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Welfare, Work, Economy, jobs

Ed Balls promises to build 100,000 affordable homes

[Daily Telegraph](#), [The Times](#)

LABOUR would raise more than £3billion from selling off Britain's mobile-phone system to fund a government-backed house-building programme, Ed Balls will announce today.

In his speech to the Labour Party conference, the shadow chancellor will unveil a plan to use the proceeds from the auction of the new fourth generation mobile-phone spectrum to build 100,000 affordable homes.

Gordon Brown sold off the rights to the last mobile-phone network but used the money to repay Britain's debts.

However, Mr Balls says the money cannot be used this time to help towards the austerity programme as it is "urgently needed to put something back into the economy". The Coalition is currently deciding how to handle the sale of the 4G licences.

Francis Maude bans promotions for union staff

[The Daily Telegraph](#)

civil servants who are paid by the state but spend their time working for trade unions will be banned from promotion under government plans.

Some 250 officials in Whitehall and throughout the rest of the country are full-time union representatives.

Francis Maude, the Cabinet Office minister, has written to ministerial colleagues asking for their support to clamp down on the practice.

A government source said that there were some cases when it would be appropriate for civil servants to work full-time on union activities.

However, there are concerns that the arrangements have been too lax, with one case seeing a civil servant promoted twice while working as a full-time union rep, earning a salary of up to £61,000.

Under Mr Maude's proposals, no civil servant would be able to receive a promotion while working full-time for a union. The plan would also require him personally agreeing to any civil servants working exclusively for a union while on the public payroll.

Schools will shrink as the Coalition makes cuts

[The Daily Telegraph](#)

NEW generation of schools will be significantly smaller than those constructed during the spending boom of the previous

government, under blueprints based around a "more for less" approach.

The "baseline designs" expected to be unveiled this week by the Education Funding Agency are to be used by designers and builders competing for contracts as a starting point.

Peter Lauener, its chief executive, said: "More for less is the theme of what we are trying to do with education capital.

"We are looking to come out with an average school building cost of under £14million compared to £21million under the BSF programme.

"It is not quite buy one, get one free. It is a three for two proposition."

Middle class receive more welfare support

[The Daily Telegraph](#)

The figures published by the Centre for Policy Studies.

Millions of middle-class families receive state services and benefits worth nearly £5,000 more than they pay in taxes, according to research.

Official figures show that there has been a surge in the level of tax credits, disability allowances, child benefit and housing benefit claimed by middle-income households over the past 15 years.

When Labour came to power in 1997, the families on the middle fifth of the earnings spectrum paid £220 more per year in taxes than they received in cash benefits and welfare services such as hospitals, schools and transport — for which the study calculated a monetary value.

Now this middle group is getting £14,114 from the state, while contributing £9,525 in taxes, leaving them thousands of pounds in "benefit credit". The tranche of middle-income households, earning about £27,000 per year, are now getting nine times as much in tax credits and twice as much in disability allowances as they were in 1997.

Labour vows to make poor kids middle class

[The Sunday Times](#)

LABOUR will promise to help working-class parents have middle-class children in an effort to win back aspirational voters who deserted the party at the last election.

Jim Murphy, the shadow defence secretary, said improvements to the education system and welfare reforms were required to ensure greater social mobility and that every public policy should be tested against this objective.

In an interview with The Sunday Times, he claimed too many poorer Britons with the ability to get on the professional career ladder and enjoy prosperity were being let down by "inherited poverty".