



# **YOUNG LIBERALS**

## **POLICY BOOK**

Last updated February 2023 following Reading Winter Conference

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# Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations



## Towards a Radical Liberal Economic Policy: Mutuals, Co-operatives, and Worker Involvement in Industry

Conference notes the longstanding commitment of the Liberal Democrats and its predecessor parties to mutuals and co-operatives, and more broadly to the principle of worker involvement in industry.

Conference further notes:

- A. That many existing mutuals and partnerships, such as the John Lewis Partnership, have proved to be some of our most successful businesses; and that works councils in Germany have made a positive contribution to that country's economic success.
- B. That the number of companies affiliating to the EOA, the trade organisation for employee ownership, has doubled in the past year, reflecting the buoyancy of the sector in the UK.
- C. The work of Liberal Democrat ministers in government to encourage employee ownership, by introducing a £75m tax break and the part-mutualisation of the Royal Mail.
- D. The recent financial difficulties of the Co-Operative Group, and the troubling revelations concerning the inadequacy of its corporate governance.

Conference believes:

- i. That co-operatives and mutuals must play a central role in a diverse, successful economy, and that government has a role to play to encourage their development.
- ii. That it is a liberal principle that individuals should have as much control over their lives as possible, and that this extends to their roles as workers and consumers.
- iii. That employee ownership is a non-socialist and non-statist means of achieving a fairer and more equal distribution of wealth and power and is a non-protectionist way of guarding against outsourcing and capital flight in a globalised economy.
- iv. Employee ownership can and should work alongside a strong and independent trade union movement; further, that employment rights are inalienable, and that George Osborne's 'rights for shares' proposals are contrary to the spirit of mutualism.

Conference Resolves:

1. HMG should increase tax reliefs for employee owned companies, possibly including negative rates of Capital Gains Tax and Inheritance Tax for shares deposited in an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT).
2. A statutory requirement should be introduced for every public listed company to have at least one non-voting representative for workers on its board, appointed by employees.
3. The Business Bank should lend preferentially to worthy SMEs where at least 25% of shares are held or are to be transferred to an EOT.
4. A Royal Commission on Mutuals and Co-operatives should be established, with a special mandate to investigate the governance of both sectors.
5. Public-sector mutuals should be introduced in sectors where this is practical and compatible with the public interest; and, where this is not feasible, the introduction of authentic worker representation at all levels.
6. Young Liberals and its members shall be actively involved in campaigning for a shift of power and capital into the hands of workers and consumers as part of the development of a distinctive, radical liberal economic policy.

*Passed: Glasgow Winter Conference - Winter 2019*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2024*



## Universal Credit

### Conference notes:

- A. Universal Credit is a benefit system intended to streamline six existing legacy benefits.
- B. The negative effects of the poor implementation of Universal Credit.
- C. The negative impact particularly on students, owing to student incomes being designated as unearned income in the calculation of Universal Credit and so being deducted pound for pound.
- D. The detrimental impacts this could have on students from disadvantaged backgrounds and on UK universities.

### Conference reaffirms the Young Liberal commitment to:

- i. Adequately supporting mature students to enable them to study.
- ii. Ensure disabled students receive the support they need in order to fully partake in their studies.
- iii. Our commitment to our more efficient benefit system that is fit for purpose and ensures everybody can afford a decent standard of living.

### Conference calls on the Government to:

- I. Restore funding to Universal Credit to pre-2015 levels.
- II. Revise the calculation of Universal Credit to designate Student Maintenance Loans as earned income.
- III. Revisit the transition between Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit to ensure that students with disabilities can receive earlier work capability assessments so as to not disqualify them from funding they are eligible for.

### Conference calls for the Liberal Democrats and Young Liberals to:

- 1. Campaign on the basis of this motion and to press the Government to enact these changes.

*Passed: Glasgow Winter Conference - Winter 2019*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2024*





## No To Minimum Unit Pricing

### Conference notes:

- A. That advocating a minimum unit price for alcohol is currently Lib Dem policy as of Autumn Conference 2019.
- B. Minimum pricing is currently government policy in Scotland, there are plans to adopt it in Wales and it has also been proposed in England.
- C. It is too early for any evidence on the policy's effect in Scotland to be measured.

### Conference believes:

- i. There should be a high burden of proof for forcing people to pay a higher price for goods and services, and the limited data we have from Scotland so far does not show enough evidence that this policy has been effective.
- ii. That setting what is essentially a consumption tax on a common household good will have a disproportionate effect on the poorest in society.
- iii. That this policy would also likely have a disproportionate effect on students and young people.
- iv. That as Liberal Democrats, we believe in empowering individuals to make their own choices where possible, rather than relying entirely on state intervention to achieve our favoured outcomes.
- v. The Liberal Democrat constitution tasks us to “champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals, acknowledge and respect their right to freedom of conscience”, and that this policy does not appear to be compatible with those values.

### Conference therefore calls for:

- 1. The Young Liberals to oppose the implementation of minimum pricing for alcohol.
- 2. To lobby for the removal of minimum pricing from the next Liberal Democrat manifesto.
- 3. To instead advocate more public education on the effects of heavy drinking, and ensuring that treatment and support for severe alcohol abuse is available for all that need it.
- 4. Greater assessment to be made within and without the party about the positive and negative socioeconomic impacts of regressive taxation as a whole, and a broader reevaluation of the party's stance on this type of taxation

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Universal Basic Income

### Conference Notes

- A. The continued assault on the welfare state by the Conservative government, with cuts to the welfare budget projected to be around 15% of the inflation-adjusted figure for 2010/11
- B. That applicants are required to wait five weeks from first making a claim before they receive any Universal Credit payment, with administrative delays often making this period longer
- C. That according to the Trussell Trust, food bank usage over the past five years has grown by 73%, which they directly attribute to the economic insecurity caused by the wait for Universal Credit
- D. That the Liberal Democrats have already committed to scrapping all benefits sanctions, showing our existing commitment to the principle of unconditionality in social welfare.

### Conference Believes:

- i. That economic insecurity should be viewed as a sixth “giant”, alongside the five identified by the Liberal economist William Beveridge in his report based on liberal principles.
- ii. That economic insecurity is repugnant to society, and curtails the economic freedom of every individual who suffers under its oppression.
- iii. That economic insecurity can only be conquered by unconditional payments, which can be relied upon no matter what hardship is suffered by the payee.
- iv. That negative income tax (NIT) is insufficient to achieve this goal, because it fails to protect against sudden changes in fortune.
- v. That any unconditional benefit should sit alongside benefits related to disability, children and housing, rather than replacing them.

### Conference Calls for:

- 1. The Liberal Democrats to support a Universal Basic Income (UBI) in principle.
- 2. The Liberal Democrats to set up a UBI Commission, to examine the economic data and formulate a detailed UBI proposal within six months of establishment.

### Conference therefore repeals and overrules:

- I. The Young Liberals policy entitled “A Liberal Welfare State” passed at Winter Conference in 2016.

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Saving the Hospitality Industry

### Conference notes:

- A. The hospitality industry was the hardest hit by lockdown, and still suffers under continuing restrictions, with nightclubs being hit hardest by being required to stay closed as nightclubs until restrictions are completely lifted.
- B. Beer Duty in the United Kingdom is three times the European average, leading to the United Kingdom having the highest beer duty bill in Europe at £3.4bn every year and pubs face the triple tax hit of one of the highest rates of beer duty in Europe, an unfair business rates burden, and VAT
- C. Pubs have been closing at a rate of almost 30 a day, with a report in March 2021 showing 11,894 venues had closed since 2019 with there being three closures for every fresh opening
- D. The hospitality industry is a major employer of young people, who are the hardest hit by unemployment with a rate three times that of the national average. With nightclubs alone employing around 45,000 people - 72% of who are under 25 years old.
- E. Research by Europe Economics commissioned by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) for their campaign to reform beer duty, shows that there would be significant increases in sales and jobs as a result of introducing a preferential rate of Beer Duty for draught beer. [1]
- F. Many clubs, pubs and bars been collateral damage in the ongoing housing crisis with skyrocketing rents and a scramble by developers to find sufficient sites causing many venues to close, with queer spaces in many parts of the country being particularly hit

### Conferences believes:

- I. The loss of a local pub is not only damaging to a local economy, but also damages local communities and the culture of our local areas and that urgent action is required by the government to prevent the loss of more vital assets to the community.
- II. That it is essential that queer hospitality venues are able to survive and thrive across the country, and the damage to the sector most often hits queer spaces the hardest
- III. That some large pub chains act in a predatory and damaging way, both in the treatment of their tenants and leaseholders and by buying up existing independent pubs and converting them to their homogeneous brand.
- IV. The advantages that supermarkets have over hospitality, which have only got greater over the pandemic with lockdowns, is a significant contribution to the damage caused to hospitality and in particular the local pub.
- V. Unlike cuts and freezes to the existing Alcohol Duties system, reforming it to give preferential treatment to draught beer and alcohol consumed on premises would give a direct benefit to businesses and consumers
- VI. Policies such as Minimum Unit Pricing and restrictions on alcohol promotions, as seen in Scotland, are damaging to pubs, bars and clubs as well as consumers by increasing prices, giving worse value for money and making the night out experience worse.
- VII. That, while in many areas pavement licences have been issued in order to increase venues capacity, in some areas local councils have given preferential treatment to restaurants over pubs.
- VIII. That even before the pandemic and regardless of their individual merits, the combination of decades of government policy, including increases to Alcohol Duties, Business Rates, the Sugar Levy, the smoking ban and Brexit's effect on recruitment, have all come together to create a hostile environment for the hospitality industry and in particular pubs.

### Conference reiterates



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- i. The Young Liberals opposition to Minimum Unit Pricing, as set out in No To Minimum Unit Pricing
- ii. The Young Liberals historic opposition to sin taxes and personal consumption charges

Conference calls for:

1. The Government to, so long as Alcohol Duties exist, introduce preferential duty rates for draught beer and alcohol consumed on premises.
2. Alcohol duty to be cut or abolished and the Sugar Levy to be scrapped.
3. Pavement and outdoor seating licences to be continued and expanded even after the pandemic, and outdoor smoking areas in pub garden's to be protected in the face of increasing pressure by local councils to abolish them
4. Reforms to the licencing system to make it easier for pubs, bars and nightclubs to operate
5. Financial support with rent and protections for historic pubs, clubs and bars, in particularly for queer spaces, to be given.
6. Business rates to be overhauled to alleviate some of the substantial costs that all hospitality venues, and in particular small and independent pubs, face.
7. The expansion of the Small Breweries' Relief scheme to give greater support to small and independent breweries, as well as the expansion of the scheme to Spirit Duty to support small and independent distilleries
8. A review into large pub chains and the treatment and conditions that they place tenants and leaseholders under, and more support for independent pubs.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*

*Note: Amendment successfully passed, calling for preferential duty rates for draught beer, at Online Spring Conference 2022 as Amendment 1 to "F33: Supporting Hospitality, Retail and Leisure in the Face of Omicron"*



## Abolishing Sunday Trading Laws

### Conference notes:

- a. There are laws limiting Sunday trading in England and Wales;
- b. These laws are to some extent medieval in origin, but took their current form during the Protectorate of Oliver Cromwell and are currently enshrined in the Sunday Trading Act 1994;
- c. Sunday trading laws were suspended from 22 July to 9 September 2012 for the London Olympics;
- d. Britain contains a number of different faiths which each celebrate different holy days and festivals;
- e. Provisions already exist in law to allow for a certain number of days off a year for workers who may work on Sundays, including provisions for religious occasions.

Conference believes Sunday trading laws are not fit for a modern secular society. They discriminate against people working longer hours by offering them less opportunity to purchase food and other essential items, and implicitly force groups with holy days on other days of the week, or without holy days of the week altogether, to follow a mainstream Christian tradition.

Conference calls for the abolition of all Sunday trading laws, with proper investigations into how to support those affected by this change.

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference – Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2027*



## In Support of Trade Unions

### Conference notes:

- A. The cost of living crisis represents the biggest fall in living standards since the 1950s.
- B. As of June 2022, inflation sits at 9.1%, whilst wage growth sits at less than 5%.
- C. The scheduled energy price cap rise in October 2022 will put an even greater burden on household finances this winter.
- D. Wage increases are an important part of tackling the cost of living crisis.
- E. The recent industrial action taken by the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) was aimed at, amongst other things:
  - a. Tackling fire and rehire;
  - b. Protecting against compulsory redundancies;
  - c. Seeking to protect the safe running of the railway by maintaining staffing levels;
  - d. Wage increases to compensate for current inflationary pressures.
- F. The industrial action was held with the support by 89% of members balloted.
- G. Other unions representing various groups of public sector workers, such as Unison, Unite, NEU, NASUWT, CWU and CBA among others are in various stages of balloting members for industrial action.
- H. There has been a recent controversial response to the RMT strikes by the Federal Party, including:
  - a. Munira Wilson MP on the BBC (26 June 2022) stating the government should be “working with the army and others to put contingency plans in place if these strikes are going to continue”;
  - b. Daisy Cooper MP on Sky News (26 June 2022) stating “I don’t agree with the rail strikes”;
- I. As of 21/07/2022, a change in UK trade union laws announced by the Secretary of State for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy will enable businesses to hire temporary workers to mitigate business disruption caused by industrial action.
- J. Conservative leadership contenders are floating the idea of curtailing the right to strike currently guaranteed under Article 11, Freedom of Assembly and Association, of the European Convention of Human Rights

### Conference believes:

- i. Businesses recording high profits should properly and fairly compensate their staff.
- ii. Public sector workers who kept crucial services running throughout the pandemic should be adequately rewarded. However, the government is currently not presenting measures to even keep current wages in line with inflation.
- iii. Trade Unions have an important role to play in negotiating fair pay and conditions.
- iv. That in the case of further restriction on the right to strike, the Liberal Democrats should not oppose coordinated industrial action, including a potential general strike, and should stand up firmly to condemn any Conservative encroachment on the human right to strike.
- v. The right to strike is an important liberal principle, enabling workers to collectively bargain to maintain fair pay and conditions.
- vi. Where employers, trade unions and (for public sector employees) the government fail to negotiate, industrial action is an important negotiating tool.
- vii. The recent changes to UK trade union law undermines the ability of employees to disrupt business through industrial action.
- viii. The right to fair employment conditions is essential to preserving the personal dignity and liberty of the individual.
- ix. That Trade Unions are not the exclusive property of any political party, and Liberal Democrat voices belong and effectively contribute to Trade Unions.

### Conference resolves:



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1. To express our support for the recent industrial action taken by RMT.
2. To condemn the combative approach to negotiations with trade unions currently being employed by the government.” and renumber accordingly.
3. To support further strike action in other sectors and industries wherever both:
  - a. Businesses fail to adequately negotiate with employees and Trade Union representatives.
  - b. Trade Union members are balloted in support of industrial action.
4. For the Young Liberals to reaffirm our support for the RMT and other groups in addressing concerns as a result of the government's failure to address the cost of living crisis.
5. For the Young Liberals to renounce in the strongest terms statements that have been made by Liberal Democrat MPs criticising the decision of RMT members to strike or calling for illiberal anti-industrial action measures to be taken against striking workers.” and renumber accordingly.
6. To condemn the recent changes to trade union law and call on the UK government to reinstate legal provisions which prohibited businesses from hiring temporary staff during industrial action.
7. To encourage Young Liberals and other members of the public, especially those employed in the public sector, to join the appropriate trade union for their position.” and number accordingly.
8. To offer our ongoing support to the Association of Liberal Democrat Trade Unionists, and other Liberal Democrat AO's which are supportive of Trade Unionists.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*



## A Fair Deal for Young Workers

Conference notes that:

- A. Young workers represent a sizeable section of the UK Workforce with 29% of the workforce in 2018 aged 18-34
- B. Young people form the highest proportions of workers in the “gig economy” (labour markets with predominantly short term contracts and freelance working) with 31.5% of the workforce aged 16-24
- C. According to the Youth Futures Foundation, young people spend on average twice the amount on essential household spending than those aged 51 or over
- D. 10.6% of young people aged 16-24 are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) as of March 2021
- E. As of April 2022, 27% of Universal Credit Claimants are aged 16-29
- F. 40% of Universal Credit Claimants are in work
- G. The Conservative Party have implemented a number of tax measures in government that disproportionately affects young people, such as raising the rate of national insurance, freezing the threshold for student finance repayment and increasing interest rates on student loans
- H. Currently the national minimum wage for apprenticeships is equal to that for under 18s, regardless of the age of the recipient” and “9. In the 2020/21 academic year, 713,000 individuals were employed as part of an apprenticeship

Conference believes that:

- I. All workers deserve fair compensation for their work, regardless of their age
- II. The welfare system currently discriminates against certain claimants based on their age
- III. The Conservative Party is fostering intergenerational hostility and implementing policies that disproportionately affect young people in what has been described as ‘a war on young people’
- IV. Apprentices should be afforded an equivalent wage and identical rights and protections as any other worker
- V. The Autonomy and flexibility provided by the “gig economy” is valuable to these industries and the people who work in them as contracts that do not guarantee hours can be very useful for people with commitments who want to be able to turn down hours i.e. students and elderly people
- VI. The use of zero hours contracts can lead to situations in which workers are denied future employment on the basis of temporary unavailability, with the effect of reducing the job security of workers

Conference calls for reform of the age qualification of the minimum wage and working-age benefits as follows:

- 1. All workers over the age of 18 to receive the national living wage
- 2. The under 18 minimum wage to be raised to the current 18 to 20 minimum wage rate (£6.83 per hour in 2022)
- 3. The abolition of the apprentice rate within a parliament, beginning by immediately raising it to match the new under 18 minimum wage
- 4. The abolition of the under-25 rate of universal credit and new-style Job Seekers Allowance
- 5. The abolition of the under-25 rate of Employment and Support Allowance

With respect to the “gig economy”, conference calls for:

- a. The Young Liberals to oppose moves to ban zero hours contracts completely
- b. The Young Liberals to support the retention of the ban on exclusivity clauses





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- c. The Young Liberals to support measures to prevent exploitive use of zero hours contracts including the right of those on zero hours contracts to move to guaranteed hours contracts and parity in rights and benefits between both types of worker
- d. The Young Liberals to enthusiastically support the “gig economy” and new start-up companies which allow for more flexibility for both consumers and workers

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*

# Home Affairs and Justice

## Supporting Drug Testing at Festivals and in Nightclubs

### Conference notes:

- A. The continued problems in relation to the number of deaths and hospitalisations which have occurred due to drug use, especially during summer festivals and at nightclub music events.
- B. That the criminalization of drugs leads to uncertainty about the composition, purity, toxicity, and strength of drugs available illegally.
- C. The work of drug-testing charity “The Loop” which has provided free, safe and accessible drug testing facilities at an increasing number of summer festivals since the summer of 2016.
- D. That the lack of guidance in relation to the legalities of drug testing at festivals has left festival organisers and local authorities in a legal “grey area”
- E. That where front-of-house testing has been successfully provided at UK festivals, around 20% of people who have used the service have disposed of the drugs in question. With an unquantifiable number also likely to change their behaviour in relation to the amount of the substances which they consume.
- F. That opinion polling has shown that 95% of festival-goers and 90% of night clubbers support the introduction of drug safety testing facilities, and 97% and 96% respectively of those who use drugs say they would consider using the facilities themselves, if available.

### Conference welcomes:

- i. The existing Young Liberals policy “Legalisation of Cannabis” which calls for, amongst other things, the decriminalisation of LSD and ecstasy and the establishment of a federal commission to investigate all laws surrounding recreational drugs.
- ii. The 2017 and 2019 Liberal Democrat manifesto commitments to “End imprisonment for possession of illegal drugs for personal use” and “Move the departmental lead on drugs policy to the Department of Health” (from the Home Office).
- iii. The 2018 Early Day Motion #1345, Drug Testing at Summer Festivals, tabled by Norman Lamb and supported by Christine Jardine, Wera Hobhouse and Layla Moran (alongside MPs from all other major parties) which urges the government to work with local authorities, police services and festival organisers to facilitate and encourage the roll-out of drug testing at all summer festivals, in recognition of the fact that such a simple step will ultimately save lives.

### Conference resolves to:

- 1. Push for the introduction of legislation which would make it a rebuttable assumption that all outdoor music festivals must include the mandating of drug-testing facilities as part of their licensing application.
- 2. Reform licensing laws to provide legal encouragement for fixed premises operations such as nightclubs and charity organisations wishing to provide onsite drug-testing facilities.
- 3. Ensure that the overall approach to drugs policy in the UK is focussed on harm reduction as opposed to the current zero-tolerance based approach.

1 <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-hampshire-49251683>

2 <https://www.factmag.com/2017/07/30/how-on-site-drug-testing-at-festivals-can-help-save-lives/>;  
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bbcthree/article/92063060-2ca3-4d9a-a6a2-538e47394f58>

3 <https://www.rsph.org.uk/uploads/assets/uploaded/c4b58b1a-431a-4459-ab769978b8e15fcf.pdf>

4 <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/51816>

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Anti Corruption Pledge - The 5 step plan to cut abuses of power

### Conference recognises

- A. That the death of George Floyd has evoked an appetite for reform of police accountability mechanisms within the minds of the entirety of the U.K. population
- B. That whilst racism is the predominant force in American police brutality that abuse of power facilitates and makes lethal the racism present within police forces
- C. That racism is not the only evil that becomes so harmful as a result of abuses of power, with sexual misconduct and financial gain resulting from police misconduct becoming all too common
- D. The horrors of the leaked Operation Tiberius Report and the more recent plight of West Midlands Police fearing wide spread infiltration by organised crime

### Conference declares

- i. That whilst where power exists, corruption and abuse will ultimately follow, every step must be taken to tackle police corruption in the immediate term
- ii. That urgent action is needed, harnessing the power of the collective anger for positive change
- iii. That addressing police corruption will form just one element of the fight to destroy the enabling forces behind racism
- iv. That any strategy to tackle police corruption must focus on, the quality of the officer pool, the factors that make otherwise morally good officers become corrupt and the effective enforcement of anti corruption policy
- v. That liberals, by the very nature of their ideology, must be at the forefront of this fight calling for a comprehensive strategy

### Conference calls for

1. The creation of a national constabulary for policing standards in place of local professional standards departments and national bodies with an expanded remit to fight not only corrupt officers, but the OCGs that utilise them as well as the maintenance of a list of known organised criminals to be distributed to constabularies through home office circulars
2. A new bill to radically reform the rules of policing with measures including recognising undue executive pressure as a crime, to make withholding information gained in duties as a police officer from a criminal or public inquiry a criminal offence, to make it a criminal offence to fail to disclose contact with a known organised criminal within a reasonable time frame and to otherwise remove any privileges granted to officers under investigation as well as mandating a video evidence trail from forensic collections courtroom alongside a mandatory police body camera program and accompanying regulations
3. The proper resourcing of the new national constabulary in order to reduce the time that officers are off duty for, in line with the police federation campaign, all the while increasing the effectiveness of the unit itself and to reduce corruption more effectively
4. A radical review, with the intention of greatly increasing the resources of, the failed police vetting system, as evidenced by the plight of the West Midlands force, prior and continuing psychological evaluation for not only mental health but also implicit biases and weaknesses of character and training to reduce incompetence which can lead to unintended corruption
5. A comprehensive program to tackle the 3 main causes of police corruption:
6. A program of free, or reduced cost, comprehensive insurance provided through the police federation in order to eliminate financial insecurities which can lead to a feeling of needing to seek out financial gain
7. The creation of an initially anonymous helpline through which police officers can disclose vulnerabilities to a police federation representative that will assist them in



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disclosing previously undisclosed vulnerabilities to their force, reducing the possibility for blackmail or other forms of manipulation

8. An unprecedented investment in a forces mental health program that goes above and beyond a fast track system, with quarterly, in depth, psychological evaluations once in the force as well as a rapid support network to ensure that possible interventions can be quickly implemented in order to prevent officers becoming incapable of effectively carrying out their duties under consistent high pressure

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Police Reform

### Conference notes:

- A. The death of George Floyd has created a global reaction with protests demanding greater racial justice and police accountability
- B. The US' issues with racism and over-policing are not unique and affect the UK too such as with stop and search being more frequently used on BAME members of the public, especially on young black men
- C. There have been several signatories from councillors and party figures in support of the below policies put forward
- D. That some degree of policing will always be necessary, and where it is necessary it must be based on the principle of positive community policing

### Conference believes:

- i. The UK still has issues with systematic racism and now more than ever we must address them
- ii. Addressing issues with over-policing's effect on the BAME community is one part of a much larger issue
- iii. Racial profiling leads to the dehumanisation and criminalisation of young BAME men in particular
- iv. We should use this as an opportunity as liberals to put forward alternative solutions in areas where police usage is unnecessary and reduce the over reliance on police
- v. As a liberal party, we believe in a community-based approach to policing, where the community trust in the police and that there exists a cordial and mutually trusting relationship between the two
- vi. These steps may also benefit the police force by reducing the burden on an already over stretched sector by using more effective and positive alternatives
- vii. Addressing the balance of power between citizen and state is a key task of liberalism
- viii. The Liberal Democrats are most needed in historical turning points like we face now, carrying the banner of civil liberties
- ix. The Liberal Democrats should reaffirm their beliefs in rehabilitation and alternatives to excessive force and infringements on civil liberties
- x. The Liberal Democrat's should stand up for other marginalised people, such as the mentally ill, who's interactions with the police can be incredibly dangerous for them and others

### Conference calls for:

- 1. Amend section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to;
  - a. remove the provision for blanket stop and search powers to be authorised by an officer of the rank of Inspector or above and replace with the requirement to obtain a warrant from a Magistrate
  - b. remove the provision for these powers to be extended by an officer of the rank of Superintendent or above
- 2. Developing use of restorative justice approaches to make them more regularly deliverable, including routes to access them that do not work through the procedural criminal justice system.
- 3. Pledging significant new funds to both expand restorative justice services and raise awareness of them as an option among victims of crime, aiming for restorative justice use to become a new normal for a wide range of crimes and conflicts.
- 4. Piloting and rolling out the use of mediation and intervention teams that work outside police forces and can provide an alternative point of contact to use restorative justice and de-escalate conflict situations in the community without engaging the police.
- 5. Police to increase the number and resources of community representatives, and to seriously invest in comprehensive partnerships with communities up and down the UK.
- 6. Working toward stricter oversight structures for the police, especially on reducing racial profiling, and replace current state enforcement bodies such as the UK Border



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Force which currently have weaker oversight structures than police forces with ones that will receive at least that level of accountability.

7. Move forward with and expand our existing Liberal Democrat commitment to decriminalise victimless crimes such as cannabis possession, reducing burdens on police forces and communities alike.
8. The federal party to devise an action plan to ensure that the police are never sent to a mental health crisis and that instead specialised crisis teams are sent out
9. The specialist NCA to be given the resources to be the lead force on matters such as organised crime and counter terror, due to being a better trained and more effective force which uses resources in a much more controlled manner, and local community policing to serve as an intelligence source for the NCA rather than the 'boots on the ground'

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Legalisation of Cannabis

### Conference notes:

- A. That the “War on Drugs” and the policies employed to “fight the battle” are widely acknowledged to have failed to achieve their stated aims of the eradication of drug taking and addiction
- B. In 2019/2020, there were approximately 175,000 drug offences recorded by the police in England and Wales: 13% higher than in 2018/19
- C. That Drug Tsar, Keith Halliwell, admitted that his anti-drugs strategy had ended its first year with a 13% rise in drug convictions in England and Wales.
- D. An estimated 1 in 11 adults aged 16–59 had taken a drug in 2019/20, a statistic which rises to 1 in 5 in the 16–24 age group
- E. Cannabis is the most common drug, often taken on a recreational basis
- F. That cannabis is an intoxicating drug and that driving while intoxicated is a danger to others.

### Conference welcomes:

- i. The report of the Police Foundation Inquiry into drugs, which called for the downgrading of offences for individuals caught in possession of cannabis and other soft drugs.
- ii. The increasing realisation of those in authority that legalisation and regulation of drugs should be considered as a solution to the “War on Drugs”.
- iii. The Liberal Democrat commitment to legalise cannabis, with limits on potency levels, in order to break the grip of criminal gangs and protect young people.

### Conference resolves:

1. In the short term:
  - a. To legalise the use, possession, and sale of cannabis, including the distribution of information, seed for home growing, and cannabis itself through government regulated centres.
  - b. To decriminalise the use and possession of LSD and ecstasy.
  - c. To target the resources of the Police and Customs & Excise on tackling the suppliers of more dangerous drugs.
2. In the medium term, to establish a Federal Commission to investigate all issues around the balance of harm caused by, and laws surrounding, recreational drugs.
3. To encourage and support research in the use of cannabis in the fight of diseases for example, MS and epilepsy.
4. To encourage schools and youth organisations to offer advice and guidance to young people concerning the misuse of drugs.
5. To tax cannabis at similar levels to the taxes on tobacco where cannabis is sold to be smoked, and a lower rate where cannabis is to be ingested in less harmful ways; to use part of the revenue raised through this taxation to alleviate the deprivation and social marginalisation that has led to disproportionate levels of drug addiction.
6. To call for the commissioning of research into the intoxicating effects of cannabis and the development of a simple test for the drug in the body which can be administered by police officers. When this is complete, legislation akin to the drink-driving laws should be introduced.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference – Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*





## For Fair and Effective Fines

### Conference notes:

- A. Most criminal justice fines issued in England are currently not affected by the offender's income.
- B. Day-fines are an alternative system whereby fines' values are given as a number of days, with the offender's daily income being multiplied by this number to find the final value of the fine, meaning that, the higher your income, the greater the values of fines issued to you.
- C. A system of day fines has already been successfully implemented in several countries (e.g France, Germany, Finland).
- D. Most speeding fines in England are already usually calculated based on a proportion of the offender's income, capped at £1,000, or £2,500 for offences committed on motorways.
- E. The caps on speeding fines shield individuals above a certain level of income from being equally affected to those poorer than them by speeding fines.

