

Welsh Liberal  
Democrats

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# **STOP BREXIT**

## **BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE**

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**MANIFESTO 2019**





# Stop Brexit

Build a Brighter Future

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# Foreword

For more than three and a half years, our country's future has been on pause as the Brexit debate has raged on. This election gives us the opportunity to transform our country and create a brighter future. The Liberal Democrats have an ambitious vision for who we can be – a society where every child and young person is nurtured to become whoever they want to be, where if you work hard and play by the rules, you can live a happy and fulfilling life, and where we do everything in our power to save our planet for future generations.

And the opportunity for the Liberal Democrats at this election is huge. There are no limits to my ambition for our party as we take our positive vision for a brighter future to the country.

In the last few months, tens of thousands of people have joined our party as our membership continues to hit new records. We've had our best-ever local elections and beat both Labour and Conservatives in a national election for the first time in a hundred years, returning 16 Liberal Democrat MEPs. And former Labour and Conservative MPs have joined us because they know that we want to build an open, fair and inclusive society. The Liberal Democrats are standing strong, growing every day, and I am so proud to be the Liberal Democrat candidate for Prime Minister at this election.

Voters are being told that the only choice is between the Conservatives or Labour. But when I look at Boris Johnson and Jeremy Corbyn, I know that I could do a better job as Prime Minister than either of them. Our country deserves better than what is on offer by the two tired old parties, led by men who want to reuse ideas from the past – whether the 1870s or the 1970s – and gamble with our children's future.

We can make a better choice. At this general election, people can choose to vote Liberal Democrat. They can choose a government that will build the kind of country and society we deserve, where every person, every community and our planet can thrive. They can choose what kind of country we are – open and generous, or closed and selfish. And they can choose whether we work with our closest allies or stand alone in the world.

For too many people, things aren't working as they should be. They are working hard and playing by the rules, and yet they struggle to pay the rent, put food on the table and they don't feel confident that their children will go on to have better opportunities than they had. That's not good enough.

And instead of focusing on how we create a brighter future for everyone, our politics has been utterly dominated by Brexit. Leaving the European Union is not the answer to the single parent who is struggling to make ends meet, to the child who needs extra support at school, or to saving our planet. In fact, it will only make those problems worse.

Our politics is in a state of flux, and this general election could lead to seismic change out of which a new and different politics can emerge. A politics based on hope, not fear. A politics where every individual and community can thrive, and where we work together to save our planet for future generations.

For me, the choice is clear. To stop Brexit and build that brighter future, vote Liberal Democrat. We have the plan that this country deserves, and we are ready to deliver it.



**Jo Swinson, Leader of the Liberal Democrats**



# Introduction

The Welsh Liberal Democrats are fighting this election with a clear plan to build a brighter future for Wales. The first step of this plan is simple: stop Brexit and use the subsequent remain bonus to invest in our public services.

We are unashamedly fighting to stay in the European Union, and we are the strongest party of Remain. We believe that our country's best future is as members of the European Union, and that any form of Brexit will damage the Welsh economy, hurt our NHS and put an enormous strain on our family of nations.

Let's be clear - there is no Brexit deal that will ever be as good for Wales as the deal we currently have as members of the European Union.

Our determination to stop Brexit isn't just about retaining membership of this or that EU institution. It's about who we are as a country and the values that drive us. It's about working with others to tackle the big challenges we face, not retreating to isolation because co-operation and compromise is just too difficult.

Whether it's the climate crisis or cybercrime, we recognise that the zero-sum games of the past no longer apply to a world where our future prosperity is so closely interlinked with that of our friends and allies.

Staying in the European Union will generate a £50 billion Remain bonus, with the economy growing faster if we remain members of the EU. That means protecting jobs from Flintshire to Fishguard, from Chepstow to Caernarfon. It means farming businesses surviving so they can be passed onto the next generation. It means helping people out of poverty and making life a little bit easier for them.

A Liberal Democrat government will also take urgent action to save our planet. We are the last generation that can do something to stop irreversible climate change. We've already seen how floods are becoming an ever more regular occurrence in our country. And, though we should be proud to have declared a climate emergency, we cannot ignore the fact that the UK Government has done little else since then. In the meantime, it's been young people who have consistently put the climate crisis back on the agenda with their inspirational climate strikes.

Climate change rightly terrifies us, but we should take heart from the passion, dedication and moral clarity of these young people. We would also do well to remember that fighting climate change has so many further benefits. From transforming the Welsh economy to providing clean air and providing energy security. Wales can do so much by effectively tackling climate change.

The Liberal Democrats are the only party with a radical, credible and detailed plan to tackle the climate emergency as soon as possible. We will deliver a ten-year emergency programme to cut emissions, generate 80% of our electricity from renewables by 2030 and achieve net-zero greenhouse emissions by 2045 at the latest.

We will invest in public services across the UK, ensuring Wales gets its fair share of this investment, as well as introduce universal free childcare, ensure we treat mental health with the same urgency as physical health and give every child in Wales the best possible start in life.

On December 12th, you will have a historic opportunity to stop Brexit and build a brighter future for Wales. If that is what you want, then vote Welsh Liberal Democrat to make this opportunity a reality.

**Jane Dodds,**  
**Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats**



# Stop Brexit

Every vote for the Welsh Liberal Democrats is a vote to stop Brexit and stay in the European Union.

For over three years Welsh Liberal Democrats have led the fight to stop Brexit. We campaigned to stay in the EU in 2016 and we unequivocally believe that Wales and the UK are stronger as part of the EU.

The election of a Liberal Democrat majority government on a clear stop Brexit platform will provide a democratic mandate to stop this mess, revoke Article 50 and stay in the EU. In other circumstances, we will continue to fight for a people's vote with the option to stay in the EU, and in that vote we would passionately campaign to keep the UK in the EU.

Electing a Liberal Democrat government is the only way to get the Brexit process over. Although the Conservatives claim that a vote for them will 'get Brexit done', it won't. It will simply usher in more years of difficult negotiations over the UK's trade deal with the EU, with a very high chance of Britain crashing out and trying to survive on so-called 'WTO terms.' A deal so bad that almost no other country anywhere in the world trades on that basis.

Labour want to reopen the Withdrawal Agreement all over again and negotiate a new deal – but they will not say whether they want Britain to remain in the EU or leave. The fact is that whether Labour Red or Tory Blue, Brexit is bad for the UK. The importance of the UK's membership of the EU has never been clearer. Working together through the EU, the countries of Europe have achieved peace and prosperity on a continent historically wracked by war and division. That is a tremendous achievement; it should not be taken for granted, particularly as Europe faces new dangers from an increasingly aggressive Russia and as the US turns away from its old alliances.

Many of the great challenges of the 21st century are global: climate change, human trafficking, the arms trade, the power of multinationals, global poverty and inequality. By separating itself from the EU, Britain diminishes its capacity to respond to these threats. By working together with our European neighbours, we increase the UK's ability to meet those challenges: for example, in international



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negotiations, in regulating the tech giants or in creating markets for climate-friendly products.

There is no doubt that full membership of the EU is good for the British economy. Brexit would bring to an end businesses' unfettered access to the European single market – the destination of almost half of Britain's exports – and to the smooth flow of goods that complex industrial supply chains require. The prospect of tariffs and border checks is already causing manufacturers to shift their operations to other EU states and UK manufacturers are already reporting that export orders have dried up.

There is no prospect of replacing lost EU markets with free trade agreements with other countries thousands of miles away. If the UK gives in to President Trump's demands to lower environmental and health standards for a trade deal with the US, we would lose the ability to export to the EU, which would drive many British businesses, including most farmers, out of business. Brexit is bad for jobs, growth and prosperity.

Brexit would leave Wales poorer, less free and less influential on the world stage. It threatens the future of Welsh farming, forcing crippling tariffs on Welsh lamb and beef farmers. It threatens manufacturers in Wales like Airbus who rely on just-in-time European supply chains. It threatens chaos at Welsh ports like Holyhead as customs declarations cause delays and traffic jams that cannot be adequately prepared for.

Poverty is already far too prevalent across Wales. but Brexit would only make it much worse. It would deprive Wales of the European funding that is so vital to tackling poverty. Funding that has done so much to create prosperity and opportunities in the parts of Wales that have been neglected by the UK Government for too long.

Brexit will also mean an end to freedom of movement, which has brought the UK tremendous social, economic and cultural benefits. It gives British people the opportunity to work, be together with their loved ones, study and retire anywhere in the EU. There is no contradiction between our European and our British and Welsh identities: they enrich one another. By stopping Brexit, Liberal Democrats will protect and maintain freedom of movement, safeguarding the rights of UK

citizens living elsewhere in the EU and EU citizens in the UK. Liberal Democrats will also support the right of the people of Gibraltar to remain in the European Union.

EU citizens are valued members of our communities and we believe that they should be afforded the right to full participation in civic life, including the ability to stand for office and vote in UK referendums, European elections and general elections as well as local elections. Liberal Democrats will extend these rights to all EU citizens who have lived in the UK for five years or longer.

To ensure that EU citizens are not denied their vote in any election or referendum, we will also implement urgent electoral law reform, in line with the Electoral Commission's 2014 recommendations, including introducing a legal requirement for councils to inform citizens of the steps they must take to be successfully registered and making the necessary changes to ensure that the UK has an automatic system of inclusion in elections.

The national humiliation of Brexit puts so much at risk – the NHS, public services, jobs across the country, scientific collaboration, peace in Northern Ireland, the unity of the UK, our ability to tackle global crises such as climate change and our global reputation as a country that is confident and outward-facing. By keeping the UK in the EU, we can get on with tackling the real issues facing our country, using the Remain Bonus of £50 billion to invest in public services and tackle inequality. A Liberal Democrat government will stop Brexit – and build a brighter future for Wales and the UK by keeping us at the heart of the European Union.



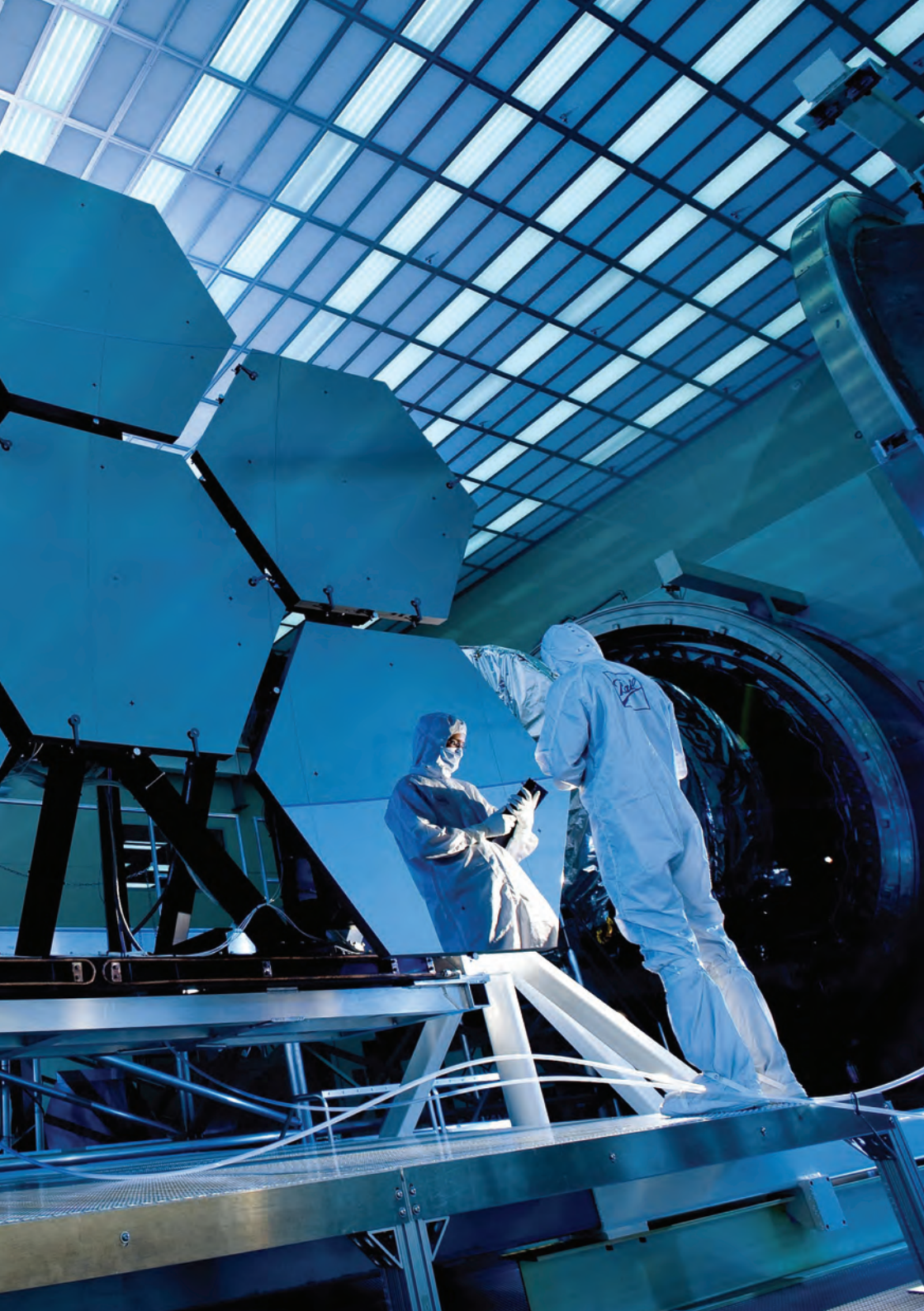
# Our Plan for a Stronger Economy

People who work hard and contribute to society should have good, fulfilling and well-paid jobs. Businesses and entrepreneurs who innovate, invest and behave responsibly to their employees and to the environment should be supported. This is not how Wales or the UK is today. Too many people can't get on, and live secure, happy and fulfilling lives. The failure of governments to invest in infrastructure and skills has undermined productivity, and now the Conservatives threaten to make the vast majority of people poorer and punish business and enterprise through a hard Brexit.

