britain. But make no mistake: I do not intend to be the leader of the Opposition for a day more than is necessary.

My aim is to show that our party is on the side of the squeezed middle in our country and everyone who has worked hard and wants to get on. My aim is to return our party to power. This is a tough challenge. It is a long journey. But our party has made the first step in electing a leader from a new generation.

It is now down to me to make the change happen. That is a challenge I relish.