### Conference believes:

- I. It is unjust for people to be impacted differently for committing the same crime; the same fine could be several days' work for one person and pocket change for another.
- II. This goes against the fundamental liberal values of fairness and equality.
- III. The purpose of fines is to deter crime, but small fines have little noticeable impact on the wealthy. Therefore, for fines to be effective deterrents for everyone, fines must be adjusted to make a noticeable impact on people of all incomes, not just the poor.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The changing of the values of all criminal justice fines in England to be calculated based on a system of day-fines.
- 2. The removal of caps on speeding fines in England.

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference – Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2027*



## Protecting Asylum Seekers and Undocumented Immigrants

Conference notes that:

- A. Police and emergency services are currently required to inform border security forces when they encounter an undocumented immigrant.
  - a. This policy prevents undocumented immigrants from giving information to police or accessing emergency services without fear of detention and harms the ability of police to solve crimes.
  - b. Undocumented immigrants are significantly more vulnerable to crime and poor welfare than the population as a whole.
  - c. Both the Labour and Conservative parties have pursued and endorsed this policy despite the significant risks to human life and public safety that it entails.
  - d. Studies have shown US “sanctuary city” policies have either a minimal or lowering effect on overall crime rates and to improve wellbeing amongst immigrant communities.
- B. Last year over 45,000 people crossed the English channel in “small boats”, which was a 60% increase on 2021, most of whom claimed asylum upon arrival.
- C. The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 introduced a number of illiberal and morally reprehensible policies including offshore designated places for the application of refugee and migrant asylum claims and criminalising asylum seekers who come on “unsanctioned” or “irregular” routes and disqualifies them from consideration as refugees.
- D. The UK has very limited and restrictive routes for asylum and the Refugee Council and Amnesty International insist there are no safe and legal routes for most people to seek asylum in the UK.

Conference believes that:

- i. As the Preamble to the Liberal Democrat constitution states, our responsibility for justice and liberty cannot be confined by national boundaries, including our own, and that we are committed to fight poverty, oppression, hunger, ignorance, disease and aggression wherever they occur and to promote the free movement of ideas, people, goods, and service
- ii. It is imperative for general public safety that all those reporting crime are provided with safe routes to do so and the immigration status of an individual should not affect their right to be protected from crimes committed against them.
- iii. The UK has a duty of care to people living within its borders regardless of their legal status, including ensuring that they have access to medical, natal, and emergency services.
- iv. The UK has a moral and legal obligation to have safe and legal asylum routes and policies such as offshore “asylum hubs” such as in Rwanda are illiberal and reprehensible.

Conference calls for:

1. Public services, such as the police and emergency services and local government services, to be legally restricted from informing border security services when they encounter an undocumented immigrant who has not been convicted of a personal non-immigration related crime.
2. The policy and legacy of the “hostile environment” to be abandoned and its practical elements to be deconstructed, including the closure of most of the UK's immigration detention centres, the introduction of “detention as an absolute last resort”, and the limitation of detention to as short a period as possible.



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3. The reversal of elements of the Nationality and Borders Act including to remove restrictions on asylum seekers who come to the UK illegally and rule out any offshore “asylum hubs” including in Rwanda.
4. An amnesty for all undocumented immigrants currently resident in the United Kingdom.
5. Immigration targets to be abandoned, there to not be an “upper limit” on immigration and for legal routes for both asylum and immigration to be expanded significantly.

*Passed: Reading Winter Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2028*

# Social Justice



## Traveller Liberation

Conference notes with anger and sadness that:

- A. Gypsies, Travellers, and Roma (GTR) people face systemic discrimination from institutions, government, the police, and individuals from every sector of society.
- B. Under 40% of Traveller children attend school regularly, and under half have any form of secondary education.
- C. 5% of the prison population are of Traveller heritage, despite Travellers making up only 0.1% of the UK population, representing a 50-fold over-representation in the prison population.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat Commitment to:

- I. Liberate each and every person from conformity to societal norms, regardless of their race, creed, or lifestyle.
- II. Tackle injustice in law enforcement practices and stand unwaveringly for equality under the law.
- III. Provide access to free, high quality primary and secondary education for each and every child, including those who may lead to nomadic lifestyle.

Conference calls for:

- 1. A thorough investigation into provisions made by the Department of Education for children of no fixed address, including:
  - a. Strategies to best help children with disjointed and incomplete educations;
  - b. Strategies to deal with how progress is tracked between consecutive parts of a child's education, with particular emphasis on children moving schools multiple times during secondary education;
  - c. Strategies to assist children who have low attendance for any number of reasons, including health, lifestyle, and background.
- 2. A serious and mindful review of how trespassing on public property is dealt with by local authorities and the police, in particular when a person or group of people take up adobe there, including:
  - a. Provisions of designated spaces for GTR communities to live;
  - b. How law enforcement and local authorities deal with evictions from public property, with an approach which seeks minimal aggravation and conflict.
- 3. An inquiry into practices within the police force and the justice system as a whole which lead to such gross overrepresentation of the traveler community in UK prisons, including:
  - a. How discriminatory attitudes of judge and jury may lead to harsher sentences and more frequent convictions for GTR people;
  - b. What charges are most commonly brought against GTR people;
  - c. How reoffending rates amongst GTR convicts compare to the general population;
  - d. What opportunities, or lack thereof, are available to GTR ex-convicts compared to the general ex-convict population.
- 4. The reaffirmation that it is to the benefit of our entire society that GTR people, and everyone else, are treated with the non-judgemental respect and kindness which is the right of each and every human being.

*Passed: London Summer Conference - Summer 2019*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2024*



## Young Carers

Conference notes that young carers struggle disproportionately with both their education and employment and in particular that:

- A. Around 6.5 million people in the UK are carers, with over 700,000 of those being classified as young carers, and by 2030 it is estimated the number of carers will increase by around 6%.
- B. Carers between the ages of 16 and 18 are twice as likely to be not in education, employment, or training (NEET) as young people without caring responsibilities, even though most carers need to work to support themselves.
- C. 73% of young carers report having to take time off school to cope with caring responsibilities and are at risk of missing out on key topics like sex and relationship education, and home economics.
- D. Young adult carers appear to be four times more likely to have to drop out of their college or university course than other students: 56% of young adult carers in college or university were struggling because of their caring role, 17% said they may have to drop out for reasons associated with their caring role, and 13% said that they may have to drop out for financial reasons.
- E. 45% of young adult carers report mental health problems, and young carers in rural areas are more likely to feel lonely and isolated.
- F. Young carers save the government billions of pounds as they are effectively unpaid workers.
- G. Carers are not eligible for Carer's Allowance if they are in education for more than 21 hours a week.
- H. Currently, carers can travel for free or at a reduced price with the person they care for.

Conference commends and acknowledges the Liberal Democrat commitments made in policy paper 122, *Age ready Britain* (2014), to introduce a Carer's Bonus, support for re-entering the jobs market, and more recognition and rights in the NHS.

Conference believes that:

- I. Being a carer should be given the same support and care as other diversity groups.
- II. Young carers need support and specialized education to allow them an equal chance at life, to compensate for missing schooling and to meet the special challenges of their caring roles; this should include cooking classes, finance education, sex education, and wellbeing classes.
- III. Being in education is not a way to support yourself so you should be eligible for Carer's Allowance.
- IV. Awareness of carers should be increased to help hidden carers who do not know they are carers and to help employers and educational institutes understand carers.
- V. Education institutions should be providing more support to student carers through measures such as increasing mental health funding, creating support systems such as mentors for carers in education, and providing bursaries to cover the extra cost of caring.

Conference resolves that:

- 1. Young carers and young adult carers should be provided with a bus pass that allows them to travel for free without the person they care for.
- 2. Exam re-takes in all levels of education should be made more readily available for student carers.
- 3. Learning institutes and employers should treat being a carer as a diversity issue and provide support accordingly.
- 4. Learning institutes should work with charities to provide all young carers and young adult carers with a support worker.



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5. Carers who undertake more than 21 hours a week of education should be able to qualify for Carer's Allowance if they meet the other criteria.
6. In addition to our 'curriculum for life' that should be available to all students, local authorities should ensure that young carers have educational opportunities on finance, sex and relationships, and mental health.
7. Awareness about carers should be raised through government campaigns and working with charities.

*Passed: London Summer Conference - Summer 2019*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2024*

*Note: Motion successfully passed at Brighton Autumn Conference 2019 as "F14: Young Carers"*



## Autism Support

### Conference notes:

- a. At least 1% of the population has autism, so at least 700,000 people in the UK. This is likely an underestimate and 1.6% of children are diagnosed with autism. This means autism is a part of daily life for 2.8 million people in the UK
- b. The National Autistic Society found that 80% of autistic people wish they had more information about laws around autistic individuals
- c. The Autism Act 2009.
- d. Currently every autistic person has the right to a needs assessment completed by an assessor with the skills, competency and knowledge of autism sufficient to undertake that assessment – however this is not always accessible for individuals through the Autism Act 2009.
- e. Only 8% of autistic people and 5% of family members felt that health and care services had improved since the Autism Act.
- f. The Equality Act 2010
- g. Only 16% of diagnosed autistic individuals are in full time employment and 32% in part time employment
- h. 77% of unemployed autistic individuals want to work
- i. Misdiagnosis of autistic individuals is far too common – especially in women, girls and non-binary individuals
- j. Ethnic minorities are thought to be underdiagnosed along with women, girls and non-binary individuals
- k. In 2019 the Access to Work cap was increased to support even more disabled people but it still does not cover everyone's needs
- l. Due to social misunderstandings, autistic individuals can unknowingly end up on the wrong side of the law – 4.5% of young offenders in Feltham have a diagnosis
- m. Autistic people are up to seven times more likely than the general population to be involved in the criminal justice system
- n. Autistic people and their families may be eligible for a Blue Badge to access disabled parking spaces
- o. Autistic individuals are included in many invisible disability campaigns including the London “Please offer me a seat” campaign
- p. Autism hours are increasing in popularity and frequency

### Conference believes that:

- i. Every individual should be able to achieve their potential – neurodivergent or neurotypical
- ii. Divergent thinking and autistic individuals not only are equal workers but can provide unique perspectives and be a substantial addition to the workplace
- iii. The focus on Brexit has taken away from the support and much needed discussion on how to support autistic individuals
- iv. A diagnosis is not a label, it is a tool there to support individuals in getting the help needed

### Conference resolves that:

1. Guidance on employment must be updated to ensure the equality act 2010 is fulfilled and employers can support autistic individuals in their employment
2. Education about neurodivergence should be included on the curriculum in the same way mental health is now
3. Diagnosis must be made more accessible with gatekeeping stopped – diagnosis should be considered complete when a Doctor tells an individual that they have autism
4. Wait lists for diagnosis must be reduced by increasing funding and space for diagnosis
5. Autistic women, girls, non-binary individuals and ethnic minorities must have equal access to support and diagnosis





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6. There should be increased training for teachers to acknowledge neurodiverse individuals, to both recognise behaviour and support different styles of learning
7. The cap on Access to Work should be removed
8. There should be further improvements from the Autism Act 2009, to create obligations on employers and local authorities to support autistic people with their care assessments
9. Autistic offenders should be met with support and not punishment when the crime is non-violent
10. Businesses should be offered rewards for providing autism hours such as support advertising
11. Sensory spaces should be provided for autistic individuals engaging with the justice system - whatever their role in it
12. Autism must not be considered as decreasing quality of life

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*

*Note: Motion successfully passed at Online Spring Conference 2021 as “F22: Autism Support”*



## Black British Rights: Inequality in the UK

### Conference notes:

- A. That Black British civil rights and liberties are being impeded on by systemic and systematic racism evident from:
  - i. The 1999 Macpherson inquiry that labelled the Metropolitan Police Service force as institutionally racist.
  - ii. The fact that Black British young people are stereotyped and profiled in excess in comparison to white peers and are 9.5 times more likely to be stopped and search by police, and nine times more likely to be stop and searched for drugs despite using drugs at a lower rate than white Britons.
  - iii. Stereotypes of Black British people are still prevalent in the UK including the jezebel stereotype, the 'mammy' stereotype, the Mandingo buck stereotype that translates into the Black violent drug dealer/gangbanger stereotype and the sambo stereotype.
  - iv. The Windrush scandal.
- B. That Black British young people face an award gap where:
  - i. Out of 19,000 UK professors, less than 100 are black or mixed-race (of whom only 27 are women).
  - ii. BAME academics are paid less than their white counterparts.
  - iii. Only 1.2 per cent of the nearly 20,000 funded PhD studentships awarded by the UK research councils between 2016 and 2018 were awarded to black or mixed-race students.
  - iv. A 26% black attainment gap is present at Universities.
- C. That it is unequivocally more difficult to be a member of society as a Black British person than it is being a white British person.

### Conference believes:

- i. That civil rights and liberties should be enjoyed by all citizens and residents of the United Kingdom.
- ii. That all prejudice, discrimination, inequality, and privilege based upon race and colour is abhorrent and must be sought out and removed from British society.
- iii. That the Liberal Democrat party is committed to fighting oppression, ignorance and aggression.
- iv. That political blackness was once a powerful tool in unifying British minorities against overlapping experiences of white perpetrated racism in the UK but is outdated in use by the British government in 2020.

### Conference calls for:

1. The Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians to lobby the government for an official inquiry into educational institutions across the UK and Black British attainment gaps with white British peers.
2. The Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians to lobby the government to provide a diverse range of grants to Black British creatives from the age of 16 to pursue creative projects across mediums, with a focus on television and cinema, in order to diversify cinema and television to properly represent Black British people and stunt Black stereotypes perpetuated by white British creatives.
3. The Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians to explore policy solutions to British Black systemic racism that include mandatory bi-annual racial sensitivity training for all government employees, MPs and police employees across the country.



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4. The Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians to legislate to make unconscious bias training mandatory for all government employees and police force employees across the country.
5. The Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians to legislate businesses to be legally obligated to publish in-depth data on minority employment and earning differences with white counterparts.
6. The government to create a free online unconscious bias training resource for the public.
7. The government to develop a guide to talking about race in workplaces.
8. The government to seek out ways to celebrate successes in racial diversity by creating a top 100 people of colour and ethnic minorities employers list with lists within that address Black and Asian employment directly.
9. The government to ensure that the Windrush scandal never happens again.
10. The Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians to lead cross-party cooperation on the furthering of the above-listed policies, Black equality, Black equity, and work to ensure that Black British people are as free from oppression and discrimination as white British people.
11. The Liberal Democrat party to do more to address a horrible history of undiverse council and national candidates and generate initiatives to address the lack of representation in party candidacy so that Black British people and Asian British people are represented and representing others.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## Abolishing the Term BAME

### Conference notes:

- A. The term BAME has begun to be used to simply refer to “non-white” individuals.
- B. All people of colour and ethnic minorities have their own differences, backgrounds, culture and challenges to overcome.
- C. “People of colour” excludes white minorities.
- D. The [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) advice suggests that you do not use the term BAME or BME when referring to specific ethnic groups.

### Conference believes:

- i. Acknowledging the importance of individuality.
- ii. Acknowledging the importance of separate communities.
- iii. Groups of people should not be put together simply because they are not something else.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians to abolish the use of the term BAME by when addressing specific issues such as Black British issues.
- 2. The Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians to abolish the use of BAME when discussing specific minority issues and to include statistics within BAME statistics a breakdown of each minority.
- 3. The government to abolish the use of BAME when discussing specific minority issues and to include statistics within BAME statistics a breakdown of each minority.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## Public Sexual Harassment

### Conference notes:

- A. PSH is defined as: ‘unwelcomed and unwanted attention, sexual advances and intimidating behaviour that occurs in public spaces, both in person and online. It is usually directed towards women and often oppressed groups within society, however it can be experienced by all’.
- B. The Women and Equalities Committee stated ‘Sexual harassment affects the lives of nearly every woman in the UK’.
- C. PSH is widespread and relentless:
  - a. 66% of girls and young women aged 14–21 have experienced PSH, with 38% of girls aged 14–21 suffering PSH at least once a month, rising to 42% of BAME girls and 49% of LBTIQ+ young people.
  - b. Due to sustained PSH during lockdowns, 28% of women and girls now feel less safe going out.
- D. 35% of girls aged 14–21 have experienced PSH while wearing school uniform.
- E. People rarely report incidents – to anyone:
  - a. 42% of girls aged 14–21 who have experienced PSH didn’t tell anyone. 33% were too embarrassed, 28% feared not being taken seriously and 26% didn’t know who to tell.
- F. PSH is significantly underreported to the police:
  - a. 76% of girls who have experienced harassment have never reported it to the police.
  - b. 94% of girls believe that PSH should be illegal.
- G. The lack of support for victims, many being children, often makes the aftermath worse than the incident.
- H. Victims often blame themselves. People are regularly made to feel they were ‘asking for it’, and feel social condemnation holding them responsible for not preventing or controlling it. The onus is put on victims to stay safe, rather than tackling the actions of perpetrators.
- I. People’s freedom is restricted, changing their behaviours to avoid PSH
- J. People don’t know their rights. Girls learn to accept being sexually harassed as part of growing up partly because the law is not always on their side. If authority figures lack clarity about laws around PSH, it is understandable that the public are also uncertain.
- K. The UK is behind many other countries that have criminalised PSH:
  - a. In Belgium, Peru, Portugal and France perpetrators can be fined.
  - b. In Belgium, Portugal and Brazil perpetrators face prison; in Portugal if the victim is under 14 the maximum sentence increases.
  - c. In France the penalties increase when committed by an authority figure/someone in a vehicle or against a minor/ vulnerable person or when motivated by the victim’s true or supposed sexual orientation
- L. Paris’ 2015 ‘Stop, that’s enough!’ campaign prompted a vital conversation across France’s major media.

### Conference believes that:

- I. Everyone has the right to feel safe in public.
- II. Relentless harassment is holding people back, impacting their mental health, restricting their freedom and making them feel unsafe.
- III. Everyone must have equal access to public spaces.
- IV. Education about PSH is crucial to decreasing its prevalence.
- V. PSH must be criminalised. This will empower victims to speak out and deter perpetrators.



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VI. PSH is so socially accepted that bystander intervention rarely occurs.

Conference calls for:

1. Including PSH in the RSE and PSHE curriculums.
  - a. Teaching what constitutes PSH and its impact on women, girls and marginalised groups.
  - b. Engaging all pupils with bystander initiatives.
  - c. Running visible school campaigns, tackling the stigma.
2. Education for school and university staff: training how to intervene during PSH, how to respond if a student reports PSH and working with local specialist support services to better support students who are distressed following PSH.
3. Encouraging victims to report PSH and monitoring its locations.
  - a. A teacher supervising common locations of PSH near school when pupils are travelling and a police officer at other locations, at common times.
4. Taking action against PSH occurring in schools and universities.
  - a. Introducing a clear reporting process with designated staff, allowing students to remain confidential.
  - b. Developing a clear policy to tackle PSH, distinct from a school bullying policy.
5. Criminalising PSH with fines and prison sentences; penalties increasing when committed by authority figures or someone in a vehicle and when against someone under 18/ a vulnerable adult.
6. Launching a campaign similar to Paris' 'Stop, that's enough!' across the UK, raising awareness about PSH's prevalence and seriousness; promoting bystander intervention and victim support.
7. Conducting a comprehensive study to understand PSH and its impact on all genders.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## Children in Care and Care Leavers

Conference notes that:

- A. 99,000 children are considered children in care in the UK.
- B. The Liberal Democrats currently only mention care leavers in motions to do with other problems such as homelessness.
- C. Care leavers only have a pathway plan from the age of 16 to 21.
- D. 16 year olds who become homeless or estranged cannot easily find support
- E. 1 in 4 young care leavers have had to sofa surf.
- F. 14% of young care leavers have slept rough.
- G. 40% of care leavers are unable to pay the required deposit for housing.
- H. 57% of care leavers feel unsafe in the area they originally lived in.
- I. Young people leaving care are less likely to be involved in education, training or employment and are more vulnerable to social exclusion in later life.
- J. Children in care are less likely to achieve their academic potential.
- K. 12% of care leavers have entered higher education by the age of 23 – this has doubled over the last decade.
- L. The average child in care enters care at aged 14, which is a crucial point academically.
- M. Care leavers have sometimes lived in up to 20 foster placements and care homes.
- N. Government statistics do not always match up with charity statistics on care leaver wellbeing.
- O. Care leavers often rely on universal credit as their main source of income.
- P. Care leaver/children in care mental health support.

Conference believes that:

- i. Care leavers are vulnerable young adults who need the support of both their local authority and government.
- ii. Care leavers need more support than the average young adult as often they do not have the support of family, both for health and financial reasons.
- iii. Care leavers starting at the age of 16 could be inhibiting their ability to attend education post 16.
- iv. Children in care deserve equal access to education and support.
- v. All children deserve full support in reaching their potential, no matter their circumstances.

Conference resolves that:

- 1. A pledge of the level of support that they will provide to the children in their care should be mandated on all local authorities. The pledge should be legally enforced, with penalties.
- 2. Care leavers should have support transferring local authorities if they wish, including communication between the two and agreed funding.
- 3. Children in care should have savings set aside for them by local authorities during their time in care to go towards supporting them as a young adult.
- 4. All 16 year olds should be allowed the opportunity to stay in care until the age of 25.
- 5. 16 and 17 year olds whose family relationship deteriorates should have the full support of their local authority, equal to that they would have had at 15.
- 6. Moving children in care should only happen when necessary.
- 7. Children in care should be supported with exam resists and revision support by both local authorities and schools.



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8. Children in care and care leavers should be given access to special meetings to encourage them to explore their future and given full information on apprenticeships, sixth forms, colleges, universities etc. with no bias of pathways provided.
9. Children in care should be offered tutoring and mentoring from the age of 13 provided by local authorities and schools.
10. All universities should be encouraged to provide support for care leavers outside of term time.
11. Universities should be encouraged to run access schemes for care leavers with the aim to get 30% of care leavers in higher education by the age of 25 by 2030.
12. Care leavers should have access to support in the form of mentors and advisors throughout their life, even after the age of 21.
13. Care leavers should have access to CAMHS up until the age of 25.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*

*Note: Motion successfully passed at Online Autumn Conference 2021 as "F10: Children in Care and Care Leavers"*





## Funeral Support for Students and Young Adult Carers

### Conference notes:

- A. 55% of UK students find that the financial support granted them by SFE/SFE/SFNI/SAAS does not cover their rent and living costs.
- B. 29% of freshers applied for additional funding in 2019.
- C. The average shortfall between living costs and maintenance funding is £223 per month
- D. 74% of UK students rely on part-time work to make up this shortfall.
- E. Although there are still no official records of the number of student carers, it is estimated that between 3-6% of the total student population have caring responsibilities; this has increased due to the pandemic.
- F. 67% of student carers surveyed felt that they did not receive sufficient financial support.
- G. 60% of student carers surveyed were working, studying, and caring simultaneously.
- H. Full-time students are not eligible for any benefits, including Carer's Allowance.
- I. The average cost of a funeral in the UK is between £3946 and £4893.
- J. The death of someone being cared for is a very real prospect for many student carers; even more so during the pandemic.

### Conference reaffirms:

- I. The Liberal Democrat commitment to making Carer's Allowance available for students and made more accessible.
- II. The Liberal Democrat commitment to increasing Carer's Allowance by £1,000 a year.
- III. The Liberal Democrat commitment to considering being a carer to be a protected characteristic.

### Conference believes:

- i. Students with caring responsibilities should be given the same support and care as other diversity groups
- ii. All students should be supported with costs if an unexpected emergency such as a death arises

### Conference calls for:

- 1. Students (both full-time and part-time) to be made eligible for the Government's funeral expenses support.
- 2. Carer's allowance to be added to the eligibility for the Government's funeral expenses.
- 3. The Government funeral expenses allowance to be expanded so those who are on low income but do not qualify for benefits can apply for support.
- 4. University student support services to include provision for grief counselling.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*

*Note: Drafting amendment accepted, with conference calls for 2 of this motion, at Online Spring Conference 2021 to "F13: Standing Up for Unpaid Carers"*



## Confronting the Spiking Crisis

### Conference notes:

- A. Spiking can affect anyone but predominantly affects women and those of other marginalised genders; it is a part of the wider problem of Male Violence Against Women and Girls (MVAWG) and rape culture
- B. “Student night in” boycotts have been successful in raising awareness
- C. Although the maximum sentence for spiking in the UK is 10 years, many cases go unreported, and very few people are convicted
- D. Reports of spiking have been increasing in the UK since 2015:
  - a. Between 2015 and 2018 drink spiking more than doubled in the UK, according to figures from UK police forces
  - b. In September and October 2021 alone approximately 200 spiking incidents were reported in England and Wales, as well as an additional 56 incidents related specifically to injection spiking
- E. The NHS still has no specific page for spiking, and only added some information about it to the ‘Help after rape and sexual assault’ page in November 2021
- F. Many victims are being failed by authorities, due to the lack of specific procedure between the NHS and police. In many cases critical evidence is lost as drugs will only stay in victims’ systems for a short period of time
- G. There’s a surge in spiking each year during the first term of university, according to the Alcohol Education Trust
- H. A former Home Office forensic scientist, Jim Campbell OBE, believes ‘There is no communication between them [hospitals and police] at all with this...The police don’t really want to know unless they can convict someone.’

### Conference believes:

- I. Spiking is entirely the fault of the perpetrator and never the victim
- II. Everyone has the right to feel safe in hospitality venues regardless of their gender
- III. Preventative measures are essential in the short term, but long term change requires education and a cultural shift against MVAWG
- IV. Governmental and police inaction towards the safety of women and marginalised genders has caused an epidemic of MVAWG, which is fundamentally caused by their institutionalised misogyny and disregard for those groups

### Conference reaffirms:

- a. The Young Liberals policy ‘Public Sexual Harassment’ passed at Winter Conference 2021
- b. The Liberal Democrat policy ‘Ending Violence Against Women and Girls’ passed at Autumn Conference 2021

### Conference calls for:

1. Police and NHS staff to have specific training to enable them to effectively tackle spiking and support victims
2. Greater support for victims of spiking, including when there is no conviction
3. Measures to be put in place within venues:
  - a. Drink spiking test strips to be free and widely available at venues, as well as student unions, schools and pharmacies
  - b. Bottle stoppers and cup covers to be provided at venues free of charge
  - c. Rigorous bag checks by venue staff to make it harder for perpetrators to take in spiking equipment
  - d. All staff in venues to be trained on the signs of a spiked drink and how to prevent drinks being spiked, as well as specific first aid for victims and how they get further help from the NHS and police
  - e. Improved CCTV
4. A greater focus on tackling spiking within emergency services:



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- a. A clear and swift protocol to be put in place to enable the NHS and police to effectively work together after a report of spiking including improved police response times to ensure victims are protected
  - b. A review to be launched on why there are so few convictions for spiking and cases are rising so rapidly
  - c. A specific NHS webpage on spiking to be made
5. Spiking to be added to the PSHE curriculum to prevent young people from becoming perpetrators and so potential victims know what infrastructure is in place to support them

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference – Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (February) 2027*



## Protecting Our Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) Communities

### Conference notes:

- A. That the Human Rights Act makes it illegal to discriminate on a wide range of grounds including 'sex, race, colour, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, association with a national minority, property, birth or other status'.
- B. In the 2011 census, there were found to be 60,000 people identifying as part of the GRT community, however the true number may be more.
- C. The members of these communities that have no fixed address are not allowed to vote in any elections in the UK.
- D. The discrimination against these groups has been present in much of Western Europe for centuries, and has resulted in several atrocities, including the Holocaust in which between 500,000 and 1 million members of the Roma community were murdered by the Nazi regime..
- E. The Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill which would change trespassing from a civil to a criminal offence, and awards police more powers to disband and fine those encamping at roadside.
- F. The stigma and stereotypes that exist regarding GRT communities have had, and continue to have, a profound negative impact on members of those communities.
- G. The indirect discrimination faced by them, politically, socially and economically is unjust and is illegal as to the Equalities Act 2010.

### Conference believes:

- I. Travellers are faced with racism and discrimination, both indirect and direct discrimination, in many aspects of their daily lives.
- II. All efforts must be made to alleviate the discrimination, and the effects of such discrimination, on the GRT communities.
- III. The Police, Crime and Sentencing Bill is an illiberal measure by the Conservative government in Westminster which will have a large negative impact on marginalised communities.
- IV. The restriction on the civil liberties of these communities specifically will increase the usage and impact of the negative stereotypes that currently exist.
- V. All peoples are entitled to the same rights and liberties, and that this bill specifically contradicts that.
- VI. Evictions from unauthorised settlements lead to community tension, further divides along racial and ethnic barriers and significant cost to the taxpayer.

### Conference reaffirms:

- a. Our commitment to protecting the rights, liberties and free will of those in the GRT community.
- b. Our belief that the current criminal justice system is failing those in such communities.
- c. Our belief that the Young Liberals should stand up for the oppressed, whether that be in our country, or overseas.

### Conference calls on the government:

- 1. Repeal the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act.
- 2. Pass the necessary legislation to protect the nomadic aspects of these communities, as long as they do not impede on the private property of another individual.
- 3. Listen to the members of these communities in order to help remove the negative stereotypes that exist around them.
- 4. Pass legislation that would allow members of these communities to vote in the constituency or ward that they resided in at the time of election.



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5. Push for GRT History to be included in the school curriculum, both in primary and secondary schools, as well as training about GRT affairs and culture. within workplaces
6. Challenge the institutional racial stereotyping of GRT within the police force and local authorities, and other institutions.
7. Legally require councils to provide adequate GRT sites that will suit the size and needs of those who would inhabit them.
8. Include GRT as a distinct ethnic group in equality monitoring surveys, to highlight institutional discrimination and racism, gain a clearer understanding of the number of GRT in the UK and their needs.
9. Support those who wish to use the term 'Gypsy' by both including it as an option on all relevant surveys such as the census and educating specifically on the British history of the identity.
10. Pass legislation supporting GRT communities engagement with education, ensuring they cannot be turned away by schools and funding is ring fenced to work with them to stay in education until the age of 18.

