



# Our Vision for Britain

## Who we are

ResPublica is an independent non-partisan think tank based in Westminster that seeks to establish a new economic, social and cultural settlement for the United Kingdom. Our interventions in public policy and public debate have been decisive, and our ideas have been adopted by politicians of all parties.

## What we believe

We believe in the common good and the development of real wealth that promotes both social and economic flourishing. To combat the concentration of wealth and power in the UK, we work for the greater distribution of agency and ownership. In order to heal the country's social wounds, we seek the ties that bind and the policy that will rebuild and rectify. To mend our cultural rifts, we work to encourage a recovery of the codes that share virtue and values for all people.

## How we achieve it

For the next three years, all of our work – which includes thought leadership and policy innovation, communicated via our reports, events, commentary and multi-media – will be based on our three founding principles: Society, Prosperity and Virtue.

[www.respublica.org.uk](http://www.respublica.org.uk)



## Society

The UK has one of the most centralised states in the developed world and one of the more disaffected and politically estranged populations in Europe. We hold our leaders in contempt, but despair of doing anything for ourselves or for our community. This dysfunction, which is evident at every level of society, stems from the collapse of our social relations and personal foundations. We are becoming an increasingly fragmented and atomised society, and this has deep and damaging consequences for our families, our communities and our polity.

We believe that power should be devolved to the lowest appropriate level. Public services and neighbourhoods should be governed and shaped from the 'bottom up' by families and communities and their associations. Neighbourhoods need to be served by a range of providers that incorporate and empower their inhabitants. We believe that neither state bureaucracy nor privatisation of public services is attentive to either whole persons or the life of communities considered in the round. Instead, we need new institutions and new approaches that reflect the priority of direct and interpersonal human relationships.

To achieve this, we have set up three new workstreams: placing family at the heart of society; devolving power to people and places; and renewing Britain's commonwealth and constitution.



## Prosperity

The UK has some of the highest levels of wealth concentration in the developed world. It has an economy where most mature markets are dominated by a small number of players and the barriers for new market entrants are far too high. This conspires against innovation and is detrimental to the small and emergent businesses that generate growth and spread prosperity. Added to this, our education system, by specialising too early and often in the wrong areas, fails to produce students with well-rounded skills. We are simply not equipping our future workforce with the means to safeguard our, and their, economic future.

We believe that shared prosperity cannot be achieved by simply tweaking the market. Britain needs significant demand and supply-side transformation, with new visionary institutions re-ordering our economy. We need long-term solutions that give power over wealth and assets, not simply hand-outs, to ordinary people. Central to this process of economic empowerment is an ethical, practical and adaptable education that gives people the ability to build their own businesses or develop their own talents, rather than a conveyor belt to jobs of low wage and less return.

To achieve this, we have set up three new workstreams: making markets work for the many; and securing assets for all; realising vocational, artistic and academic excellence.



## Virtue

Endemic scandals across the public and private sector from health and policing failures, to market rigging in the banks, have led to a crisis of trust and governance which is deeply damaging enterprise, the economy and our communities. When faced with such challenges, we often demand that government intervenes to make more laws and draft more draconian regulation. But this compounds rather than addresses the problem: it leaves the true cultural cause of our contemporary malaise unacknowledged and unaddressed. We have lost any idea of what the shared goods of society are, and what we need to do together in order to progress.

We need a renaissance of virtue and honour in policy and practice. 'Virtue' encompasses not simply an ethical code or guideline by which we measure ourselves and our institutions; it entails a much deeper understanding of what it means to be human and why it matters to contribute to the 'common good'. Virtue charts a way of life that enables a person, community, business and nation to properly identify and fulfil the shared goals that they hope to achieve. The exercise of virtue is a process of discernment that has an ambitious goal in mind: the flourishing of all people.

To achieve this, we have set up three new workstreams: promoting human flourishing; fostering value and virtue in business and the economy; and shaping character and instilling ethos through institutions.