Meanwhile, we are facing profound economic changes that demand new partnerships between government and business: the emergence of artificial intelligence requires new approaches to work, and the challenge of transitioning to a zero-carbon economy must be managed in a way that does not hurt the least well-off and makes us more competitive. Our strengths in science, financial services, the creative industries and high-tech manufacturing mean that we should be well placed to build an economy that treats business as part of the solution and spreads opportunity to everyone.

However, neither Labour nor the Conservatives are capable of guiding the economy through these challenges. Both parties are reaching to the past for answers that are no longer relevant. The Conservatives are pursuing a deregulated, low-tax Brexit that will set our economy back for generations; Labour are facilitating Brexit while seeking to renationalise their way back to a form of 1970s socialism.

Liberal Democrats are now the natural home of business: we are the only party with a new plan for a brighter economic future. A plan to invest in climate-friendly infrastructure and technology and create new green businesses and jobs; a plan to build on our scientific, technological and creative strengths; a plan to stop Brexit and build a more prosperous, equal and inclusive economy. Whichever part of the country people are from and whatever stage of their career they are at, our plan will mean greater opportunities and good, well-paid jobs.





**Our priorities in the next parliament will be:**

- **Investing £130 billion in infrastructure across the UK – upgrading our transport and energy systems, empowering all nations of the UK and developing the climate-friendly infrastructure of the future.**
- **Enabling an adaptable, future-focused workforce – empowering individuals by delivering a ‘right to lifelong learning.’**
- **Introducing a wellbeing budget and basing decisions for UK Government spending on what will improve wellbeing as well as on economic and fiscal indicators**

## **Investment for the Future across the UK**

Opportunity and access to education, employment and services are not fairly spread around the UK. This means that many people become stuck in insecure work in which they have no prospect of promotion. The Conservatives pay lip service to the idea of regional growth while pursuing a reckless Brexit that will deepen inequality and place trade barriers between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK. Labour’s backwards-looking approach of Whitehall running renationalised industries denies people and communities autonomy and will hit investment and stifle innovation. Liberal Democrats are the only party looking to the future with a sustainable answer to the regional divide. We will:

- Introduce a capital £50 billion Regional Rebalancing Programme for infrastructure spend across the UK, with the Welsh Government fully involved in determining how it is used. A programme reinforced by Just Transition funding for areas particularly affected by the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions.
- Set an ambitious National Industrial Strategy to transform the economy and develop Local Industrial Strategies within it that incentivise clustering by businesses and universities with particular specialisations.
- Work with the major banks to fund the creation of a local banking sector dedicated to meeting the needs of local small and medium-sized businesses.
- Expand the British Business Bank to perform a more central role in the economy, to ensure that viable small and medium-sized businesses have access to capital, even when the rest of the commercial banking system can’t provide it.

Liberal Democrats want to take advantage of historically low interest rates to

increase borrowing for investment to build the economy of the future. We are committed to a responsible and realistic £130 billion package of additional infrastructure investment, which will prioritise:

- Significant investment in public transport, including converting the rail network to ultra-low-emission technology (electric or hydrogen) by 2035, and a continued commitment to HS2 and other major new strategic rail routes.
- A programme of installing hyper-fast, fibre-optic broadband across the UK – with a particular focus on connecting rural areas.
- An emergency ten-year programme to reduce energy consumption from all the UK's buildings, cutting emissions and fuel bills and ending fuel poverty.
- £5 billion of initial capital for a new Green Investment Bank, using public money to attract private investment for zero-carbon priorities.

We will ensure that the National Infrastructure Commission takes fully into account the climate and environmental implications of all national infrastructure decisions.

## **UK2050: Our Vision for an Innovation-Led Economy**

We want to lay the foundations for the UK to be the best place in the world for innovation-led businesses in the long-term – to be a place where people come from across the EU and the world to turn their ideas into reality. But with R&D and innovation investment lagging behind other countries and being overly concentrated in the south east, it needs major change to make this vision a reality. Only the Liberal Democrats can deliver this: the Conservatives are harking back to a romanticised imperial past, while pursuing a Brexit that will hit research and innovation, which is so dependent on European and other international collaboration; Labour have no plan for the economy of the future.

Liberal Democrats have a transformative plan to make the UK a world-leader in responsible innovation by taking advantages of the UK's strengths and what we are good at as a nation: our natural advantages in renewable energy; our strong university sector; and our regional strengths. We will build a growing economy in which people will have well-paid and meaningful jobs. We will:

- Increase national spending on research and development to three per cent of GDP. We will publish a roadmap to achieve this ambition by the earliest date



possible, via an interim target of 2.4 per cent of GDP by no later than 2027.

- Support innovation, with a goal of doubling innovation spending across the economy
- Increase the Strength in Places Fund, to boost research and development outside the 'golden triangle' of Oxford-Cambridge-London.
- Build on the industrial strategy developed by Liberal Democrat ministers in government, working with sectors which are critical to the UK's ability to trade internationally, creating more 'Catapult' innovation and technology centres and backing private investment in particular in zero-carbon and environmental innovation.
- Develop the skilled workforce needed to support this growth by introducing a new two-year visa for students to work after graduation.
- Continue to support investment in new UK digital start-ups by reforming the British Business Bank's support for venture capital funds to enable it to help funds 'crowd in' new backers rather than acting as a funder of last resort.

## **Harnessing the Benefits of New Technology**

Our ambition is for the UK to lead the world in ethical, inclusive new technology, including artificial intelligence. We will invest in education to equip people with the skills they need – whether to use new technology or to create it – while also attracting and welcoming the best talent from around the world. We will enable innovators and entrepreneurs to experiment and take risks, while taking on concentrations of power that stifle competition, limit choice for consumers and hamper progress. And we will ensure that new technology is developed and deployed ethically, so that it respects people's fundamental rights, including the rights to privacy and non-discrimination. We will:

- Support the UK's diverse, inclusive tech sector by reforming immigration rules – including enabling industry bodies to sponsor work visas.
- Support the growth of new jobs and businesses in the tech sector by allowing companies to claim R&D Tax Credits against the cost of purchasing data sets and cloud computing, simplifying the regulatory landscape and speeding up regulatory change.
- Ensure that new technologies are used in ethical and responsible ways by:
  - Introducing a Lovelace Code of Ethics to ensure the use of personal data and artificial intelligence is unbiased, transparent, accurate, and respects privacy.

- Giving the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation the power to ‘call in’ products that appear to breach this Code.
- Introducing a kite mark for companies that meet the highest ethical standards in their development and use of artificial intelligence and other new technologies.
- Convening a citizens’ assembly to determine when it is appropriate for the Government to use algorithms in decision-making.
- Empower consumers and ensure that everyone can enjoy the benefits of new technology, by requiring all products to provide a short, clear version of their terms and conditions, setting out the key facts as they relate to individuals’ data and privacy.

## **A Better Deal for Entrepreneurs and Small Business**

Dynamic, entrepreneurial businesses are a force for good: entrepreneurs, the self-employed and small businesses form the backbone of local economies and government should support them. However, the Conservatives are pursuing policies that make it harder to start successful new businesses and Labour do not understand or value start-ups and small businesses. Liberal Democrats are the only party who understand the importance of these businesses and who will ensure that they have the access to funding and long-term capital that they need. We will:

- Create a new ‘start up allowance’ to help those starting a new business with their living costs in the crucial first weeks of their business.
- Support fast growing businesses seeking to scale up, through the provision of mentoring support.
- Prioritise small and medium-sized businesses in the rollout of hyper-fast broadband.
- Require all government agencies and contractors, and companies with more than 250 employees to sign up to the prompt payment code, making it enforceable.
- Establish separate project bank accounts for major government projects, to ensure that the company at the top of a supply chain cannot abuse their position to shore up their own cashflow at the expense of smaller suppliers.
- Expand the activities of the British Business Bank, enabling it to perform a more central role in the economy by tackling the shortage of equity capital for



growing firms and providing long-term capital for medium-sized businesses.

- Provide a supportive framework to develop social enterprises – businesses with a social focus rather than a profit motive.
- Expand the rights and benefits available to those in insecure forms of employment, such as offering parental leave and pay to the self-employed.
- Work with all levels of government to reform the business rates system, prioritising reforms that recognise the development of the digital economy, lessen the burden on smaller businesses, and ensure high streets remain competitive. We will also consider the implementation of a Commercial Landover Levy.

## **Better Business**

Business can be a force for good in our economy: we need thriving businesses to create wealth and a model of responsible capitalism generates good jobs, shares prosperity and sees businesses promote rights and protect the environment. But the system is not working as it should: unscrupulous employers are still able to exploit their workforce and even when businesses fail, those at the top often receive huge rewards while staff lose their jobs. And we do not yet have a framework that sufficiently rewards businesses for environmentally sustainable behaviour – or penalises them for environmentally damaging activities. Labour do not recognise the good that business can do; the Conservatives don't care about the consequences of businesses that are run irresponsibly. Only the Liberal Democrats will promote responsible capitalism that works for the future. Our plan is for an economy that works for everyone, fosters a diversity of types of business – mutuals, social enterprises and community interest companies – and empowers employees. We will:

- Encourage employers to promote employee ownership by giving staff in listed companies with more than 250 employees a right to request shares, to be held in trust for the benefit of employees.
- Strengthen worker participation in decision-making, including staff representation on remuneration committees, and require all UK listed companies and all private companies with more than 250 employees to have at least one employee representative on their boards with the same legal duties and responsibilities as other directors.
- Introduce a general duty of care for the environment and human rights,

requiring companies, financial institutions and public sector agencies to exercise due diligence in avoiding specified activities such as child labour or modern slavery, or specified products such as commodities produced with deforestation, in their operations and supply chains, and to report on their actions.

- Reform fiduciary duty and company purpose rules to ensure that all large companies have a formal statement of corporate purpose, including considerations such as employee welfare, environmental standards, community benefit and ethical practice, alongside benefit to shareholders, and that they report formally on the wider impact of the business on society and the environment other considerations,
- Create under UK law the option for a new form of incorporation, explicitly with a dual purpose to be profit-making and have a positive impact on society, workers, communities and the environment.
- Require binding and public votes of board members on executive pay policies.
- Extend the scope of the existing 'public interest' test when considering approvals for takeovers of large or strategically significant companies by overseas-based owners to recognise the benefits to the UK economy, workers and consumers of protecting UK companies from speculative or short-term interests.

## Fair Taxes

Government must ensure the tax system meets the needs of a modern economy and is ready for the transition to a digital and zero-carbon economy. Businesses and individuals who benefit from being based in the UK should pay their fair share in tax – and responsible businesses are willing to do this. They benefit from public goods such as an educated workforce, a stable economy and publicly-funded infrastructure, and it is right that they should contribute towards them. But the taxation system is unbalanced and unfair: it is too easy for tech giants and large monopolies to avoid tax and income from employment is taxed more harshly than income generated by wealth.

Labour and the Conservatives are looking to the past for answers that will not work today: Labour want to hike up income tax in a way that will not even ensure that more tax is paid; the Conservatives have no interest in making the taxation system fairer. Our plan for the future will see big businesses paying their fair



share, support small- and medium-sized enterprises and ensure that income earned from wealth is not privileged when compared to income from employment – making sure the tax system is fair to all. We will:

- Restore Corporation Tax to 20 per cent – reversing the Conservatives’ reduction of this tax to 17 per cent – and ensure that the rate is stable with a predictable future path.
- Equalise the tax treatment of income from wealth and income from work by:
  - Abolishing the separate capital gains tax-free allowance and instead taxing it through a single allowance for the income and capital gains.
  - Aligning capital gains and income tax rates while introducing a basic inflation or “rate of return” allowance.
- Simplify business taxation to lower administration cost and reduce opportunities for tax avoidance – supporting smaller companies.
- Take tough action against corporate tax evasion and avoidance, including by:
  - Introducing a General Anti-Avoidance Rule, setting a target for HM Revenue and Customs to reduce the tax gap and continuing to invest in staff to enable them to meet it.
  - Reforming place of establishment rules to stop multinationals unfairly shifting profits out of the UK.
- End retrospective tax changes like the loan charge brought in by the Conservatives, so that individuals and firms are treated fairly, and review recent proposals to change the IR35 rules.
- Scrap the Marriage Tax Allowance.

## **Future of Work**

People should have secure jobs, with proper rights and fair pay. However, changes in technology and the nature of employment have outgrown the existing system of employment rights and protections. The Conservatives have not done enough to support workers as they are sucked into insecure, poorly paid jobs; Labour’s dogmatic, backward-looking approach would destroy flexible jobs that people value and harm the economy. Liberal Democrats are the only ones with a plan for 21st century work: a plan that will give employees protection and a voice at work while enabling innovative business models to flourish in the modern economy. We will make work pay and ensure that there are good and well-paid jobs available for people to do. We will:

- Establish an independent review to consult on how to set a genuine Living Wage across all sectors. We will pay this Living Wage in all UK government departments and their agencies, and encourage other public sector employers to do likewise.
- Establish a powerful new Worker Protection Enforcement Authority to protect those in precarious work.
- Change the law so that flexible working is open to all from day one in the job, with employers required to advertise jobs accordingly, unless there are significant business reasons why that cannot be.
- Modernise employment rights to make them fit for the age of the 'gig economy', including by:
  - Establishing a new 'dependent contractor' employment status in between employment and self-employment, with entitlements to basic rights such as minimum earnings levels, sick pay and holiday entitlement.
  - Reviewing the tax and national insurance status of employees, dependent contractors and freelancers to ensure fair and comparable treatment.
  - Setting a 20 per cent higher minimum wage for people on zero-hour contracts at times of normal demand to compensate them for the uncertainty of fluctuating hours of work.
  - Giving a right to request a permanent contract of employment after 12 months for 'zero hours' and agency workers, not to be unreasonably refused.
  - Reviewing rules concerning pensions so that those in the gig economy don't lose out, and portability between roles is protected.
  - Shifting the burden of proof in employment tribunals regarding employment status from individual to employer.
- Strengthen the ability of unions to represent workers effectively in the modern economy, including a right of access of to workplaces.