Conference calls on the Liberal Democrats to:

- i. Provide a space for GRT rights to be discussed in all training where relevant such as unconscious bias training.
- ii. Hold councillors to account for their behaviour on social media – including making comments and posts that are racist towards the GRT community.
- iii. Mention GRT communities in all future manifestos, promising to uphold their rights and support their communities.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*



## Sex Work

Conference notes that

- A. Criminalisation harms all individuals in the sex work industry
  - a. Sex workers are three times more likely to experience rape and other violence in countries where sex work is criminalised
  - b. UK sex workers have the highest murder rate compared to women in other occupations
  - c. Research in the US shows trans, Black, immigrant and other women of colour are particularly targeted. 86% of trans sex workers reported being harassed, attacked, sexually assaulted, or mistreated by police
  - d. 62% of street sex workers and 90% of parlour workers had not disclosed their work to their GP
- B. Transgender people are disproportionately likely to be sex workers
- C. The sex work industry can be dangerous for sex workers due to criminalisation and stigma
- D. Sex work is one of the oldest professions and will continue to be around for a long time
- E. The English Collective of Prostitutes (the closest thing to a sex work union) calls for decriminalisation and points to New Zealand as the model to follow, after they decriminalised in 2003
  - a. Over 90% of sex workers said they had additional employment, legal, health and safety rights. 64.8% found it easier to refuse clients and 70% said they were more likely to report incidents of violence to the police
- F. The Nordic model forces sex workers underground and results in them only having clients willing to break the law - many first hand accounts report this is a negative result for sex workers
- G. The Royal College of Nursing and Women Against Rape in the UK and internationally Amnesty International, the World Health Organization, Human Rights Watch, UNAIDS and Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women support decriminalisation

Conference believes that

- i. Anti-sex work sentiment is often wrapped up in misogyny and misunderstanding
- ii. Supporting the sex work industry is vital to protect vulnerable individuals
- iii. Sex work will happen regardless of laws, so protecting any workers must be a priority of government
- iv. There are benefits and drawbacks to both the legalisation approach and decriminalisation approach
- v. Legalisation requires decriminalisation

Conference calls for

- 1. The UK Government to decriminalise sex work
- 2. The Liberal Democrats to campaign for education surrounding sex work, including training for health professionals and the police
- 3. The Liberal Democrats to support and campaign to decriminalise sex work
- 4. The Young Liberals to support and campaign for decriminalising sex work
- 5. The Young Liberals to hold SWERFs (Sex work exclusionary feminists) to account by ensuring candidates are pro sex work decriminalisation and to hold people to account on views which are discriminatory and push for a pro sex work decriminalisation Party where possible

*Passed: Reading Winter Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2028*



## Respecting Secularism and Humanism

### Conference Notes:

- A. The rich history of non-religious and secular thought within the United Kingdom, and the valuable contributions to society and public discourse of humanist individuals and groups, such as Humanists UK.
- B. That humanism represents a distinct non-religious ethical and philosophical worldview; embracing secularism, reason, naturalism, tolerance and kindness.
- C. That humanist weddings are now recognised by law in Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Channel Islands, but not in England and Wales, where there exists no option to have a wedding according to beliefs that are non-religious.
- D. That in a 2022 report the Law Commission found that wedding law in England and Wales includes additional restrictions on the performance of civil marriages compared to religious marriages, with specific provisions existing providing exemptions for Anglican, Jewish and Quaker weddings – for example, civil marriages must be conducted by a registrar, in a registered venue, following a prescribed form of words.
- E. The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 contains provisions allowing the government to enact secondary legislation to permit Humanist weddings in England and Wales.
- F. That section 70 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides for mandatory collective worship in community schools in England and Wales, and that parental permission is required for pupils to withdraw from this (with the exception of Sixth Form students in Wales); with similar requirements being incorporated into the trust deeds of most academy and free schools.
- G. That the same section provides for collective worship to be ‘broadly Christian’ in nature, unless a school is granted an exemption by its local authority’s Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), which is also responsible for the development of local Religious Education (RE) curricula.
- H. That a number of SACREs have refused full membership (and voting rights) to humanists; a practice found to be a breach of article 14 of the European Convention on Human Rights in a judicial review in May 2023.
- I. The introduction of the Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill, as a private member’s bill in the House of Lords by Liberal Democrat peer Baroness Burt, which addresses, amongst other things, concerns relating to the composition of SACREs.
- J. That the Charities Act 2011 (which consolidated previous charity law) includes ‘the advancement of religion’ as one of the thirteen permitted charitable purposes, on the grounds that it provides ‘public benefit’.
- K. That according to Humanists UK, less than half of NHS Trusts and less than 20% of prisons employ (even on a volunteer basis) a non-religious pastoral carer; and that the Ministry of Defence does not provide non-religious pastoral support to Service personnel.

### Conference Believes:

- I. That the fundamental right to freedom of religion and belief necessarily includes the right to secularist and non-religious beliefs and worldviews, including humanism.
- II. That the existing promotion of religious beliefs over non-religious beliefs, for example within education and in charity law, without equitable promotion of secularist worldviews is discriminatory; and that there should be no privilege or discrimination on the basis of religion or belief.
- III. That exposure to and discussion of diverse worldviews and belief systems in educational settings is essential to the development of a more tolerant and fair society.





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- IV. That the law in England and Wales surrounding non-religious weddings is discriminatory to humanists and others who hold non-religious beliefs.
- V. That there exists a right to pastoral support (chaplaincy) according to non-religious worldviews on the same basis as a right exists according to religious worldviews.

## Conference Reaffirms:

- i. The 2019 Liberal Democrat manifesto commitment to support the introduction of Humanist marriages.

## Conference Calls For:

1. The full implementation of the Law Commission's 2022 scheme for reform of weddings law in England and Wales, providing more equitable provisions for religious and civil marriages; and that humanist marriages should be included within any reforms, so that they receive equal recognition and treatment to religious and civil marriages.
2. The Government to make an order in council under section 14 of the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 to permit humanist marriages prior to the passage of legislation enabling the Law Commission's scheme through parliament.
3. A review of charity law surrounding the promotion of religious and irreligious beliefs.
4. The repeal of section 70 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, and for the Government to introduce measures to remove the requirements for collective worship in academies.
5. For any child, regardless of their age, to be given the right to withdraw from collective worship without parental consent; for the requirement that collective worship be 'broadly Christian' in nature be removed; and for non-statutory guidance to be updated to promote inclusive assemblies.
6. The Government and others in parliament to support the Education (Non-religious Philosophical Convictions) Bill.
7. A review of pastoral services in prisons, hospitals and the armed services to improve the provision of non-religious pastoral support.

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*





## Promoting Equality in the Playground

### Conference notes:

- A. Research by the charity, Make Space for Girls, shows children tend to use parks equally at younger ages when with parents and carers. However when children get older and become more independent, parks are used much more by boys than girls, and girls use them with less confidence.
- B. A recent Girlguiding survey showed that over 80% of girls and young women feel unsafe when they are out alone, while research in Glasgow during the Coronavirus pandemic found that only 20% of girls and young women felt very comfortable in the park that they had chosen to use.
- C. 59% of girls don't feel welcome in parks because spaces are dominated by boys.
- D. When facilities are built for older children, they almost always consist of MUGAs (Multi Use Games Areas) and Skateparks. This is enshrined in the Fields in Trust Guidance used by local authorities
- E. Research in the US found that living near a park makes it more likely that a teenage girl will do exercise, however living near a skatepark lowered the average exercise taken.
- F. Girls feel unsafe using prescriptive and fenced-in MUGAs, which are open to territorialisation by boys.
- G. Research by the University of Leeds showed 89% of park professionals think parks in their area of West Yorkshire are very or fairly safe for women and girls, while only 22% of girls felt the same.
- H. In Austria, Malmö and Umeå, parks designed for teenage girls and co-created with girls and young women have resulted in an increase in girls using the spaces.

### Conference Believes:

- I. Girls are designed out of public spaces like parks at a crucial stage in their development when they should be increasing their autonomy and developing an independent life. But these spaces tell them that they, unlike the boys, are not welcome limiting their opportunities to exercise and socialise.
- II. Parks need to provide a clean, cared for and attractive space with at least basic facilities for girls to feel comfortable.
- III. Equalising and promoting usage of specific exercise spaces for girls will create a more inclusive environment where both girls and boys feel they are welcome.
- IV. The absence of girls' voices in the planning process for all public spaces also affects their sense of worth. Not a single more skate park or MUGA should be built without an equalities assessment.

### Conference calls on local authorities to:

- 1. Re-imagine the design of new and existing parks by
  - a. Including in-ground trampolines, social seating and shelters, belt swings and, music and dance spaces.
  - b. Breaking skateparks into smaller sections that cannot be dominated by one group.
  - c. Building new MUGAs with multiple wider entrances, and provisions for sports like Netball.
- 2. Put parks at the centre of our communities by
  - a. Investing in cafes and ice cream stalls within parks
  - b. Loaning speakers and bandstands to street performers and musicians.
- 3. Create a safe and welcoming environment in parks by
  - a. Increasing the provision of park officers and CCTV.
  - b. Ensuring areas are well-lit at night.



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- c. Building new parks in accessible and walkable places.
- 4. Encourage teenage girls to use parks by
  - a. Consulting and co-creating with local teenage girls to design and develop inclusive, active parks that meet girls' needs, and those of the wider community.
  - b. Reframe perceptions of parks as active spaces for everyone, with local campaigns and messaging.
  - c. Setting up local exercise initiatives for girls.
- 5. Use and integrate technology more innovatively with physical activity.
- 6. Monitor and evaluate park developments for girls and share case studies and best practice learnings to future-proof park spaces.

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*



## Disabled Marriage Equality

Conference notes that:

- A. When assessing a married or cohabiting disabled person for means tested benefits, the claimant's eligibility is partially dependent on the income and savings of their partner.
- B. When joint income is taken into account, their partner's earnings or savings often exceed the limits for eligibility for income-related benefits.
- C. Disabled people experience higher levels of domestic violence, with disabled women being twice as likely to experience domestic violence as their non-disabled counterparts and also experience the abuse for longer before seeking help.\*

Conference believes that:

- I. Under current UK law, for disabled people getting married or cohabiting with a partner can result in reduced monthly benefits or even total loss of eligibility for benefits.
- II. Current law deprives disabled people in relationships of agency and the ability to be financially independent.
- III. Forcing disabled people to become financially dependent on a partner puts them at a further heightened risk of abuse.

Conference calls for:

- 1. Individual's eligibility for means tested disability benefits to be based on their sole income alone, regardless of marital/cohabitation status.

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*



## Tackling Maternal Discrimination

### Conference notes:

- A. That mothers' careers are disproportionately impacted by having children, due to the societal expectation to take on much of the care responsibilities.
- B. That the rate of full time employment for mothers when their youngest child is 18 is as low as 60%, when compared to over 90% in fathers.
- C. The current provision of quality childcare is insufficient, as staff with level 3 qualifications decreased by 37% from 2015 to 2019.
- D. That 50% of local authorities in England have sufficient childcare spaces for under twos, 73% for three to four year olds, but only 25% have sufficient provision for five to eleven-year-olds
- E. That full time childcare currently costs on average £14,030 a year, however there are regional disparities with it costing 62.5% more in Inner London compared to the East Midlands
- F. That good quality formal childcare supports the career progression of a mother, and has long term academic benefits for children.
- G. The current model for secondary parental leave upholds the view that mothers should take up most of the caring responsibilities, with fathers only qualifying for up to two weeks of leave.
- H. Iceland's parental leave programme, which gives fathers a significant independent right to parental leave, helped contribute to a culture shift, which by 2012, resulted in 60% of parents sharing caring responsibilities equally.
- I. Research suggests that equalising barriers to participation in the labour market could increase productivity by 32%.
- J. That the UK Government is phasing in 30 hours of free childcare over the next two years

### Conference believes:

- I. That the current division of paid and unpaid work in society is inherently sexist
- II. That mothers should be able to pursue careers, alongside having children, and it should be the state's responsibility to facilitate this
- III. In order to support women who wish to both have children and a career, we need to expand access to childcare, improve the quality of that childcare and to fix parental leave in order to rebalance caring responsibilities in a given family.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The UK Government to reform Paternity Leave, with secondary parents being given an independent right to three months of non-transferable parental leave, paid in line with Statutory Maternity Pay
- 2. The childcare sector to be reformed, by:
  - a. Allowing Local Authorities to be their own providers of childcare, by establishing not-for-profit nursery trusts;
  - b. Setting up fair pay agreements for this sector, including a minimum floor for terms and conditions;
  - c. Expanding the provision of childcare for school age children, including after school clubs and breakfast clubs
- 3. The UK Government to expand flexible working, by:
  - a. Giving all employees the right to request from day one;
  - b. Giving employees the right to appeal a rejected request;
  - c. Creating a duty for employers to list flexible working options available on job adverts



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4. The Liberal Democrats to remain committed to 35 hours of free childcare from the 2019 Manifesto

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*



## Tackling road use - A Novel Strategy for Vehicle Taxation.

### Conference notes:

- A. £32 billion in tax revenue is generated from petrol and diesel cars, arising from both Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and fuel duty, equivalent to 3% of total government tax receipts, as cited by Resolution Foundation's June 2023 report "Where the rubber hits the road".
- B. New sales of petrol and diesel cars are to be banned from 2030, with new hybrid sales to be banned from 2035
- C. Road pricing was a Liberal Democrat policy in the 2010 manifesto, promising "Any such system would be revenue-neutral for motorists, with revenue from cars used to abolish Vehicle Excise Duty and reduce fuel duty."
- D. Road pricing has been repeatedly endorsed as needed by the Climate Change Committee, most recently in its June 2023 Progress Report, to make local congestion schemes effective towards our climate targets and to meet fiscal shortfalls.
- E. Various models for road pricing have been proposed, whether it be a flat pence per mile scheme with free mileage allowances, whilst phasing out fuel duty, as proposed by Social Market Foundation in May 2022 paper "Miles Ahead: Road pricing as a fairer form of motoring taxation"; introducing road pricing only on Electric Vehicles as suggested by Resolution Foundation in its aforementioned June 2023 paper; or a variable pricing scheme working in conjunction with local emissions schemes, as suggested by Campaign for Better Transport's September 2022 report "Pay-as-you-drive: The British public's views on vehicle taxation reform".
- F. Campaign for Better Transport's 2022 report in particular suggests a smart charge based on location, traffic data and public transport, and an opt-out static charge based on emissions that would be paid at the vehicle's MOT.
- G. Campaign for Better Transport's 2022 report suggests that local congestion charges should be applied consistently across the UK to avoid Local Government competition on rate setting.
- H. Campaign for Better Transport in June 2023's briefing "Better Transport for Better Health" also suggests that the success of local congestion charge schemes depends on eligibility of scrappage schemes and associated funding.
- I. The Institute for Fiscal Studies' (IFS) publication "A road map for motoring taxation" calls for a national scrappage scheme equivalent to the "showroom VED", the first year VED that is graduated based on emissions.
- J. Current policy set out in the Liberal Democrat Autumn 2021 Policy Paper "Tackling the Climate Emergency: Proposals for Carbon Pricing" includes a commitment to a limited 5% VAT rate on cheaper Electric Vehicles, to be phased out as EV market expands
- K. VAT on EV sales is already at 20%, and that VAT limited reductions or zero-rating has meant only tax forgone, rather than being passed onto the consumer, as noted by 2015 IMF working paper "Estimating VAT Pass Through", where VAT cuts have only been passed onto the consumer where share of total consumption affected is more than 10%.
- L. Since the 2021 policy paper, the government has since cut fuel duty by 5p in the Spring Statement 2022, and is continuing the freeze this financial year.
- M. The fuel duty cut could lead to a rise in carbon emissions, up to as much as 3.9 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> (equivalent to 3.9% increase to total emissions) in the next year, as estimated by New Economics Foundation in March 2023

## Conference believes:

- I. Replacing both fuel duty and VED before the end of the decade with smart road pricing would enable both better targeting of non-exhaust emissions (eg tyres and breaks) alongside pricing of exhaust emissions from petrol and diesel cars.
- II. Where there are privacy concerns from members of the public, an annual emissions-based rate paid at MOT would ease concerns about a transition to smart road-pricing.
- III. A rapid rollout of local congestion charges is vital and that generous scrappage schemes should accompany it as part of a just transition away from petrol and diesel based transport.
- IV. An accelerated move towards electric vehicles can only occur with a national scrappage scheme that subsidises replacement of more carbon-intensive cars with cars that are less carbon-intensive.
- V. Specific VAT cuts, whether it is a scaled reduction on Electric Vehicles, or a cut for public charging points as suggested by the Climate Change Committee in recommendation 2022-31, are not likely to be passed on and are therefore unable to accelerate the transition to electric vehicles.
- VI. That fuel duty rises are needed to control emissions but a one off rise in fuel duty now would be regressive and hit poorer households harder and a plan suggested by both IFS in 2019, for monthly increases based on CPI, and by Resolution Foundation in its June 2023 paper "Tax Planning" paper, would ease the increases in taxation on consumers whilst maintaining emissions targeting.

## Conference calls for:

1. In the lead up to the implementation of a road-pricing scheme, the Government to increase fuel duty monthly in line with the Bank of England's target of 2% annual inflation, as suggested by Resolution Foundations' June 2023 "Tax Planning" paper.
2. Liberal Democrats to resist campaigning for adjusting specific VAT rates, particularly with electric vehicles and public charging points, and that the Government also rejects calls to do so in favour of funding measures to increase public transport and electric vehicle uptake.
3. Liberal Democrats in Local Government across England to support implementation of further local emissions charges in their areas to further public health improvement and reduce local emissions.
4. The Government to negotiate harmonisation of top up rates for local congestion charges in England, in preparation for it to be integrated with a national pricing scheme, and ensure revenues are maintained by local authorities that introduce congestion charges.
5. Liberal Democrat to support extensive scrappage schemes where local schemes are introduced, and the Government to introduce a nationwide scrappage scheme exceeding the current "showroom" VED, once a national road-pricing scheme is rolled out.
6. Liberal Democrats to support the introduction of a smart road-pricing scheme, and for the Government to implement one by 2030 to replace VED and fuel duty, favouring a scheme linked with vehicle telematics systems to track location and traffic alongside linkage with availability of public transport.
7. The Government, alongside a road-pricing scheme, to introduce an opt-out system, where current vehicle owners object to smart pricing or the vehicle does not have the systems capabilities to comply: that such a system comprises of the following components:
  - a. the charge is based on miles driven payable at the annual MOT,
  - b. the charge is graduated based on vehicle emissions

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*

# LGTBQAI+ Liberation





## LGBT+ Youth Homelessness

Conference is concerned that:

- A. Research by the Albert Kennedy Trust estimates that a quarter of homeless people under twenty-five are LGBT+, with 77% as the direct result of rejection and abuse by their families;
- B. Stonewall has found that LGBT+ people are fourteen times more likely to be homeless than their cis and heterosexual peers;
- C. These trends are disproportionately higher amongst trans, non-binary, BAME, faith, disabled and lower-income groups.

Conference further notes that:

- i. The true scale of LGBT+ homeless is not fully known, due to homelessness and housing providers failing to adequately monitor and record gender and sexual identity during assessment;
- ii. An investigation by the BBC found that only nine English local councils could confirm that they have specialist training on LGBT+ issues within homelessness;
- iii. The same report from the BBC found that fifty-five local councils in England ask for proof from parents that they have made their children homeless, placing undue trauma on individuals and increasing the prospect that they do not receive support;
- iv. LGBT+ people that are homeless are at a high risk of sexual exploitation, HIV infection and exposure to risky sexual activities.

Conference therefore resolves that:

1. Housing and homelessness services should be mandated to properly undertake equality monitoring to better identify and address needs, including opportunities to disclose an LGBT+ identity after initial assessment;
2. All local authorities should ensure that frontline staff have adequate and ongoing specialist training to appropriately work with at-risk LGBT+ youth;
3. Local authorities should be prohibited from using the testimony of parents to determine whether an LGBT+ person is eligible to receive support;
4. There should be greater investment in so-called 'Upstream' services to identify LGBT+ youths at risk of homelessness within schools, so as to provide early intervention and support.

Sources:

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*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Trans Rights

Conference notes with concern:

- A. In July 2019 transphobic hate crimes in the UK rose by 81% compared to 2016-2017
- B. In May 2020 the Hungarian Government outlawed legal gender recognition by replacing 'sex' on legal governments with 'sex assigned at birth'
- C. 13 countries in Europe and Asia still require those transitioning to be sterilized
- D. 31 countries in Europe and Asia have age restrictions for transitioning
- E. The increasing influence of TERFs (Trans exclusionary radical feminists) online, within the media and in politics.
- F. The toxic debate within politics and the media around Trans Rights, especially in respect to the Government Consultation on the proposed reforms to the Gender Recognition Act
- G. That systemic transphobia exists, both overtly and under the guise of feminism, within British Politics including within the Liberal Democrats, and that there have been cases of transphobia by members and office holders within the party
- H. Two in five trans people (42 per cent) who would like to undergo medical intervention as part of their transition, haven't done so yet, because they fear the consequences it might have on their family life. (Source: LGBT in Britain - Trans Report, Stonewall and YouGov)
- I. The recent comments by Minister for Women and Equalities Liz Truss and other indications in the Media that suggest the Government may not only not go ahead with changes to the Gender Recognition Act, and may instead reduce the rights of trans people and make their lives harder.

Conference affirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- a. To extend protection of gender reassignment in equality law to explicitly cover gender identity and expression, and streamline and simplify the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to allow individuals to change their legal gender without unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, for example the intrusive medical tests currently required.
- b. To Introduce an 'X' option on passports, identity documents, and official forms for those who do not wish to identify as either male or female, and campaign for their introduction in the provision of other services, for example utilities
- c. The removal of the Spousal Veto and in cases where marriages have previously been annulled against the desires of both partners, to introduce a mechanism to allow couples, where one partner has transitioned, to reinstate their marriages with the consent of both partners
- d. A commitment to include positive images of trans individuals in all Central Government publications to increase the visibility of our communities.

Conference believes:

- i. Trans men are men, trans women are women, Non-binary individuals are non-binary.
- ii. All trans individuals deserve legal recognition and protection from transphobia
- iii. That there is no conflict or contradiction between supporting and protecting trans rights and the rights of women
- iv. That the discourse around trans rights needs to be detoxified, and transphobia must not be tolerated, and that as liberals we have a responsibility to call out those who wish to undermine the rights of trans people including within the Liberal Democrats
- v. That the original proposed reforms to the Gender Recognition Act set in motion under Theresa May should go ahead, that the government should push ahead with the reforms and that any such reforms should make specific provision for recognising non-binary identities
- vi. That young people should be supported and respected in their gender identity, and the age to access gender recognition should be lowered from 18 to 16
- vii. That hate crimes based on gender identity should be treated equally to those based on race and faith under the law



# YOUNG LIBERALS POLICY BOOK

viii. The Liberal Democrats stand to defend and enhance human rights across the UK, including the right of each citizen to define freely who they are

Conference calls for:

1. The UK government to condemn the transphobic actions of Hungary, the United States and any and all other countries taking transphobic actions.
2. The UK government to condemn transphobic actions of any nation state, regardless of existing relationships with those states, including the transphobic actions of Hungary and the United States
3. The government to take more action regarding online harassment
4. The upcoming changes to the Gender Recognition Act to reform the system to ensure that the process is as simple and non-bureaucratic as possible, and for the specific policy changes in this motion and in wider Liberal Democrat policy to be implemented
5. The government to ensure that the legal right of trans people to access facilities matching their gender is protected
6. The Liberal Democrats to take a more proactive and vocal position in the promotion and defence of transgender individuals
7. The Liberal Democrats to amend their constitution preamble to include gender as a characteristic that we reject all prejudice and discrimination based on.
8. Both the Young Liberals and the wider Liberal Democrats to include options for pronouns on conferences passes and for the party at all levels to continue to make clear that transphobia is not welcome in the party, and that those who wish to undermine trans rights are not welcome in the party
9. Both the Young Liberals and the wider Liberal Democrats to ensure that gender neutral facilities are available for members to use at events such as conferences

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Supporting the Prescription of Hormone Blocking Medications to Gender Diverse People Under the Age of 18

Conference notes that:

- A. There are estimated to be between 200,000 and 500,000 gender diverse people in the UK.
- B. 41% of gender diverse people record having experienced a hate crime in the last 12 months.
- C. 21% of gender diverse people experience homelessness at some point in their lives.
- D. In 2020 the courts ruled against the Tavistock and Portman Trust resulting in the blocking of easy access to live saving medications for young gender diverse people in the form of Puberty Blockers.
- E. Obtaining Puberty Blockers requires court approval in almost all cases for under 16's.
- F. For all other treatments, the NHS either considers the child under 16 able to consent (by assessing whether the child is Gillick competent), or allows the parent/guardian to consent on their behalf. This treatment is unique as the courts hold the ability for the aforementioned parental consent to be overturned by the courts.
- G. There are currently approximately 5,000 young people on the waiting list for their first appointment with the GIDS (Gender Identity Development Service) – the only gender clinic for children and adolescents in the UK.
- H. The average wait for a first appointment in a Gender Identity clinic for children and adults is 18 months, contrary to the 18 weeks pledged by NHS England.
- I. Puberty blocking medications are life saving for those who are prescribed it – there are no deaths related to taking the medication.
- J. Only 267 people under the age of 15 have used blockers between 2012 and 2018.
- K. Less than 1% of people de-transition.
- L. There is no evidence that puberty blockers have any permanent effect.

Conference believes that:

- i. Trans men are men, trans women are women, and non-binary people are non-binary.
- ii. Everyone has the right to feel comfortable in their own body.
- iii. Everyone should have access to healthcare at no significant cost or unnecessary hinderance.
- iv. Everyone has the right to a maximum 18 week wait time for non-urgent consultant-led treatment.

Conference calls for:

- 1. The Government to ensure that the right of gender diverse people to access lifesaving treatment is protected, by supporting the Tavistock and Portman Trust in their court appeal.
- 2. Liberal Democrat MPs to actively contest the changes made by the courts surrounding the restrictions of the prescription of Puberty Blockers in young people.
- 3. The Government to seek advice from Trans+ young people when reforming the GRA (Gender Recognition Act).
- 4. The Liberal Democrats to campaign for the widening of GIDS, increasing the overall capacity for children and young people.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## Pride is a Protest

In light of the current economic crisis, threats to jobs and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) services due to lack of funding, the rise of the far right and an increase in homophobic hate crime, there can be no doubt that the need for a strong, political movement to promote and defend the LGBT community's interests is as clear today as it has ever been. Pride events have always been, and must remain, key to driving forward social progress and effectively defending the interests of the LGBT+ community at home and abroad.

Young Liberals denounce recent moves towards increasingly commercialised Pride events where business sponsorship often predominates to the detriment of prides as inclusive, accessible, political events. Conference notes the key role that can be played by member-led organisations such as trade unions, political bodies, community groups, and student unions in reclaiming Pride as political events belonging to the whole LGBT+ community.

*Passed: Manchester Activate - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## Continuing the Journey to Equal Marriage

Conference notes with pride that same-sex marriage became legal in 2013, following the actions of Liberal Democrats in Government.

Conference also notes:

- A. That the Same Sex Marriage Act introduced the “spousal veto”, a clause which allows one partner in a marriage to object to their spouse obtaining a gender recognition certificate
- B. That many benefit and welfare entitlements can be affected by marital status, and so some disabled people are deterred from marriage due to the economic impact it could have on them
- C. That it is still necessary to designate partners in a marriage ceremony as a “wife” or “husband”, and so non-binary people may be forcefully misgendered as part of the ceremony
- D. That religious groups are not required to recognise or perform same sex marriages

Conference therefore recognises that we do not yet have “equal marriage”, and that we should refrain from describing same-sex marriage as equal marriage.

Conference calls on the Federal Party and elected Liberal Democrats to campaign on the above points, to continue the journey towards truly equal marriage.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## Trans Children

### Conference notes:

- A. The Conservative Government have continually failed to protect and stand up for the rights of transgender people, including:
  - a. Disbanding the LGBT Advisory Group
  - b. Abandoning plans to reform the Gender Recognition Act (GRA)
  - c. Reluctance to ban conversion therapy, entertaining proposals for exemptions and loopholes
  - d. Abandoning work on the LGBT Action Plan
- B. Over a quarter of trans children have experienced transphobia in school or college, according to a Galop survey in 2020
- C. Nearly one in ten trans students in Britain are subjected to death threats in school, according to a Stonewall survey in 2016-17
- D. Puberty blockers prevent the progression of puberty by temporarily stopping the production of the hormones which progress puberty, helping to avoid the devastating mental health consequences of trans children undergoing puberty does not correspond to their gender identity
- E. The NHS Gender Identity Development Service recognizes puberty blockers as a physically reversible intervention: if an individual stops taking hormone blockers, their body will begin to develop as it would have done without the person taking puberty blockers
- F. Excluding trans children from participating in sports in teams and settings in line with their gender identity can have severe mental health impacts for those children, who are already vulnerable, and prevent trans children from gaining the physical and mental health benefits of participating in sports
- G. A study in 2018 from the Williams Institute at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law found that there is no evidence that allowing trans people to access public facilities in line with their gender identity increases safety risks
- H. The Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) is currently seeing young people for their first appointment who were referred in 2018
- I. Many children and young people who are waiting for an appointment with the Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS) are vulnerable and at risk of self-harm or suicide attempts
- J. 5% of LGBT+ people have been “pressured to access services to question or change their sexual orientation when accessing healthcare services”, but this rises to 20% of trans people concerning services which aim to “suppress their gender identity” according to Stonewall
- K. Trans children are especially vulnerable to being compelled towards conversion therapy due to the influence of non-affirming family members

### Conference believes:

- I. Trans men are men, trans women are women, and non-binary people are non-binary
- II. Trans children should be free and empowered to live as who they are and have their rights and liberties protected
- III. Everyone deserves to have access to healthcare at no significant cost or unnecessary hindrance
- IV. There is no conflict or contradiction between supporting and protecting trans rights and the rights of women

### Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Issue guidance for teachers and administrators to ensure that trans children are protected and safe in schools and ensure that safeguarding training for the relevant people includes adequate and accurate information on the protection of trans children in schools
2. Pass legislation that explicitly protects the rights of trans children to access gender affirming healthcare, including but not limited to puberty blockers



# YOUNG LIBERALS POLICY BOOK

3. Outline and deliver upon measures ensuring that right of trans children to participate, and compete in whatever sports, sports teams or competitions they wish to is protected
4. Ensure that trans children have access to bathrooms, changing rooms, and any other facilities children may need to access in line with their gender identity, including in schools and any other public building
5. Widen the provision of Gender Identity Development Service (GIDS), increasing the overall capacity for children and young people
6. Ban conversion therapy in all forms and in all settings, with no exemptions, including for religious or faith-based organisations

Conference calls on the Liberal Democrats to:

- a. Take a more proactive and vocal position in the promotion and defence of the rights of all transgender individuals, with a particular focus on trans children
- b. Create and protect an atmosphere that is safe and welcoming to all trans individuals within the party

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference – Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (February) 2027*





## In Opposition to the use of a Section 35 Order Regarding the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill

### Conference notes:

1. The Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill [GRR] completed all stages in the Scottish Parliament on 22nd December 2022 and seeks to make it simpler for people to change their legal gender.
2. The GRR was passed overwhelmingly by the Scottish Parliament on a cross-party basis.
3. The proposed legislation is similar in effect to legislation enacted in 18 other countries, including Belgium, Denmark and Ireland.
4. On the 17th January 2023, the UK Government blocked the bill from receiving Royal Assent by using a section 35 order under the Scotland Act.
5. This action is unprecedented in the modern period of devolution, and is the first use of a post-legislative veto since 1708.
6. Under the Scotland Act, gender recognition is not a reserved matter and as such is devolved.
7. During the legislative process, the Scottish Parliament specifically considered whether it had the legislative competence to pass the GRR and found in the affirmative.
8. A series of recent statements and actions by the UK Government have sought to undermine the existing rights afforded to trans people including a reticence to include gender identity in a proposed ban on so called “conversion therapy”.
9. The House of Commons Women and Equalities Committee supports reforms similar to those contained within the GRR.
10. The implementation of the GRR would be a massive benefit to members of the trans community in Scotland, however it falls short of including provisions for non-binary people.

