What does the new government mean for civil society and funders?

Just under a month ago the 2024 General Election results revealed a new Labour Government. It is a government that has been elected into power under [promises](https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Labour-Party-manifesto-2024.pdf) of change; of restoring hope and of turning the page on 14 years of austerity.

Our Chief Executive, James Banks, [shared his reflections](https://londonfunders.org.uk/latest/news/decisive-night-uk-politics-what-does-it-mean-london) that there was a “sense of optimism about a re-imagined role for civil society and a more open door for engagement with national government” when the results came in. But now the dust has started to settle, what do civil society and funders hope for? As James stated, “The reality is that across London, community organisations are shutting each week: the relentless effects of disinvestment in wider local services at a time when need demand is through the roof has left many at breaking point.”

Now Labour have been instated, they set out in the [King’s speech](https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-kings-speech-2024), their ambitions to lead a government which “will be mission led and based upon the principles of security, fairness and opportunity for all”. The speech included 40 bills and draft bills on everything from prioritising economic growth to border security.

Following the King’s speech we’ve also seen calls from across civil society on what has been applauded and what hasn’t gone far enough:

* Turn2Us [said](https://7kzf3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsDhYHbMm9UoI50sZUOOEm/MDFIeuV2Z1yd) that while they welcome reforms for renters and a focus on wellbeing and support, they “need to see more concrete commitments to tackling the rising levels of poverty in the UK” and urged the government to “take immediate steps to make our social security system fair, accessible, and truly supportive”.
* Joseph Rowntree Foundation also [welcomed](https://7kzf3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsE9sznnAVajSL4hxJN7wq/fupK2B8noTrJ) the ambition to “address some of the leading drivers of poverty” including equal pay for ethnic minorities and disabled people enshrined in law, and laws to enhance employment rights to raise pay. But, like Turn2Us, they call on the government to do more to reform social security “so we all have a safety net to rely upon”.
* Power to Change [said](https://7kzf3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsEcDi0DYrgecb8XL8Lreu/Cv8eAc859al0) the new English Devolution Bill will “strengthen communities' powers to take ownership of and safeguard important local assets”. The Bill proposes local growth plans as a statutory requirement for Combined Authorities, “meaning there is a real opportunity for regional strategies for the social economy to be developed”.
* On housing, the Homes for All campaign (which many of our members are part of, including Impact on Urban Health, Trust for London, Lloyds Bank Foundation and Homeless Link) [said](https://7kzf3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsF4YQCdxDmZmrCMixKbMy/62KxpOiTLzz6) that while it was great to see plans for building and reforming local planning to transform the housing system, any housing policy “must deliver quality, affordable homes for all”. Trust for London [echoed](https://7kzf3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsFWt8P4LZsUx7GC6mJL52/q_nxLDFY1PR_) this, saying the housing crisis requires “a generational effort to build vastly more social and affordable homes”.
* New Philanthropy Capital [welcomed](https://7kzf3.r.sp1-brevo.net/mk/cl/f/sh/1t6Af4OiGsFzDqbUjvyQ7NK1UbI4n6/4CBbvdhDecux) “the focus on local growth, because it’s often in local communities where charities and funders can make the biggest difference in removing barriers and creating new opportunities”. They also said that “bills to improve some of the big challenges affecting society - including improving mental health provision, particularly for children and young people, and creating new green jobs to respond to environmental crisis - are much needed”.
* The government also introduced a new bill, the ‘Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill’ which proposes to “clear the asylum backlog and tackle small boat crossings”. The charity Women for Refugee Women [said](https://x.com/4refugeewomen/status/1813536314798833879) “any plans must ensure that those who are fleeing war, persecution and danger are not criminalised by the Bill”. Unless the government introduces safe and accessible routes for people to claim asylum in the UK, “people will continue to make dangerous journeys to reach safety”.
* Trust for London have seen this government as “an opportunity to rest the conversation about poverty in this country”. Their Chief Executive, Manny Hothi, has [commented](https://trustforlondon.org.uk/news/new-government-poverty/) on four areas the government could act on from leadership to housing and tackling racial justice and ending migrant destitution, all areas where the government can act to reduce poverty.

Further reading

Looking at an array of manifestos and campaign asks from civil society organisations, we reviewed some of the key themes in what is being asked of the new government, and how it fits to their manifesto covering; devolution, housing, community, health, climate and employment. You can read the blog [here](https://londonfunders.org.uk/latest/news/general-election-what-are-civil-societys-asks-next-government).

NCVO have published an article on what the charity sector needs to know from the King’s Speech, you can read it [here](https://www.ncvo.org.uk/news-and-insights/news-index/kings-speech-2024-what-charities-need-to-know/).

The Future Governance Forum and Metro Dynamics published their recommendations for how the government can enact an ‘Impactful Devolution’. Read their recommendations [here](https://www.futuregovernanceforum.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Impactful-Devolution-01-A-new-framework-for-inclusive-local-growth-and-national-renewal.pdf).

There have been many discussions of a return of ‘Total Place’, 2010 Labour’s ‘new’ direction for local public services, you can read more about the concept [here](https://www.youngfoundation.org/institute-for-community-studies/repository/total-place-a-whole-area-approach-to-public-services/) and can read about New Local’s similar idea on Place-Based Public Service Budgets [here](https://www.newlocal.org.uk/publications/research-reports/place-based-budgets/).

There have been talks of the new government being a ‘mission-driven’ government. Learn more about what mission-driven policy making looks like [here](https://www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk/publication/mission-driven-approach-government) and you can hear from the ‘mother of mission thinking’, Mariana Mazzucato, [here](https://marianamazzucato.com/books/mission-economy/).

You can read more about the new civil society minister, Stephanie Peacock MP, by visiting her [website](https://www.stephaniepeacock.org.uk/).