## Responsible Finances

A good government should responsibly manage the nation's finances: taking advantage of opportunities to borrow to invest in key infrastructure while making sure that day-to-day spending does not exceed the amount of money raised in taxes. The Liberal Democrats are the only party who will manage the country's finances properly. The Conservatives are pursuing a Brexit that will wreck the economy for a generation, making it impossible to sustainably invest in public



services. Labour will waste billions nationalising utilities – spending money that could be used to improve them just to bring them under state control. Our plan for the future is built on responsible management of the country's finances: stopping Brexit and using the increased revenue from a bigger economy to invest in services and using the money that Labour would waste to tackle the climate emergency and invest in transport and energy infrastructure. We will:

- Use the Remain Bonus to invest in public services, tackle inequality and combat in-work poverty.
- Ensure that key services are properly funded and responsibly manage their budgets so that they rise year-on-year.
- Ensure overall national debt continues to decline as a share of national income.
- Protect the independence of the Bank of England and keep the inflation target of two per cent.

## Promoting Wellbeing

There is no more fundamental purpose for government than supporting people to expand their quality of life. A successful economy is important, because it supports jobs, income and well-funded public services – all of which matter for individuals' wellbeing. But the conventional focus on GDP as the objective not only of government but society as a whole is clearly insufficient. People in the UK deserve to have their wellbeing considered and invested in, and a Liberal Democrat government will do just that. Liberal Democrats understand that wellbeing requires both a strong economy and a government that considers many other aspects of life, including support for people's mental health and good working conditions. Only a Liberal Democrat government will put the wellbeing of people and the planet first.

In Wales we already have the ground-breaking Future of Generations Act that compels public bodies in Wales to consider the long-term implications of their policies. An act that establishes the goal of creating a prosperous, resilient, more equal, healthier, cohesive, culturally vibrant and globally responsible Wales. These are certainly noble aims, but we need concrete action from governments and public bodies to make them real.

We are the only party with a plan to invest in wellbeing and put it at the forefront

of decision making, alongside economic considerations. We will:

- Introduce a wellbeing budget, based on the example of New Zealand, with decisions based on wellbeing as well as economic and fiscal indicators.
- Appoint a UK Government Minister for Wellbeing, who will make an annual statement to Parliament on the main measures of wellbeing and the effects of government policies on them.
- Introduce wellbeing impact assessments for all UK Government policies.
- Prioritise government spending on the things that matter most to people's wellbeing, including mental health, schools, loneliness and social housing; both now and in the future.
- Ensure that the planet is protected for future generations with clean air to breathe and urgent action to move towards net-zero carbon emissions.



# Education: Our National Mission

Education from the early years right through adulthood is critical to ensuring that everyone can reach their full potential. The quality of schooling you enjoy should not be determined by where you are born, where you go to school or how rich your parents are. Yet people who receive a poor education are far less likely to enjoy a decent opportunity to make the best of their lives; diminishing their own futures and damaging the country's prosperity.

We recognise that powers over schools and colleges are devolved to the Welsh Government, yet decisions made in England on education affect decisions elsewhere in the UK. The UK Government's continued austerity has severely limited the funding the Welsh Government and local authorities have been able to spend on education. Liberal Democrat proposals to restore school funding to 2015 levels in England will help ensure Welsh schools have the funding they need to give our children the best possible start in life.

Education reform is our national mission. Liberal Democrats have always put education at the heart of our agenda. We believe every child and citizen deserves to be given the tools, support and opportunities they need to achieve their potential and shape their own destiny. We are determined to make sure our education system finds and unleashes the best in everyone.

With Kirsty Williams AM as Education Minister in the Welsh Government, we are delivering on our national mission to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver a system of national pride and confidence.

Liberal Democrats recognise the dual role of education in giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to be part of a productive, competitive economy, and helping them grow into happy, healthy and engaged citizens.

**That's why our priorities for Wales will continue to be:**

- **Give an extra £560m for Welsh education each year, investing in cutting infant class sizes and investing in the largest teacher professional learning**





programme in the UK.

- **Increasing the Welsh Pupil Premium to close the attainment gap between our most disadvantaged pupils and their peers.**
- **Overseeing the most progressive higher education student support policy in the UK, which supports every student, no matter their mode of study, with living costs grants.**

## **Better for Early Years**

- Investing in high quality early years education has a huge impact on children's attainment as they enter school. Our most vulnerable children have the most to gain from excellent early years settings, with strong partnerships with parents a key component.
- Liberal Democrats have a plan to deliver the best start in life for children: free high-quality childcare from nine months for all working parents, properly funded. Parents wanting to go back to work will get the help they need, knowing that their child will be happy, healthy and ready to start school.
- We will offer free, high-quality childcare for every child aged two to four and children aged between nine and 24 months where their parents are in work: 35 hours a week, 48 weeks a year.
- Childcare is devolved to the Welsh Government, but this childcare commitment would lead to the Welsh Government having an extra £464m a year on average. We would urge the Welsh Government to use this funding to deliver the same free, high quality childcare offer in Wales.

## **Teachers – our biggest asset in education**

Teachers are the biggest and most important asset in our education system. That is why Kirsty Williams has secured the single biggest investment in the profession since devolution; delivering the biggest immediate uplift in starting teacher salaries anywhere in the UK; and introducing the most comprehensive professional learning programme available in the history of education in the UK. We are:

- Supporting new accreditation standards for teacher training courses to attract the best talent to the profession.
- Cutting classroom bureaucracy to ensure teachers can dedicate their time to teaching.



- Ensuring that there are annual Welsh Professional Teaching Awards to celebrate best practice
- Expanding the use of highly skilled business managers in order to provide more effective support, and reducing the burden, for school leaders.
- Encouraging teachers with some ability to speak Welsh to further develop their skills to teach through the medium of Welsh, and develop 'pools' of Welsh teaching staff to be shared between schools.
- Supporting new teaching standards to promote teaching excellence and support career-long professional learning for all teachers and education workforce.
- Investing record levels of funding in teacher professional learning.
- Attracting and retaining more high-quality applicants and high calibre mature graduates into teaching through a re-designed Graduate Teacher Programme.

## Improving Education Standards

Liberal Democrats want to give every child the chance of attending an excellent local school. We are:



- Delivering record investment in the building of new schools and upgrading the quality of school buildings.
- Reducing infant class sizes so that teachers have time to support individual pupil needs so they can reach their full potential.
- Delivering the first ever Rural Schools Strategy, including a presumption against the closure of rural schools and additional funding for rural schools.
- Supporting Wales' first ever National Academy of Educational Leadership – ensuring networks, learning and support for all leaders and potential leaders in our schools – putting right years of negligence.
- Introducing online adaptive assessments to support the profession to raise standards in Literacy and Numeracy.
- Establishing a single regulatory, oversight and coordinating authority for the post-compulsory education sector.
- Extending the Seren Network to reach learners at an earlier stage, ensuring they have the support and opportunities to reach their full potential.
- Tackling the lack of availability of Welsh language textbooks and ensure world-class bilingual resources for our new curriculum.
- Investing £20 million to support the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs Act.
- Investing in school broadband to ensure that all schools across Wales can embed the new Digital Competence Framework and access resources made available through the Hwb platform.

## **Creating a Better Curriculum**

In government in Wales, Kirsty Williams is developing a world-class curriculum that will help raise academic standards across our schools. It is a curriculum being designed by teachers and experts and being shaped in schools across Wales. We want schools and teachers to have the flexibility to teach pupils the way they know best. But we also believe that parents and children need to know that the curriculum in every school will cover the essentials and combine knowledge and skills. This curriculum will support teachers to be skilled educators who inspire a love of learning.

Alongside introducing a new curriculum for Wales, we are:

- Introducing comprehensive and inclusive relationships and sexuality education

(RSE) covering consent, sexuality, gender identity and healthy relationships.

- Improving the quality of vocational education, including skills for entrepreneurship and self-employment, and improving careers advice in schools and colleges.
- Making better use of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, ensuring that councils are able to support a growth in Welsh-medium education and bilingual pupils.;
- Improving links between employers and schools, encouraging schools to participate in employment and enterprise schemes that promote regular experiences in business. In particular, we are inspiring more children and young people to follow technical and scientific careers through partnership with relevant businesses.
- Challenging gender stereotyping and early sexualisation, working with schools to promote positive body image and breaking down outdated perceptions of gender appropriateness of particular academic subjects.
- Establishing a National Endowment for Music, which will enable more young people to access musical opportunities.

## Getting children and families ready to learn

Schools are on the front line in dealing with children and young adults with mental health issues. We also know that children cannot learn properly if they are undernourished.

Parents are under huge pressure and receive little support even though home is the biggest influence on children's learning. Parents need to be properly empowered and supported with the tools they need to raise the next generation and be involved in the running of their children's schools. We are:

- Ensuring that teaching staff have the training to identify mental health issues and that schools provide immediate access for pupil support and counselling.
- Helping provide quality meals and activities in primary schools during the school summer holidays.
- Delivering a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.
- Tackling bullying in schools, including bullying on the basis of gender, sexuality, gender identity, or gender expression.
- Increasing the PDG-Access scheme to help disadvantaged families cover the costs of school uniform, sports kits and equipment for activities outside of



school.

- Introducing new guidelines to make school uniforms cheaper and gender neutral.
- Supporting a 'Ready to Learn' campaign to help parents and carers prepare their child for school.
- Extending a new Community Focused Schools Initiative to offer additional support to schools and colleges to help parents and children learn together.
- Ensuring collaboration between leading education and family organisations to improve the flow of helpful information between home and school without increasing teacher workload.

## **A world class university sector, open to all**

The ability of universities to attract funding to maintain top quality research activity and deliver the best teaching depends on us being open and outward looking. The UK Government's disastrous approach to Brexit is already damaging our universities. Liberal Democrats will protect our world-leading higher education sector, which relies on international collaboration and being able to attract leading academics from around the world.

In government we have introduced the most generous and progressive student finance system in the UK. It is unique in Europe for its approach to supporting all students with living costs grants. We have introduced a system that provides financial support for living costs of all students, including equivalent support for postgraduate and part-time learners. This has resulted in record levels of part-time and post-graduation students accessing higher education, delivering for social mobility and economic prosperity. We are:

- Overseeing the most progressive higher education student support policy in the UK, which supports every student, no matter their mode of study, with living costs grants.
- Ensuring that all universities work to widen participation across the sector, prioritising their work with students in schools and colleges and requiring every university to be transparent about their selection criteria.
- Recognising the value of international staff and students to universities and promoting international collaboration.
- Encouraging Universities to help raise standards in schools by expanding undergraduate mentoring schemes in key disciplines such as science,

languages and computing.

- Continuing to make the case to the UK Government that students are not migrants and should not count towards national migration statistics.
- Investing in transformational outward mobility opportunities for Welsh students – connecting our students, families and communities with universities and companies across the world.

We will stop Brexit and keep the UK at the heart of the EU to:

- Reverse the damage to universities posed by Brexit and related uncertainty.
- Maintain access to EU funding streams, including Horizon 2020 and Marie Skłodowska- Curie Actions funding.

## **Lifelong opportunities to learn**

We need to grow Wales' skills base, especially in the technologies and industries that are most important to our economic future. We want it to become the norm for businesses to take on and train up young people as apprentices in every sector, and for higher level apprenticeships to be understood as a respected alternative to university education.

As our economy rapidly changes, the need for people to retrain and reskill has never been more important. It is no longer the case that the skills learnt at 18 or 21 will last throughout a career. The ability to learn new skills or change careers is also vital in creating the opportunity for people to succeed no matter their stage in life. That's why Liberal Democrats will introduce a new right to lifelong learning. In government, Kirsty Williams is introducing legislation to deliver a whole-system solution to the funding, regulation and performance of tertiary education, training and research. This will be achieved by establishing a new Commission that will take on responsibilities right across those sectors. This will ensure Wales has a post-16 education system that is equitable, excellent and enterprising. We will:

- Introduce Personal Learning Accounts providing people with free and flexible courses so they can achieve the skills and qualifications they need to get on in life.
- Expand access to apprenticeships, including higher level apprenticeships, across key sectors such as creative, digital and engineering, through increased collaboration between universities, Further Education colleges and industry.
- Expand the apprenticeships levy into a wider 'Skills and Training Levy' to help



prepare the UK's workforce for the economic challenges ahead.

- Work with the Coleg Cymraeg Cenedlaethol and other partners to enhance skills provision, vocational courses and promotion of Welsh-medium courses and teacher recruitment and retention, in line with our Cymraeg 2050 strategy.
- Aim to increase the number of apprentices from BAME backgrounds, ensure gender balance across industry sectors, and encourage underrepresented groups to apply.
- Place the needs of learners at the heart of the education system by establishing clear and flexible learning and career pathways.

## How the EU Helps

Membership of the EU has greatly benefited our university sector. The UK has one of the strongest university sectors in the world and it's an area where we punch well above our weight. The EU – through funding, facilities and people – is a vital part of the UK's success that it. Before the referendum, the UK's universities received around £730 million a year from the EU to spend on research.

Membership of the EU means that academics of an international calibre can easily come to teach in our universities and pass their expertise on to British students. It also allows them access to the large science facilities elsewhere in the EU, making the UK an attractive place to work and conduct research.

The Erasmus scheme provides British and students with fantastic opportunities to study and live across Europe, enriching their university experience and helping them develop into rounded citizens. UK universities and communities also greatly benefit from the students from across the EU who study in the UK as a result of the scheme.

The EU benefits schools as well. Our schools have staff shortages in a number of areas and, without EU citizens, teaching staff would be even more stretched – EU citizens teaching in British schools improves children's education. Membership of the EU also gives schools easy access to school trips and school exchanges, allowing children to experience other cultures and broaden their horizons.