### Conference believes:

- i. The section 35 order is a dangerous attack on the fundamental rights of trans people, and its implementation is the result of systemic transphobia within the Conservative Party.
- ii. The blocking of the GRR is a threat to the union and erodes the principles of devolution, with the precedent set by the use of section 35 undermining the legislative autonomy of the Scottish Parliament.
- iii. The Scottish National Party are weaponising the actions of the UK Government as an argument in favour of Scottish independence, where the focus ought to be on supporting the real victims, that is, members of the trans community.
- iv. People should be able to change their legal gender without the need for medical intervention or unnecessary delay.
- v. Any gender recognition reform should be inclusive of non-binary people.
- vi. Trans women are women. Trans men are men. Non binary people are valid. Trans rights are human rights.
- vii. Any attempts at opposition to trans equality and the reform of Gender Recognition Act are in direct conflict with the objectives and values of the Young Liberals.

### Conference calls for:

1. The UK Government to revoke the Section 35 order and stop blocking the GRR from receiving Royal Assent and for parliamentarians to make all reasonable efforts to this effect.



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2. The Federal and English Liberal Democrats to publicly and vocally criticise the decision to block the GRR in total solidarity with the Scottish Liberal Democrats, the LGBT+ Liberal Democrats and the trans community.
3. The Liberal Democrats to campaign to amend the Gender Recognition Act 2004, making it easier for people to change their legal gender, in line with the aims of the GRR.
4. All Liberal Democrats, inside and outside the parliamentary party, to unequivocally support the Liberal Democrat commitment to the reform of the Gender Recognition Act as seen in Scotland.

*Passed: Reading Winter Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2028*

# International Affairs and Europe



## Ukrainian Political Prisoners

Conference acknowledges:

- A. To date, there are 70 political prisoners still in detention, 10 have already been released under the previous president, Petro Poroshenko
- B. The Russian Federation have used as many as 10 of the prisoners, including Nadiya Savchenko, Oleg Sentsov and Oleksandr Kolchenko for '[show trials](#)'.
- C. The European Union have voted in favour of calling on The Russian Federation to release all of the prisoners with immediate effect and with no caveats.

Conference reaffirms:

- I. The Liberal Democrat commitment for a better world, one where neighbouring countries do not need to be at war with each other, one where NGOs such as OSCE and the UN can carry out their work in affected areas in a non-biased atmosphere in order to gain a non-biased outcome.
- II. The principle of the right to basic human needs such as medical needs, housing, and the right to fair and non-biased legal representation

Conference calls for:

1. The Party to call on the Government to bring action against The Russian Federation for stripping prisoners such as Sentsov and Kolchenko of their dual Russian-Ukrainian citizenship and making them pure Russian citizens in order to deal with them in the biased Russian legal system.
2. Liberal Democrat members of the Council of Europe to put pressure on their Russian counterparts to make sure that the prisoners are getting access to basic rights such as non-biased legal representation and high-quality medical attention.
3. Liberal Democrat MEPs to bring this to the attention of the new president of the EU commission, Ursula Von Der Layen, and make sure that a vote is passed condemning the actions of The Russian Federation in this EU parliamentary session.

*Passed: London Summer Conference - Summer 2019*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2024*



## Young Liberals Stand with Hong Kong

Conference notes that:

- A. The Sino-British Joint Declaration, signed in 1984 by both the United Kingdom and the People's Republic of China, promised that, for a period of 50 years following the 1997 handover, Hong Kong's way of life would remain unchanged.
- B. The government of the People's Republic of China has increasingly acted in breach of the Joint Declaration, most recently through the attempts to enact an extradition bill that would allow extradition from Hong Kong to the mainland.
- C. There have been mass protests by the people of Hong Kong against the extradition bill.
- D. Residents of Hong Kong prior to the 1997 handover were eligible to receive the status of *British National (Overseas)*.
- E. The late Paddy Ashdown proposed that BN(O) passport holders should receive the right of abode in the United Kingdom.

Conference believes that:

- I. As the only other signatory to the Sino-British Joint Declaration, the United Kingdom is in a unique position to criticise the People's Republic of China for its violation of the declaration and has a unique moral responsibility to take action in response.
- II. The United Kingdom has both a general humanitarian obligation and a specific obligation, by virtue of its historic links to Hong Kong, to seek to preserve the rights and freedoms of Hongkongers.
- III. Britain should stand with Hong Kong in the fight for freedom.
- IV. Hongkongers wishing to relocate to the United Kingdom should be welcomed, especially under the current circumstances.

Conference calls for:

- 1. Any post-Brexit trade deal with Hong Kong and the People's Republic of China to include provisions on human rights, civil liberties and democratisation.
- 2. Imposing sanctions on those persons complicit in or responsible for suppressing Hongkongers' human rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Joint Declaration.
- 3. That British Citizenship be unconditionally granted to all Hong Kong Citizens guaranteeing them the right to live and work within the United Kingdom.

*Passed: London Summer Conference - Summer 2019*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2024*



## Hungary and Poland

Conference notes that:

- A. Hungary and Poland, as member states of the European Union, are obliged to uphold the rights and freedoms of its citizens, which includes upholding the rule of law and justice.
- B. Since 2015, the government of Poland has passed laws which curb the rule of law, including providing wide-ranging powers for the government to appoint and dismiss judicial officers who try to apply rulings from the Court of Justice of the European Union. It has also passed laws which undermine the independence of Polish public broadcasters, and has a chilling effect on the media at large.
- C. The Polish government is currently under investigation by the European Council through Article 7(2) of the Treaty of the European Union.
- D. As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Hungarian government passed legislation which declared an indefinite 'state of emergency' and allowed for the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán the right to rule by decree. This legislation also banned the distribution of 'misleading information that obstructs responses to the pandemic', which has been criticised by legal experts for creating the potential to undermine the independence of media in Hungary.
- E. Preliminary inquiries are currently underway by the European Commission with regard to undermining of the rule of law in Hungary through Article 7(1) of the Treaty of the European Union.

Conference believes that:

- i. Human rights are not to be taken for granted, and must be protected and upheld across the world.
- ii. Notwithstanding the United Kingdom's decision to leave the European Union, it still has an ability to call out human rights abuses across the world, including in states that are member states of the European Union.
- iii. The COVID-19 pandemic does not justify the broad and vague scope of legislation proposed across various nations that undermine civil liberties and freedoms that humans have.

Therefore, Conference resolves to:

- 1. Condemn the passage of the 'Authorisation Act' in Hungary as a breach of fundamental human rights and freedoms.
- 2. Condemn the government of Poland for undermining the rule of law and the fair application of justice, including from European Union jurisprudence.
- 3. Support efforts by LYMEC, Renew Europe and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in Europe (ALDE) in condemning the governments of Hungary and Poland, and advocating for the measures in Article 7 of the Treaty of the European Union to be fully executed.
- 4. Advocate for a similar motion at the next Liberal Democrats Conference condemning the governments of Hungary and Poland for their undemocratic actions, and to develop a policy in response to these actions.

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Future Relationship with Europe

### Conference notes:

- a. The UK left the EU and the UK government is now negotiating its future deal with the EU.
- b. The Liberal Democrats unsuccessfully campaigned for a second referendum since the EU referendum of 2016.
- c. The UK's future membership of the Single Market and Customs Union will cease once the transition period is over.

### Conference believes:

- i. The UK still needs a close relationship with the EU after Brexit.
- ii. The Northern Irish border must be kept open for those travelling between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland.
- iii. Free Trade is threatened by protectionism and Liberals must stand up for Free Trade when Boris Johnson and Donald Trump won't.
- iv. That EU citizens that have made their home in Britain should have the right to say.
- v. That the political decision by the Conservative government to end freedom of movement after Brexit has been motivated by xenophobia, and represents a huge loss of opportunity for millions of people. Liberals must continue to fight for the right to live and work freely in Europe
- vi. That while it is not achievable in the immediate future, and the party should not actively campaign on the issue for in the short term, conference believes that Britain's place continues to be in Europe and the party should maintain a long term goal to rejoin the EU

### Conference calls for:

1. The UK to apply to re-join the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) of which it was originally a founding member. This would also mean a place on the EFTA council, the main decision making body within EFTA, which makes its decisions unanimously.
2. If membership of EFTA is accepted, for the UK to continue to build on the existing 29 EFTA Free Trade Agreements along with negotiating new Free Trade Agreements around the world.
3. The UK to participate in the single market through the European Economic Area (EEA) if it becomes an EFTA member. This would mean the UK would be outside the EU's: Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), security policies, foreign policy, justice policies and home affairs policies. However, it would still allow the UK to participate in the economic aspects of the single market.
4. The UK to negotiate continued membership of the Customs Union alongside membership of the Single Market, which is the only clear solution to the Northern Ireland border issue
5. The UK to remain in programs available to EFTA+EEA members such as: Horizon 2020, Erasmus+ and the Galileo program which is allowed by EFTA+EEA membership.
6. The UK as a participant in the single market through the European Economic Area (EEA), to retain freedom of movement with all other EEA countries

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Recognising the Uyghur Genocide and Supporting Sanctions

### Conference notes:

- A. With great concern, the footage and reports of the persecution of the Uyghur people in the region referred to as Xinjiang by the People's Republic of China and also known as East Turkestan or Uyghurstan.
  - a. This includes reports of forced sterilisation, torture, restrictions on childrens' names, destrution of religous sites, and detainment in re-education camps.
- B. That, as of May 2019, 1 to 3 million Uyghurs are estimated to have been interned in re-education camps according to then US Assistant Secretary of Defense for Indo-Pacific Security Affairs Randall Schriver.
- C. The disturbing description of the aforementioned re-education camps released by International Consortium of Investigative Journalists in the China Cables.
- D. That the petition "Impose sanctions on China over its treatment of Uyghur Muslims" passed the threshold of 100,000 signatures on the official government petitions website, meaning it will be considered for Parliamentary debate.
- E. The 2019 report from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute that detailed the involvement of Huawei in the persecution of Uyghurs by providing technology to authorities in the region.
- F. Huawei's reported use of the forced labour of Uyghurs.
- G. The Sanctions and anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 includes gross human rights violations as grounds for imposing sanctions on a person or an entity.
  - a. In July 2020 the UK government introduced Magnitsky-style sanctions under this legislation on specific nationals of Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Myanmar as well as on two organisations involved with North Korean gulags.

### Conference welcomes:

- I. The fact that Alistair Carmichael, Liberal Democrat Foreign Affairs Spokesperson and Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Uyghurs, called for:
- II. Recognition of the actions taken against the Uyghurs as a genocide.
- III. Sanctions in response to the persecution of Uyghurs.
- IV. The government to investigate Huawei's involvement in the use of slave labour before proceeding with the process of building 5G infrastructure.
- V. Daisy Cooper, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport, calling for human rights impact assessments on foreign firms that bid on public contracts in the UK.
- VI. The Government's recent decision to change course and ban the use of Huawei equipment in the UK's 5G network.

### Conference believes:

- i. The actions taken against the Uyghurs constitute a genocide.
- ii. The persecution of Uyghurs involves gross human rights violations and thus meets the standard for imposing sanctions on persons or entities under the Sanctions and anti-Money Laundering Act 2018.
- iii. That the Liberal Democrats should unreservedly oppose human rights abuses wherever they happen in the world and support actions in opposition to them.
- iv. That the UK Government has a moral duty to take actions to oppose human rights abuses.
- v. That, in light of Huawei's complicitness in human rights abuses, it would be unacceptable for them to be involved in building the UK's 5G infrastructure.

### Conference calls for:

1. Recognition and condemnation of the genocide against the Uygurs by the Young Liberals, the Federal Liberal Democrats, and the UK Government.





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2. The introduction of Magnitsky-style sanctions on persons and entities involved with the persecution of Uyghurs under the Sanctions and anti-Money Laundering Act 2018.
3. A full commitment to the plans for Huawei to be excluded from building the UK's 5G infrastructure.
4. Asylum to be granted to individuals fleeing persecution.

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*

*Note: Motion successfully passed at Online Autumn Conference 2021 as "F14: The Uyghur Genocide"*



## Britain and Russia in the context of the Russian Report: a call for a measured response, both domestically and diplomatically.

### Conference notes:

- A. The publication of the so-called Russia Report by Parliament's Intelligence and Security Committee;
- B. That the report contained a number of recommendations, including new legislation to better tackle the problem of foreign interference in our elections and empower counter-espionage agencies to better deal with foreign agents;
- C. That the report admitted that there has not been an assessment of the full extent of Russian interference in the 2016 Referendum on Britain's Membership of the European Union, and suggests that there should be;
- D. That many have seen Russian's actions over the past twelve years as that of a rogue actor, and at increasing odds with the concept of a liberal world order;
- E. The attempts of British, American and European foreign policies to 'reset' relations with Russia prior to the annexation of Crimea, which were widely seen as a failure.

### Conference believes:

- i. That the needs to protect our democratic integrity and our safety when threatened by foreign actors must be carefully balanced with our civil liberties;
- ii. That the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport is ill-suited to the role of protecting Britain's digital security and electoral integrity;
- iii. That Russian nationals in the United Kingdom are our neighbours, friends, key workers and vital parts of our community; it is the antithesis of liberalism to create a hostile discourse around one nationality on the basis of any government's actions;
- iv. That it is a logical fallacy to conclude previous attempts to form a working relationship with Russia should be taken as proof that any cooling of hostilities are doomed to fail;
- v. That re-conciliatory diplomacy is a better tool at maintaining the international system than framing a nation negatively, and the continued escalation of hostilities which necessarily follows this framing;
- vi. That differing interests and world-views do not necessitate a dichotomy in all aspects of international affairs, that this view is unhelpful and that many issues within the Russian Report could be better dealt without the context of wholly antagonist Anglo-Russian relations; and that this does not preclude opposing and condemning Russia's hostile actions where appropriate;
- vii. That Russia has the potential to pose a threat to British national security, as affirmed in the Young Liberal motions: 'Renewal of Trident: Security in Insecure Times' and 'Defending Our Defence'.

### Conference condemns, unequivocally:

- a. The Russian annexation of sovereign Ukrainian territory;
- b. The continued Russian involvement in Ukraine;
- c. The documented interference of Russia in foreign elections, including but not limited to the 2016 United States Presidential Election, the 2017 French Presidential Election, and the 2016 Referendum on Britain's Membership of the European Union;
- d. Russian state involvement in the Salisbury poisonings;
- e. Russia's involvement in the Syrian Civil War, which has included allegations of massacres against civilians.

### Conference adopts the following response:



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1. That the principles of transparency, proportionality and democratic oversight guide any new counter-espionage or intelligence legislation that emerges as a response to the Russia Report;
2. In particular, that any changes to the Official Secrets Act protects whistleblowers;
3. That there be a full investigation into the extent of Russian involvement in the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum, 2016 European Union Membership Referendum, the 2017 Stoke-on-Trent Central parliamentary by-election and the 2017 and 2019 General Elections;
4. That this investigation should be as open and transparent as possible and should be judge-led; independent of government or intelligence services;
5. Rejects and condemns anti-Russian xenophobia: this includes the rejection of any new standards or legislation on political donations by non-British nationals specifically targeted at ordinary Russian citizens living and working in the United Kingdom;
6. Believes that the protection of Britain's digital infrastructure from foreign actors is better suited to the Foreign Office; and that the protection of electoral integrity should be the responsibility of an independent body reporting to the Cabinet Office;
7. Rejects the framing of western-Russian relations as a 'second Cold War', and affirms the damaging impact this discourse has on British national security, British interests globally and overall international system-level stability;
8. For the West to work constructively with Russia, in the limited areas where this is possible, in order to take a step-back from a zero-sum security dilemma of ever increasing hostilities.

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Putting Our Futures First: Reverse the Decision to Leave Erasmus+

### Conference notes:

- A. Erasmus+ is an EU programme committed to life-long learning, covering higher education, school and adult education, vocational education and training (VET), youth, and sport.
- B. Erasmus+ covers over 53% of university students in the UK who study abroad for a period of time.
- C. Students who go abroad are 20% less likely to be unemployed six months after graduation.
- D. 1/3 of Erasmus+ work placement students are offered a job at their host company upon graduation.
- E. Erasmus+ includes the Jean Monnet Actions, which promotes EU studies.
- F. Participation in Erasmus+ does not require membership of the EU.
- G. The Turing scheme will replace the participation of the UK in Erasmus+.
- H. The Turing scheme, from September 2021, intends to provide funding for approximately 35,000 students to undertake exchanges and go on placements abroad.
- I. The Turing scheme aims to include countries across the world.
- J. The Irish government have agreed to fund students in Northern Ireland on the Erasmus+ scheme.
- K. Funding from Erasmus+ for youth organisations has supported vital youth work and engagement in the UK, playing a crucial role in the lives of young people.
- L. Erasmus+ has had a positive impact on social mobility in the UK by supporting individuals from disadvantaged backgrounds and providing them with new opportunities and experiences.
- M. According to the European Commission, 1/3 of British people on Erasmus mobilities are from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- N. Erasmus+ exchanges, involving countries which are close by, are particularly suitable to vocational students, people with family commitments, and people with special needs.

### Conference further notes:

- a. Erasmus+ provides students with 'soft skills' such as cultural insight, entrepreneurship, and independent thinking.
- b. Erasmus+ students coming to the UK has economic benefits, in their participation in the economy, and cultural benefits, allowing UK students to see themselves as global citizens.
- c. The participation of the UK's young people in Erasmus+, enabling them to acquire and develop new skill sets, is economically beneficial to the UK.
- d. International cooperation through Erasmus+ has been invaluable for improving education and training in the UK.

### Conference believes:

- A. It is in the best interests of the UK to remain a part of Erasmus+.
- B. Withdrawing from the Jean Monnet Actions will have a detrimental impact upon teaching and research in higher education in the UK.
- C. Efforts to create a scheme which extends beyond Europe should exist alongside participation in Erasmus+ and not replace it.



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- D. It will be impossible for Turing to replicate certain aspects of Erasmus+, including its strong brand, trusted reputation, established network of partners, and common framework to operate upon.
- E. The inability to access the Erasmus+ scheme in England, Scotland, and Wales may disincentivise Northern Irish students from studying there.
- F. EU students will be disincentivised from coming to the UK and be more likely to go to other countries participating in Erasmus+.
- G. Individuals with disabilities, with additional medical needs, and from disadvantaged backgrounds will be disproportionately affected by the UK no longer participating in Erasmus+.

## Conference calls for:

- 1. The Young Liberals to campaign for UK membership of Erasmus+.
- 2. The Young Liberals to call upon the Liberal Democrats to campaign for UK membership of Erasmus+.
- 3. Turing to not be exclusive to university students, instead embracing the range of options covered by Erasmus+, such as vocational education and training (VET).
- 4. Turing to match the provisions set out in the Jean Monnet Actions to support teaching and research in EU studies in UK universities.
- 5. Turing to consider differing living costs when determining grants, as Erasmus+ does, to provide the financial support that individuals need.
- 6. Turing to provide additional support for individuals with disabilities or additional needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds, and for placements on offer to be flexible, in order to make the scheme accessible to all.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference – Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## For Peace and Democracy in Belarus

Conference notes:

- A. The Belarusian general election of 4 August 2020 was considered by international observers to be fraudulent and undemocratic,
- B. The fraudulent nature of the election therefore yielded a wholly misleading result,
- C. The supposed victor of that election, Aleksandr Lukashenka, has perpetuated the false results of that election,
- D. International observers widely view the principal opposition candidate, Sviatlana Tsikhanoŭskaya, as the rightful winner of that election,
- E. Peaceful protests by the citizens of Belarus have been held continuously since this election;

Conference notes with concern, that:

- a. Aleksandr Lukashenka has used the general election and the Covid-19 pandemic as a means to seize further control over the apparatus of the Belarusian state
- b. The peaceful protests by Belarusians have continued to be met with wholly unjust force by the Belarusian police and armed forces,
- c. Cities frequently face social media blackouts, preventing Belarusians sharing the nature of the protests and the State's reaction thereto,
- d. Protesters and civil rights activists have faced imprisonment without trial, physical and mental torture, and have been forced to make statements under clear duress, as a result of their peaceful dissent toward the illegal actions of the Belarusian state,
- e. Many Belarusians closely associated with the Lukashenka regime store their financial assets in, or move them through, the United Kingdom;

Conference notes with grave concern the recent developments in Belarus, namely:

- I. The wrongful imprisonment of many Belarusian dissident politicians, most notably Siarhei Tsikhanoŭsky, husband of Sviatlana Tsikhanoŭskaya, and Viktor Babaryka,
- II. The illegitimate diversion and subsequent grounding of a Ryanair passenger flight with the use of military force in Belarus, with the intent to arrest and imprison dissident journalist Raman Pratesevich and his partner Sofia Sapega,
- III. The suspicious death of dissident politician Viltold Ashurak while being held in custody by the Belarusian KGB,
- IV. The continued and aggressive suppression of independent news media by the Belarusian state,

Conference welcomes:

- i. Similar resolutions passed by LYMEC, IFLRY, and ALDE,
- ii. The international engagement undertaken by Sviatlana Tsikhanoŭskaya and other members of the Opposition-in-exile,
- iii. The continued action of Belarusian citizens opposing Lukashenka's tyrannical regime;

Conference believes:

- 01. Young Liberals have a proud history of defending the rights of oppressed nations and peoples, leading the conversation within the Liberal Democrats and wider society around the plight of these groups,
- 02. The actions of the Lukashenka regime hitherto outlined should be condemned in the strongest terms,
- 03. Sviatlana Tsikhanoŭskaya is the legitimate head of the Belarusian government,



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04. Our organisation, Party, and country should support the movement for democracy and human rights in Belarus as a means to topple Europe's last dictatorship;

Conference calls for:

1. The immediate and unequivocal release and rehabilitation of all political prisoners illegitimately incarcerated by the regime of Aleksandr Lukashenka,
2. The Government of the United Kingdom to rescind all recognition of Aleksandr Lukashenka as the President of Belarus,
3. The UK Government immediately to recognise the Government-in-exile led by Sviatlana Tsikhanoŭskaya as the legitimate government of Belarus,
4. The UK Government to cooperate with the Tsikhanoŭskaya government to help facilitate a return to peace and democracy in Belarus,
5. The immediate implementation of Magnitsky-style sanctions on the leading political and military functionaries of the Lukashenka regime,
6. The freezing of all UK-based assets of Aleksandr Lukashenka and his associates,
7. The Liberal Democrats to continue to support the dissidents in Belarusian civil society, especially those exiled in the UK,
8. Young Liberals to continue to cooperate with LYMEC and IFLRY on these issues,
9. The recognition of the white-red-white flag used by the pro-democracy campaigners in Belarus as the official Belarusian flag.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## A Liberal Approach to Free Trade

Conference recognises that:

- A. The pursuit of free trade is a core tenet of liberal internationalism
- B. Parliamentary scrutiny of trade deals is an essential component of a functioning liberal democracy
- C. Leaving the European Union has damaged our international reputation and reduced our access to global free trade
- D. One aspect where Liberals have sought reform of the European Union is the protectionism present in the EU's democratic institutions
- E. There is an increasing strand of protectionist thought across party political lines, with Starmer's plans to "buy British" and the inward looking approach of this Conservative government
- F. Whilst the growth of international trade increases economic growth and provides new opportunities for businesses in the UK, it can also displace industries which are economically viable when in competition with international competitors
- G. In the context of the climate emergency, economic opportunities must be balanced with our need to tackle global warming
- H. The Government's proposed trade deal with Australia is a betrayal of UK farmers and a threat to the UK's high animal welfare and environmental standards

Conference reaffirms our policy of rejoining European Free Trade Association (EFTA) passed at Summer 2020 Young Liberals conference to ensure we can continue to trade freely with our neighbours in Europe whilst also striking other international trade deals.

Conference continues to condemn the approach of this Conservative government to UK-EU relations including their failure to secure an equivalence deal for the UK's financial services industry, to reach a deal on performers visas to protect our live performance industry and the erecting of unnecessary non-tariff barriers.

In line with our support of free trade, conference therefore believes that:

- I. The Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) has a number of benefits, most importantly that it will give the UK economy access to growing markets which currently contribute 15% of global trade
- II. The Australian trade deal will be of benefit to the UK, as it will allow for lowered prices of food as well as, specifically for young people, the right to live and work in Australia
- III. The best way to improve standards of living, welfare and human rights is through the expansion of global free trade.
- IV. Parliamentary scrutiny of the negotiation process is of vital importance to ensure any new deals agreed are fair for both sides, and to hold the government to account.

Conference calls for:

- 1. In all future negotiations, parliament to have scrutiny on every part of the trade negotiation process including: a vote on negotiation aims, regular updates to parliament on the progress of negotiations, and a vote and debate on any deal, and for this scrutiny to ascertain how and if these deals contribute or contradict with global carbon reduction targets
- 2. The Liberal Democrats to support ascension to the CPTPP and EFTA
- 3. The Liberal Democrats to vote against the Australian trade deal if it fails to meet with our commitment to environmental standards and carbon reduction goals
- 4. The Liberal Democrats to champion free trade and oppose protectionism in all its forms going forward





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5. Transitional economic support packages to be put into place for industries displaced by international trade instead of blanket opposition to trade deals that may have negative impacts whilst carrying a net economic benefit
6. In lieu of the UK joining EFTA, a renewed effort to reach an agreement on financial services, performers visas, and to eliminate non-tariff barriers to trade wherever possible with our European partners
7. The Liberal Democrats to support the UK's high environmental and animal welfare standards and demand that these standards are not compromised in trade negotiations
8. Environmental and economic considerations to be balanced in the negotiation and approval of future trade arrangements
9. The Liberal Democrats to campaign for the UK to lead the world in promoting green free trade

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## Young Liberals in Solidarity with Uyghurs

### Conference notes:

- A. There have been widespread human rights violations against Uyghurs by the People's Republic of China in the province of Xinjiang
- B. These human rights violations include forced sterilisation, torture, restrictions on childrens' names, destruction of religious sites, forced separation of families, and detainment in re-education camps
- C. These violations of human rights by the People's Republic of China in Xinjiang constitute a genocide, based on the description of genocide as laid out in Article 6 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court
- D. Sir Vince Cable has made comments opposing the use of the word "genocide" in reference to the human rights violations against the Uyghurs in the province of Xinjiang, including:
  - E. In an article in the Independent, Sir Vince Cable said that "the genocide allegations are particularly horrific since they put the Chinese regime's behaviour on the same moral plain as the Holocaust, the Rwandan genocide and Pol Pot's murderous Killing Fields", the labelling of genocide is based on "questionable evidence", and that "Some scepticism is in order"
  - F. In an appearance on GB News, Sir Vince Cable said that using the word "genocide" in reference to the treatment of the Uyghurs by China was "hyping the language"
- G. The Liberal Democrats have a proud history of supporting the rights of oppressed minority groups around the world

### Conference believes:

- i. Genocide denial is wholly unacceptable and illiberal
- ii. It is imperative that liberals take a firm stance against the abuse of human rights and the oppression of minority groups
- iii. The comments made by Sir Vince Cable regarding the Uyghur genocide are not in line with the values of the Liberal Democrats
- iv. The Young Liberals must always stand up against illiberal views and rhetoric on human rights violations, including when these come from within the Liberal Democrats
- v. It is no longer appropriate that Sir Vince Cable is a member of the Liberal Democrats

### Conference therefore calls for:

- 1. Sir Vince Cable, former Leader of the Liberal Democrats, to retract his comments regarding the Uyghur genocide
- 2. The Young Liberals executive to explicitly express the viewpoint that it is no longer appropriate that Sir Vince Cable is a member of the Liberal Democrats

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## A Brighter Future for Myanmar

### Conference notes:

- A. Since Myanmar's independence from the United Kingdom, the country has enjoyed periods of successful, democratic self-government, holding broadly free, fair and multiparty elections.
- B. The 1962 coup d'état marked the subversion of democratically elected government in Myanmar, and the beginning of continuous direct or indirect control of the country by the Tatmadaw (Burmese Armed Forces).
- C. In 2021, the Tatmadaw launched another coup to overthrow the civil government.
- D. More than 710 people have been murdered since 1 February 2021, including 44 children (as of 31 March 2021).
- E. As of Summer 2021, 3080 people have been detained, including 900 children and young people arbitrarily detained in clear breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- F. The major democratic opposition party National League for Democracy (NLD) won an overwhelming majority in the national elections held on the 8th November 2020.
- G. Several elected cabinet ministers and parliamentarians of the NLD are still illegally detained by the Tatmadaw on spurious charges.
- H. The Panglong Agreement of 1947 established a precedent for autonomous governance for ethnic minorities under a unified state framework, however some ethnic minorities, notably the Rohingya, have been denied or restricted access fully to participate in national elections.

