

[Regulation: LibCon Learning Disabilities](#) [1]

Written by [Tim Ambler](#) [2] | Friday 21 May 2010



In their last six years in opposition, the Tories produced no less than four shadow green papers on how they would tackle regulation and de-regulation. Each began with a blank sheet and demonstrated that each set of authors had learned little or nothing from their predecessors nor from the experience of the current administration, nor the one before.

Some of us would like to imagine that policy develops continuously, integrating experience, research evidence and the discussion of new ideas. We have previously suggested that a one or two year moratorium on new UK regulation would allow learning to take place and break the Whitehall culture of regulation. EU regulation would of course continue, but the UK should not regulate at all in areas the EU regulates. It simply burdens UK business relative to the rest of Europe. If they don't need it, why should we? So a moratorium on UK regulation is perfectly feasible.

The coalition agreement is a new set of patent nostrums, ungrounded in experience or debate. The shadow regulation minister, John Penrose, no longer has that portfolio and although the new minister, Mark Prisk, was shadow regulation minister a while back, he did not author any of the four shadow green papers.

It is great to see the back of some of the earlier ideas, like having Professor Richard Thaler replacing regulation by nudging, but some old hobby horses, like the gold plating myth, remain. Sunset clauses will be required but the previous administration said that too but they didn't deliver. I'll bet the coalition does not know why it failed even if they know it did. Much more important are post implementation reviews to establish if the regulations worked at all. They should happen, but don't, and there's no mention of that.

On the other hand, they propose to dive into corporate reporting which the Financial Reporting Council and Accounting Standards Board are actually developing very well. What happened to small government/Big Society?

They are ill-informed on new business set-ups. One of Brown's successes was to make the UK one of the easiest countries to set up new business. And the coalition's section on financial regulatory reform seems to be unaware that New Labour handed that over to Brussels.

From a strong field, the motherhood prize goes to 'We will review employment and workplace laws, for employers and employees, to ensure they maximise flexibility for both parties while protecting fairness and providing the competitive environment required for enterprise to thrive.' How on earth can that be

achieved by regulation? No doubt they will set up a commission to bring that about ? chaired by Willie Walsh.

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