# Our Plan for a Green Society and a Green Economy

The UK should be leading the world in tackling the climate emergency. We are the first generation to know we are destroying the environment, and the last generation with a chance to do something about it before it is too late. There is no Planet B. If we fail to act, millions of people – at home and abroad – will suffer the impacts of floods, storms and heatwaves, rising food prices and the spread of diseases; the global financial system will be destabilised, poor countries could collapse and the number of refugees will soar.

The Conservatives have shown themselves unfit to lead in response to this historic challenge. They have repeatedly flouted EU limits on air pollution and scrapped energy efficiency schemes that would reduce energy bills and end the scourge of fuel poverty. They have cut support for renewable energy while trying to force fracking on communities that don't want it. They are not on track to meet the UK's climate targets and are dragging their feet on reducing the use of plastics. They promised to restore the natural environment, but have presided over declines in many species of wildlife, and repeatedly failed to meet air and water quality goals.

Meanwhile, Labour's policies are a distraction from meaningful action on the environment. They want to spend billions to renationalise the companies running the electricity grid, the water industry and the railways. But this would not only be enormously disruptive and ruinously costly; it would be pointless, as in reality, ambitious environmental and consumer aims can be achieved through tougher regulation. A socialist planned economy is no way to tackle the environmental crisis.

The failures of Conservatives and Labour are not only morally indefensible but economically illiterate. Climate change and the collapse of natural systems are huge crises but they also represent a massive opportunity to create a different future, where people breathe clean air, drink clean water and use clean energy, where communities and industries live in harmony with nature, not at its expense.

We need a new government with the vision and the will to seize that opportunity. Liberal Democrats offer a new plan to innovate our way out of crisis. To mobilise every community in the country, and the resources of both the public and private sector to achieve it. To turn the birthplace of the industrial revolution into the home of the new Green Revolution.

The Liberal Democrats have the thought-through, deliverable plan for that new Green Future – in place of the Dutch auction of fantasy dates for Britain to achieve net zero greenhouse gas emissions offered by the other parties. We will deliver a ten-year emergency programme to cut emissions substantially straight away, and phase out emissions from the remaining hard-to-treat sectors by 2045 at the latest.

**Our first priorities in the next parliament will be:**

- **An emergency programme to insulate all Britain’s homes by 2030, cutting emissions and fuel bills and ending fuel poverty.**
- **Investing in renewable power so that at least 80 per cent of UK electricity is generated from renewables by 2030 – and banning fracking for good.**
- **Protecting nature and the countryside, tackling biodiversity loss and planting 60 million trees a year across the UK to absorb carbon, protect wildlife and improve health.**
- **Investing in public transport, electrifying Britain’s railways and ensuring that all new cars are electric by 2030.**

## **Climate Action Now**

The climate emergency can only be tackled effectively by ensuring that every relevant decision taken by the UK Government, Welsh Government, councils, businesses, investors, communities and households makes progress towards the net zero objective. We will set a new legally binding target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2045 at the latest, and implement a comprehensive climate action plan, cutting emissions across all sectors. To realise these goals, we will:

- Require all companies registered in the UK and listed on UK stock exchanges to set targets consistent with the Paris Agreement on climate change and to



report on their implementation; and establish a general corporate duty of care for the environment and human rights.

- Regulate financial services to encourage green investments, including requiring pension funds and managers to show that their portfolio investments are consistent with the Paris Agreement, and creating new powers for regulators to act if banks and other investors are not managing climate risks properly.
- Establish a Department for Climate Change and Natural Resources, appoint a cabinet-level Chief Secretary for Sustainability in the Treasury to coordinate government-wide action to make the economy sustainable resource-efficient and zero-carbon, and require every government agency to account for its contribution towards meeting climate targets.
- Establish Citizens' Climate Assemblies to engage the public in tackling the climate emergency.
- Guarantee an Office of Environmental Protection that is fully independent of government and possesses powers and resources to enforce compliance with climate and environmental targets.
- Increase government expenditure on climate and environmental objectives, reaching at least five per cent of the total within five years.
- Support investment and innovation in zero-carbon and resource-efficient infrastructure and technologies by creating a new Green Investment Bank and increasing funding for Innovate UK and new Catapult innovation and technology centres on farming and land use and on carbon dioxide removal.
- Implement the UK's G7 pledge to end fossil fuel subsidies by 2025 and provide Just Transition funding for areas and communities negatively affected by the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

## **Renewable Energy**

Thanks to Liberal Democrat policies in government, the UK has made major strides in cutting emissions from power generation; wind power is now the cheapest form of electricity generation. Now we can go further: we aim to decarbonise the power sector completely, supporting renewables and household and community energy to create jobs and cut fossil fuel imports. We will:

- Accelerate the deployment of renewable power, providing more funding, removing the Conservatives' restrictions on solar and wind and building more interconnectors to guarantee security of supply; we aim to reach at least 80 per

cent renewable electricity in the UK by 2030.

- Ban fracking because of its negative impacts on climate change, the energy mix and the local environment.
- Support investment and innovation in cutting-edge energy technologies, including tidal and wave power, energy storage, demand response, smart grids and hydrogen.
- In Wales, revised plans for a Swansea Tidal Lagoon could – at last – get the go-ahead under the Liberal Democrat plan to support investment in tidal energy. This would advance the technology and help to achieve our ambitious carbon-reduction targets.
- Provide an additional £12 billion over five years to support these commitments, and ensure that the National Infrastructure Commission, National Grid, the energy regulator Ofgem, and the Crown Estate work together to deliver our net zero climate objective.

## Warm Homes and Lower Energy Bills

Everyone should be able to afford to heat their home so that it is warm enough for them to live in. However, too many households are in fuel poverty. Homes they cannot afford to heat to a decent standard partly due to poor insulation and heat loss. This contributes to climate change and causes ill-health and early deaths. We will implement an emergency ten-year programme to reduce energy consumption from all buildings. Cutting emissions and energy bills, ending fuel poverty and generating employment. Supported by investing over £6 billion a year on home insulation and zero-carbon heating by the fifth year of the Parliament. We will:

- Cut energy bills, end fuel poverty by 2025 and reduce emissions from buildings, including by providing free retrofits for low-income homes, piloting a new subsidised Energy-Saving Homes scheme, graduating Stamp Duty Land Tax by the energy rating of the property and reducing VAT on home insulation.
- Require all new homes and non-domestic buildings to be built to a zero-carbon standard (where as much energy is generated on-site, through renewable sources, as is used), by 2021, rising to a more ambitious ('Passivhaus') standard by 2025.
- Increase minimum energy efficiency standards for privately rented properties and remove the cost cap on improvements.
- Adopt a Zero-Carbon Heat Strategy, including reforming the Renewable Heat



Incentive, requiring the phased installation of heat pumps in homes and businesses off the gas grid, and piloting projects to determine the best future mix of zero-carbon heating solutions

## **Green Industry, Green Jobs and Green Products**

Given the right support, British businesses have the chance to be world leaders in green technology. UK low-carbon businesses already have a combined turnover of £80 billion and directly employ 400,000 people, and under our proposals these will grow. We will provide support for innovation to cut energy and fossil fuel use in industrial processes – reducing emissions, cutting dependence on fossil fuel imports and generating jobs and prosperity. We will:

- Reduce emissions from industrial processes by supporting carbon capture and storage and new low-carbon processes for cement and steel production.
- Provide more advice to companies on cutting emissions, support the development of regional industrial clusters for zero-carbon innovation and increase the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund.
- Expand the market for green products and services with steadily higher green criteria in public procurement policy.
- End support from UK Export Finance for fossil fuel-related activities, and press for higher environmental standards for export credit agencies throughout the OECD.

The successful economies of the future will be those which adopt ‘circular economy’ techniques, cutting resource use, waste and pollution by maximising recovery, reuse, recycling and remanufacturing. This will cut costs for consumers and businesses, protect the environment and create new jobs and enterprises. We will introduce a Zero-Waste and Resource Efficiency Act to ensure that the UK moves towards a circular economy, including:

- Banning non-recyclable single-use plastics and replace them with affordable alternatives, aiming for their complete elimination within three years, as a first step towards ending the ‘throwaway society’ culture and an ambition to end plastic waste exports by 2030.
- Benefitting consumers through better product design for repairability, reuse and recycling, including extending the forthcoming EU ‘right to repair’ legislation

for consumer goods, so helping small repair businesses and community groups combat 'planned obsolescence'.

- Introducing legally binding targets for reducing the consumption of key natural resources and other incentives for businesses to improve resource efficiency.
- Work with the Welsh Government and other devolved governments to create an expanded deposit return scheme for all food and drink bottles and containers.

## **Saving Nature and the Countryside**

A healthy natural environment, where people breathe clean air, drink clean water and enjoy the beauty of the natural world, lies at the heart of the society and the economy Liberal Democrats want to create. Yet nature is under threat: unsustainable farming practices are depleting the soil and, together with air and water pollution, contributing to a rapid decline in the numbers of insects, birds and other animals. One in seven UK species are at risk of extinction.

We will protect the natural environment and reverse biodiversity loss at the same time as combating climate change. We will support farmers to protect and restore the natural environment alongside their critical roles in producing food, providing employment and promoting tourism, leisure and health and wellbeing. We will:

- Combat climate change, and benefit nature and people by coordinating the planting of 60 million trees a year across the UK and introducing requirements for the greater use of sustainably harvested wood in construction.
- Support producers by broadening the remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator and supporting them with access to markets.
- Create a new 'British Overseas Ecosystems Fund' for large-scale environmental restoration projects in the UK Overseas Territories and sovereign bases, home to 94 per cent of our unique wildlife.
- Establish a £5 billion fund for flood prevention and climate adaptation over the course of the parliament to improve flood defences, and introduce high standards for flood resilience for buildings and infrastructure in flood risk areas.
- Ensure that sustainability lies at the heart of fisheries policy, rebuilding depleted fish stocks to achieve their former abundance. Fishers, scientists and conservationists should all be at the centre of a decentralised and regionalised fisheries management system. Immigration policy should also be flexible



enough to ensure that both the catching and processing sectors have access to the labour they need.

## **Farming, Food and Agriculture**

Brexit puts farmers, agricultural businesses and rural communities in huge danger. It threatens to cut farmers and businesses off from their main markets, levy substantial tariffs on Welsh lamb and beef and flood Welsh markets with chlorinated chicken and hormone-treated beef via a US trade deal. Brexit also threatens cuts to the financial support that underpins farmers' livelihoods and their ability to manage the countryside.

Our system must support farmers, secure food production, and protect the environment. That's why we will:

- Continue our long campaign to reform agricultural subsidies – making sure British farming remains competitive.
- Ensure that smaller farms are protected and move support away from large landowners, whilst delivering a more localised agricultural policy.
- Focus support and subsidies towards effective land management including countryside protection, flood prevention, food production, and climate change mitigation.
- Ensure that future trade deals require imported food to have as high safety, environmental and animal welfare standards as domestic products, including clear and unambiguous country of origin labelling for meat and dairy products.
- Encourage new and younger entrants to farming by championing different forms of ownership including longer tenancies, share farming, and community ownership.
- Continue to improve standards of animal health and welfare in agriculture and promoting the responsible stewardship of antibiotic drugs.
- Bovine TB is a horrifying disease that causes suffering to wild and domestic animal populations. We wish to continue efforts to eradicate the disease in the British Isles.

## **Animal Welfare**

Liberal Democrats believe that all possible steps should be taken to promote





animal welfare and prevent animal suffering, with better protection for animals, and full regard for animal welfare. We will:

- Enshrine the principle of animal sentience into UK law to ensure due regard is paid to animal welfare in policy making.
- Introduce stronger penalties for animal cruelty offences, increasing the maximum sentencing from six months to five years and ensure that the National Wildlife Crime Unit is properly funded.
- Ensure that future trade agreements require high environmental and animal welfare standards at least equivalent to standards in the UK and ensure that all public procurement in the UK is compliant with high animal welfare standards.
- Clamp down on illegal pet imports through legal identification requirements for online sales.
- Minimise the use of animals in scientific experimentation, including by funding research into alternatives.

## Improving Transport

Britain's transport systems are broken. Commuting by rail is expensive, unreliable and unpleasant, and away from the major commuter routes, buses, trams and trains are so infrequent and expensive that cars are essentially made a necessity. This in turn has made air pollution – mostly caused by cars – one of the biggest causes of preventable illness in the UK, causing at least 40,000 premature deaths a year and costing the NHS £15 billion. And surface transport is now the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, with almost no progress in reducing them since 1990. The UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions has risen by almost 80 per cent since 1990. Liberal Democrats will meet this challenge by:

- Investing in public transport, buses, trams and railways to enable people to travel more easily while reducing their impact on the environment.
- Placing a far higher priority on encouraging walking and cycling – the healthiest forms of transport.
- Accelerating the transition to ultra-low-emission transport – cars, buses and trains – through taxation, subsidy and regulation.

Together these steps will tackle the clean air crisis, meet the challenge of climate change, improve people's health, stimulate local and regional prosperity and

develop British zero-carbon industries, with benefits for jobs, growth and exports.

## Clean and Green

To achieve our net-zero climate target by 2045, we aim to reduce emissions from surface transport to near zero; at the same time the transition to electric vehicles and from private to public transport will drastically cut air pollution. Emissions from the UK's share of international aviation are much more difficult to tackle; we need to accelerate the development of new technologies and cut demand for flying, particularly from the 15 per cent of individuals who take 70 per cent of flights. We will:

- Accelerate the rapid take-up of electric vehicles by reforming vehicle taxation, cutting VAT on EVs to 5 per cent and increasing the rate of installation of charging points, including residential on-street points and ultra-fast chargers at service stations. We will ensure that, by 2030, every new car and small van sold is electric.
- Pass a Clean Air Act, based on World Health Organisation guidelines, enforced by a new Air Quality Agency. The Act will enshrine the legal right to unpolluted air wherever you live.
- Shift more freight from road to rail, including electrifying lines leading from major ports as an urgent priority, and amend the current HGV road user levy to take account of carbon emissions.
- Support innovation in zero-emission technologies, including batteries and hydrogen fuel cells, supplementing government funding with a new Clean Air Fund from industry.
- Reduce the climate impact of flying by reforming the taxation of international flights to focus on those who fly the most, while reducing costs for those who take one or two international return flights per year, placing a moratorium on the development of new runways (net) in the UK, opposing any expansion of Heathrow, Gatwick or Stansted and any new airport in the Thames Estuary, and introducing a zero-carbon fuels blending requirement for domestic flights.
- Develop a strategic airports policy for the whole of the UK. We will focus on improving existing regional airports, and encourage, in particular, the development of Cardiff airport. We will ensure no net increase in runways across the UK.