### Conference believes:

- i. The military junta illegally seized control of the Burmese state and implemented a totalitarian regime of brutality, fear and corruption.
- ii. The vicious repression of liberal values by the Tatmadaw and its associates must come to an immediate end.
- iii. The rights and liberties of the Burmese people have been systematically corroded and must be restored.
- iv. The Young Liberals will always speak out against human rights violations, and to stand up for the rights of man and the protection of minorities.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The immediate restoration of the democratically-elected government of Myanmar.
- 2. The UK government to continue to call for peace in Myanmar.
- 3. The UK government to freeze all UK-based financial assets of high-ranking junta officials until the military rule is ended.
- 4. Individuals and corporations that economically enable the military oppression of the people of Myanmar to cease business activities until the democratically elected government is restored.
- 5. The UK government to work through international organisations such as the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to aid Myanmar in returning to a democratic system, especially through the conduct of free, fair and independently monitored elections.
- 6. The immediate release of all protesters, parliamentarians, and government officials illegally arrested and detained by the current Burmese regime.
- 7. The junta to end all violence against protesters and civilians.
- 8. To ensure that all ethnic minorities of Myanmar are included in a just and equitable matter in future elections and governments.

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference - Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2027*



## Standing In Support of Armenia and Armenians

Conference recognises:

- i. The genocide committed against Armenians, as well as Greeks and Assyrians, which was carried out by the Ottoman Empire between 1915–21, and the persecutions against these groups in the preceding decades and centuries, together with the beliefs that caused them;
- ii. The cultural and religious importance to Armenians of such sites as Mount Ararat and Lake Van, located in Turkey and currently inaccessible due to the closure of the land border;
- iii. The chain of events which led from the Armenian Genocide to the Nagorno-Karabakh war in the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries;
- iv. The ceasefire agreement negotiated by Russia and signed by Armenia and Azerbaijan in November 2020.

Conference notes with concern:

- a) The ignorance of the ceasefire agreement by Azerbaijan, which since May 2021 has been sending military forces into Armenian territory, causing harm to civilians in the process;
- b) The anti-Armenian cultures still prevalent in Azerbaijan and Turkey, taking the form of anti-Armenian violence and policies, including the outright denial of the Armenian Genocide;
- c) The failure of the UK (with the exception of Scotland, Wales and the City of Derby) to recognise the Armenian Genocide;
- d) The fears of many ethnic Armenians living in the Nagorno-Karabakh region of another genocide at the hands of the Azerbaijani government;

Conference adds its voice to the condemnation of Azerbaijan raised by the European Union, United States of America, France, and the Republic of Cyprus, among others.

Conference calls for the UK Government to:

1. Call for the withdrawal of Azerbaijani troops from Armenia;
2. Demand the recognition of and, in Turkey's case, apology for the Armenian Genocide by Azerbaijan and Turkey;
3. Call for the re-opening of the Turkey-Armenia land border;
4. Put pressure on Azerbaijan to assure Armenians living in Nagorno-Karabakh that there will be no genocide, and to take steps to demonstrate this;
5. Pass the Armenian Genocide Recognition Bill currently passing through Parliament;
6. Add its voice to condemnations of Azerbaijan;
7. Investigate claims by Armenia of Turkish and Israeli involvement with Azerbaijan, and apply appropriate sanctions if true;
8. In the interim, discuss steps to assist Armenia, including, if necessary, leading or joining an international human rights mission to the Caucasus.

Conference calls for the Liberal Democrats to support the aforementioned bill, and for Liberal Democrat councillors in England to submit motions to their councils to recognise the genocide in the meantime.

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference - Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2027*



## A Sovereign Ukraine

### Conference notes:

- a) In 2014, Russian forces illegally annexed Crimea from Ukraine
- b) In the same year, pro-Russian separatists in the oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk were backed by Russian military forces in attempts to exert control over eastern regions of Ukrainian territory
- c) Russian military units remain present and active in these regions
- d) The continued support of the Ukrainian citizenry of the European and Euro-Atlantic cause since the Euromaidan protests of 2014
- e) The courage and principle of those nations, especially Lithuania, in supporting Ukraine's independence and countering Russia's aggressive threats to their own sovereignty
- f) Ukraine's political will and constitutional commitment to join NATO

### Conference notes with concern recent developments at the Ukrainian border, namely:

- A. Russian troops massing along the eastern borders of Ukraine, and in occupied Crimea
- B. The aggressive rhetoric from Vladimir Putin and other Kremlin operatives surrounding NATO activity in eastern Europe
- C. The withdrawal of large parts of the UK's embassy staff from Kyiv
- D. Russian troops supplying approximately 500,000 Russian passports to rebel leaders in Donetsk and Luhansk in order to legitimise a potential territorial incursion

### Conference believes:

- I. Ukraine is a sovereign, self-governing state who should be able freely to decide her own destiny
- II. The very act of Russian troops massing along the Ukrainian border is an act of aggression and represents a clear diplomatic and military escalation
- III. The first response to Russian aggression must always be to engage diplomatically with a view to de-escalation
- IV. Any incursion by Russia into Ukrainian territory should be considered an act of war. NATO should always remain an alliance open to any state which shares its values
- V. Western European states have an important role in ensuring the territorial sovereignty of Ukraine
- VI. The right to self-determination and territorial integrity is a fundamental liberal value

### Conference calls for the UK Government to:

1. Impose swift, severe and wide-ranging sanctions on the Russian government
2. Lead calls for an end to Russian aggression toward Ukrainian sovereignty and on all its Western borders
3. Continue the supply of lethal aid to Ukraine
4. Increase military and diplomatic aid to other eastern European states, such as Poland and the Baltic states, to counter growing Russian hostility
5. Support Ukraine's entry into NATO in the medium-term
6. Promote the fundamental values of NATO amongst its members
7. Maintain NATO's member commitment to 2% defence spending

### Conference calls for the Young Liberals to:

01. Maintain our strong ties to the Liberal Democratic League of Ukraine and the European Youth of Ukraine bilaterally and through LYMEC and IFLRY
02. Support the Ukrainian youth in their continued efforts to promote peace and democracy in Ukraine
03. Continue to monitor the developing situation at the Ukrainian border, and to push the Liberal Democrats to move decisively on this issue.

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference - Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2027*



## Decolonising British Heritage

Conference notes that:

- a. Throughout the British colonisation of large parts of Africa, the Americas, Asia, Oceania and even Europe itself, many items were stolen as 'prizes'.
- b. These items are now often housed in museums, or private collections - if they have survived.
- c. 90% of Africa's cultural heritage is now believed to be in Europe.
- d. Many other items were destroyed by antiquarians and have been lost to time due to neglect.
- e. Heritage spaces are often unwelcoming to minority groups, with barriers such as ticket prices, a lack of disabled access, . Furthermore, getting a visa to even be allowed to come to Britain to see their ancestor's belongings can be impossible for many outside of Europe.
- f. Various heritage institutions, such as the British Museum, claim to be 'in talks' with the communities certain objects are stolen from such as the Benin Bronzes, but they often only consider offering artefacts on loan.
- g. Some stolen objects are considered to be of huge cultural value to the people they were stolen from, such as the Hoa Hakananai'a, a Moai from Rapa Nui (Easter Island), which is considered to host the soul of a dead ancestor.
- h. Edinburgh University returned skulls to Sri Lanka in 2019 and is currently in the process of returning skeletons to New Zealand and Manchester University returned 43 objects to Aboriginal groups in Australia November 2019.
- i. Germany and France have begun moves to formally send the Benin Bronzes they stole back to Nigeria.
- j. Ethiopia, which was never formally colonised, has laws in place ensuring artefacts found in the country stay in the country, allowing for their heritage sector to secure finds such as Lucy the Australopithecus.
- k. The UK played a key role in the abduction, enslavement, and trafficking of people from Africa for 250 years.
- l. Today, around 10% of the UK's population have their origins in the former colonies and continue to face substantial disadvantages due to structural racism.
- m. The British eventually compensated victims of a massacre in Amritsar, northern India, in 1919.
- n. The compensation for slavers is significantly larger than any reparations made thusfar with the final payment made in 2015.

Conference believes that:

- i. Heritage is a vital aspect of education and should be accessible by all.
- ii. Many museums do not treat seriously the legitimate and often impassioned requests by governments to return artefacts of significant national importance
- iii. Items of outstanding national importance appropriated from peoples, especially with significant monetary or cultural value, must be returned.
- iv. Archaeological and antiquary preservation methods globally have advanced hugely in the last two decades, and many of the societies requesting the repatriation of artefacts now have international museum-grade spaces in which effectively to preserve objects after repatriation.
- v. The repatriation of specific artefacts to their original states has not created a 'slippery slope' whereby the academic and cultural relevance of museums are undermined.

Conference calls for the government to:

1. Facilitate the return of objects of outstanding national importance whose repatriation has been requested by their states of origin, such as the Hoa Hakananai'a, Elgin Marbles and Benin Bronzes, to the nations from which they were appropriated



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2. Support museums to put significant resource into acknowledging colonialism, the role it has played in the construction and destruction of human endeavour, and the way it still influences heritage spaces and present-day civilisation
3. Put pressure on the heritage sector to implement repatriation plans for articles sought for return by their states of origin, or to expedite those already in place
4. Fund the heritage sector to allow the continued advancement of new heritage technologies, including, 3D printing, to create like-for-like replicas and digital displays of objects repatriated to their original territory
5. Encourage the heritage sector to promote accessibility and contextual learning environments, including making online tours, increasing physical accessibility in museums and improving digital access of archives so as not to hinder the research and development in fields surrounding repatriated heritage
6. Work with other countries to provide sustained support for archaeologists from the countries containing sites being excavated, including consultation and hiring of local experts during archaeological processes
7. Ensure training and support is provided where necessary to promote international standard preservation and excavation techniques by locals
8. Support international heritage organisations such as UNESCO to continue to promote decolonisation of archaeological and antiquarian stakeholders
9. Commission a fully government funded study with the intention to provide reparations for those negatively impacted by the British colonisation, inclusive of murder, assault, rape and theft. This commission will properly explore both the way reparations will be provided and the appropriateness of what will be provided

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*





## Renewing UK-Taiwanese Relations

### Conference notes:

- a. Taiwan meets the parameters to be an independent and legitimate sovereign state according to international law.
- b. United Nations (UN) member states have to respect the self-determination of people, as enshrined in article 1(2) of the UN Charter.
- c. Popular support by the Taiwanese people against reunification with the People's Republic of China (PRC), as demonstrated by the re-election of Tsai Ing-wen in the 2020 Presidential election.
- d. The PRC will perceive any cooperation with Taiwan as acts of aggression.
- e. Lithuania has demonstrated great bravery by allowing Taiwan to open a representative office under their preferred name, and the subsequent expulsion of the Lithuanian ambassador from China and economic sanctions because of this.
- f. Taiwan has a crucial role in facilitating the international trade of technological components.

### Conference believes:

- vi. Taiwanese independence should be decided by the people of Taiwan.
- vii. Interdependence between Taiwan and the world strengthens Taiwanese sovereignty.
- viii. Free and democratic nations should support the people who fight for democracy and human rights by rising to rid themselves of autocratic regimes
- ix. The Young Liberals are at the forefront of fighting for oppressed nations and peoples within the Liberal Democrats

### Conference calls for:

1. The UK government to strengthen bilateral relations with Taiwan through economic, cultural, and defence cooperation.
2. The UK government to work multilaterally with allies to ensure that the PRC's response to increased cooperation with Taiwan is resolved peacefully.
3. The UK government to raise efforts to oppose PRC aggression towards Taiwan
4. The UK government to assist Taiwan in becoming a member of the UN, and other international organisations, if desired by the people of Taiwan.
5. Cultural and sporting bodies to allow Taiwan to compete as their preferred name rather than 'Chinese Taipei'.
6. The Young Liberals to make increased efforts to cooperate with activists in Taiwan, independently and via IFLRY.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*





## For a Free, Peaceful, and Democratic Ukraine

Conference notes the developing situation in Ukraine and the wide-reaching consequences of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Conference believes:

- I. It is essential for liberals to stand up for freedom, self-determination, and human rights
- II. Putin's actions challenge Ukraine's sovereignty and the rules-based international order, threatening Europe's security
- III. The response to the invasion of Ukraine from the international community must reflect the horrific scale of tragedy, devastation, and loss of life caused by Russia, while ensuring not to force increasing numbers of Russian civilians into poverty
- IV. Refugees and people from minority communities must be treated with dignity and respect, with their individual barriers and needs recognised and addressed
- V. Global dependence on Russia oil must come to an end
- VI. The international community must support Ukraine in the building of their post-war economy and come together to build a peaceful future

Conference therefore endorses [Policy Paper 1, For a Free, Peaceful, and Democratic Ukraine](#), and in particular its proposals for the UK to:

1. Support Ukraine in defence by Increasing defence spending, providing a long-term strategy for the provision of military equipment to Ukraine, and ensuring that capacity gaps in the Ministry of Defence are filled as a matter of urgency.
2. Use its soft power to leverage currently neutral states to support Ukraine
3. Cease being a safe haven for dirty money and eliminate corruption by resourcing and enabling Companies House to more effectively monitor compliance, increase funding for the National Crime Agency (NCA), and legislate to ensure enablers of money-laundering are held accountable and prosecuted
4. Work closely with international allies to impose multilateral sanctions on oligarchs guilty of financially supporting the Russian war effort
5. Take action to reduce the impact of the war in Ukraine on the cost of living ranging from additional welfare support to reducing supply chain concerns with respect to wheat and grain markets
6. Create a sustainable energy strategy to reduce reliance on Russian oil both at home and across Europe, with renewed investment in renewable energy and energy efficiency as well as a new European Energy Security Compact
7. Promote the rights, protection, and dignity of minority communities in Ukraine
8. Ensure that all refugees to the UK are resettled on UK soil
9. Work with the international community to build and maintain a peaceful future in Ukraine

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*

# Health and Social Care



## Mental Health Provision

Conference notes:

- A. 1 in 4 will experience mental health difficulty in the course of a year.
- B. Despite funding for mental health services increasing, those experiencing mental health problems continue to suffer unacceptable discrimination in terms of access to services and treatment.
- C. That the current treatment of mental ill health is ineffective, and results in high readmission rates.
- D. Poor mental health severely impacts upon educational attainment, and poor mental health at a young age can result in increased risk of acute infections, illness, increased self-harming behaviours, suicidal ideation, and suicide.
- E. The work of the Liberal Democrats in Coalition Government in England has resulted in new access and waiting time standards to be introduced in 2015, age appropriate and effective co-ordination between services, and support for employers and employees in ensuring provisions to support individuals with mental health difficulties, ensuring an active working lifestyle.
- F. Students at Universities are often left without the support and mental health care they need.

Conference believes that:

- i. There currently exists an inequity in treatment between patients with physical health needs and those with mental health needs.
- ii. There is a shortage of psychological therapists, which results in the common use of drugs to treat mental ill health; as a result, the notion of patient choice does not in effect extend to mental health services.
- iii. Support for employees in returning to work and students returning to education should become the norm with employers and education providers. Mental health training and provision should first start in the workplace and educational institution.
- iv. The stigma and discrimination of poor mental health often has a negative impact as great as that of the illness itself.
- v. That Health and Wellbeing Boards should publish readmission statistics, to help inform trends that currently exist in the patient discharging system.
- vi. That waiting times for mental health treatment should be the same as all other treatment.
- vii. Universities are communities and as such they have a responsibility to the mental health of their students.

Conference calls upon:

- 1. Young Liberals to call on the Liberal Democrats to deliver a mental health strategy to radically improve treatment and access to mental health services, including tackling waiting times across the UK through a rigorous review of all Health and Wellbeing Board provision.
- 2. Young Liberals to call on the Liberal Democrats to outline a national framework to ensure continuity of treatment for young people transitioning from adolescent to adult services, including a streamlined information sharing system between providers.
- 3. Young Liberals to call on the Liberal Democrats to develop a strategy for the provision of mental health services in local communities, and development of a programme for rolling out mental health support in the workplace, similar to that used to monitor physical health such as blood cholesterol, weight, and blood sugar levels.
- 4. Young Liberals to call on the Liberal Democrats to ensure provision of extra capacity in mental health intensive care and forensic units to divert people in need of treatment away from prison and to assist those already in prison.
- 5. Young Liberals calls upon the Liberal Democrats to ensure provision capacity and understanding at all levels of society in order to ensure those with mental health needs



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are not automatically punished in the traditional manner without due regard or appropriate treatment for their mental health issues, with specific regard to those with PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).

6. Young Liberals calls upon Universities UK to implement mental health standards across all universities in the UK, ensuring on campus mental health professionals, adequate mental health emergency training for all student facing non-teaching staff members, and general mental health training for tutors.

*Passed: Glasgow Winter Conference - Winter 2019*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2024*



## Free Periods

Conference acknowledges:

- A. Periods are an unavoidable part of many adults' lives.
- B. The impacts of period poverty on 25% of women and girls between 14 and 21 who have been unable to, or struggled to afford menstrual products.
- C. That 49% of women and girls of this age group have missed a whole day or more due to their periods, with 59% of those having used a different excuse.
- D. 48% of this group are embarrassed by their periods, and 22% do not feel comfortable discussing it with their teachers.
- E. The long-term detrimental effect of missing valuable time in education due to a period.

Conference reaffirms:

- I. The Liberal Democrat commitment to expand the rollout of free menstrual products to homeless shelters, women's refuges, foodbanks, NHS GP surgeries, and universities in England.
- II. The principle of equality of opportunity in which everyone should expect a fair start in life and throughout education.

Conference calls for:

- 1. Students Unions to ensure the dignity of their students by providing menstrual products in toilets across campus, including male, female, and gender-neutral facilities.
- 2. In the event Students Unions themselves cannot find the resources to tackle period poverty on campus, for these Unions to work with their universities to co-finance initiatives or provide products in university facilities.
- 3. Universities and Students Unions to develop action plans to tackle period poverty and its stigma on campus as soon as possible.
- 4. Universities to make every effort to reduce the impact of periods on studies, providing an understanding environment for students which is free from stigma.

*Passed: London Summer Conference - Summer 2019*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2024*



## Learning Disabilities

Conference deplores that:

- A. People with learning disabilities and their carers can struggle to access the support and information they need from the NHS.
- B. The NHS healthcare of people with learning disabilities is inadequate due to a lack of training.
- C. According to a Mencap report, 23% of healthcare professionals have never attended training specifically on caring for people with learning disabilities.
- D. The same report also states that 45% of healthcare professionals think that a lack of training about caring for and communicating with people who have learning disabilities might be contributing to deaths that are avoidable.
- E. According to higher education institutions, many students with learning disabilities do not know that they are entitled to DSA, or if they do, the process is stressful, so they do not bother.
- F. Scrapping bursaries for those studying nursing which has led to a drop in the number of specialist nurses who are qualified in dealing with patients with learning disabilities.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- I. Improving healthcare treatment across the NHS for both physical and mental health.
- II. Investing a further £6bn into our NHS, with £2bn reserved for mental health services.
- III. All healthcare professionals being trained in learning disabilities and how to communicate with people with learning disabilities and their families.
- IV. Ensuring that those with learning disabilities have the right to a long, prosperous and equal life.

Conference believes that:

- a. The NHS should provide high-quality healthcare for those with learning disabilities.
- b. People with learning disabilities are entitled to the same standard or care as those without learning disabilities.
- c. People with learning disabilities should be involved in decisions about their care as much as possible with the guidance of healthcare professionals and carers when required.
- d. The process of applying for DSA for those with learning disabilities should be made as easy as possible.
- e. People with learning disabilities should be able to access the services required, whether it be with or without the support of a carer.
- f. Cuts to services can have a detrimental effect on not just people with learning disabilities, but carers as well.

Conference calls on the government to:

- 1. Mandate all front-line UK hospital staff, clinical and non-clinical, to have compulsory learning disability training based on the Learning Disability Core Skills Training and Education Framework.
- 2. Require this training to be updated and refreshed every 3 years.
- 3. Give the NHS the necessary funding so that it may afford training, longer appointments, for those with learning disabilities, and any specialist equipment that may be needed.
- 4. Ensure training is co-delivered and co-produced by those learning disabilities and delivered with reasonable adjustments as set in the Equality Act 2010.
- 5. Ensure that training is learner-centred and contains general disability awareness skills.
- 6. Make all NHS hospitals provide easy-read information readily available for patients so everyone is able to fully understand their medical care.



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7. Ensure a smooth transition of healthcare specialists when moving from childhood to adulthood.
8. Reinststate bursaries for those studying nursing to increase the scope of nurses being able to deal with patients with learning disabilities

*Passed: London Summer Conference - Summer 2019*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2024*



## Isolation and Mental Health

Conference notes that:

- A. Mental health is a huge problem with 1 in 4 people having mental health difficulty every year
- B. Isolation often has a negative impact on mental health highlighted by the recent covid-19 crisis
- C. Vulnerable members of our society such as carers and disabled people often feel isolation is a huge factor to their mental health
- D. Internet access in rural areas is often not good enough for strong communication
- E. Many charitable organisations are doing great work, supplying technology such as laptops to disadvantaged families, but this is not a nationwide service
- F. University students eligible for equipment still need to pay £300 towards this, a fee that is often too much for many
- G. Children without internet access often suffer academically due to inability to complete homework tasks at home
- H. The Liberal Democrats have been consistent advocates for mental health with special notes to Norman Lamb and the penny in income tax policy pushed for in the last two general elections

Conference believes that:

- i. Mental health is as important as physical health and we must overcome the current inequality
- ii. Access to the internet is vital to combat isolation
- iii. Isolation is easily combated through digital access and better transport links

Conference resolves that:

- 1. Efforts to equalise access to technology for those from disadvantaged backgrounds should be addressed through channels such as the Pupil Premium or as an addition to Universal Credit
- 2. Courses for functional technological skills such as online banking; applying for apprenticeships, jobs or further education; accessing legitimate news online; and using social media safely should be provided in schools and offered in job centres to increase the digital skills and literacy of disadvantaged young people
- 3. Vulnerable members of societies such as carers should be given a free bus pass with a similar system as the disabled bus pass and elderly bus pass

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*





## The Duality of Healthcare

Conference believes:

- A. There is currently a crisis in student mental health – a previous NUS survey has found that 80% of students experienced mental health issues in one year.
- B. There is a lack of continuity of care for students who live away from home during term-time – long breaks over the Christmas period and summer leave students without help.
- C. It's often difficult to get a doctor's appointment. People are often waiting weeks for an appointment with a GP, and face waiting lists of over six months for mental health services.
- D. This has been worsened by the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.
- E. Students cannot currently be registered with their home GP and a GP near their place of study.
- F. While students are able to temporarily register with a different GP's practice while away from University, students are likely to spend more than 14 days from their term-time address during the holidays.
- G. For students with chronic conditions, this can cause disruption to ongoing care and treatment, which can be medically damaging and dangerous.
- H. Frequently making temporary registrations while away from a term time address is an unnecessary administrative burden on GP practices and patients.

Conference further believes:

- i. Students need flexibility, especially as many students do not live in their university towns full time.
- ii. A report from HEPI on student mental health released in September 2016 found that students with mental illnesses lack continuity of care between home and university, where making an appointment can be overwhelming in itself.
- iii. The HEPI report suggested that being registered with two GPs practices simultaneously will allow students who live away from home to have better access to care during their studies and whilst being back at home.
- iv. Students who are already managing a chronic health condition should not have to manage the administrative overhead of frequently registering with different GP services simply to ensure their medical care continues.
- v. For students whose term time and out of term addresses are in different countries face extra complications, where differing healthcare policies and services add an additional layer of confusion.
- vi. Conference welcomes efforts towards integrated electronic healthcare records.

Conference resolves:

- 1. To lobby the government and the NHS to allow students to be simultaneously registered with a GP at both their home address and their University address.
- 2. To lobby the Party's publicly elected officials to do the same.
- 3. To help University based branches to lobby and support universities and student unions in maintaining an on- or near- campus GP surgery.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## Protecting Disabled People During COVID-19

### Conference notes:

- A. An increasing number of Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) orders have been imposed on people with disabilities and learning difficulties during the pandemic, often without even consultation of the patient or their family.
- B. The Care Quality Commission found that these imposed DNRs had caused unnecessary deaths.
  - a. These DNRs had been blanket-issued against care home residents and disability services, against standard DNR advice.
  - b. These DNRs prevented patients that needed care from reaching hospital, and in worst case scenarios resulted in the death of patients.
- C. According to the Office for National Statistics, disabled people accounted for 6 in 10 deaths involving Covid-19 in England in the period up to November 2020.
- D. This risk of death involving Covid-19 is greater for disabled people than non-disabled people, with specific groups, such as individuals with learning disabilities, having an even greater risk.
- E. A key factor in the greater risk of death involving Covid-19 for disabled people and individuals with learning disabilities is the socioeconomic and personal circumstances which disabled people disproportionately face.

### Conference believes:

- i. Despite the strain that the NHS is under as a result of the pandemic and shortages of medical supplies, treatment must be applied as equally as possible.
- ii. Those requiring hospital treatment and resuscitation must be able to access it freely, fairly, and without discrimination.
- iii. Care and medical treatment must be allocated based on an individual's needs and best interests, and never imposed collectively.
- iv. There should be no deviation in quality of care between disabled people and non-disabled people.
- v. No person should be deterred from, or pressured to refuse, medical treatment.
- vi. It is wrong for blanket DNRs to be imposed on a vulnerable section of society.
- vii. Even during the pandemic, it is for patients alone, or for their family if they are not of sound mind, to decide whether or not to put a DNR in place.
- viii. Patients who successfully apply for DNRs, or have one imposed on them, must receive notice of that DNR being in place.
- ix. Disabled people have been abandoned by the Government and placed in a more vulnerable and tenuous financial situation as a result.
- x. The Government must increase the support available for disabled people.

### Conference therefore calls for:

1. The Liberal Democrats to campaign for only allowing individual patients, or their family if they lack mental capacity, to issue DNRs, and to stop collective DNRs being issued.
2. The Liberal Democrats to campaign for parity of medical treatment for disabled people and non-disabled people.
3. Government support for people with disabilities and learning difficulties to be substantially increased during the pandemic and thereafter.
4. Investment in integrated care and social security in schools, hospitals, care homes, and job centres, so that people with disabilities and learning difficulties of all ages can access support and care during the pandemic and thereafter.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*

*Note: Amendment successfully passed, calling for the rejection of the blanket issuing of DNACPRs, at Online Spring Conference 2021 as Amendment 1 to "F14: Fixing the Government's Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic"*



## A Three-Pronged Public Health Response to Drug Testing

### Conference notes:

- A. 50.4 people per million in the UK died drug-related deaths in 2019.
- B. 20.3% of 16-24 year olds in the UK admitted to using drugs in the last year, 8.7% of which were classed as Class A.
- C. A 2018 study as cited by the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, conservatively estimated that the rate of heroin contamination with fentanyl (a highly potent synthetic opioid) could be as high as 6%.

### Conference reaffirms:

- a. The war on drugs has been a public health disaster and has actively harmed young people across the world, but especially in the UK, for decades.
- b. Liberal Democrats have always worked progressively on this issue, most notably through the recent work of Norman Lamb.
- c. The work of previous Young Liberal's policies including "Legalisation of Cannabis" and more recently "Supporting Drug Testing at Festivals and in Nightclubs" from which this motion arose out of the debate at Activate 2020.

### Conference recognises:

- i. That the most effective harm reduction policies in an environment of drug criminalisation combine three central tenets: testing, monitoring and education.
- ii. An effective example of a drug monitoring service is DIMS in the Netherlands, since 1999 its focus has been on monitoring over testing and according to the EMCDDA this sort of program has meant prevention of deaths due to contamination.
- iii. No program of harm reduction can reduce the risk of contamination to 0 without full legalisation.
- iv. The rise in distribution of Novel Psychoactive Substances (NPS) in recent years posing unknown risks and threats to young people using untested drugs.
- v. A liberal approach to controlled substances should be focused on empowering the user to make informed decisions

### Conference calls for:

- 1. Readily available and publicly-funded home reagent drug testing kits distributed through existing healthcare and community networks.
- 2. An exploration into the efficacy of drug testing centres in areas with high drug fatality rates to provide better monitoring and testing capabilities where it is needed most.
- 3. Better education on drug usage and its consequences through public health messaging alongside classroom based education including awareness of drug testing facilities once implemented.
- 4. Once the policy response called for in "Supporting Drug Testing at Festivals and in Nightclubs" is implemented that testing facilities in night clubs and festivals should be utilised in order to provide much deeper monitoring than community-based reagent testing to create a service inspired by DIMS in the Netherlands.
- 5. The utilisation of existing educational, media and public health institutions, to more efficiently dissuade drug abuse within liberal parameters and to disseminate public warnings around batches of contaminated substances.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## Voluntary Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

### Conference notes:

- A. The consideration of euthanasia as either manslaughter or murder, depending on the circumstance, in English law, with a maximum penalty of life imprisonment
- B. The punishment of up to 14 years' imprisonment for assisted suicide
- C. The general consensus that assisted suicide should be made legal in the case of terminal and incurable but not terminal illnesses, according to YouGov polling
- D. The right to religious freedom and individual conscience enshrined in the preamble to the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- E. The current unwillingness of the legal system to enforce the current law regarding assisted suicide.

