

THE INDEPENDENT GROUP

Statement of Independence

We are leaving the Labour Party to sit as the Independent Group of Members of Parliament.

Our primary duty as Members of Parliament is to put the best interests of our constituents and our country first. Yet like so many others, we believe that none of today's political parties are fit to provide the leadership and direction needed by our country.

Our aim is to pursue policies that are evidence-based, not led by ideology, taking a long-term perspective to the challenges of the 21st century in the national interest, rather than locked in the old politics of the 20th century in the party's interests.

As an Independent Group we aim to recognise the value of healthy debate, show tolerance towards different opinions and seek to reach across outdated divides and build consensus to tackle Britain's problems.

Our values

We believe:

- Ours is a great country of which people are rightly proud, where the first duty of government must be to defend its people and do whatever it takes to safeguard Britain's national security.
- Britain works best as a diverse, mixed social market economy, in which well-regulated private enterprise can reward aspiration and drive economic progress and where government has the responsibility to ensure the sound stewardship of taxpayer's money and a stable, fair and balanced economy.
- A strong economy means we can invest in our public services. We believe the collective provision of public services and the NHS can be delivered through government action, improving health and educational life chances, protecting the public, safeguarding the vulnerable, ensuring dignity at every stage of life and placing individuals at the heart of decision-making.
- The people of this country have the ability to create fairer, more prosperous communities for present and future generations. We believe that this creativity is best realised in a society which fosters individual freedom and supports all families.
- The barriers of poverty, prejudice and discrimination facing individuals should be removed and advancement occur on the basis of merit, with inequalities reduced through the extension of opportunity, giving individuals the skills and means to open new doors and fulfil their ambitions.
- Individuals are capable of taking responsibility if opportunities are offered to them, everybody can and should make a contribution to society and that contribution should be recognised. Paid work should be secure and pay should be fair.

- Our free media, the rule of law, and our open, tolerant and respectful democratic society should be cherished and renewed.
- We believe that our parliamentary democracy in which our elected representatives deliberate, decide and provide leadership, held accountable by their whole electorate is the best system of representing the views of the British people.
- In order to face the challenges and opportunities presented by globalisation, migration and technological advances, we believe the multilateral, international rules-based order must be strengthened and reformed. We believe in maintaining strong alliances with our closest European and international allies on trade, regulation, defence, security and counter-terrorism.
- As part of the global community we have a responsibility to future generations to protect our environment, safeguard the planet, plan development sustainably and to act on the urgency of climate change.
- Power should be devolved to the most appropriate level, trusting and involving local communities. More powers and representation should be given to local government to act in the best interests of their communities.

The Independent Group of MPs

Each of us has dedicated decades to the progressive values that were once held true by Labour, values which have since been abandoned by today's Labour Party.

Labour now pursues policies that would weaken our national security; accepts the narratives of states hostile to our country; has failed to take a lead in addressing the challenge of Brexit and to provide a strong and coherent alternative to the Conservatives' approach; is passive in circumstances of international humanitarian distress; is hostile to businesses large and small; and threatens to destabilise the British economy in pursuit of ideological objectives.

For a Party that once committed to pursue a spirit of solidarity, tolerance and respect, it has changed beyond recognition. Today, visceral hatreds of other people, views and opinions are common-place in and around the Labour Party.

It is not simply that our values are no longer welcome in the Labour Party; the values we hold mean that, in all conscience, we can have no confidence in the Party's collective leadership, competence or culture.

To fix our broken politics, we are clear that we want to develop a different approach. We recognise that every member of our group has the right to be heard and a duty to lead. We commit to support each other and treat each other with respect.

Sitting as the Independent Group of MPs we appeal to colleagues from all parties to consider the best interests of the country above short-term party-political considerations and choose to do likewise.

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