## Fixing Wales' Railways

There is enormous scope to improve Britain's railways, providing reliable and affordable train services and cutting emissions. The Tories' and Labour's ideological obsessions – the former with privatisation, the latter with nationalisation – only serve to get in the way of making real improvements through investment and regulation. We will improve the railways, reform the franchising system and improve services to customers. We will:

- Extend Britain's rail network, improve stations, reopen smaller stations and restore twin-track lines to major routes.
- Convert the rail network to ultra-low-emission technology (electric or hydrogen) by 2035, and provide funding for light rail and trams.
- Give Wales an extra £62m a year to Wales as a result of our commitment in England to clean transport.
- Introduce a new type of company – Public Interest Companies – whose constitutions would place delivering the public good over making profit. These companies will make decisions in the interests of the people who use trains rather than shareholders.
- Be far more proactive in sanctioning and ultimately sacking operators if they fail to provide a high-quality public service to their customers and the powers of the Secretary of State to do this if necessary.
- Ensure new rail franchises include a stronger focus on customers, and completing a programme of investment in new stations, lines and station facilities as a matter of urgency. Continue the Access for All programme, improving disabled access to public transport as a key priority.

## How the EU helps

Climate change is a global problem and tackling requires us to work closely with partners. The EU are the international block that is most committed to combatting climate change and working with them greatly amplifies the UK's voice. The EU also sets and enforces the UK's environmental standards so that the government is held to account for not meeting them. This has been used to great effect in highlighting poor air quality in the UK.

The UK is one of the leading places in the world for green industry and green jobs.

This was possible because of our position in the EU: which provides ready access to a pool of expert scientists who conduct research into new technologies, supply chains that stretch across the EU and ease of access to a large international export market.

The EU also plays an important role in supporting farmers, protecting the countryside and protecting animals. Under the Common Agricultural Policy, UK farmers receive much-needed income support; EU funding also supports rural development and environmental improvement schemes. As well as this, the ease of trade with the EU provides a huge export market for British farmers. Animal rights in the UK are also entirely underpinned by EU law: around 80% of UK legislation on animal rights comes from the EU.

The UK is heavily reliant on EU workers to secure animal welfare. Around half of veterinary surgeons registering to practise in the UK each year, and over 90% of Official Veterinarians working in abattoirs, are non-UK EU nationals.



# Our Plan for Health and Social Care

We recognise that powers over the running of the NHS are devolved to the Welsh Government, yet decisions made in England on health affect many people in Wales. These policies therefore make clear the Welsh Liberal Democrats' vision and priorities for how the Welsh NHS should deliver for patients.

Britain's National Health Service used to be the envy of the world. Free at the point of delivery and based on need, not ability to pay, high-quality care was provided to rich and poor alike. But seventy years after its foundation the NHS is facing crisis. The Conservative government's obsession with austerity and shrinking the role of the state has systematically failed to give the Welsh Government the funding it needs to properly fund the NHS in Wales. This has left NHS Wales without the resources independent experts say it needs to cope with changes in life expectancy and patterns of ill health and rising demand for services.

Good health is a prerequisite to taking full advantage of life's opportunities, and we must do all we can to help people stay healthy, as well as provide high-quality care when they are ill. Mental health is just as important as physical health and we must make it a priority to deliver equality between the two. We are living longer, but that means more people are living with conditions like diabetes and dementia who need help to live with dignity and the maximum degree of independence. We must set the highest standards in care and encourage effective collaboration between health and social services. We will work to improve wider factors like warm homes, good air quality and access to exercise and healthy food so that everyone can have the best chance to lead a healthy life.

## **Funding for Health and Social Care**

The UK Government has an important role to play in giving the NHS in Wales the resources it needs to provide the care the people deserve. The UK Government has a responsibility to provide the Welsh Government with a budget that gives the Welsh Government the opportunity to properly fund health and social care.





Although the UK Government has belatedly acknowledged the crisis in the NHS, it has not come clean about funding and failed to provide the Welsh Government with adequate resources to properly fund social care and local NHS services.

Welsh Liberal Democrats recognise that Britain's health and social care services are our most treasured national institutions. Any party seeking to lead the country after this election should be prepared to take bold action to safeguard them. This isn't about doing the easiest thing, it is about doing what is right and what is essential.

Liberal Democrats will put our health and social care system back on a sustainable financial footing through:

- An immediate 1p rise on the basic, higher and additional rates of Income Tax. This will raise £7bn a year for the UK.
- The additional health spending in England this funding allows would lead to almost £400m a year more for Wales. We would urge the Welsh Government to spend this funding on health and social care in Wales.
- We believe the best use of any additional health funding is transforming mental health by treating it with the same urgency as physical health.
- In the longer term and as a replacement for the 1p Income Tax rise, we will commission the development of a dedicated Health and Care Tax on the basis of wide consultation, possibly based on a reform of National Insurance Contributions, which will bring together spending on both services into a collective budget and sets out transparently, on people's payslips, what we spend on them.
- Establish a UK-wide cross-party health and social care convention. Bringing together patients' groups, professionals from within the health and social care system, the public, and stakeholders from all political parties. This convention would carry out a comprehensive review of the longer-term sustainability of health and social care finances and workforce, the practicalities of achieving joined-up care, and how to make the system better support informal carers. We will invite the governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to be a part of this work.
- We will also continue to make the case for our own cross-party health and social care commission in Wales, bringing together stakeholders to review the

financial and workforce sustainability of health and social care in Wales and to examine the practicalities of greater integration. Were we able to establish both our UK-Wide convention and our commission for Wales we would expect the two to fully work together on the question of financial sustainability.

## **Better Mental Health**

One in four people experience a mental health problem in any given year. For too long, mental health has been stigmatised and ignored. We strongly believe mental health should be taken as seriously as physical health and are determined to give it the equal attention it deserves. We know that not enough resources reach front line services and that in the fight for parity of esteem, there is still a very long way to go.

Historically, mental health services have been badly neglected and under-funded in the NHS. The Conservative UK Government's recent announcements of new cash for the NHS will not give the Welsh Government the resources it needs to spend enough on mental health.

That's why Liberal Democrats think we need to put 1p in the £ on income tax. It would be up to the Welsh Government to decide how it spent the additional revenue it received. However, we would urge the Welsh Government to spend this money on health and social care services and to ringfence a share of it for mental health. We will press for:

- Additional funding from within the one penny income tax rise to be used to provide additional investment in mental health services
- The introduction of access and waiting time standards and invest in access to therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Counselling, and Interpersonal Psychotherapy.
- Better mental health support for pregnant women, new mothers and those who have experienced miscarriage or stillbirth.
- A strengthened Crisis Care Concordat and improved follow-up support for people attending A&E after self-harm or a suicide attempt.
- New waiting time standards and better crisis care in Accident and Emergency, in the community and via phone lines to ensure that no one in crisis is turned away, with. This will enable us to end the use of police cells for people facing a



mental health crisis.

- Out of area placements to be brought to an end, ensuring those admitted to hospital for mental illhealth are able to be treated close to home.
- All frontline public service professionals, including in schools and universities, to receive better training in mental health.
- LGBT+ inclusive mental health services to receive funding and support they need.

Medical research is vital for developing new and better treatments. We will fight the threat Brexit poses to medical research funding. We support the principle that a fair proportion of all public funding for medical research should be focused on research into mental ill-health.

We know that there is a strong link between financial debt and suicide, with over 100,000 people in problem debt attempting suicide every year. A Liberal Democrat government will build a more compassionate culture towards those in debt by ending threatening debt collection practices and stopping firms profiting from consumers' poor mental health.

There are 340,000 problem gamblers in the UK including some 55,000 children aged 11 to 16. The Liberal Democrats will introduce further measures to protect individuals, their families and communities from problem gambling. We will:

- Introduce a compulsory levy on gambling companies to fund research, education and treatment of problem gambling.
- Ban the use of credit cards for gambling.
- Restrict gambling advertising.
- Establish a Gambling Ombudsman.

## **Supporting our Workforce**

Our health and social care services' greatest resource is their staff, working tirelessly under immense pressure. We will:

- Guarantee all NHS and social care service staff who are EU nationals, the right to stay in the UK.
- End the public sector pay freeze for NHS workers.

- Protect NHS whistle-blowers and introduce a Welsh NHS whistleblowing hotline.

GPs in particular have been put under considerable strain, leaving many people waiting weeks to get appointments. GPs are the core of the NHS and they need support to ensure that the NHS is able to survive and thrive.

We recognise that rural and Welsh language primary care services are often the most vulnerable, services that play a vital role within their communities. We want:

- A national workforce strategy, ensuring that we never again experience a shortage in the numbers of GPs, hospital doctors, nurses and other professionals that the NHS needs.
  - An Access to GPs Scheme, funding GP practices to make sure people can get the appointments they need.
  - To make it easier to register at a GP's practice near where you work
  - To develop alternative ways, using modern technology, to connect GPs and patients.
- Support GP federations and clusters being given real decision-making powers with delegated budgets.

## Help to Stay Healthy

It is better for patients and for the NHS if we keep people healthy in the first place, rather than just waiting until people develop illnesses and come for treatment, too much of NHS spending is on diseases that are preventable. We need to do more to promote healthy eating and exercise, making people aware of the dangers of smoking and excessive consumption of alcohol and other drugs, and helping to improve mental health and wellbeing. We will:

- Develop a strategy to tackle childhood obesity including restricting the marketing of junk food to children, restricting TV advertising before the 9pm watershed, and closing loopholes in the sugary drinks tax.
- Encourage the traffic light labelling system for food products and publication of information on calorie, fat, sugar and salt content in restaurants and takeaways.
- Introduce mandatory targets on sugar reduction for food and drink producers.
- Reduce smoking rates, introducing a levy on tobacco companies so they fairly contribute to the costs of health care and smoking cessation services.



- Introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol, taking note of the impact of the policy in Scotland.
- Support good practice among employers in promoting wellbeing and ensure people with mental health problems get the help they need to stay in or find work.

We want to:

- Move towards a health and social care system that empowers and encourages people to better manage their own health and conditions and to live healthier lives.
- Support effective public awareness campaigns and learn from what works when designing new health promotion campaigns to change behaviour.
- Develop a public health campaign promoting the steps people can take to improve their own mental resilience.

Recent new measures to allow the limited use of medicinal cannabis are too restrictive as the Government is driven by fear rather than evidence. Instead of applying a different standard of evidence to cannabis than to other medicinal products, Liberal Democrats believe we should be led by what provides clinical benefit to patients, and reform access to medicinal cannabis through a regulated cannabis market in UK, with a robust approach to licensing.

To combat the harm done by drugs, we will:

- Move the departmental lead on drugs policy to the Department of Health.
- Divert people arrested for possession of drugs for personal use into treatment, and imposing civil penalties rather than imprisonment.
- Break the grip of the criminal gangs and protecting young people by introducing a legal, regulated market for cannabis. We would introduce limits on potency and permit cannabis to be sold through licensed outlets to adults over the age of 18.
- Concentrate on catching and prosecuting those who manufacture, import or deal in illegal drugs.
- Repeal the Psychoactive Substances Act which has driven the sale of formerly legal highs underground.
- Take strong action to stop the people-trafficking that forms a large part of illegal

drug manufacture in the UK.

We believe that everyone has a right to make independent decisions over their reproductive health without interference by the state, and that access to reproductive healthcare is a human right, as recently confirmed by the Supreme Court in relation to Northern Ireland. It is not right that induced abortion is currently a crime throughout the UK, (although the Abortion Act 1967 provides exceptions to the crime of administering or procuring an abortion in England, Wales and Scotland, and the common law allows some exceptions in Northern Ireland). Numerous medical organisations, including the Royal College of Midwives the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists and the BMA support treating abortion as a medical regulatory matter rather than a crime. We will:

- Decriminalise abortion by repealing sections 58 and 59 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861, while retaining the Infant Life Preservation Act 1929 and the framework for exemptions laid out in the Abortion Act 1967; any changes to the legislation would still incorporate the existing 24-week term limit.
- Provide funding so that users of reproductive healthcare services are provided with enough specialist advice to make fully informed decisions.
- Enforce safe zones around abortion service providers so that those visiting can travel to them free of any harassment or pressure on their decision, and to make intimidation or harassment of abortion service users outside clinics, or on common transport routes to these services, illegal.
- Provide funding to enable abortion clinics to provide their services free of charge to service users regardless of country of nationality or residency, using standard NHS provision criteria.
- Support the people of Northern Ireland to have access to abortion facilities within their own province.

## How does the EU help?

EU citizens make a huge contribution to the UK's health and social care services. A substantial proportion of doctors, nurses and social care workers in Wales are EU nationals and the number is falling since the EU referendum.

EU membership benefits health and social care services in other ways too. The EU funds research into new treatments for diseases and gives the UK access to



cutting edge treatments at the earliest opportunity. The EU provides important coordination on the management of pandemics, which must be a cross-border endeavour. And, the European Health Card means that UK citizens can easily receive medical treatment when they are visiting other countries in the EU.

The UK imports a great number of medical goods from the EU that are essential for treating disease: we rely on our membership of Euratom to get access to the radioactive isotopes that are relied upon for cancer diagnosis, we rely on imports of blood plasma – which cannot be replaced from within the UK due to the risk of variant CJD – from the EU, and the UK is also dependent on the EU for insulin. Membership of the EU – and Euratom – helps protect the health and wellbeing of people in the UK.