### Conference believes:

- i. That, as a point of principle, the individual should have power over their own life, including power over the manner of their death if they so wish.
- ii. That the participation of any and all parties in the process of euthanasia must be wholly voluntary.
- iii. That the role of the state in the regulation of decisions leading to death should be protecting the vulnerable, not enforcing any specific group's moral code.
- iv. That the current law is not only an abuse of personal liberty but also fails to protect vulnerable persons.

### Conference resolves:

1. That the law should be amended so as to allow voluntary euthanasia and medical assisted suicide.
2. That the amending legislation should contain safeguards that would protect the principle that all parties should be consenting, at a minimum:
  - a. That all parties are kept fully informed of their rights and the course of action that is to be followed at all times.
  - b. That there is no element of coercion by or of any party involved, including medical staff.
  - c. That the patient is mentally competent to make such a decision and has been made fully aware of all their options, for example palliative care.
3. In cases of dispute the presumption shall be of a lack of consent.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## Talk Tickets

Conference notes with concern:

- A. 20% of adolescents may experience a mental health problem in any given year.
- B. 1 in 6 children aged 5-19 had a probable mental health disorder in 2020.
- C. 50% of mental health problems are established by age 14 and 75% by age 24.
- D. 10% of children and young people (aged 5-16 years) have a clinically diagnosable mental problem, yet 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health problems have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age.
- E. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a hugely damaging impact on the mental health of children and young people.
- F. Demand for Children & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) increased by 35% in 2019/20
- G. This was met by only a 4% increase in the number of children receiving support from the NHS in 2019/20
- H. In 2020, 4.5% of children and young people in England were receiving CAMHS treatment in 2019/20.
- I. 27% of referrals to CAMHS in England being closed before treatment in 2019/20.
- J. Access to talking therapies through the NHS continues to be limited as demand grows.
- K. Children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are disproportionately impacted by mental ill health.
- L. Children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds are less likely to access talking therapies.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitments to:

- i. Providing equal treatment of mental and physical health services.
- ii. Revolutionise mental health services.
- iii. Increase the number of psychiatrists on the NHS by 4,000 by 2023.
- iv. Introduce further mental health maximum waiting time standards, starting with children's services, services for people with eating disorders, and bipolar conditions.
- v. Ensure that 50% of children and young people with diagnosable conditions get NHS treatment within a year, and 100% by in five years (currently only 35% do).

Conference calls for:

- 1. The UK government to implement a new 'Talk Tickets' scheme to provide people aged 5-25 who qualify for the pupil premium or who are accessing universal credit £520 in vouchers to subsidise talking therapy sessions.
- 2. The ability for doctors to prescribe Talk Tickets (£10 a week in vouchers) to people with clinically diagnosed mental health conditions at their discretion.
- 3. The establishment of an accreditation scheme for 'Talk Ticket' providers of therapists and counsellors to be operated by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE).
- 4. A review of the system at regular intervals to ensure those who are in need of the scheme and further support are able to access it.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## The Big Fat Problem With BMI

### Conference notes:

- A. Body Mass Index (BMI) has been widely criticised as a flawed measure of individual health and health outcomes:
  - a. Research by Gaesser (2002) shows that 91% of what accounts for health outcomes has nothing to do with Body Mass Index (BMI) and that the other 9% is correlation, not causation. Academics have also found BMI to be an inherently racist (Strings 2020), sexist (Patricia *et al.* 2019) and ableist (Stoll *et al.* 2021) metric.
  - b. Adults with higher BMI are three times more likely to say that they have been denied medical care.
  - c. 47% of people categorised as overweight by BMI are metabolically healthy, while 24% of people categorised as a healthy weight are metabolically unhealthy.
  - d. An inquiry by the Women & Equalities Committee (Changing the perfect picture: an inquiry into body image, 2021) concluded that “The use of BMI inspires weight stigma, contributes to eating disorders, and disrupts people’s body image and mental health” and called on Public Health England to stop using BMI.
- B. Approaches to healthcare centred on weight loss, including the weighing of children in schools, are unsustainable and lead to harmful outcomes:
  - a. Health risks are lowered by physical activity, social support, good nutrition and access to medical care, regardless of whether weight loss occurred.
  - b. 90-95% of people who lose weight fail to sustain weight loss beyond two years and many will end up at a higher weight than they originally were.
  - c. Despite this, NHS pharmacists have been given the power to refer patients to weight loss programmes without them first seeing a GP.
  - d. Charities such as Beat report that weighing children in schools increases the risk of children developing eating disorders, and negative experiences in Physical Education classes can deter individuals from exercise for life.

### Conference believes that:

- I. As Liberal Democrats, we champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals. As part of this commitment, we must ensure that all individuals are provided free healthcare that will better their quality of life, and that an individual’s weight should not influence the quality of healthcare they receive.
- II. BMI as a measure of health is outdated, unsupported by evidence, and harmful to all individuals.
- III. Exercise should be encouraged for enjoyment and overall wellbeing, not weight loss.

### Conference resolves that:

1. The Government should implement the findings of the Women & Equalities Committee’s “Changing the perfect picture: an inquiry into body image” report, including the adoption of a “Health At Every Size” approach to replace the current use of BMI by Public Health England. BMI should be abolished as a measure of health within the NHS and government bodies.
2. Medical professionals should only weigh patients when it is medically necessary to do so.
3. Children should not be weighed in schools, including as part of the National Child Measurement Programme.
4. The Physical Education curriculum should be reevaluated and updated to focus on mental & physical wellbeing and enjoyment.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*  
*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*





## The Right to Abortion

Conference notes that:

- A. The 1967 Abortion Act was introduced by David Steel, a Liberal MP, and gave Women and pregnant people in England, Wales, and Scotland access to safe and legal abortion for the first time.
- B. Under the Act, induced abortion is a crime, with exceptions. A person receiving or providing an abortion is committing a criminal offence unless two doctors agree that the abortion is necessary such as a risk to the life of the mother, risk of serious harm to the mother or in cases of severe mental or physical abnormalities in the foetus.
- C. The British Pregnancy Advisory Service, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists have all called for abortion to be removed from criminal law and to be regulated in the same way as other aspects of healthcare.
- D. The Royal College of Midwives supports abolition of abortion law and removing any term limits
- E. The US Supreme Court's Dobbs v Jackson decision has overturned Roe v Wade (which previously protected the right to access abortion services in all US states), and has instead allowed US states to introduce restrictions on access to abortion services.
- F. A 2015 study by Aston University found that the presence of anti-abortion activists outside abortion clinics damaged the mental health of clinic users.
- G. An amendment has been introduced to the Public Order Bill, which would establish 150 metre buffer zones around abortion clinics, inside of which activists would not be able to campaign.
- H. The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 1990 imposed a 24 week limit on Abortions in the UK.
- I. Trans men and some Non-Binary people with the capability to get pregnant also need access to abortion services.

Conference believes that:

- i. The 1967 Act was a great Liberal accomplishment for its time, but it is now severely outdated and does not reflect social and medical changes over the last 50 years.
- ii. Everyone has the right to control their own body. A person who chooses to end their pregnancy should not be criminalised for doing so, and should not require permission from others.
- iii. Everyone has the right to peaceful protest, but not to intimidate people seeking healthcare.
- iv. Pregnant people have control over their own body and what happens with any foetus they carry

Conference calls for:

1. The UK Government to remove abortion from the criminal law and focus instead on providing and maintaining accessible and progressive reproductive healthcare
2. The UK Government to roll out buffer zones to all abortion clinics.
3. The UK Government to pass legislation to remove the requirement for two doctors' assent for abortions.
4. NHS England to provide counselling to abortion service users if they request it within a reasonable timeframe.
5. The UK Government to remove any term limits for abortion and provide abortion as healthcare at any point in pregnancy

*Passed: Reading Winter Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2028*



## The Problem With Single-Use Vapes

### Conference Notes:

- A. That the Policy Motion “Transforming the Nation's Health” selected for Bournemouth Autumn Federal Conference 2023 includes within it the line “Conference Calls for: Halt the dangerous use of vapes amongst children and non-smokers by introducing tougher regulation on vapes, such as standardised packaging, an end to toy-like advertising targeted at children, a ban on the sale of single use vapes, and the licensing of their sales, whilst recognising their role in smoking cessation for adult.”
- B. That the Policy Paper “Tackling the Nature Crisis” selected for Bournemouth Autumn Federal Conference 2023 includes within it the line “We would ban the sale of disposable vapes and head off this growing environmental hazard”.
- C. That since 2015 “it is both illegal for retailers to sell electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) or e-liquids to someone under 18” and “for adults to buy (or try to buy) tobacco products or e-cigarettes for someone under 18”
- D. Some vapes sold, including to under 18s, contain dangerous chemicals like lead.
- E. Current rules require that any retailer with sales in excess of £100,000 of electronic equipment must take waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) back in-store for recycling.
- F. Research conducted by Material Focus, a British environmental nonprofit, found that an estimated 1.2 million single-use vapes are thrown away every week in the U.K., containing enough lithium to power 1,200 electric vehicles.
- G. Prohibitions on single use plastics are effective, for example the ban on single use straws has prevented 3,570 tonnes of plastic per year from entering the environment in the UK.
- H. That a Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy study found that for every 1 person who uses e-cigarettes to quit smoking, 81 people started smoking after using e-cigarettes.
- I. A 2021 Respiratory Research article found that short term use of e-cigarettes has harmful effects, and that the long term effects of e-cigarettes has been scarcely investigated. It found that there was limited evidence of the use of e-cigarettes as a method of smoking cessation.
- J. A 2020 American Journal of Epidemiology article found that “experts have noted potential public health risks, including the potential for increased smoking initiation among minors, and for increased nicotine addiction among dual users of cigarettes and e-cigarettes”, and that “there is evidence of substantial uptake among nonsmoking minors”.

### Conference Believes:

- I. That the waste caused by disposable single-use vapes is a growing environmental crisis, and that a prohibition on single use vapes is an appropriate method to address this, in line with other prohibitions on single use plastics.
- II. The availability of disposable vapes is the major attraction point for new users vs other forms of vaping, and single use vapes are therefore more likely to encourage the uptake of smoking.
- III. The variety and diversity of flavours is a major element that vapes have in attracting new smokers, who then become addicted.
- IV. Reusable vapes offer a more environmentally friendly option for those who want to make use of vapes or e-cigarettes, and would severely reduce the availability of these products to minors.
- V. The marketing of single use vapes in particular has been designed to attract children, young people, and non smokers.





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## Conference Therefore:

1. Endorses the lines in both “Transforming the Nations Health” and “Tackling the Nature Crisis” that call for a prohibition on disposable vapes.
2. Calls for proper enforcement of existing laws and regulations around vaping and for local authorities and the police to undertake an aggressive campaign of test purchase to catch retailers selling vapes to under 18s.
3. Calls for new regulations:
4. to require that all vapes in the UK have a clear and uniform certification on packaging showing that they are legitimate and are compliant with regulations and do not contain dangerous chemicals and following recycling regulations
5. to significantly increase the penalties for retailers selling vapes to under 18s and for retailers who are repeatedly caught to be banned from selling vapes.
6. to extend the indoor smoking ban to include all vapes and e-cigarettes
7. Calls for comprehensive reforms around vape recycling including:
  - a. regulations around the design of vapes to ensure that it is easier to separate lithium batteries from the plastic exterior and for vape packaging to include instructions on where and how to recycle them.
  - b. In addition to the current WEEE recycling rules, the introduction of a requirement for all retailers selling vapes to have a dedicated vape recycling bin in-store.
  - c. for local authorities to place dedicated vape recycling bins in city and town centres and in major public spaces including parks and outside pubs, clubs and bars.

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*

# Education



## Accessibility in Education

Conference notes that:

- A. Being able to easily access the internet and other technological services such as audio and DVDs is imperative for networks, learning and communication.
- B. Many young people cannot access the internet for various reasons, such as regional or financial inequality.
- C. During a time where schools and other educational institutions are being disrupted, either due to COVID-19 or other reasons such as adverse weather conditions, technology is important for the continuation of learning.

Conference believes that:

- i. Those unable to access the internet or other resources (such as audio and film) are at a significant disadvantage and it's unfair on young people in Further and Higher Education.
- ii. Material should be readily available in all formats (including large print, audio and Braille) and students shouldn't have to wait many weeks for these requests.
- iii. Internet connections vary across the country and can affect the outcome of the technology used.
- iv. Certain items of technology or software can be financially out of reach for some.
- v. Online resources may not be that useful due to the level of technology that one may have.
- vi. In the 21st century, everyone should have access to a computer with the right software and resources easily available.
- vii. Programmes should be easily accessible and delivered in the same way to make it easier for those who may have difficulties with internet connectivity.
- viii. Those who have modules disrupted through emergencies such as COVID-19 or adverse weather conditions, should be allowed to retake them with a no detriment policy at a later date.

Conference calls for:

- 1. The government to offer schools and universities funding to allow Universities to have a pot of money to establish bursaries for items such tablets or laptops for disadvantaged families and students in order to help with home and remote learning, and within this, to help the same recipients pay for broadband that would be sufficient enough for home learning.
- 2. Locals councils and universities to offer guidance on working and learning from home.
- 3. Greater communication between Universities and government to allow them to deliver these bursaries.
- 4. 4G/5G routers as a temporary fix for places without a proper broadband infrastructure in order to improve internet access in parts of the country where internet speeds are slow.
- 5. The government to increase school's funding to reflect the introduction and cost of new online resources

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*

*Note: Revised version of the motion successfully passed at Online Spring Conference 2021 as "F26: Accessibility in Education"*



## A More Diverse Curriculum

### Conference notes:

- H. There is a lack BAME exposure in the England education syllabus
- I. Some parts of History are being misrepresented or key parts missed because of the omission of BAME figures and related events from the curriculum
- J. The lack of foundational history education about Britain's colonial past and the activities of Britain during the period of the British empire.
- K. There is awareness in parliament of this issue as 30 MPs from across the political spectrum have written to the education secretary to call for a review into the syllabus' diversity
- L. The work done by the group known as The Black Curriculum in order to achieve a more diverse curriculum
- M. And welcomes the change in heart of the U.K. government in regard to meeting with the Black Curriculum leaders
- N. The lack of education of international religious and cultural philosophies within the foundational education curriculum
- O. The Education Act 1944 and The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 which require schools to require pupils to perform acts of worship that are 'wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character' if there is no formal faith designation applied to that school.

### Conference believes:

- i. In a time of great upheaval in regards to race equality, now more than ever we need to address these areas of inequality
- ii. Education is an important part in shaping future generations and a lack of BAME exposure where there needs to be leads to misinformed opinions of history and reinforce structural racism
- iii. The education system doesn't take enough responsibility in UK's role to play in historic racism
- iv. the aims set out in the Black Curriculum's 2020 report: to improve a sense of identity and belonging, to raise attainment and to improve social cohesion, are all aims Liberal Democrats should seek to fulfill in creating a diverse curriculum
- v. The absence in teaching of Britain's colonial past and the British empire leads to racial and cultural ignorance and must be remediated to ensure the eradication of institutional and societal prejudices on the basis of culture and race
- vi. Education about international religious and cultural philosophies is an important part of alleviating cultural and religious tensions and reducing cultural and religious ignorance
- vii. A more eclectic approach to religious education, which considers Christian and non-Christian philosophies in equal parts, in regards to morality and God, provides pupils with a greater understanding of spirituality and morality and prepares students for a multicultural work environment and a more multifaceted approach to their own individual spirituality
- viii. The requirement that acts of worship must be of Christian character, has no place in today's multicultural and religious Britain.

### Conference calls for:

1. The Liberal Democrat Shadow Education Secretary to meet with the Black Curriculum and to begin the process internally of creating a policy paper implementing their recommendations as well as other areas of education policy relating to other ethnic minorities, being careful not to ignore the interests of said groups
2. The Liberal Democrat Shadow Education Secretary to meet with the Black Curriculum and to begin the process internally of creating a policy paper implementing their recommendations as well as other areas of education policy relating to other ethnic minorities, being careful not to ignore the interests of said groups



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3. The Department for Education to engage constructively in their future meeting with the leaders of the Black Curriculum
4. Implementation of British colonial history in foundational history classes in the primary and secondary curriculum, by consulting and utilizing the expertise and opinions of teachers, academics, students and racial equality groups that does not seek to place judgement, but presents the facts and allows for critical analysis and evaluation
5. The religious education within the national curriculum to include teachings of all major religious faiths prevalent within Britain
6. The abolishment of of the requirement of the act of worship to be of Christian and character and the requirement that all schools provide space and time for each student to practice their own faith so as to fulfill the collective act of worship requirement of Section 70 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*

## Fair Higher Education Standards

### Conference notes

- A. That there is a wide discrepancy in the number of contact hours and teaching staff to student ratios offered by university courses even across the same subjects.
- B. That the QAA (Quality Assurance Agency) for higher education is the body responsible for standards in all recognised institutions. That the most recent review in 2012 by the House of Lords Science and Technology committee found that the QAA was still 'not fit for purpose' and no meaningful reforms have been undertaken since then.
- C. That contact hours, staff to student ratios and other teaching quality metrics have not improved despite increases in tuition fees.
- D. That only 41% of students believe their course offers 'Good value for money' according to the Student Academic Experience Survey. That studies have shown that older, more prestigious Russell Group universities which are generally accepted to have higher standards offer more contact hours than newer universities.
- E. That the Liberal Democrat 2019 manifesto included a commitment to strengthen the Office for Students to 'raise standards for all students.'
- F. The Young Liberals already have a policy to nationalise school exam boards and set syllabuses.

### Conference Believes:

- i. Students have a right to a quality education which includes quality teaching time in reasonably sized lectures and tutorials not just independent learning.
- ii. That contact hours provide the best support in developing subject knowledge and skill, shaping and guiding studies.
- iii. That the Government should take a more proactive approach to ensuring higher standards across universities as it does with schools.
- iv. That standards and metrics should be determined with input from both students and staff.

### Conference calls for:

1. The development of a comprehensive set of standards for each course based on input from professionals at the QAA and the Office for Students which should include student representation.
2. Minimum standards to be set for each course include requirements for contact hours, teaching staff to student ratio during these hours, quality of learning space, resources and feedback and assessment.
3. The empowerment of the QAA to assess universities and ensure they are meeting these standards through in-person verification and feedback from students.

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Education in COVID Britain

### Conference notes:

- A. The top-down, Government-dictated way in which education has been operated during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- B. The blame that has been cast on students for spreading the Coronavirus, despite scientific evidence to the contrary.
- C. The severe drop in income for University students, who rely on the voluntary, retail, and service industries for vital employment and work experience opportunities, which have also been the sectors that have been hit the hardest by the pandemic.
- D. The way in which landlords, Universities, and student accommodation companies have profited from students being pressured to study in person and despite the fact that most learning is done online.
- E. The unfair way in which A-level results were initially graded and the way in which teacher's voices were ignored in determining grades.
- F. As a result of online-only teaching, the grades of students and the quality of education have decreased.
- G. Despite a higher burden on mental health services, both on- and off-campus, students are not seeing increased investment in these services.
- H. The call for the refund of tuition fees from Universities to students, as students feel as though their University education is fundamentally inadequate.
- I. The way in which tuition fees are spent by Universities means that staff, including lecturers, Student Unions, and student services are largely dependent on tuition fees to carry out their services.
- J. The interim policy on No-Detriment practices enacted by the YL Executive in January 2021.

### Conference believes that:

- i. Education and the needs of students are local, that our teachers are to be trusted with these needs, and that the Government must support these local needs rather than suppress them.
- ii. Students and recent College and University graduates are unable to access the same opportunities as those that studied and graduated even a few years ago, and that the Government must be front and center to support them.
- iii. The Government, as well as the education and private sectors must co-ordinate to provide the best outcome for students, including in raising the amount of disposable income for students during the pandemic.
- iv. Teachers are best placed to assess students' grades, signpost student services, and oversee developmental opportunities for students, and the Government should not obstruct them in doing so.
- v. No-detriment policies are the best way of ensuring that students' opportunities are not hindered and that there is a level playing field between students who have and have not studied during the pandemic.
- vi. The Government must co-ordinate between schools, Colleges, Universities, and mental health services to bolster the already-flagging mental health of students.
- vii. Calling for a refund of tuition fees is, by and large, not reflective of how the student loan system works, although students rightfully feel as though they are not being given an adequate University education.
- viii. Should tuition fees be repaid directly by Universities, it risks causing mass staff layoffs, crippling student services, and financially devastating already-underfunded Student Unions.
- ix. One benefit of cancelling exams is that it means year groups which hold higher transmission rates and risks of long COVID can continue to learn virtually and



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independently whilst lower year groups who more urgently need face to face learning to resume can benefit from it

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Allow schools, headteachers, and local authorities the autonomy to decide if, when, and to what extent it is safe to operate on an in-person basis, including which children should be given priority to in-person teaching.
2. Provide University students with an emergency maintenance grant in order to make up for lost income during the pandemic.
3. Expand the Kickstart scheme to businesses by providing money to employ A-level and University students and graduates in order to help provide at least short-term, part-time work and income, as well as ensuring young people can build life skills despite the pandemic.
4. Request Universities and student accommodation companies to reduce the amount of rent charged to students, in order to help students retain their income during a period of increasing unemployment.
5. Issue Centre Assessed Grades based on Teacher Predictions for GCSE/A-Level results at the earliest possible opportunity which gives both time for students to show an improvement in their skills and time for a robust appeals process to take place before an opportunity for reassessment
6. Facilitate the external moderation of these Centre Assessed Grades with a process by which schools must provide a commentary of how grades were determined in individual cases for a proportion of each school's grades
7. Ensure that in the time period between grades being entered by teachers and issued, students should continue with their GCSE/A-Level courses in order to build an evidence basis for a robust appeals process
8. Allow students who are unhappy with their results and who are unsuccessful in appeals to have a second chance to sit internal assessments in May/June before any final admissions decisions are made by further or higher education providers in order to provide an evidence basis for a reassessed grade
9. Change the educational focus of those in School Years 11 to 13 after grades are issued to transition to work from their next educational institution or to allow for students to enter work or apprenticeship schemes earlier, although a requirement to have taught the full GCSE English Language and Maths syllabus must exist
10. Advise Educational institutions to be more lenient in admissions, especially to 15/16 year olds who wish to continue in education, as students can't be expected to perform to the same standard as previous cohorts during this unprecedented time.
11. Provide an immediate emergency cash injection to national, local, and student-based mental health services.
12. Where feasible, provide a Government-funded partial rebate of tuition fees that do not disrupt University services, impact Student Unions, or affect the pay of vital staff members and lecturers.
13. Implement a national No-Detriment policy for Universities until the pandemic is over.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference – Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*





## School Attendance

### Conference notes:

- A. In the 2020/21 Autumn term, 4.7% of sessions were missed due to absence- not including absences related to Covid-19- with an unauthorised absence rate of 1.4%
- B. Parents of children who are missing school “without good reason” (truancy) may face legal action, which may include a fine, a Parenting Order, an Education Supervision Order, and/or a School Attendance Order
- C. Parents who take their child or children on holiday during term time without the school’s permission may be fined
- D. National and international research shows that parental prosecution, benefit sanctions, and truancy sweeps have statistically insignificant impacts upon school attendance levels.
- E. Studies have highlighted that many schools consider parentally condoned absence to be a more widespread problem than truancy.
- F. Research has indicated a link between poverty and poor school attendance.

### Conference believes:

- i. That a good education for all is a cornerstone of a functioning liberal democracy.
- ii. That poor school attendance reduces a child’s chances of receiving a good education.
- iii. That the casual link between attendance and attainment runs in both directions.
- iv. That many children in the UK have been lost without trace from school rolls.
- v. The current government’s moves to promote parental prosecutions for non-attendance has led to some Education Welfare Services moving away from crucial work dealing with the welfare of children.
- vi. The setting of targets to reduce exclusions can lead to a rise in tolerated absence of ‘backdoor exclusions’.
- vii. That setting targets for ‘truancy’ can lead to a rise in authorised absence.
- viii. The police service and courts have more important work to do than deal with absent children.
- ix. That prosecuting or fining parents for their child’s absence is often a costly and ineffective means of improving a child’s attendance.

### Conference therefore resolves:

- 1. To focus on all absence from school as opposed to just unauthorised absence or other manipulable statistics.
- 2. To promote greater co-operation between Local Education Authorities and other agencies dealing with young people to ensure no child becomes ‘lost’ from school rolls.
- 3. To provide more support for children returning to school after periods of absence in order to break the cycle of non-attendance.
- 4. To promote greater use of an alternative and more relevant curriculum for those children with little interest in or use for ‘academic’ subjects.
- 5. To end reliance upon truancy sweeps and replace them with systems of targeted first day contact with absent children and their parents.
- 6. To end reliance upon parental prosecution for non-attendance in all but the most extreme cases and use the funds saved to invest in welfare support for absent children.
- 7. To abolish fines for term time holidays and work with the travel industry to reduce the cost of non-term time holidays for parents of school age children.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## Nationalisation of Exam Boards

### Conference notes:

- A. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and is governed by a board appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. QCA maintains and develops the National Curriculum, assessments, and has overall responsibility for regulating the public examination system.
- B. The National Assessment Agency (NAA) is a subsidiary of the QCA and is now directly in charge of public examinations.
- C. All major examination boards enjoy charitable status, and do not come under the control of the QCA, NAA, nor the DfES.
- D. Exam Boards charge schools and colleges varying fees for providing examinations and marking. Despite exam cancellations during the pandemic, these fees were not refunded
- E. QCA consultation with a selection of teachers revealed a desire for 'a body publicly taking responsibility for the conduct and performance of the exam boards'.

### Conference believes:

- I. It is an important goal for schools to offer a broad, challenging, and balanced education, providing opportunities for students to enjoy all aspects of the curriculum: academic, physical, and vocational.
- II. This goal is undermined by the effects of the current system of competition between exam boards:
  - a. Exam boards only provide exams in subjects which are commercially viable.
  - b. The current educational climate means exam results are crucially important to schools, therefore they choose what they perceive to be the easiest exam syllabus, and exam boards try to create the easiest possible syllabuses.
  - c. Competition between exam boards could therefore be responsible for allegations about 'dumbing-down'.
- III. The Government should have indirect control of an essential accessory to the education system – the exam system.
- IV. In particular, since the Government wishes all final year secondary students to take compulsory exams, and is trying to increase the popularity of vocational subjects, it should indirectly decide the content, implementation, and marking procedures for these exams.

### Conference therefore calls for:

- 1. In the interests of simplicity and clarity, financial efficiency, control over educational standards, and an enhanced ability to achieve its aims, the Government should take indirect Control of providing examinations, by empowering, and compelling the QCA or NAA to set its own syllabuses.
- 2. The QCA/NAA to determine how many different syllabuses to offer per subject, taking account of the demand, justifying themselves to the Secretary of State for Education if necessary.
- 3. State educational institutions to be obliged to use the new syllabuses provided by the QCA/NAA.
- 4. The QCA/NAA to determine an appropriate fee to charge, for each examination taken. It would be up to each educational institution to decide whether or not to pass this fee onto the candidate.
- 5. State educational institutions too continue to receive funding for exam fees, under the existing model.



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6. The QCA to stop its existing function of accrediting and regulating the standard of qualifications offered by the existing exam boards.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## Faith Schools

### Conference notes:

- A. 37% of all British primary schools, and 19% of secondary schools are state-funded faith schools.
- B. The number of state-funded faith schools in the UK continues to increase.
- C. Faith schools in the U.K. are permitted to admit or turn away students based on their religious background.
- D. The motion 'Disestablishment of the Church of England', passed at the Winter 2021 conference, called for a separation of religion and state, whilst rejecting sentiments of antidisestablishmentarianism.

### Conference believes:

- i. State-funded schools, regardless of faith or status, should not be permitted to determine admission upon grounds of religious background.
- ii. Children in the U.K. should be educated in the customs of all faiths equally, so as to enable a more tolerant society.
- iii. Matters of relationships, sexuality and gender identity should be openly taught in classrooms, without the potential hindrance of religious bias.
- iv. Ethical issues such as assisted dying or abortion should be approached in a balanced manner, rather than from an explicitly religious perspective.
- v. A Liberal approach to religion in schools should empower the individual to choose one's faith, rather than impose it upon them.
- vi. The future of British education should be secular.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. Existing faith schools to be held to the same standards as community schools on issues of religious education, relationships, sexuality and gender identity.
- 2. An end to the proliferation of state-funded faith schools.
- 3. A withdrawal of the exemptions and privileges that faith schools currently enjoy, so that faith schools are placed on a level playing field with the wider schools sector.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference – Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## Education for Everyone: Resolving the SEN Crisis

### Conference notes:

- A. In the last 5 years, the number of pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) in the UK education system has increased by almost 200,000.
- B. Children with SEN are more than twice as likely to be eligible for free school meals than their peers.
- C. Children with SEN are four times as likely to be excluded from school than non-SEN pupils.
- D. The number of SEN pupils attending independent special schools has increased by more than 50% since 2010, for the most part due to a lack of capacity at state special schools.
- E. 40% of Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs), documents detailing needs and provisions for SEN pupils with higher levels of needs, are not being issued within the 20-week deadline set out in law.
- F. Following failed applications to obtain an EHCP, many people have to go to an appeals board.
- G. An increasing number of SEN pupils are being turned down for the already limited number of special school places.
- H. SEN is drastically underfunded in schools, meaning that they do not have adequate resources to provide SEN pupils with the support they need.

### Conference believes:

- i. SEN education is in a state of crisis.
- ii. Education is a fundamental right for all young people, regardless of whether they are SEN pupils or not.
- iii. SEN pupils must be given the opportunity to thrive in their place of education.
- iv. The government's results-focused attitude to education compromises the development of SEN pupils.
- v. When provided with the right support and opportunities, SEN pupils are able to flourish, providing both a social and economic benefit to society.
- vi. For too long SEN pupils have been treated as an afterthought; we need an education system that truly values SEN pupils.

