



## What should a new government do? Ten points for a Social Renaissance

At Participle, we believe that public services must provide new ways for people to shape their lives in a more meaningful way. We work with and for the public to make this happen. The current system isn't working. It is both failing to support people and failing to address the major issues of modern society. This has little to do with money – most of our solutions are cheaper. Check out [www.participle.net](http://www.participle.net) to see how we are doing this.

Working with the public means that we have lived for six months on council estates to spend time with 'families in chronic crisis.' We spent most of 2007 intensively living and experiencing the lives of over 250 older people in South London. We have also spent six months living through the lives of over 60 young people. Through working in this unique way, immersing ourselves in some of the biggest issues of our time, we are fortunate to receive unique insights into particular parts of the population.

Those who have seen our work have asked, what should a new government do to allow these bottom up, low cost approaches to flourish nationally. Here are our 10 points for a Social Renaissance:

1. **Invest in system changing innovation** – We must move from 'invest to save' to 'innovate to save.' We need bold, disruptive innovation that is focused, sustainable, tested and always designed with the national picture in mind. Embed a competitive model to develop an investment programme that develops the next generation of public services within 5 years. Small scale one off investments and innovation units do not deliver systemic change. Develop a structured investment strategy with those who have a proven track record - significant investment with a cut off strategy for those who fail to deliver.
2. **Set clear positive goals** – We must move from a deficit model that seeks to avoid risk to a vision of positive outcomes. People need a sense of possibility and something to grow into. This sounds deceptively simple yet all our current goals are set with reference to the current system and its failings, not with reference to people's lives and their desire for positive change.
3. **Measure social change not things** - Integrate measurement with the vision and the goals: focus on positive indicators of capability and wellbeing, as opposed to so many current negative indicators that measure risk. Develop robust qualitative measures, that if not met, re-adjust the system to avoid it happening again. Social Britain will not be realised if measured through an emphasis on economic frameworks alone.
4. **Outsource appropriately** – Trust the people to be more appropriately involved in being part of the solution. Community energy is alive in Britain, as we have seen through our solutions to the 'ageing crisis' (Circle) and the commitment to help young people thrive that powers our youth service (Loops). Social change is largely about trust and confidence. A political narrative is needed to generate a wave of confidence

that we can change things: that everyone is included, that they have real options and that they matter.

5. **Generate collective capacity** - Embrace a broader set of ideas around problem solving – and a broader set of actors. We need new solutions and many will come from the margins and from communities too small to be embraced by current approaches. Deep participation is needed to create new outcomes and it starts by engaging with people's lives and harnessing networks as much as individuals.
6. **Roll Back the Frameworks** - As a rule, public service workers and citizens are trapped in bureaucratic systems that work against transparent, caring human interaction for example child protection frameworks and health and safety legislation. This will require both concrete action and a national conversation about how we might do things differently and why it matters. It will ultimately save a lot of money.
7. **Support the Front Line** – The 'average person on the street' engages with the state and government through doctors, nurses, carers, social workers, teachers and the police – the front line. They are not just the eyes and ears, but the mind and heart of the state. Front line workers need real pay and emotional support – fostering change means the time, space and support to develop transformative relationships. It's not just about 'doing your job,' or being fobbed off by the trappings of professionalism. Release them.
8. **Re-direct investment, Re-think resources** - Allow local authorities and communities to integrate budgets around goals, which will generate more value from existing resources. Encourage the combination of human, financial and community resource. Develop an 80:20 rule that ensures 80 percent of any investment is spent directly at the front line or community level – think World Bank social investment funds, not New Deal for Communities.
9. **Vary the Timescales** – We need a varied approach that simultaneously builds the foundations of and the 'buds that bloom' the Social Renaissance, and allows the existing buds to bloom. Some issues, such as the 'ageing crisis', we can address relatively quickly, in comparison, helping the 150,000 'families in chronic crisis' is a longer term project. We know that generally, developing a robust collective capacity will take a generation.
10. **The Equality Principle** – We know that equality is key. There is a clear correlation between income inequality and social glue. Britain is one of the most unequal societies in the world. No amount of disruptive innovation, re-imagining of the state or growth of social entrepreneurs can deliver a Social Renaissance within a context of deepening inequality. The Equality Principle must be placed at the heart of every major system change initiative.

The next administration needs to develop a dynamic model of change. Participle is here to help.

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