# Our Plan to Build a Fair Society

People should have enough money to keep a roof over their heads, buy food, heat their home, access services and opportunities online, or afford a simple bus journey to visit or care for family. But this is sadly beyond the reach of too many people: life has become unaffordable. While the UK is one of the world's richest countries, the benefits and opportunities that should follow from that are felt increasingly unevenly across our communities.

More than one in five (23%) people in Wales now live in poverty; including more than one in four (29%) children. The number people sleeping rough continues to rise as more people are forced to live in unsafe or unsuitable accommodation and increasing numbers face unaffordable rents and rent arrears. The situation is so bad that the UN felt the need to send its Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty to the UK to assess the situation.

Labour and the Conservatives are both unable to tackle these challenges. The Conservatives have intentionally designed the welfare system for a traditional family with a main breadwinner and two children, which is entirely out of step with the modern world. Labour have a nostalgic attachment to a nine-to-five working life that does not suit modern life either, as increasingly households have two earners and people want to be able to work flexibly.

Liberal Democrats are the only party with a plan to tackle poverty and inequality that makes sense in the modern world. A plan that will mean a social security system that provides a real safety net for those that need it, and effectively supports people to get back into work; a plan that will support disabled people and help them find meaningful work that they can reasonably do; a plan that will rebalance the economy and help rural and coastal communities thrive; a plan that will ensure that – wherever people are in the country – they have access to the services that they need. We will build a future in which people are supported in hard times and in which opportunity is spread across the whole country.

The importance of tackling poverty and inequality goes beyond ensuring that life is affordable: it is the poorest and most vulnerable people and areas of the country that are most impacted by crime. We believe that preventing crime and ensuring people feel safe are crucial to achieving social justice. We want to build a police force that is fit for the 21st century, in which police officers feel valued and able to focus on cutting crime.

Liberal Democrats are the only party capable of building a criminal justice system that can effectively prevent crime. For 25 years, both the Conservatives and Labour have been looking to the failed approaches of the past and competing to seem tough on crime, without being willing to take the preventative measures that actually work. We will build safe communities in which people do not need to fear crime. Our plan for the police will see investment in community policing and a public health approach to serious violence. Instead of wasting money locking people up on short sentences that don't work, we will spend it on the things that really do prevent crime.

#### **Our priorities in the next parliament will be:**

- **Investing £6 billion per year to make the benefits system work for people who need it and reducing the wait for the first benefits payment from five weeks to five days.**
- **Introducing a principle of universal access to basic services.**
- **Creating a £50 billion Regional Rebalancing Programme to address the historic investment disparities between our nations and regions.**

## **A Safety Net that Works**

The social security system is not working as it should: it is driving people further into poverty and forcing families to rely on foodbanks to get by. The Conservatives have designed the welfare system based on their backward-looking view of work and families and are making the matter worse. Liberal Democrats are looking to the future and will build a system that works for the modern world to support those who need it and help people back into work. We will:

- Make the welfare system work by:
  - Reducing the wait for the first payment from five weeks to five days.
  - Tackling child poverty by removing the two-child limit and the benefits cap.



- Making work pay by increasing work allowances and introducing a second earner work allowance.
- Establish a legal right to food to enshrine in law the government's responsibility to ensure that existing and new public policy is audited for its impact on food security.
- Reform Universal Credit to be more supportive of the self-employed
- Increase Local Housing Allowance in line with average rents in an area.
- Abolish the bedroom tax and introduce positive incentives for people to downsize.
- Ensure that everyone gets the help they need by separating employment support from benefits administration and increase spending on training and education.
- Scrap the sanctions system, which does not encourage people into work, penalises people with mental health issues and deters people from claiming support, and replace it with an incentive-based scheme.
- Reverse the cuts to Employment Support Allowance for those in the work-related activity group.
- End Work Capability Assessments and replace them with a new system that is run by local authorities and based on real world tests.
- Reinstate the Independent Living Fund.
- Radically overhaul the Bereavement Allowance, slashed by the Conservatives, so that widows and widowers receive far more support and extend the payments to unmarried couples when a parent dies.
- Pilot a secure income guarantee to test the impact of introducing an unconditional element to the benefits system.
- Aim to end fuel poverty by 2025 by providing free energy retrofits for low-income homes as part of our emergency programme to reduce energy consumption from all the UK's buildings.

## Support for Pensioners

Everybody should have enough to live on when they retire, but low wages and underemployment mean that people are not able to save as much for their retirement as they need. Because people are living longer – meaning that their pensions need to last for 20, 30 or even 40 years – many people find themselves in an even more vulnerable position. Liberal Democrats are looking to the future and will build a country that is the best place in the world to save for, and enjoy,

retirement. We will:

- Retain the Triple Lock on the basic state pension, so that it rises in line with the highest of wages, prices or 2.5 per cent.
- Ensure that the women born in the 1950s are properly compensated for the failure of government to properly notify them of changes to the state pension age, in line with the recommendations of the parliamentary ombudsman.
- Address continuing inequalities in pensions law for those in same-sex relationships.

## **Access to Affordable Housing**

People are struggling to afford good homes in in the right location: house prices are too high and the possibility of owning a home seems remote for many people; the private rental market is expensive and insecure; and there are not enough homes for social rent to meet demand.

The Conservatives, looking back to the 1980s, have tried to solve the problem of unaffordable homes by extending Right to Buy, but that has only served to deplete stock and deepen the crisis in social housing. Liberal Democrats are looking to the future and will oversee a substantial building programme to ensure that everybody has a safe and secure home. We will:

- Help finance the large increase in the building of social homes with investment from our £130 billion capital infrastructure budget.
- Build new houses to zero-carbon standards and cut fuel bills through a ten-year programme to reduce energy consumption from all the UK's buildings.

House prices are high across the country. Even where houses are available to buy, they are often unaffordable for first time buyers. In many areas, the rental market has also become unaffordable. Young people particularly need support from the government to help them find and keep a home of their own.

Housing is devolved to the Welsh Government, but through the Progressive Agreement between Kirsty Williams and the First Minister we are already improving access to affordable housing in Wales. We are:

- Building an additional 20,000 affordable homes in Wales over the course of this Assembly.



- Implementing a new Rent to Own Model; a model where through rent payments tenants get an increasing stake in the property and are helped to eventually own it outright.

We recognise that the scale of the housing crisis demands further action. Were we to form the next Welsh Government we would:

- Research how many additional homes Wales is likely to require over the next decade and explore how this demand could feasibly be met and funded.
- Ensure that new social homes are built to low carbon developments and are accessible.
- Support the development of zero carbon homes to minimise costs for residents and help combat climate change.
- Ensure that all local authorities have at least one provider of the Housing First model of provision for long term, entrenched homeless people.

We would also scrap the Vagrancy Act were we to form the next UK Government, so that rough sleeping is no longer criminalised.

## **Rural and Coastal Communities**

Rural communities are vital to the character and strength of Wales. Liberal Democrats have a long tradition of representing these communities and understand their needs. We will always give rural interests a high priority.

People in rural and coastal areas should be able to work and live locally, to have access to a well-funded and integrated transport network and to have equal access to the new technology that is shaping 21st century life. This, however, is far from being the reality: a proliferation of second homes and holiday cottages mean that there is a lack of affordable homes for the people that make communities work – teachers, nurses, carers, agricultural workers, police officers, shopkeepers among others; transport is usually limited to an expensive, infrequent and unreliable bus service; broadband and mobile services aren't fit-for-purpose; and people limited access to services.

Both Labour and Conservative governments have used central government funds in a way that has shown no concern for rural and coastal areas. Government spending per person is lower in these communities, policies are developed

without due consideration of how they will work in sparsely populated areas, and investment clearly focuses on metropolitan areas.

The Liberal Democrats are the only party demanding better for rural and coastal communities: we would ensure that rural communities serve the people that live and work in them, rather than incoming wealthy retirees and property developers. For people living in these areas, we are committed to building thriving communities that are innovative, flexible, resilient and prepared for the future.

A thriving rural community needs local services and community facilities such as schools, public transport, local shops, cultural venues and pubs. It needs enough homes, affordable for local families, to ensure those services are viable. Liberal Democrats understand the changes needed to support a living, working countryside.

- Invest £2 billion in innovative solutions to ensure the provision of high-speed broadband across the UK.
- Invest in mobile data infrastructure and expand it to cover all homes.
- Commit to preventing Post Office closures and protect Royal Mail's Universal Service Obligation to deliver across the UK for the same price.

## **A Public Health Approach to Violence**

People should feel safe in their homes and on their streets. But this is not how it is for too many people today: knife crime has increased by over 75 per cent since 2015; homicides are at their highest rate for a decade; robberies and thefts are increasing and almost all go unsolved; and there are more and more places in the country where people simply don't see police officers. The Conservatives, having unnecessarily cut police funding in England and Wales, are now trying to seem tough on crime without actually doing what is needed to prevent it. We understand that the situation needs more than tough talk: our plan means more police, properly supported by the government and focused on the community policing that prevents crime and makes people feel safe while investing in the services that will help people build lives free from crime.

We believe that powers over youth justice, probation services, prisons and policing should be devolved to allow Wales to create an effective, liberal, community-based



approach to policing and tackling crime.

Until these powers are devolved to Wales, these are our priorities for policing and justice at a UK Government Level:

- Invest £1 billion to restore community policing across England and Wales. Enough for two new police officers in every ward.
- Adopt a public health approach to the epidemic of youth violence: identifying risk factors and treating them, rather than just focusing on the symptoms. This means police, teachers, health professionals, youth workers and social services all working closely together to prevent young people falling prey to gangs and violence.
- Embed Trauma-informed Youth Intervention Specialists in all Major Trauma Centres.
- Introduce a target of one hour for handover of people suffering from mental health crisis from police to mental health services and support the police to achieve adequate levels of training in mental health response.
- Fully fund an immediate two per cent pay-rise for police officers to support recruitment and retention, and future pay rises in line with recommendations from the independent Police Remuneration Review Body.
- Properly resource the National Crime Agency to combat serious and organised crime, and tackle modern slavery and human trafficking through proactive, intelligence-led enforcement of labour market standards.
- Create a new Online Crime Agency to effectively tackle illegal content and activity online, such as personal fraud, revenge porn and threats and incitement to violence on social media.
- End the disproportionate use of Stop and Search.
- Prevent violence against women and girls and domestic abuse, and support survivors, by:
  - Ratifying and bringing into force the Istanbul Convention.
  - Legislating for a statutory definition of domestic abuse that includes its effects on children.
  - Expanding the number of refuges and rape crisis centres.
  - Ensuring sustainable funding for specialist independent support services.
  - Giving local authorities the duty and funding to provide accommodation for survivors of abuse.
  - Establishing a national rape crisis helpline.

- Ensuring access to special measures for survivors in all courts and preventing direct cross-examination of survivors by their abusers.
- Replace Police and Crime Commissioners with accountable Police Boards made up of local councillors.
- Stop Brexit and maintain the European crime-fighting tools that keep us all safe, including: Europol, the European Arrest Warrant and direct access to shared police databases.

## Reducing Reoffending

Prisons should be places of rehabilitation: when people leave them they should be ready to reintegrate into society with work and a place to live. But, the prison system is in crisis and not delivering this: prisons are overcrowded and understaffed and riots, drug use, suicide and extreme violence have all become far too common. For decades, Labour and Conservative governments have repeated the same failed policies, desperate to appear tough on crime while failing to properly provide the services that help people build lives free from crime. Only the Liberal Democrats have a vision for making the justice system work. Instead of wasting money locking people up on short sentences that don't work, we will spend it on the things that actually prevent crime. We will protect people from becoming victims of crime by focusing on what works to stop re-offending. We will:

- Transform prisons into places of rehabilitation and recovery by recruiting 2,000 more prison officers across England and Wales and improving the provision of training, education and work opportunities.
- Reduce the number of people unnecessarily in prison, including by: introducing a presumption against short prison sentences; ending prison sentences for the possession of drugs for personal use; and increasing the use of tough community sentences and restorative justice where appropriate.
- Establish a Women's Justice Board and provide specialist training for all staff in contact with women in the criminal justice system.
- Reduce the overrepresentation of people from BAME backgrounds throughout the criminal justice system, including by:
  - Uniformly recording data on ethnicity across the criminal justice system and publishing complete data to allow analysis and scrutiny.
  - Introducing a principle of "explain or reform": if the criminal justice system cannot explain disparities between ethnic groups, then it must be reformed



to address them.

- Promoting greater diversity in the criminal justice system by ensuring that the police, prison service and judiciary all adopt ambitious targets for improving the diversity of their workforce and requiring regular reports on progress to parliament.
- Improve and properly fund the supervision of offenders in the community, with far greater coordination between the prison service, probation service providers, the voluntary and private sectors and local authorities, achieving savings in the high costs of reoffending.
- Ensure that all prison-leavers have a suitably timed release and are supported with suitable accommodation, a bank account and employment or training, and are registered with a local GP.
- Improve mental health support and treatment within the criminal justice system and ensure continuity of mental health care and addiction treatment in prison and the community.
- Reform criminal record disclosure rules so that people do not have to declare irrelevant old and minor convictions and remove questions about criminal convictions from initial application forms for all public-sector jobs.





# Our Plan for Freedom, Rights and Equality

People should be able to live their lives free from discrimination or intrusion and without fear of having their most fundamental rights violated. But this is not the reality in the UK today. The hostile environment has unacceptably trampled on people's rights and people are still discriminated against on the basis of their gender, race, age, sexuality, gender identity, religion or whether they are disabled. Inequalities are rife – children from Black households are more likely to be in persistent poverty and both hate crimes and violence against women and girls are far too prevalent.

The Conservatives and Labour have entirely failed to stand up to hatred or combat entrenched inequalities. The Conservatives have been relentlessly hostile in their rhetoric and policy around migration and have failed to take allegations of Islamophobia within their party seriously; Jeremy Corbyn has failed to tackle institutional anti-Semitism in the Labour Party. For decades, both parties have seen civil liberties as an inconvenience standing in the way of other priorities, which has meant attacks on individual rights and surveillance of citizens conducted outside the law.

Our plan is for a free society where every person's rights and liberties are protected and where the contribution of migrants to our society is celebrated. A plan for a world where everybody's rights are respected and society is fair and diverse; a plan to allow everyone to get on and live as who they are, free from discrimination or state intrusion; a plan that means that those who choose to come to the UK to work, study or join their families are welcomed for the skills and contributions that they bring; a plan where family unity is protected and the rule of law is respected.

**Our priorities in the next parliament will be:**

- **Standing up for human rights by championing the Human Rights Act and**

**the European Convention on Human Rights.**

- **Fixing the broken immigration system by scrapping the Conservatives' hostile environment, ending indefinite detention and taking powers away from the Home Office.**
- **Giving asylum seekers the right to work three months after they have applied and resettling 10,000 unaccompanied refugee children in the UK over the next ten years.**

## **Protect Civil Liberties**

Our rights and freedoms are under threat. Labour and Conservatives consistently vote for new laws that curtail civil liberties and Conservatives repeatedly threaten the Human Rights Act that safeguards our individual freedoms. Liberal Democrats will build a society where rights and liberties are protected and where nobody has their privacy violated by prying instruments of the state. We will:

- Defend the Human Rights Act, resist any attempt to withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights and oppose any laws that unnecessarily erode civil liberties.
- Establish a new right to affordable, reasonable legal assistance, and invest £500 million to restore Legal Aid, making the system simpler and more generous.
- End the bulk collection of communications data and internet connection records.
- Introduce a Lovelace Code of Ethics to govern the use of personal data and artificial intelligence to ensure it is unbiased, transparent and accurate, and respects privacy.
- Immediately halt the use of facial recognition surveillance by the police.
- Introduce a right to no-fault divorce.
- Extend limited legal rights to cohabiting couples, for example, to give them greater protection in the event of separation or a partner's death.
- Complete the introduction of equal marriage, by:
  - Removing the spousal veto.
  - Allowing those marriages that were dissolved solely due to the Gender Recognition process to be retrospectively restored.
  - Enabling the Church of England and Church in Wales to conduct same-sex marriages.
- Introduce legal recognition of humanist marriages.



## Demand Equality

People should be able to go about their lives without fear of discrimination. However, hate crimes are on the rise and too many groups of people no longer feel safe. We believe that government needs to take an active role both in punishing discrimination and ensuring that it does not happen in the first place. We will:

- Tackle the rise in hate crimes by making them all aggravated offences, giving law enforcement the resources and training they need to identify and prevent them, and condemning inflammatory rhetoric – including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia – by those with public platforms.
- Provide funding for protective security measures to places of worship, schools and community centres that are vulnerable to hate crime and terror attacks.
- Complete reform of the Gender Recognition Act to remove the requirement for medical reports, scrap the fee and recognise non-binary gender identities.
- Introduce an 'X' gender option on passports and extend equality law to cover gender identity and expression.
- Ensure accurate population data on sexual orientation and gender identity by including a question on LGBT+ status within the 2021 Census.
- Increase accessibility to public places and transport by making more stations wheelchair accessible, improving the legislative framework governing blue badges, setting up a benchmarking standard for accessible cities, and banning discrimination by private hire vehicles and taxis.
- Introduce a British Sign Language Act to give BSL full legal recognition.
- End period poverty by removing VAT on sanitary products and providing them for free in schools, hospitals, hostels, shelters, libraries, leisure centres, stadiums, GP surgeries, food banks, colleges and universities.
- Scrap the so-called 'Pink Tax', ending the gender price gap.
- Outlaw caste discrimination.

## Promote Diversity

Liberal Democrats believe that in the diversity of the UK should be represented in public and working life. That means that women, ethnic minority groups, LGBT+ people and disabled people should be properly represented and paid fairly. But deep-seated and – normally – unconscious biases mean that too many workplaces

lack diversity and inequalities remain entrenched. We will tackle institutional biases, promote equality and hold power to account through applying values of openness, transparency and accountability. We will:

- Increase statutory paternity leave from the current two weeks up to six weeks and ensure that parental leave is a day-one right, and address continuing inequalities faced by same-sex couples.
- Require organisations to publish parental leave and pay policies.
- Continue the drive for diversity in business leadership, pushing for at least 40 per cent of board members being women in FTSE 350 companies and implementing the recommendations of the Parker review to increase ethnic minority representation.
- Extend the Equality Act to all large companies with more than 250 employees, requiring them to monitor and publish data on gender, BAME, and LGBT+ employment levels and pay gaps.
- Extend the use of name-blind recruitment processes in the public sector and encourage their use in the private sector.
- Improve diversity in UK public appointments by setting ambitious targets, which go further than targets for the private sector, and require reporting against progress with explanations when targets are not met.
- Develop a free, comprehensive unconscious bias training toolkit and make the provision of unconscious bias training to all members of staff a condition of the receipt of UK public funds.
- Develop a UK Government-wide plan to tackle BAME inequalities and review the funding of the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ensure that it is adequate.

## **A Compassionate and Effective Immigration System**

Britain's immigration system is in desperate need of reform. The Conservatives' hostile environment has caused far too many innocent people to have their rights violated – most notably the Windrush generation. The NHS can't recruit the doctors and nurses it needs; families are separated by unfair, complex visa requirements; people are detained indefinitely, in inhumane conditions and at great expense. Decades of incompetence, cruelty and hostile rhetoric from Labour and Conservative Home Secretaries have shattered confidence in the system. The Liberal Democrats are the only party with a plan for a fair migration system that



works for everyone. A plan to ensure that migrants coming to the UK are welcomed for the skills and contribution that they bring, while ensuring that everyone has confidence that the immigration system is functioning as it should. We will:

- Stop Brexit and save EU freedom of movement.
- Scrap the Conservatives' hostile environment.
- Invest in officers, training and technology to prevent illegal entry at Britain's borders, assist seekers of sanctuary and combat human trafficking and the smuggling of people, weapons, drugs and wildlife.
- Make immigration detention an absolute last resort, introduce a 28-day time limit on detention and close seven of the UK's nine detention centres.
- Establish a firewall to prevent public agencies from sharing personal information with the Home Office for the purposes of immigration enforcement and repeal the immigration exemption in the Data Protection Act.
- Move policymaking on work permits and student visas out of the Home Office and into the Departments for Business and Education respectively, and establish a new arms-length, non-political agency to take over processing applications.
- Replace Tier 2 work visas with a more flexible merit-based system.
- Introduce a 'Training up Britain' programme to make the most of migrants' skills.
- Create a new two-year visa for students to work after graduation.
- Reduce the fee for registering a child as a British citizen from £1,012 to the cost of administration.
- Abolish the arbitrary, complex minimum income requirement for spouse and partner visas.
- Waive application fees for indefinite leave for members of the Armed Forces on discharge and their families.
- Enable people who came here as children to apply for resident status.

## **Dignity for Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

We must do all we can to protect people forced to flee their homes to escape war and persecution. The UK has a proud history of providing sanctuary to those in need, but Labour and Conservative governments have introduced a harsh system that fails to respect people's dignity. Thousands of asylum seekers are forced to wait many months for a decision, unable to work, rent a home or support their

families. Too many people are wrongly denied asylum, with 40 per cent of refusals overturned on appeal. Liberal Democrats are the only party who can make the system work fairly for seekers of sanctuary. We will:

- Give asylum seekers the right to work three months after they have applied, enabling them to work in any role so that they can support themselves, integrate into their communities and contribute through taxation.
- Provide safe and legal routes to sanctuary in the UK by resettling 10,000 vulnerable refugees each year and a further 10,000 unaccompanied refugee children from elsewhere in Europe over the next ten years, whilst expanding family reunion rights.
- Offer asylum to people fleeing the risk of violence because of their sexual orientation or gender identification, end the culture of disbelief for LGBT+ asylum seekers and never refuse an LGBT+ applicant on the basis that they could be discreet.
- Move asylum policymaking from the Home Office to the Department for International Development and establish a dedicated unit to improve the speed and quality of decision-making.
- Provide free basic English lessons to refugees and asylum seekers and scrap the 16 hours-per-week rule with respect to financial support for those unable to work due to insufficient English.
- Increase the 'move-on period' for refugees from 28 days to 60 days.



# Our Plan for a Better Politics

Everybody, wherever they live, should be given a proper chance to influence the decisions that affect them. But, as it stands, British politics is far from delivering this for people. Too many are being cheated out of a voice and a vote. For some, that is because they live in a constituency where they feel that it does not matter who they vote for – the same party will always get elected. For young people, EU citizens and many British people living abroad, it is because they are denied any say at all in elections to parliament. The failure of the UK's democratic system to reflect the diversity of the public's views in parliament has played a major role in creating the current political crisis – fixing this is a matter of urgency.

Neither Labour nor Conservatives are interested in changing our broken system, because it works to keep them in power. They have been driven to the extremes and their leaders seek to win power by being slightly more palatable than the alternative – but the UK deserves better than the choice of the lesser of two evils. Liberal Democrats have a plan to radically transform our political system so that it works for a modern democracy. A plan that will mend our broken politics so that we can get on with building a fairer society that protects our planet.

**Our priorities in the next parliament will be:**

- **Giving people a voice with a fair voting system so that everyone's vote counts equally, letting people vote at the first election or referendum after they turn 16 and giving votes to all British citizens abroad and to EU citizens who have made the UK their long-term home.**
- **Embarking on a radical redistribution of power away from Westminster to the nations, regions and local authorities, giving power to communities to hold local services to account and decide how their taxes are raised and spent.**
- **Introducing a written constitution for a federal United Kingdom.**

## Fair Votes

The current UK Parliament voting system is not working. It means that too many people do not have their voices heard. Liberal Democrats are the only party that





realises that the system is broken and will change it so that it works for the future: Labour and Conservatives will not change the system that has always entrenched their privileged position. We understand that British politics needs to be reformed to make it more representative and empower citizens. We will:

- Put an end to wasted votes, by introducing proportional representation through the Single Transferable Vote for electing MPs.
- Give 16- and 17-year olds the right to vote in elections and referendums.
- Extend the right to full participation in civic life, including the ability to stand for office or vote in UK referendums, Local Elections and General Elections, to all EU citizens who have lived in the UK for five years or more.
- Introduce a legal requirement for local authorities to inform citizens of the steps they must take to be successfully registered with far greater efforts in particular to register under-represented groups; and ensure that the UK has an automatic system of inclusion in elections.
- Enable all UK citizens living abroad to vote for MPs in separate overseas constituencies, and to participate in UK referendums.
- Scrap the plans to require voters to bring identification with them to vote.
- Reform the House of Lords with a proper democratic mandate.
- Enabling Parliament, rather than the Queen-in-Council, to approve when parliament is prorogued and for how long.
- Ensure that a new Prime Minister, and their programme for government, must win a confidence vote of MPs.
- Take a zero-tolerance approach to harassment and bullying in Westminster and legislate to empower constituents to recall MPs who commit sexual harassment.
- Legislate to allow all-BAME and all-LGBT+ shortlists.
- Bring into force Section 106 of the Equality Act 2010, requiring political parties to publish candidate diversity data.

## High-Quality Public Debate

A well-functioning democracy should have a high standard of public debate in which: citizens are supported, educated and empowered to distinguish between facts and lies; there is a pluralistic media environment where journalists have the resources they need to find the truth and to hold the powerful to account; civility in public discourse is protected; election procedures and rules are upheld robustly

and quickly. However, these foundations of our democratic way of life are under threat. Liberal Democrats are the only party forward-looking enough to do what it takes to foster high quality public debate. We will:

- Mandate the provision of televised leaders' debates in general elections, based on rules produced by Ofcom.
- Introduce a Leveson-compliant regulator to be given oversight of both privacy and quality, diversity and choice in both print and online media and proceed with Part Two of the Leveson Inquiry.
- Take big money out of politics by capping donations to political parties and introduce wider reforms to party funding along the lines of the 2011 report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
- Establish citizens' assemblies to ensure that the public are fully engaged in finding solutions to the greatest challenges we face, such as tackling the climate emergency and the use of artificial intelligence and algorithms by the state.
- Expect the BBC both to provide impartial news and information, and to take a leading role in increasing media literacy and educating all generations in tackling the impact of fake news.
- Strengthen and expand the lobbying register and ban MPs from accepting paid lobbying work.
- Work towards radical real-time transparency for political advertising, donations and spending, including an easily-searchable public database of all online political adverts.
- Make algorithms used by the data companies available for close inspection by regulators acting for democratically elected governments, along with access for regulators to the programmers responsible for designing and operating them.
- Review the need for any election safeguarding legislation that is needed to respond to emerging challenges of the internet age, such as foreign interference in elections.

## **Power for the Nations and Regions**

The people who best understand what the UK's nations and regions need are those who live in them. However, the Conservative government has a terrible record at meeting the needs of the UK outside its heartlands in the south of England – this is most clear in the way that the Conservative government has excluded voices from the nations in the Brexit negotiations.



Liberal Democrats want home rule for each of the nations of a strong, federal and united United Kingdom. We have a proud record of leading the way on giving greater powers to Scotland and Wales. We will not allow Brexit to reverse devolution and will oppose attempts to use Brexit to go back to the past when powers were hoarded at Westminster. We will champion a federal future for the UK.

Our plans for a written, federal constitution will include a permanent Scottish Parliament and Welsh Parliament and we will take forward practical steps to ensure that Scotland and Wales both have strong voices in the future of the family of nations. We will:

- Extend the involvement of the Scottish Government and Welsh Government in the development of UK-wide policy frameworks.
- Specifically include health and education departments of the Scottish and Welsh governments in UK policymaking on drug policy and student visas.
- Create a Joint Climate Council of the Nations to coordinate action to tackle the climate emergency.
- Improve joint ministerial work on new cross-cutting policies, such as the UK industrial strategy.
- Establish a dispute resolution process to resolve differences between the administrations.

## **Wales**

In the 20 years since the National Assembly for Wales was created, we have proudly played our part in Wales' devolution journey: 20 years of devolution has allowed the Welsh National Assembly to mature into a Welsh Parliament. Yet Brexit now threatens much of this progress. We recognise that stopping Brexit and protecting existing levels of devolution will not be enough to create the federal Britain that Wales needs to achieve its potential.

We will complete the next stage of devolution in Wales by implementing the remaining Silk proposals and substantially reducing the number of powers reserved to Westminster. In addition to these steps, to ensure Wales has a strong voice within the UK we will:

- Devolve Air Passenger Duty to put Wales on a fair playing field with Scotland and Northern Ireland and put Cardiff Airport on a fair playing field with regional airports in England.
- Create a distinct legal jurisdiction for Wales to reflect the growing divergence in law as a result of devolution.
- Devolve powers over youth justice, probation services, prisons and policing to allow Wales to create an effective, liberal, community-based approach to policing and tackling crime.

We firmly believe Wales is best off as part of both the UK and the EU. Each union is worth billions of pounds to the Welsh economy and supports tens of thousands of jobs.

For Wales, a federal UK will mean a truly equal family of nations, ensuring that every part of this union has a voice, backed up by real, meaningful devolution. We will work to create a Wales that is able to shape its own destiny as part of a strong United Kingdom playing a leading role within the EU.

## **Funding Devolution**

The nations of the United Kingdom have long had different needs with regard to funding. The Liberal Democrats when in government delivered a substantial extension of financial powers to the nations of the UK and we will devolve further fiscal powers. To ensure reliable funding, we will retain the Barnett formula to adjust spending allocations across the UK. This will protect the individual nations' budgets from external shocks. However, we recognise the findings of the Holtham Commission that the current formula underfunds Wales and will commission work to update this analysis. We will address the imbalance by immediately ensuring that the Barnett floor is set at a level that reflects the need for Wales to be funded fairly and seek over a parliament to increase the Welsh block grant to an equitable level.



# Our Plan for a Better World

The world today feels increasingly unstable and unsafe. Nationalism and authoritarianism are on the rise in countries across the globe. President Trump has repeatedly acted to cause instability, whether by initiating trade wars or abandoning Kurdish allies in Syria; Putin's Russia is persistently threatening the international rules-based order; and tensions continue to rise across the world – a brutal war still rages in Yemen, relationships with Iran are increasingly difficult and citizens are protesting against their leaders in places such as Hong Kong, Pakistan and Chile. The UK should be playing a leading role as part of a coalition of liberal democracies to respond to these challenges, but Brexit has already undermined our ability to shape world events.

Both the Conservatives and Labour would pursue a mistaken and backwards looking approach to foreign affairs that would further undermine the UK's position in the world. The Conservatives base their plans on an invented past, blind to the realities of Empire, and Boris Johnson has shown, with his comments about Nazanin Zaghari-Radcliffe, that he cannot be trusted to protect British citizens; the Labour leadership, wedded to an anti-Western obsession that makes them persistent apologists for an increasingly aggressive Russian government, likewise cannot be trusted to protect the UK's interests.

Only the Liberal Democrats have a plan to renew international liberalism in Britain and ensure that the UK plays an active role in building a better world. A plan that will tear down walls, not build them; a plan that will champion the values of human rights, democracy, and equality; a plan that means working through multilateral organisations such as the EU, UN, NATO, and the WTO, rather than undermining or leaving them entirely. By clearly committing to these multilateral organisations, we can tackle our shared challenges, live up to our values internationally and shape international events in the interests of the UK.

**Our priorities in the next parliament will be:**

- **Defending international cooperation against the rising tides of nationalism and isolationism, supporting multilateral organisations like**





the UN and NATO which are increasingly under threat.

- Spending 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on aid: reducing poverty, defending human rights, protecting the environment and preventing violent conflict worldwide.
- Cooperating with the UK's European and global partners in tackling the climate and environmental emergencies.
- Controlling arms exports to countries with poor human rights records and, as part of this, suspending arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

## A Peaceful World

Liberalism and cooperation have a vital role to play in securing peace, promoting democracy and defending human rights across the world. But the rules-based international order that has governed international relations for the past 70 years is under threat. The Liberal Democrats are the only party that is looking forward: neither the Conservatives nor Labour have a convincing vision of the UK's role in the world. We will build on the UK's proud record of international leadership through the EU, UN, NATO and the Commonwealth by promoting values of freedom and opportunity for all. It has never been more important for the UK to work with allies as a champion of this message. We will:

- Champion the liberal, rules-based international order, which provides a strong basis for multilateral action to address the world's biggest problems.
- Use all aspects of government policy – trade, aid and diplomacy as well as military cooperation – to strengthen UK efforts to prevent violent conflict.
- Increase overseas financial support for the ongoing refugee crisis, focussing on countries that have accepted millions of refugees.
- Work with European partners to introduce a European Magnitsky Act that would enable sanctions against corrupt individuals and perpetrators of human rights abuses.
- Improve control of arms exports, including by introducing a policy of 'presumption of denial' for arms exports to countries listed as Human Rights Priority Countries in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's annual human rights report.

Liberal Democrats believe that despite efforts to prevent violent conflict, sometimes military intervention is necessary. The UK should only intervene

militarily when there is a clear legal or humanitarian case, endorsed by a vote in parliament – working through international institutions whenever possible. We will encourage dialogue and mediation to reduce conflict between and within countries, working through the UN and other agencies. In response to current crises, we will:

- Legislate to ensure there is a parliamentary vote before engaging in military action, while preserving the ability to engage in action in emergencies or under treaty obligation without requiring parliamentary approval.
- Focus on the diplomatic priorities of the UN's Responsibility to Protect doctrine and establish new tests to ensure that any UK action has regional support, a reasonable prospect of defined success, and a sound legal and humanitarian case.
- Work with international partners to tackle violent extremism, paying special attention to UK citizens who have fought overseas for terrorist organisations who may become significant sources of terrorist activity if they return to Britain.
- On Syria, cooperate internationally to stabilise the region and provide humanitarian assistance.
- Work with the EU to revive the Iran nuclear deal.
- Officially recognise the independent state of Palestine, condemn violence on all sides of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and support Israel's right to security. We remain committed to a negotiated peace settlement, which includes a two-state solution.
- Suspend UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia in response to their consistent targeting of civilians, in breach of international humanitarian law, in Yemen.
- Promote democracy and stability in Ukraine and neighbouring countries against an increasingly aggressive Russia, by working closely with the EU and international partners to exert maximum economic and political pressure, and standing by our NATO treaty obligations.
- Honour our legal and moral duty to the people of Hong Kong by reopening the British National Overseas Passport offer, extending the scheme to provide the right to abode to all holders.

## **A Secure Defence in the 21st Century**

The Armed Forces play a vital role in the defence of the nation: government should have a deep sense of duty to properly support service personnel and veterans. Neither the Conservatives nor Labour have shown a commitment to this: the



Conservative government in particular has spread chronic low morale, misspent money on vanity projects and failed to recruit and retain people with the skills needed for 21st century warfare. Liberal Democrats are the only party who understand the new challenges faced by the Armed Forces and who are committed to properly supporting them. We will:

- Commit to the principle of collective self-defence as laid out in the North Atlantic Treaty and spending two per cent of GDP on defence in line with NATO recommendations: as the economy grows after we have stopped Brexit, this will mean an extra £3 billion over the parliament.
- Strengthen our armed services and address critical skills shortages by recruiting STEM graduates to be armed forces engineers, providing ‘golden handshakes’ of up to £10,000.
- Promote an international treaty on the principles and limits of the use of technology in modern warfare.
- l Recognise the expansion of warfare into the cybersphere by investing in our security and intelligence services and acting to counter cyberattacks.
- Maintain a minimum nuclear deterrent, while pursuing multilateral nuclear disarmament: continuing with the Dreadnought programme, the submarine-based replacement for Vanguard, but procuring three boats and moving to a medium-readiness responsive posture and maintaining the deterrent through measures such as unpredictable and irregular patrolling patterns.
- Support the Armed Forces Covenant and ongoing work to support veterans’ mental health.
- Improve the quality of housing for service personnel by bringing the Ministry of Defence into line with other landlords, giving tenants the same legal rights to repair and maintenance as private tenants.

## **Trade, Aid and Investment**

The liberal, international rules-based order has created peace and prosperity: trade has helped millions out of poverty and to live longer, healthier lives. But the system is imperfect and must improve to tackle global inequalities: gender inequality remains widespread and the climate crisis will disproportionately impact the poorest people and poorest countries. Liberal Democrats are the only party with a vision for the future based on championing liberalism: the Conservatives are inward-looking and nationalist and committed to leaving the EU, the biggest champion of the liberal order in our part of the world; Jeremy Corbyn’s Labour

spring to the defence of authoritarian regimes in Venezuela and Iran, while failing to fight to stop Brexit. Our plan for the future is built on championing liberal and international values, ending poverty and promoting the UN Sustainable Development Goals both in the UK and abroad. We will:

- Remain firmly committed to spending 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on aid, prioritising development that both helps the poorest and ties in with our strategic international objectives on gender equality, climate change and the environment, human rights, conflict prevention and tackling inequality.
- Increase the proportion of the aid budget committed to tackling climate change and environmental degradation: helping countries mitigate the impact of climate change and other environmental crises and support climate refugees.
- Pursue a foreign agenda with gender equality at its heart, focusing on: the transformation of the position of women through economic inclusion, education and training; ensuring the lives of women and girls are not ignored in favour of trade or regional alliances; working to extend reproductive rights and end female genital mutilation; and ending sexual violence in conflict zones.
- Protect, defend, and promote human rights for all, including LGBT+ individuals who are persecuted across the world as well as those persecuted for their religion or belief.
- Develop a global education strategy to address the urgent crisis of 263 million children missing out on schooling.
- Work through international bodies for better regulation and scrutiny of international trade and investment treaties to ensure they do not worsen inequalities or undermine human rights or developing countries' ability to regulate the environmental and social impacts of businesses.
- Champion global anti-corruption initiatives and ensure the UK and British Overseas Territories have publicly-accessible registers of beneficial ownership of companies registered in their jurisdictions.

## **Promoting Human Rights and Equality Around the World**

Human rights are global. An individual's liberty should be equally respected wherever they live. However, as authoritarian regimes trample over freedom of speech and belief and LGBT+ and other people are continuing to suffer discrimination, this is far from being the case. Liberal Democrats are the only party



capable of renewing international liberalism and combatting discrimination: the Conservatives' Brexit will mean prioritising trade deals over people's rights and Labour cannot hope to tackle discrimination abroad when they cannot even root out anti-Semitism in their own party. We are the only party with a credible plan to enhance the UK's soft power and to use it to promote human rights and democracy around the world. We will:

- Require UK-registered NGOs and organisations including the Armed Forces and defence contractors to report all instances of documented abuse overseas to government – reviewing, reducing, or refusing funding to organisations found in breach of these rules.
- Establish an easy and appropriate reporting mechanism for abuse that makes clear that reporters and whistleblowers will not be discriminated against for reporting abuse.
- Support free media and a free and open internet, championing the free flow of information.
- Support the current UN initiative to protect journalists. Combatting the impunity granted to those who attack reporters on the frontline by funding UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication.
- Work to abolish the death penalty around the world and remove the power of ministers to allow security and justice assistance in cases that could result in its use.
- Work to end the use of torture around the world and conduct a full inquiry into the UK Government's involvement in torture and rendition.
- Develop proposals with the BBC for investment to grow the World Service to reach more people across the world with independent and trusted news and continue to support BBC Monitoring and the British Council.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for promoting the decriminalisation of homosexuality around the world and advancing LGBT+ rights.
- Appoint an Ambassador-level Champion for Freedom of Belief.

## **Global Climate Action Now**

The climate emergency is a global challenge and requires a global solution. However, with the US withdrawing from the Paris Agreement and with most national climate policies falling well short of the Agreement's ambition to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C, this global solution looks a long way off. Neither

the Conservatives nor Labour have a plan to tackle this: the Conservatives have given no real thought to the climate emergency, and Labour are only interested in repeating empty slogans. Liberal Democrats are the only party with a detailed plan to lead global efforts to combat the climate emergency. We will:

- Support the Paris Agreement by playing a leadership role in international efforts to combat climate change, demonstrating commitment by rapidly reducing emissions from the UK economy, increasing development spending on climate objectives and aiming to persuade all countries to commit to net zero climate goals by the 2020 UN climate conference in Glasgow.
- Use our role in the EU to tackle the climate emergency, by setting a binding, EU-wide net zero target of 2050, and continuing to take part in the EU's Internal Energy Market, to provide access to clean energy sources while keeping costs low.
- Strengthen climate and environmental goals in EU trade and investment agreements and refuse to enter any trade agreements with countries that have policies counter to the Paris Agreement, including the Mercosur-EU free trade agreement because of the Brazilian government's actions in the Amazon.
- Initiate negotiations within the UN for a legally binding international treaty on plastics reduction.
- Provide greater resources for international environmental cooperation, particularly on climate change and on actions to tackle illegal and unsustainable trade in timber, wildlife, ivory, and fish.
- Argue for an end to all fossil fuel subsidies world-wide and provide aid to developing countries to help them transition to clean sources of energy.



Democrats  
**LIBERAL  
DEMOCRATS**  
**STOP BREXIT**  
BUILD A BRIGHTER  
FUTURE

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Rhyddfrydol Cymru

**STOP BREXIT**

**BUILD A BRIGHTER FUTURE**

This manifesto sets out Welsh Liberal Democrat policies and priorities for the General Election. A separate Liberal Democrat manifesto has been created that covers England. Whilst our colleagues in the Scottish Liberal Democrats have their own manifesto that covers Scotland. Our sister party, the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland, makes its own policy on devolved issues in Northern Ireland.

**Email:** [enquiries@welshlibdems.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@welshlibdems.org.uk)

This manifesto can be found online at:  
[https://www.welshlibdems.wales/policy\\_papers](https://www.welshlibdems.wales/policy_papers)

For further information on obtaining copies of this manifesto in alternative formats please email [enquiries@welshlibdems.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@welshlibdems.org.uk)

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