### Conference calls for:

1. The Department for Education to fund schools in creating disabled friendly school grounds and classrooms and where only when necessary separate facilities, as well as increase the number of specific special education schools to ensure all students need to travel for a maximum of one hour each way.
2. A fairer funding system, consisting of:
  - a. Fully funding the SEN provision of any child with an EHCP.
  - b. A ring-fenced pot of money given to schools for SEN pupils without an EHCP, on a per pupil basis (based off the SEN register), to replace the Notional SEN budget.
3. Update initial teacher training on SEN with significant input from a range of disabled un disability charities and disabled voices. The outline of training provided should be made public and teachers should have annual refreshers, regardless of where they teach.
4. Reasonable Adjustments including support for students who do not have or need an EHCP to be hand tailored to students for all disabilities, ensuring students are not merely given what other SEN students have when their disability is less well-known.
5. The Department of Education to create full guidance on the tasks and requirements of a SENCO.
6. The government to encourage schools and other places of education to make education overall more accessible to SEN pupils.

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference – Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2027*



## Supporting UCU Strikes

### Conference notes:

- A. Negotiations between the University and College Union (UCU) and relevant universities have been going on for many years since an original proposal of a new pension scheme in 2017
- B. The Government's proposed new pension scheme would end defined benefits for almost 200,000 staff members
- C. Newest staff, and therefore the youngest staff, will be disproportionately impacted
- D. This is one of a number of key disputes between the UCU and universities over pay and working conditions which primarily impact younger staff

### Conference believes:

- I. The use of industrial action is a regrettable, but necessary given the length of negotiations
- II. Industrial action is one of the most effective tools within staff pay, pension and condition negotiations
- III. The proposed Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) would be hugely detrimental to the livelihoods of young professionals in academia

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The Young Liberals to support the current set of industrial action being conducted by UCU members across the country
- 2. Young Liberal branches to lobby their Students' Unions in support of the UCU industrial action
- 3. The Young Liberals to put out a statement of support for the UCU industrial action
- 4. The Young Liberals to call on the government Universities UK (UUK) to settle the USS pensions dispute

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference – Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2027*



## Vocational Education and Apprenticeships in England

### Conference notes:

- A. Since 2015, the Department for Education (DfE) has introduced wide ranging reforms to apprenticeship programs, including the introduction of degree apprenticeships and the movement towards employer created standards.
- B. In 2017, the UK Government introduced the Apprenticeship Levy on organisations with a total annual wage bill greater than £3 million, with the funds generated being available to employers to train apprentices in England.
- C. According to DfE statistics, apprenticeship starters in England are generally gender balanced: 50.1% of starters in 2018/19 were women, and 51.2% of starters in 2019/20 were men.
- D. Apprenticeships are no longer limited to trades and engineering, and are now available in a broad range of roles and industries.
- E. There is a shortage of skilled workers in engineering and technical roles across the UK, which is predicted to become worse in the coming years.
- F. The 2019 Liberal Democrat manifesto contained the commitments to improve vocational education and to expand higher vocational training. However, these pledges were not fleshed-out proposals, were not prominent in the manifesto and were overshadowed by other educational pledges.
- G. There was an absence of any policy related specifically to advanced apprenticeships (Level 3/post-GCSE) in the 2019 Liberal Democrat manifesto.
- H. Employers, CIPD professionals and other industry bodies are calling for reform of the apprenticeship levy to increase flexibility and to encourage the addressing of the skills gap in existing employees.
- I. 3.3 billion pounds in unused apprenticeship levy funding has been returned to the treasury since 2019.
- J. The Social Mobility Commission believes that 1 in 3 workers will not escape low pay largely as a direct result of the Adult Skills Gap.

### Conference believes:

- I. While public opinion on apprenticeships has improved since reforms began, there is still a social stigma against vocational education, with it commonly being seen as inferior compared to higher education.
- II. Vocational education and apprenticeships have previously been an afterthought when developing Young Liberals and Liberal Democrat education policies.
- III. While the reforms implemented by the UK Government have increased the quality of apprenticeship programs and the range of industries in which apprenticeships are available, further action needs to be taken to increase the number of apprenticeship opportunities available.
- IV. Vocational education and university are equally valid educational routes, and neither should be seen as superior or inferior to the other.
- V. Both vocational education and university can provide strong foundations for a high skill career, which is one of the most important aspects for increasing an individual's social mobility and reducing inequality.
- VI. Vocational education and apprenticeships must be a strong component of a robust and well-rounded education strategy.
- VII. The reformed apprenticeship system is fair and effective, benefiting apprentices, employers and taxpayers.
- VIII. Urgent action and support for continuing education is needed to ensure we address the Adult Skills Gap.

### Conference calls for:



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1. The UK Government to publish a strategy for increasing the number of apprenticeships and vocational education opportunities in England.
2. The UK Government to maintain the Apprenticeship Levy.
3. Young Liberals and the Liberal Democrats to champion the benefits of vocational education and apprenticeships for individuals, employers and wider society.
4. Young Liberals to visibly champion apprenticeships and vocational opportunities through actions and future policies to help break the social stigma around these opportunities.
5. The introduction of a Continuing Education Levy, with the same set of rules and rates as the pre-existing apprenticeship levy, to be split with 50% allocated to businesses for accredited training of their existing employees and the other 50% being allocated on a per employee to individual educational accounts ("Skills Wallets")
6. After 1 year, businesses to have the option to move up to 50% of their budget from the apprenticeship levy or the continuing education levy to the other levy's budget.
7. Introduce a new requirement for the government to report to Parliament on how unused apprenticeship levy funds are spent by the treasury towards an aim of promoting or creating new apprenticeships.
8. A review of the rules and requirements currently required for apprenticeships to see if any are overly burdensome and preventing the creation of new high-quality apprenticeships.
9. Amidst the current economic situation, temporarily extend the timeframe for use of levy funding from 2 to 3 years.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*





## Selective Schools

### Conference notes:

- A. Selective schools are places of secondary education that admit entry based upon academic ability, commonly determined by the eleven-plus (11+) examination.
- B. There exist selective state schools and academies, grammar schools, and independent schools that all have similar societal and academic impacts.
- C. Students of all abilities are faced with barriers to high quality educational pathways arising from selective education.
- D. A 2018 study from the School of Education, Durham University demonstrated that grammar school selection separated pupils based on characteristics, such as 'chronic poverty', ethnicity', and 'language', in a way described as 'potentially dangerous to society'.
- E. A 2016 House of Commons briefing paper found that selective schools take disproportionately fewer special educational needs (SEN) pupils, where it was found that the proportional intake 'was less than 0.1% in grammars, 2.4% in secondary modern schools and 1.8% across all schools'.
- F. A 2016 report from the Education Policy Institute found that 'Pupils who are eligible for free school meals (FSM), a proxy for disadvantage, are under-represented in grammar schools'.
- G. The same report also found that there is not a 'significant positive impact on social mobility' for pupils attending grammar schools.
- H. Additionally, the report determined that the introduction of more selective schools 'could lead to lower gains for grammar school pupils and small attainment losses for those not attending selective schools – losses which will be greatest amongst poor children'

### Conference believes:

- I. Whilst selective schools nominally select on the basis of academic ability, this selection often co-segregates pupils on a range of other, often protected, characteristics.
- II. Selective schools are inherently illiberal as they limit equality of opportunity for pupils, by restricting the educational pathways available to them.
- III. Selective schools, through their disparity in admissions, artificially reinforce the attainment gap between pupils of more privileged and less privileged backgrounds.
- IV. Comprehensive schooling promotes a more diverse and egalitarian approach to education.
- V. Selective schools do not increase social mobility, but rather entrench social classes as pupils from more affluent backgrounds have better access to additional resources that boost their outcomes in the 11+.
- VI. Selective schools are ableist by taking disproportionately fewer special educational needs (SEN) pupils.
- VII. There is a large disparity in what certain schools have available to them with regards to the financial resources needed to provide education, supply relevant support to pupils' needs, and to attract teaching talent.
- VIII. The financial burden being placed upon schools and lower income families is being exacerbated by the cost of living crisis and there exists an enhanced duty of care to support these schools and families as a priority.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. An end to selective education at the secondary level: no more selective schools should be established, and existing selective state and independent schools should be phased towards comprehensive and non-selective independent schools.
- 2. An end to the 11+ exams.



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3. The introduction of a 'pupil premium plus': an increase in the money allocated by the current pupil premium scheme, providing schools in areas of high deprivation with additional financial resources, especially in response to the cost of living crisis.
4. The introduction of measures to close the attainment gap between pupils, including:
  - A. More support to be afforded to those pupils from disadvantaged minority ethnic groups, low income households, the care system, and those with SEN.
  - B. More targeted support at primary and early years settings, in order to have an influential impact on later attainment.
5. A review of existing comprehensive school funding to ensure they're getting the funding and resources they need.
6. The UK Government to set out an ambitious Covid recovery strategy for students which includes these measures.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*



## Protecting Arts and Humanities Education

### Conference notes:

- A. Primary and secondary provision of arts and humanities is inconsistent across the country.
- B. Research by leading diversity consultants, the EW Group on behalf of Arts Council England in 2015 showed disparities in the uptake of arts subjects in schools and access to arts events strongly different between different groups with protected characteristics, including race and gender.
- C. These disparities continue into the workplace, with a 2021 report by the Arts Council England showing that 72% of their permanent staff are white, 61% are men, and just 7% identify as disabled.
- D. Attempts to increase the teaching of arts and humanities including:
  - a. The English Baccalaureate performance measure, which encourages every student to take a humanities subject and a language to GCSE.
  - b. The UK Government's 2022 paper, "The power of music to change lives: a national plan for music education".
  - c. The new Curriculum for Wales, which aims to give equal status to all areas of the curriculum.
- E. The closure of many arts and humanities departments at Universities across the UK, including:
  - a. the University of East Anglia, where arts and humanities staff represent 86% of compulsory redundancies,
  - b. cuts to English language and literature at Portsmouth and Leicester, and the closure of departments at Sheffield Hallam and Cumbria,
  - c. the closure of Modern Languages at the University of Hull in 2021 and the scaling back of language teaching at many universities,
  - d. the closure of History departments at "post-92" institutions, which are more likely to recruit first generation students, and students from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- F. Comments made by Gavin Williamson during his tenure as Secretary of State for Education, in which he described arts and humanities degrees as "dead-end courses that give [students] nothing but a mountain of debt".

### Conference believes:

- I. Every child has the right to access a broad and diverse curriculum that allows them to explore their creativity and gain a better understanding of the cultures around them.
- II. That humanities offer students the chance to develop useful and transferable skills that make them adaptable and resilient adults.
- III. Language education offers students a unique chance to experience another culture, and provides a much needed skill for future employers.
- IV. Any decline of the arts and humanities in schools and universities poses an existential threat to the culture sector in the UK.
- V. Access to the arts and culture enriches the human experience and should be promoted where possible.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. Increased funding to support teaching of humanities and creative arts with a wider range of bursaries for humanities subjects, including funding for subject knowledge enhancement courses to support language teaching.
- 2. Increased funding to provide specialist equipment for schools to enhance teaching of creative subjects and non-European languages, such as instruments, studio spaces and software.



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3. The development of resources for post-16 education providers to teach “key skills” traditionally associated with humanities such as media literacy, critical thinking, public speaking, research and written communication skills, to complement qualifications such as T-Levels, diplomas and apprenticeships.
4. Universities to explore additional funding and support for students who study joint-honours degrees with a humanities component.
  - a. Universities to explore reduced tuition fees or scholarships for students who chose this humanities component in a “high-demand” area such as law or languages.
5. The Department for Education (DfE) to work with the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to help councils collaborate with schools to increase access to arts charities and events.
6. Enhanced support to improve diversity in arts and humanities, with a particular focus on helping students from minority ethnic backgrounds and economically disadvantaged backgrounds, including funded trips to arts and cultural venues and workshops with higher education providers.
7. The DfE to work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to create a public awareness campaign on the importance of humanities and creative arts to schools, society and the economy.

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*

## Religious Education – A Way Forward

### Conference notes:

- A. The continued increase in religious diversity, including those who are non-religious, across England and Wales, as evidenced by the 2021 Census.
- B. There is no 'national curriculum' for Religious Education (RE).
- C. For state-maintained schools, the 'locally agreed syllabus' for RE is set by the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). These locally agreed syllabuses are to be updated every five years.
- D. A 2021 research report from the National Association of Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (NASACRE) exposed that 7 Local Authorities had failed provided schools with an updated locally agreed syllabus, per statutory requirements.
- E. The 1996 Education Act states these SACREs must implement a curriculum which much reflect the fact that Britain is "in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain".
- F. According to the Religious Education council, in 2016, 33.4% of all schools in England (approximately 900) did not offer any RE at Key Stage 4 and 23.1% did not offer any RE at Key Stage 3.
- G. GCSE Religious Studies does not currently contribute to the English Baccalaureate certificate.
- H. Department for Education data shows RE is too regularly taught by non-specialist teachers, with 25% RE hours being taught by teachers without an A-Level, or higher, qualification in the subject in 2022/3.
- I. There is an important distinction between learning about religion and learning from religion.

### Conference believes:

- I. The growing religious diversity in Britain, including an increase in a-religiosity requires wholesale changes to RE in schools.
- II. Specifically for RE, a nationally prescribed curriculum would not adequately enable Local Authorities & SACREs to design RE syllabuses that effectively represent specific, diverse, communities within Britain. As such, devolving power to SACREs is an appropriate mechanism for designing RE curricula across the country.
- III. Local Authorities have a responsibility to adequately fund SACREs, to ensure provision for RE continues to reflect both changes to local demographics and shifts, both nationally and internationally, in religiosity.
- IV. High quality education begins with high quality specialist teachers.
- V. All schools, regardless of their academy status or religious character, should be statutorily obligated to provide RE across all Key Stages.
- VI. That learning from religion, i.e., supporting students to understand how religion impacts their daily lives, and consider its benefits or detriments to modern society, ought to be the central aim of high quality RE.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The government to update statutory requirements for RE in England, to ensure SACREs are compelled to include secular worldviews and better promote both secular and religious ethics and philosophy to better reflect religious life in modern Britain to support making learning from religion a more central focus in RE.
- 2. The government to provide Local Authorities with adequate, ringfenced, funding to ensure SACREs are well equipped to update their syllabuses within the statutorily required timeframe.



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3. Religious Studies GCSEs to become a part of the English Baccalaureate to increase the status of RE and offer the subject parity with other humanities.
4. The government to reintroduce the training bursary for RE specialists to improve recruitment for specialist RE teachers.
5. The government to reaffirm and enforce the statutory entitlement for students in state-maintained schools in England to provide RE, whilst also maintaining existing mechanisms for parental opt-outs.

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*



# Environment, Energy and the Climate Emergency



## Deforestation and Sustainability

### Conference notes:

- A. More than 3.6 million hectares of virgin tropical forest were lost to deforestation in 2018.
- B. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) estimates commercial agriculture is responsible for 32% of deforestation.
- C. A significant portion of commercial agriculture is given over to cash crops such as palm oil, coffee, or cattle pasture that are consumed in other nations rather than locally.

### Conference believes:

- I. Deforestation is a significant driver of the existential threat posed by global ecological collapse and is a symptom of the wider exploitation of the periphery's resources by the unsustainable consumerism of the core rich nations.
- II. The majority of deforestation occurs in countries where the government is either unwilling or unable to prevent it.
- III. Capitalism and environmental sustainability need not be mutually exclusive, and the system of incentives offered by changing consumer behaviour is a powerful tool for enacting change.
- IV. Tackling deforestation also reduces stress on other environmental systems and demonstrates the effectiveness of a market driven approach in reducing 'outsourcing' of environmental damage to the developing world.
- V. The UK is a highly consumerist nation that has significant economic influence, and we have a responsibility to use this influence responsibly.

### Conference resolves to:

- 1. Restrict imports on goods from environmentally damaging sources.
- 2. Foster cooperation with other national governments in order to rebalance the economy towards sustainable production.

*Passed: London Summer Conference – Summer 2019*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2024*





## The Climate Emergency

Conference acknowledges and commends the 2017 Liberal Democrat Manifesto and the policy motion F6 'The Paris Agreement and UK Climate Change Policy' passed at the Autumn 2017 Conference.

Conference welcomes the FPC's work on a new climate change policy paper and hope that the resulting motion will set forward a radical policy on climate change.

Conference notes:

- A. That the climate change emergency is the biggest issue facing our generation and the implications spread across all policy sectors.
- B. The recent inspiring campaign of young climate change activists led by Greta Thunberg that has catapulted this issue back into the spotlight.
- C. The work of the Liberal Democrats in government which created the world's first Green Investment Bank, the Levy Control Framework for low carbon investment, and securing strong EU targets for decarbonization.
- D. At present the world is on track to overshoot the Paris Agreement's 1.5°C limit before 2050.

Conference believes:

- I. All levels of government (national, regional, and local) have a duty to limit the negative impacts of climate breakdown.
- II. Local councils that recognize this should not wait for their national governments to change their policies.
- III. Individuals cannot be expected to make this reduction on their own. Society needs to change its laws, taxation, and infrastructure to make low carbon living easier and the new norm.
- IV. The consequences of global temperature rising above 1.5°C are so severe that preventing this from happening must be humanity's number one priority.
- V. Bold local climate action can deliver economic and social benefits in terms of new green jobs, economic savings, and market opportunities, and a much improved well-being for citizens of our country - for example through reduction of fuel poverty and energy bills, encouraging healthy, active travel, and improving green spaces and access to nature.
- VI. The Young Liberals should have fleshed out, radical policies additional to that of the Liberal Democrats that are specific to the individual issues related to and solutions for the climate emergency.

Conference resolves to:

1. Declare a 'Climate Emergency'.
2. Lobby local councils to set a 2025 target for decarbonization of their authorities and to produce a report into the immediate actions they can take towards this target.
3. Lobby Liberal Democrat and Renew Europe MEPs to push for radical targets for the European Union climate change strategy.
4. Lobby Liberal Democrat Federal Conference to push for stronger action on climate change prevention and mitigation.
5. Mandate the Young Liberals Policy Committee to reserve a policy spot each Young Liberals conference for a motion related to climate change.

*Passed: London Summer Conference - Summer 2019*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2024*



## A Progressive Carbon Tax

### Conference notes:

- A. Reductions in man-made Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions need to be accelerated, both nationally and globally, to prevent catastrophic outcomes.
- B. The majority of GHG emissions are Carbon Dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) derived from fossil fuel, however a noteworthy proportion are measured instead using Carbon Dioxide Equivalents (CO<sub>2</sub>e).
- C. The success of carbon taxation programs in countries such as Canada.
- D. The ongoing carbon price working group headed by Duncan Brack and the Liberal Democrat's historic support for a revenue-neutral carbon tax in the 1997 General Election manifesto.
- E. A carbon tax can work in tandem with incentives for greener alternatives, such as the tax reliefs offered for electric vehicles.
- F. The reducing cost of renewable energy, which in some cases can cost less than fossil fuel energy.

### Conference believes:

- I. That a carbon tax uses market forces to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions in a very cost-effective and efficient way, encouraging both energy efficiency and the use of low-CO<sub>2</sub> energy.
- II. A general carbon tax on all fossil fuel would affect all sectors, including heating, industry, electricity generation and transport. The tax would be technology-neutral, as it does not try to "pick winners".
- III. A tax on all fossil fuel, collected at the point of production or import, would be collected mostly from big companies on goods that are already monitored, and the dividend rate is the same for everyone; hence administrative costs should be low.
- IV. Subsidies on fossil fuel, for example tax breaks on North Sea oil and gas, are effectively a negative carbon tax.
- V. This carbon tax policy is just one of many policies, both financial and non-financial, needed to reduce climate change. In the future this tax might be extended to CO<sub>2</sub> not derived from fossil fuel, such as cement production.

### Conference however also notes:

1. The Risk of Carbon Leakage from a domestic carbon tax, by which carbon emissions merely move out of our borders and outside of the force of the carbon tax instead of real reductions in the consumption of CO<sub>2</sub>.
2. That without equivalent adjustment to the welfare state, Carbon Tax can become a regressive policy that harms those on lower incomes. This creates a need to support low-income families, including direct support to them, and investment to reduce the cost of green alternatives and technologies.
3. The potential to expand beyond a simple CO<sub>2</sub> tax to also include more widely CO<sub>2</sub>e measures of GHGs in order to suppress all forms of carbon.

### Conference calls for:

- i. The introduction of comprehensive carbon tax on all fossil fuel energy collected at the point of production or import, and the withdrawal of fossil fuel subsidies. Expected tax rates for several years ahead should be published so investors and others can plan with confidence.
- ii. The majority of the net increase in tax revenue should be paid back as a dividend to all UK residents, potentially as part of our universal basic income offering, in order to ensure this tax is progressive and supports low-income families.
- iii. Consideration of the possibility of imposing Border Carbon Adjustments (BCAs) on imports with significant "embedded" carbon. International agreement and mutual recognition provision to be sought so as to avoid the imposition of tariffs where possible.



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- iv. Consideration of whether a 100% dividend is the most progressive and cost-effective way of using this funding or if other successful models can be found where a significant minority of funding is allocated to support public transport, heating and insulation programmes or other public works which will support low income families and the wider public in reducing the cost of green energy and alternatives.
- v. Consideration of expanding the Carbon tax into a tax upon CO<sub>2</sub>e at some stage in the roadmap for implementation.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference – Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## Facilitating Young People's Independence and Wellbeing Through Active Travel

Conference notes that:

- A. The proportion of young people allowed to travel independently has severely decreased in the past few decades, leading to impacts on mental and physical health; many children are now driven by their parents, leading to increased traffic and impacting the lifestyles and independence of both adults and the children in their care.
- B. There were 1,752 reported road deaths and 25,945 serious injuries in road traffic collisions reported to the police in road traffic collisions in 2019 – equivalent to over four deaths per day, or a serious injury every 20 minutes.
- C. According to the WHO, road traffic collisions are the leading cause of death for children and young adults aged 5–29 years.
- D. The casualty rate per billion passenger miles for a car passenger is 195, whereas for pedestrians it is 1,640 and cycle riders it is 4,891.
- E. According to Public Health England, air pollution (of which 35% of nitrogen oxide emissions and 12% of particulate matter emissions in the UK come from road transport) is the largest environmental risk to the public's health in the UK with estimates of between 28,000 and 36,000 deaths each year attributed to human-made air pollution exposure.
- F. In Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA's), which local authorities are required to declare if national air quality objectives are unlikely to be reached, road transport is responsible for 97% of those declared for Nitrogen Dioxide emissions and 79% of those declared for particulate matter.
- G. Transportation accounts for around a third of all carbon dioxide emissions in the UK per year, with the majority from road transport, contributing to the climate emergency.
- H. Households are more likely to have access to a car as income increases; households in England in the lowest real income level are over three times more likely to have no access to a car than those in the highest real income level.
- I. The pandemic of physical inactivity worsens quality of life by increasing the risk of long-term health conditions – costing the NHS at least £455m a year.
- J. In 2017–18, 58% of car journeys in England were under five miles in distance, and 40% of urban car journeys were under two miles in distance.
- K. Most people do not cycle as they feel it is too dangerous; in 2017, 62% of adults aged over 18 in England agreed that “it is too dangerous for me to cycle on the roads.”
- L. HGVs are involved in a disproportionate number of deaths on our roads, when compared to other forms of motorised road traffic.

Conference believes:

- i. Climate change and poor air quality are threats to the lives, wellbeing, and futures of all young people in the UK.
- ii. Enabling, not just encouraging, active travel and the independence, health benefits, and positive environmental impact this has is therefore inherently liberal, and conducive to the freedom, dignity, and well-being of individuals championed in the party constitution.
- iii. Implementing measures such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs) (where neighbourhoods are closed to through motor traffic but remain open for access), segregated cycling lanes, and safe and accessible walking routes are key to this.
- iv. Measures that facilitate active travel also facilitate childhood independence, safe street play, and diversity.



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- v. Deaths resulting from road traffic collisions should be designed out of our road network, with the goal of reducing the number to zero.

Conference calls for:

1. Liberal Democrat councillors to work with local communities and officers to support and implement LTN schemes and other interventions which facilitate an increased uptake of active travel.
2. Liberal Democrat politicians to show support for measures aimed at increasing active travel, recognising that the inconvenience to those travelling by car can vastly improve public health and save lives.
3. An increase in spending on active travel infrastructure nationwide.
4. A vision-zero approach to road deaths, with roads designed to be safe for all.
5. Nationwide direct vision standards for HGVs to ensure that visibility is maximized from vehicle cabs – matching or exceeding the rules already in place in Greater London.
6. Safe walking and cycling environments through interventions such as Low Traffic Neighbourhoods (LTNs), raised zebra crossings on each side street, and segregated cycle lanes.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference – Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## The Climate Crisis

Conference believes:

- A. That there is currently a climate crisis, with global temperatures rising at unsustainable levels
- B. That we are already seeing the devastating impact of the climate emergency, with widespread fires, indoor and outdoor temperatures too hot for safety, and flooding in m

Conference further believes:

- I. That the climate crisis must end, and cannot be allowed to continue unchecked
- II. That climate change is not a problem of personal responsibility, but collective impact - with more than 70% of global carbon emissions being caused by just a small handful of corporations
- III. That growth rates should not be used as the sole economic indicator as it does not take into account quality of life and environmental standards
- IV. International institutions need to do a better job of regulating the large corporations that are responsible for 70% of global carbon emissions
- V. any areas linked to climate change

Conference reiterates:

- i. YL policy “The Climate Emergency” passed in summer 2019
- ii. The FPC policy paper “Tackling the Climate Emergency” passed in autumn 2019

Conference therefore resolves:

1. To continue our campaign for an end to the climate emergency, tackling global warming and the effects of climate change
2. To continue to raise awareness of the danger and impact of climate change
3. To minimise Young Liberal’s climate impact however possible, in campaigning and other activities, perhaps by use of carbon offset schemes but also by making activities sustainable whenever possible
4. To support demonstrations, campaigns, and community groups which are taking steps to end the climate crisis

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## An End to Fossil Fuel Exploration

### Conference notes:

- A. The burning of fossil fuels accounts for 89% of total CO2 emissions.
- B. Denmark, France, Belize, Spain, Ireland, Sweden and Wales have all banned licensing for the exploration and extraction of new oil and gas fields.
- C. North Sea fields face an average time of 28 years from the issuing of a license to the start of production. Many licences granted in 2022 would not come online until 2050.
- D. The Chair of the Committee on Climate Change advised the government against approving new licenses. The influential 2021 report by the International Energy Agency (IEA) concludes that approving new developments is incompatible with current climate goals.
- E. Many large undeveloped reserves such as Cambo and Rosebank have already been licensed. There are multiple billions of barrels of oil in these reserves.
- F. The North Sea basin is being depleted and extraction costs for new projects are relatively high.
- G. Unlike other parts of the world, oil and gas extraction in the UK sees little benefit to the taxpayer.
- H. The ability to claim new investment as tax relief from corporation tax incentivises uneconomic development of new reserves. This is now made worse by allowing investments in new infrastructure to be claimed against the windfall tax.

### Conference believes:

- i. The climate crisis is an urgent issue that must be tackled immediately. This will mean that some significant oil and gas reserves must stay unexploited.
- ii. The negative impacts of climate change disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, indigenous communities and young people.
- iii. The UK and other developed countries have are in a strong position to lead on this important issue and a moral responsibility to do so.
- iv. The government's continued support for the oil and gas industry undermine its credibility on tackling climate change.
- v. The covid pandemic must not be used to excuse delay and lack of action.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. All governments across the UK to end the issuing of any new licenses for onshore or offshore oil and gas prospecting, exploration or extraction.
- 2. The removal of the investment allowance on the windfall tax (Energy Profits Levy).
- 3. The rest of the UK to join Wales as a core member of the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance (BOGA).

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*



## Save Our Rivers

### Conference notes:

- A. Every river in England is now polluted beyond legal limits.
- B. The Environment Agency rated only 14% of rivers as 'Good' in 2019.
- C. That chemical pollution is mostly caused by sewage discharges from water companies and the run-offs of nutrients from farms.
- D. 36% of English rivers have been damaged by water companies.
- E. In England, water companies released untreated human waste directly into our waterways over 400,000 times for a total of 3 million hours in 2020 alone.
- F. Government funding to the Environment Agency to monitor river quality, and regulate farms and water companies has dropped 75% since 2010/11.
- G. In 2020 just 3.6% of pollution complaints made to the Agency resulted in penalties.
- H. Farms are now almost never inspected, water quality is rarely tested, and water companies can pump raw sewage into rivers with virtual impunity.
- I. Tyre particles, metals from brake pads, and hydrocarbons from vehicle emissions wash off road surfaces and into rivers introducing potentially carcinogenic material into the water supply.

### Conference believes:

- I. Rivers are vital to the health and prosperity of our nation and its economy
- II. Dangerous levels of pollution in our rivers is negatively impacting public health, specifically young people who are more likely to play in untreated rivers in rural areas
- III. The health of dogs and animals is also impacted by river pollution which has caused unnecessary illness in animals
- IV. That pollutants in rivers are slowly entering our food chain and this could cause an unknown increase in illness in the human population

### Conference calls for:

1. The restoration of Environment Agency budgets to deliver the necessary oversight of water companies.
2. Increasing inspection regularity of water companies and farms, and rigorously prosecuting offenders through the Environmental Audit Committee and Ofwat.
3. Funding local and highways authorities to introduce systems to prevent road pollutants from entering our water courses.
4. The National Farmers' Union to detail what action is being taken by farmers to prevent nutrient run-off and what support they are offering.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*





## Wild Camping

### Conference notes

- A. The recent High Court ruling, which removes the assumed right to wild camp at Dartmoor National Park – the only place in England where it was previously allowed
- B. The provisional agreement reached between Dartmoor National Park and landowners to allow wild camping in limited areas in exchange for financial compensation
- C. That this is a devolved matter, with the Land Reform (Scotland) Act 2003 giving explicit legal permission for wild camping across Scotland
- D. The historic association between Liberalism and the right to freely enjoy the commons
- E. Support from all major parties, and the Green Party, in Parliament for legislation that would protect people's right to enjoy nature across England
- F. The historic understanding of the law permitting camping in Dartmoor, which has provided unrivalled access to nature, and further provided immense public good with no evidence of harm to the local ecosystem or wildlife
- G. The manifold physical and mental health benefits associated with green spaces and nature
- H. The Liberal Democrat manifesto commitment to increasing access to green spaces
- I. The recent Early Day Motion and Presentation Bill from Richard Foord MP expressing regret about the ruling and seeking to change the law regarding wild camping on National Park land

### Conference believes

- I. Access to the great outdoors is a positive public good – with benefits including but not limited to: education, physical fitness, mental health, etc.
- II. That camping is, in fact, recreation, and should therefore be protected under existing legislation relating to Dartmoor (section 10(1) Dartmoor Commons Act 1985), which allows for recreation on Dartmoor, so long as the land is accessed by foot or horseback
- III. Any issues surrounding pollution, litter, or military site restrictions can be resolved without banning activities wholesomely participated in by the vast majority of participants
- IV. That although the agreement reached is welcome, the previous status quo (assumed right to wild camp across the whole national park) is significantly better

### Conference resolves to:

- i. Express in the strongest terms its support for Dartmoor National Park Authority in any future appeal it makes against the ruling
- ii. Support wild camping across the whole of Dartmoor National Park as a matter of principle
- iii. Affirm support for the legalisation of wild camping across England and the rest of the UK
- iv. Support the principle of the right to roam, and support future Young Liberal and Liberal Democrat policy in relation to this principle

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The Liberal Democrats to reaffirm their commitment to allow people to respectfully and responsibly enjoy National Park land across the United Kingdom
- 2. The Young Liberals to vocally support Richard Foord's campaign to protect people's right to wild camp on Dartmoor
- 3. Parliament to amend section 10(1) of the Dartmoor Commons Act 1985 to firmly make clear that, following the principles of the Countryside Code, wild camping is permitted on Dartmoor



4. The Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party to make all reasonable efforts to enact this change

*Passed: Reading Winter Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2028*



## Avoiding Gridlock: Supporting Nuclear Energy

### Conference notes:

- A. The Conservative UK Government is failing to take the necessary action to tackle the huge scale of the challenge of climate change, and future generations will pay the price for this lack of action.
- B. The SNP-led Scottish Government has enacted a de-facto ban on new nuclear power stations in Scotland through a loophole in planning law. This stance was reaffirmed in the Scottish Government's 2017 Scottish Energy Strategy.
- C. The Liberal Democrats have previously maintained a stance of "no new nuclear" in its manifestos and public statements.
- D. Decarbonising the economy, including moving away from fossil fuels, is necessary in order to reach net zero.
- E. 15% of the electricity generated in the UK comes from nuclear power, compared to 26% in 1997.
- F. Investment in nuclear energy, a low-carbon source of energy, helps to reduce dependence on fossil fuels and can play a key role in the circular carbon economy and a sustainable energy system.
- G. While renewable energy sources (such as Wind and Solar) are cheap and a critical component of a decarbonised energy mix, their power generation depends on external factors which means other energy sources are required to balance the system and provide stability.
- H. The operational flexibility that nuclear power provides results in a significantly more secure grid and allows for reduced use of gas fired power stations to balance the electricity system.
- I. Due to its low operating costs and its reliability, nuclear energy is an effective baseload energy source, helping to achieve energy security.
- J. The technology to handle and mitigate the dangers of nuclear waste has been developed, meaning that the environmental impacts of nuclear waste are negligible compared to the equivalent greenhouse gases produced per unit of power of fossil fuel-sourced energy.
- K. The safety concerns regarding nuclear energy are often exaggerated, with rigorous safety procedures within power stations and relating to waste disposal, ensuring that the risk of accidents and harm are low.
- L. Utilising nuclear energy can reduce the UK's reliance on Russian oil and gas and support energy autonomy and independence.
- M. Nuclear energy provides high quality jobs and opportunities throughout the whole of a reactor's lifecycle, from construction to decommissioning.

### Conference believes:

- I. The Liberal Democrats are the party of the environment.
- II. Decarbonising the economy is essential in the fight against climate change.
- III. Using nuclear energy as a key part of the energy mix will help us to move away from fossil fuels, achieve a clean energy transition, and reach net zero.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The Liberal Democrats to support the construction of new nuclear power stations.
- 2. The UK Government to commit to ensuring that nuclear energy is the bedrock of the energy mix, providing the baseload capacity and operational flexibility required for a reliable and secure energy system.



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3. The UK Government to invest in new, as well as existing, nuclear energy projects, creating a long-term strategy to support nuclear energy as a part of the efforts to reach net zero.
4. The Scottish Government to reverse their de-facto ban on new nuclear reactors in Scotland.
5. The UK Government to continue to allow existing nuclear reactors to extend their lifespan, subject to safety reviews and approval from the Office for Nuclear Regulation.
6. The UK Government to work with the electricity industry to plan for the next generation of nuclear power stations, so they are ready to come online before the current generation of nuclear reactors are decommissioned.
7. Elected Representatives of the Liberal Democrats and Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Spokespeople to ensure their statements on Energy Security and Nuclear Energy are reasonable and based in fact.

# Housing, Transport and Infrastructure



## Demanding Better for Transport in Our North

### Conference notes:

- A. The North of England, henceforth referring to the European Parliamentary regions of the North West, North East and Yorkshire & the Humber, is suffering from a transport funding crisis that has left our railways and public transport infrastructure in ruins
- B. The North has seen a funding deficit of £541 per person for transport infrastructure compared to what London receives
- C. The North has seen an overall cut in public spending of £3.6 billion from the years 2009/10 to 2017/18 whereas the south east and south west saw an increase in public spending of £4.7 billion
- D. The United Kingdom's (U.K.) funding of transport systems, as a percentage of GDP, is significantly lower than that of our western European colleagues
- E. The U.K. has some of the largest recorded levels of regional inequality in Europe and this has been exacerbated by continued under-funding of infrastructure
- F. Where towns and cities are better connected, there are greater job opportunities, wages rise and standards of living rise
- G. The importance of rail freight to helping fight the climate crisis

### Conference believes:

- i. That if the Liberal Democrats want to improve our electoral chances in the north we must be the party to spearhead improved investment in northern infrastructure
- ii. If we are to tackle the environmental crisis then we must do more to ensure people are able to, and encouraged to, use public transport and must increase investment to ensure this is the case
- iii. There are a number of easily implemented infrastructure investments in the north that would go some way to rebalancing the funding disparities and improving the quality of life in the north
- iv. That even within the north there must be unequal spending to attempt to rectify the unbalanced funding that we have seen previously
- v. That infrastructure investment cannot simply be focussed on the M62 corridor and must cover a wide area of the north including both urban and rural areas

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The Young Liberals to push for the wider party to adopt the infrastructure investments set out hence forth:
  - a. A rolling plan of electrification that will include, but is not limited to, electrification of the Newcastle to Carlisle line, The Settle to Carlisle line, the Tees Valley line from Sunderland to Middlesbrough, Leeds to Hull, Leeds to Manchester, Leeds to York, Manchester to Holyhead, Manchester to Sheffield and York to Scarborough
  - b. Investment in underground platforms at Manchester Piccadilly to allow for further segregation of intercity and metropolitan services and easing congestion, as well as allowing for easy transfers to rail services to Manchester Airport
  - c. A light rail metro system for Leeds that will bring it more in line with what other similarly sized cities have
  - d. A new west branch of the Tyne & Wear metro encompassing the west end of Newcastle, Elswick, Denton and Benwell, before joining back to the pre-existing network at the Airport
  - e. Upgrading the east bound line from Leeds to York to electrified four track and introducing a grade separation from the current proposed HS2 line
  - f. A new 125 mph, electrified rail route across the Pennines from Darlington to Penrith that links the East Coast Main Line and West Coast Mainline as well as creating new east & west rail freight links



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- g. Northern Powerhouse Rail in full: Liverpool to Manchester links allowing HS2 integration, dedicated NPR link between Sheffield & HS2, full link of Manchester and Leeds's HS2 stations with a link via Bradford, and a NPR connection from Leeds across to York and onwards to Hull allowing for a high speed service from Liverpool to Hull
  - h. A new segregated high-speed alignment of the East Coast Mainline between Northallerton and Newcastle via Teesside. This would include a new Teesside hub station in Thornaby.
  - i. Upgraded signalling and electrification to both the ECML & WCML to allow for 140mph running where possible
  - j. Expansion of the Castlefield Corridor to support more trains per hour and a redesign of the stations and junctions in this area to ease conflict points for passing trains.
- 2. The Young Liberals to encourage the wider party to continue with its full support for all phases of HS2, in line with the Liberal Democrat manifesto commitments of 2015, 2017 and 2019.
  - 3. The Young Liberals to push the wider party to introduce a policy setting out greater devolution of transport spending to regional bodies and local government bodies who best understand where money should be spent and what is needed
  - 4. The Young Liberals to encourage the party to adopt a policy that would seek specific ringfenced funding for accessibility investments across the network including new rolling stock that features level access boarding, step free access at all stations and to ensure a guard is on every single service
  - 5. The Young Liberals to encourage the party to adopt a policy that would see specific increased funding set aside for new and higher capacity rolling stock across the north that would bring it on a similar level to what is seen across the south

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Liberalising Britain's Railways

### Conference notes:

- A. The Covid-19 pandemic has forced the current Conservative Government into nationalising all rail services into direct grant concessionary contracts
- B. The majority of rail fares are regulated by government and have increased by an average of 49.8% since 2010
- C. The British rail ticketing system is often over-complicated leaving many passengers confused and paying more for tickets than they need to
- D. According to independent watchdog Transport Focus, Passenger satisfaction has declined for almost all major operators in recent years with 2019, the most recent BAU year, seeing a 10-year low in passenger satisfaction
- E. There are a small number of Open Access Operators (OAO) in Great Britain with these seeing some of the highest passenger satisfaction rates as per the above surveys
- F. The number of people choosing to take the train fell nearly 30% between 1950 and the end of state ownership in 1997
- G. The European Union is setting upon a program of liberalisation of the rail market on the continent with new private operator models

### Conference believes:

- I. Rail franchising was a flawed form of rail privatisation with very little competition, little reason for investment and mini monopolies for almost all Train Operating Companies (TOC) that harmed the end consumer
- II. The previous period of nationalisation of the railways was deeply harmful to the British Railway Network and is responsible for Britain falling behind our European neighbours with regard to ticket pricing, modern infrastructure and overall capacity
- III. Passengers benefit when there is competition in an industry, seeing prices fall and quality rise
- IV. The European airline industry has shown a great example of a liberalised market that offers genuine choice for consumers at competitive pricing
- V. The British railway system must be drastically changed if it is to become a truly modern and self-sustaining network for the rest of the 21st century and beyond

### Conference calls for:

1. A comprehensive review of the British ticketing system
2. The splitting up of the current British TOCs and the introduction of multiple OAOs along major intercity routes
3. The creation of a not-for-profit state run operator that works all current loss-leading and subsidised routes across the country
4. Work towards devolving the operation of commuter railway networks to transport bodies such as Transport for London and Transport for West Midlands, and work towards ensuring more metropolitan areas are covered by such authorities
5. The establishment of an arm's length rail management company, separate from the Department For Transport, that is responsible for the day to day running of the railways in collaboration with all operators and made up of representatives from these operators, not civil servants
6. A wide-ranging review of Network Rail's role in maintain the infrastructure of the railways and its ongoing management of 20 mainline stations

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference – Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2027*





## National Housebuilding Targets

### Conference notes:

- A. At Autumn Federal Conference 2021, the Liberal Democrats committed to a national housebuilding target of 380,000 new homes per year, with at least 150,000 of these available for social rent.
- B. An amendment was tabled at that conference to remove the commitment to a national housebuilding target in favour of local or regional assessments of housing need: an amendment which was rejected.
- C. There is a continued desire among some members of the party to get rid of the Liberal Democrat commitment to national housebuilding targets.
- D. The Young Liberals have been vocal in demanding significantly more housebuilding than the current rates, opposing policies of urban containment, and calling for housebuilding on the greenbelt.

### Conference believes:

- I. It is a necessity for the Liberal Democrats to have ambitious national housebuilding targets.
- II. Leaving housebuilding solely at the discretion of assessment of regional or local need would facilitate nimbyism and fail to provide the vast amounts of housebuilding needed to tackle the housing crisis.
- III. Committing to solving the housing crisis is key to investing in the futures and livelihoods of young people, who are severely affected by extortionate house prices.

### Conference calls for:

1. The Young Liberals to oppose movements in the Liberal Democrats to abolish the party's commitment to ambitious national housebuilding targets.

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference – Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2027*



## Taking on the Housing Crisis

### Conference notes:

- A. In the year from March 2021 to March 2022, average UK house prices increased by 9.8%.
- B. It is becoming increasingly difficult for young people to become homeowners, with 42% of people between the ages of 15-34 living with their parents in 2021 in comparison to 36% in 1996.
- C. The stock of social housing in England is continuing to reduce, depriving people of access to basic quality of living.
- D. Adequate housing is essential for health and wellbeing.
- E. While the Greenbelt in theory exists to prevent urban sprawl in reality it is regularly used to prevent house building by NIMBYs and to protect land that has lower biodiversity than urban areas such as golf courses.
- F. The amount of green belt designated in England as of 31st March 2020 was 1,615,800 hectares – around 12.4% of the land area of England.
- G. There exists many alternative protections for land, such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Site of Specific Scientific Interest, national nature reserve and national parks which are much more effective at protecting land for specific reasons such as biodiversity, wildlife protection and retaining countryside.
- H. “NIMBYism” (Not In My Back Yard) is a political tool often employed to encourage opposition to local development projects.
- I. Voices within and outside of the Liberal Democrats have accused the party of hypocrisy with regard to encouraging development in communication with young people and then opposing it during election campaigns.

### Conference believes:

- I. Everyone should be able to own their own home and not be priced out of the property ladder.
- II. Young people should not be forced to leave their communities and support networks in order to find affordable housing.
- III. Substantial expansion in the supply of housing required, and this increase in supply should be concentrated in the areas of the greatest unmet demand, as indicated by the highest housing prices.
- IV. The existence of the Greenbelt exacerbates the housing crisis by protecting land, that has no environmental basis for being protected, that could otherwise be used for house building and giving NIMBYs a tool to block house building where it is needed most. Green space is important for biodiversity and wellbeing, but houses should be built where these factors do not apply.
- V. Some local campaigns involving the protection of the greenbelt, ultimately preventing housebuilding, can increase the difficulty of engaging with younger voters.
- VI. “NIMBYism” is a regressive political tool, in opposition to liberal ideals and fails to address the public need for certain developments often on the basis of hyperlocal concern or prejudice.
- VII. Retrofitting for energy efficiency and sustainability is always a less efficient measure than ensuring houses are built sustainably in the first place.

### Conference reaffirms:

- a. The Liberal Democrat commitment to build 380,000 new homes a year, with 150,000 of those council and social homes, while supporting and encouraging any move to pledge more ambitious housing targets.
- b. The Young Liberals’ commitment to oppose movements in the Liberal Democrats to abolish the party’s commitment to ambitious national house building targets.
- c. The Young Liberals’ commitments to improve the provision of social housing.
- d. The Young Liberals’ commitment to greener homes.



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Conference calls for:

1. A new Green Homes Act which combines appropriate legal requirements for proper insulation and energy efficiency as well as installation of heat pumps and solar panels on as many houses as feasible with the government funding and backing that ensures it will not hold up necessary housing development with additional costs.
2. Liberal Democrat campaigners and councillors in areas with the highest price-to-income ratios to avoid campaigning against house building and greenbelt protection.
3. The abolition of the Greenbelt, with green spaces of importance being protected via alternative existing protections such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Site of Specific Scientific Interest, national nature reserve, national parks etc
4. An ambitious house building programme to help young people to get onto the property ladder.
5. Green spaces that are a Site of Special Scientific Interests (SSSI) or of important historic value to be safeguarded.
6. Liberal Democrats and Young Liberals to be clear in their opposition to “NIMBYism” and to stand by this view in future election campaigns.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*



## Canals: A Place for All

### Conference notes:

- A. The canal network in England and Wales has become a popular location for many to exercise and relax, especially for those living in cities.
- B. The number of people using the Canal network to exercise has notably increased in the last 5 years.
- C. The UK Canal network has played a key role in the development of the United Kingdom, and so is of great historical and cultural importance.
- D. The majority of the canal network in the UK is operated by Canal and River Trust, a charity who rely on donations and volunteers for the upkeep of the canal network.
- E. Much of the Canal network in the UK makes up national cycle routes.
- F. Councils across the UK are using the provision of towpaths as a reason not to invest in new cycle infrastructure.
- G. Some cities in the UK boast extensive canal networks. For example, Birmingham has 35 miles of canal, which is more than the famous canal city, Venice.

### Conference believes:

- I. The importance of the preservation of canals in the UK.
- II. The fact that many of the towpaths, including those along national cycle routes, are inaccessible, dangerous, or fallen into disrepair.
- III. The vitality of Canals as places of recreation.
- IV. The inaccessibility of much of the Canal network to some people with disabilities due to narrow towpath space and lack of step-free access.
- V. The benefits to wildlife, particularly aquatic wildlife, from the canal network.
- VI. The necessity for innovations in narrowboat technology to ensure the canal network does not negatively impact the climate.
- VII. The Liberal Democrats' commitment to supporting green developments, including new cycling infrastructure.

### Conference calls for:

1. The UK Government to work with the Canal and River Trust to ensure canals and towpaths across the UK are kept in a suitable condition for recreation, such as the fixing of potholes and replacement of cobbles along cycle paths, the removal of overgrown shrubbery along towpaths, the provision of towpath lighting in areas which are popular for the public to exercise, which are not also popular mooring places, especially inner-city locations, and the general upkeep of towpaths and canals to a standard suitable for their use and enjoyment.
2. The Liberal Democrats to recognise the benefits of the Canal network, and Canal restoration projects, particularly in areas where there is no current waterway provision, for wildlife, mental health, and tourism.
3. The Liberal Democrats to advocate for the development of new narrowboat technologies including fully-electric narrowboats, and developments into hydrogen-fuelled narrowboats and the necessary infrastructure to support their use across the canal network.
4. Liberal Democrat councillors to support the development of new cycling infrastructure including the improvement of towpaths for cycling, and the construction of new segregated cycle lanes.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*



## Repeal the Enclosures Act

Conference notes that

- A. The 1773 enclosure act took away 28,000 km<sup>2</sup> of common land (land which has the right to be used and enjoyed by the public)
- B. By 1816, independant landowners had significantly reduced by 250,000 to 32,000
- C. Half of England is currently owned by less than 1% of the population
- D. The top 50 current landowners own 12% of the UK
- E. Homeowners are currently only 5% of landowners in England
- F. Many previous common land areas are golf clubs which provide little for the average person and are numerous in number

Conference believes that

- i. Common land is important to a liberal society
- ii. Land is a commodity which should be taxed or given to the people

Conference calls for

- 1. The UK Government to repeal the Enclosures Act and all common land taken due to enclosures acts to be given back to the people (defined as the general populous of the UK) and used for farming, rewilding, playgrounds or housing depending on the area's needs.

*Passed: Reading Winter Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2028*



## High Speed Rail for High Speed Growth

### Conference notes:

- A. The Department for Transport reduced spending on infrastructure upgrades by 11% in 2020-21, with spending now half of what it was in 2018-19.
- B. The Treasury continues to block large-scale electrification, despite Network Rail calling for 13,000km of track to be electrified by 2050, and a pledge by the Coalition Government in 2012 to electrify several routes across England and Wales.
- C. The UK Government's recent delays to HS2, and refusal to commit to completing the route to London Euston or Manchester Piccadilly.
- D. Delays to HS2 contributed to the recent closure of the National College for High Speed Rail, due to low student numbers and uncertainty.

### Conference further notes:

- a. Prominent Liberal Democrats and local parties campaigning against large-scale infrastructure projects such as HS2 and East-West Rail.
- b. Liberal Democrat support for HS2 since 2010, including a commitment to the project in our last general election manifesto.
- c. Policies passed at Young Liberals Conferences in 2020 (Demanding Better for Transport in Our North) and 2022 (Liberalising Britain's Railways).

### Conference believes:

- I. A strong railway network is vital for a strong economy.
- II. Heavy infrastructure projects should provide high-quality job opportunities for young people, improve connections to towns and cities for all, and boost growth and productivity.
- III. HS2 and other heavy rail projects should be a springboard for a railway revival to create jobs and opportunities outside London and the South East.
- IV. The railway network is at the forefront of fighting the climate emergency by providing accessible, low-carbon alternatives to cars and flights.
- V. Electrification reduces air and noise pollution, and should be standard for all new railway routes.

### Conference calls for:

1. a new national infrastructure strategy to improve the railway network and connected developments including housebuilding and public service upgrades to meet projected demand.
2. This strategy to include a review of vocational qualifications in the rail industry to ensure the specialist qualifications needed to provide the next generation of rail engineers is in place.
3. a second rolling programme of electrification, further to our 2020 motion, including, but not limited to:
  - a. mainline routes including the CrossCountry route between York and Bristol, the South Wales Mainline to Carmarthen, the Chiltern Mainline, and the Marches line between south Wales and Manchester
  - b. routes connecting London with major cities including Sheffield, Bristol, Gloucester, Hereford and Cheltenham.
  - c. the full electrification of East-West Rail before opening.
4. the Federal party and Young Liberals to support the state parties in Scotland and Wales to campaign for improved rail infrastructure including:
  - a. the extension and the electrification of the Borders Railway to Carlisle.
  - b. Full electrification of the mainline between Edinburgh and Aberdeen, and an "electric spine" to Inverness via Perth and Dundee.



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- c. electrification projects of branch lines including the Maesteg and Ebbw Valley lines.
  - d. supporting new lines in rural communities to improve connectivity between towns and cities, including connections to Peterhead, St Andrews and Aberystwyth.
  - e. continued investment track maintenance projects, including flood proofing for the Cambrian and Conwy Valley line to improve reliability on main rural routes.
  - f. the delivery of Barnett consequential funding for HS2 to Wales.
  - g. the devolution of further transport powers to Wales, ensuring the Senedd and Welsh Government have equal powers to Scotland.
5. the Liberal Democrats to support:
- a. the construction of the HS2 route in full, including new lines to Manchester and Leeds, and completing the route to London Euston.
  - b. the electrification of the North Wales Coast Line, as well as signalling enhancements and capacity upgrades to support HS2.
  - c. the construction of East-West Rail.

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*

# Defence





## Renewal of Trident: Security in Insecure Times

### Conference notes:

- A. Britain's membership of NATO, and its target for all members to spend 2% of their GDP on defence means that if Trident were scrapped, the money currently allocated would have to be spent elsewhere in defence in order to meet the 2% target and could not be spent on other public services.
- B. The annexation of Crimea, the war in Donbass, incursions into Baltic states, submarine incursions into Swedish waters, the probing of UK air defences by military aircraft, and the shooting down of flight MH17, all point to a Russian foreign policy that is a credible and immediate threat to British security, and to peace in Europe.
- C. President Donald Trump is a less reliable ally for the United Kingdom, and all of Europe, as evidenced by his statements and actions on NATO and US allies
- D. Therefore, a credible nuclear deterrent is necessary to protect the security of the United Kingdom, and also as leverage in future arms talks.
- E. That a liberal foreign policy will include a robust response to all threats to the liberal world order, including Russian aggression.

### Conference believes:

- i. The first duty of any government is to ensure the security of its citizens.
- ii. The security of the United Kingdom against a variety of threats must be ensured through the use of a variety of means.
- iii. The primary purpose of a nuclear deterrent is to prevent armed conflict with other nuclear armed states.

### Conference calls for:

1. Young Liberals to support like-for-like replacement of the UK's nuclear deterrent.
2. Young Liberals to lobby the federal party in support of this aim.

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Remembering All Who Serve

### Conference notes:

- A. The immense sacrifice made throughout history by those serving in the British Armed Forces.
- B. The diversity throughout British history of those who have served in the Armed Forces; with particular note to diversity of faith.
  - a. 36% of those serving within the British Armed Forces described themselves as secular, with 58% of the military being of Christian denomination.
- C. The omnipresence of religion, and particularly Christianity, in British remembrance services, monuments and organisations.
- D. The vast majority of remembrance services and monuments in the United Kingdom follow norms set by the Anglican faith, including the symbology of crosses, sayings of prayer and renditions of Christian hymns and music.
- E. The past efforts of the British Royal Legion and Commonwealth War Graves Commission in diversifying their remembrance services.

### Conference believes:

- i. The service of all British military personnel throughout history, regardless of faith, should be equally and individually recognised.
- ii. All who have served and/or sacrificed themselves in British military operations and endeavours have the right to remembrance services fitting of their faith.
- iii. It is wrong to commemorate the service of non-Christian members of the British Armed Forces through traditional Christian services and monuments.
- iv. The remembrance of the immense sacrifices made by the British Armed Forces through history should better reflect the diversity of those who served; including diversity of faith, ethnicity, sexuality and gender.

### Conference believes:

- 1. Remembrance services and monuments across the United Kingdom to better reflect the diversity of those who have served in the British Armed Forces.
- 2. An acceptance of remembrance services in all faiths, and secularism, by the British Royal Legion and other remembrance organisations.
- 3. Renewed efforts by the British Government, Royal British Legion and Commonwealth War Graves Commission to ensure all current monuments and gravestones more accurately reflect the true faiths of all those who served.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*  
*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*

# Science and Technology



## Becoming a World Leader in Space

### Conference notes:

- A. Neither the Young Liberals or Liberal Democrat principles include any policy relating to the UK space industry, including its importance for the UK economy and security, and its impacts from science and technology to exploration and culture.
- B. Space provides significant services that the UK relies upon, including navigation, communication, weather and climate monitoring, secure assets, and defense.
- C. Investment in space provides a very high economic return (high economic multipliers and GVA), and provides demand for advanced manufacturing which supports UK industry. Every £1 of public spending generates £3-4 in value for recipients in the space industry, with additional wider spillover benefits to the UK economy. (USKA).
- D. Space science and technology, through Earth Observation, enables the UK to tackle the climate emergency.
- E. Investments in space provide significant synergies toward Liberal Democrat manifesto of Harnessing the Benefits of New Technology.
- F. The UK is investing in launch capability in Scotland and Cornwall. The UK is the most attractive destination in Europe to host commercial launch services: the UK has the right geography, the right environment and the right industry. There is great potential for the UK to become a world leader in space launch, science, data, and security.
- G. Space enables the UK to remain as a leader in science, communications, and cyber security, enabling the protection of UK assets, infrastructure, and public services data.

### Conference believes:

- i. The UK is threatened to be left behind by the US, China, Russia, and fellow European countries in the pursuit of space capabilities, with severe consequences for our national security. With Brexit and our exclusion from EU programmes such as Galileo, the UK needs its own satellite infrastructure. The economic impact of a loss in GNSS (navigation services) for the UK is estimated at £5.2bn over a five day period. (London Economics, 2017).
- ii. UK Launch capability helps provide independence for launch to fulfil MOD and Government security needs.
- iii. The UK has established itself as a leader in advanced manufacturing and technology, including 5G, AI, IoT, and Quantum technologies. Investment in space will further develop these important capabilities for the benefit of UK business and citizens.
- iv. Space provides a unique opportunity for the UK to work with other countries in an international context. Investment into ESA provides a platform for us to continue to work with other countries on important space missions.
- v. The success of Tim Peake's Proxima mission, a UK Space Agency and European Space Agency (ESA) International Space Station mission, resulted in a legacy which encouraged thousands of students to pursue careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The Party to consider the opportunities and benefits of investment into the space sector and consider inclusion of a Party policy for space to the Liberal Democrat manifesto.
- 2. The Party to call on the UK government to create a National Space Strategy with funded programmes targeting investment to incentivise international companies to do business in the UK.
- 3. The Party to support existing private UK spaceport plans.



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4. The Party to encourage the Government to invest and prepare for UK GNSS in the likelihood of an extended period outside of the European Union and our exclusion from Galileo.
5. Dedicated investment in quantum communication technology, including satellites, advanced materials including photonics, optical ground receiver infrastructure, and quantum computing.
6. Dedicated investment in STEM programmes to encourage increased participation in the space industry (and related industries), particularly targeting STEM under-represented groups.
7. The UK to increase contributions to ESA with the ambition of sending the next UK citizen to space, following in the path of Helen Sharman and Tim Peake. The UK should have ambition to support international partners on future human space exploration missions, with the ultimate ambition of sending a UK citizen to the Moon.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## Deep Learning, Deep Fakes

### Conference notes:

- A. The increasing pace of development of AI (Artificial Intelligence), specifically generative AI such as ChatGPT, Midjourney and Stable Diffusion.
- B. Generative AI is a type of AI that can generate text, images or other media in response to prompts. They do this by learning how the patterns of a set of training prompts relate to the expected output of those prompts.
- C. The work done by groups such as Hugging Face to make AI models that are open-source, meaning their source code is publicly viewable ensuring the technology is not limited to large corporations.
- D. AI can be used for legitimate purposes, including but not limited to; robotic automation, idea generation and, medical diagnosis.
- E. The use of generative AI technology for the creation of 'deep faked' content, which is media that purports to be genuine but is in fact entirely or partially artificial and computer generated.
- F. The potential for this to be used to generate explicit media of someone without their consent.
- G. AI is trained on large amounts of past data, this may or may not be collected with the consent of the owners of this data.
- H. Companies have often not fairly compensated the creators of the data that they have used to train their models.
- I. IFLRY Resolution "Combating disinformation in the age of machine learning" from the 75th Anniversary General Assembly, Dakar, Senegal.
- J. IFLRY Resolution "The Democratic Frontier – Unleashing AI Responsibility" from the 52nd General Assembly, La Mesa, Colombia.

### Conference believes:

- I. