

# A Conservative Majority Government – The First 100 Days

*The Conservatives have now been in power with an overall majority for just over 100 days following their unexpected victory in this year's General Election. The Whitehouse Consultancy has analysed what areas policy the Government has focused on since May, what progress it has made on its manifesto pledges, and where it still has more to do.*



A little progress made



Some progress made



Substantial progress made



## EU Policy

The Government was quick off the mark in getting the EU Referendum Bill presented to Parliament, with David Cameron also embarking on a tour of Europe to discuss the UK's demands with European leaders. Progress has been hampered by the summer holidays and the Greek crisis dominating the last EU summits. A good and speedy start – but definitely more developments to come over the autumn.

**Elias Papadopoulos**



## Public Health

The Government has announced that it is already working on a strategy to combat adult and childhood obesity, to be unveiled in the autumn by the Prime Minister. Amidst increasing pressure for legislative solutions – a 'sugar tax' in particular – the Government may be tempted to move away from the Coalition's approach of asking big food and drink companies to voluntarily make their products healthier. As with almost every other policy area being looked at, there's the money question: where will the cash come from to help those two thirds of people who are already overweight lose some of that weight?

**Sam Blainey**



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## NHS

It was no coincidence that David Cameron choose to focus on the health service in his first speech as Prime Minister, trying to put to bed Labour's declared status as the party of the NHS. Early successes in this parliament include the introduction of agency staff spending limits and the merger of Monitor and the NHS Trust Development Authority. However, a £200m cut to the public health budget has been widely seen as short-sighted. With £22bn of efficiencies still to be achieved and a ballooning NHS deficit, the focus will now be one of financial control.

**Declan Mullaney**



## Defence

The big news has been George Osborne's commitment to meet the NATO target of spending 2% of GDP on defence. However, critics, including the new Defence Select Committee Chairman, Dr Julian Lewis, have been quick to warn this announcement smacks of creative accounting, with the target only being reached by including spending on intelligence services. Meanwhile, recruitment for the Army Reserves has failed to meet expectations. The Government will publish its Strategic Defence and Security Review in the autumn, and will face hard questions about how the UK continues to secure itself at home while projecting power abroad.

**Chris Rogers**



## Pension Reform

Following reforms introduced in 2014 which gave people greater control over how they chose to spend their savings, the Government launched a review to examine how the financial advice market could work better for consumers. It has also extended the Pension Wise service to allow people to get advice earlier on, and removed the waiting period for appointments. The Government has been keen to show that it is on the side of consumers, highlighted through the appointment of Ros Altmann as the new Pensions Minister.

**Julia Ogiehor**



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## Energy & Environment

The Government has announced measures to accelerate the development of shale gas in the UK, removing decision making powers from local councils that take longer than 16 weeks to rule on oil and gas permit applications. Early changes to the Renewables Obligation for onshore wind were widely expected, while Ministers have introduced an Energy Bill through the House of Lords. Through the legislation, the Government will formally establish the Oil & Gas Authority as an independent regulatory body. However, there is still a huge amount of policy uncertainty, with mixed messages being sent over the future of nuclear in the UK, delays to the planned Contracts for Difference auction in October, and a decision to axe energy efficiency measures without lining up a replacement.

**Robert Ede**



## Education

Education Secretary Nicky Morgan has said she has no desire to provoke the level of policy upheaval seen during the Coalition Government. In the run-up to the election, the Conservatives pledged to protect funding per pupil in cash terms in schools over this parliament, and confirmation of pre-election intentions for schools spending and exact details of wider education spending plans are expected in the Spending Review this autumn. The Education and Adoption Bill represents the Government's flagship initiative, making it easier to turn schools into academies. Ministers' ambitions for vocational education is likely to be realised through the yet-to-be-published Enterprise Bill. A key focus will be on increasing the value of apprenticeships. Finally, the Schools Minister Nick Gibb has stated that he has asked civil servants to draw up plans for a new wave of reform. This could include scrapping the independent exam boards which currently compete for the £300m school exams market by setting rival A-level and GCSE papers.

**Rowan Allport**



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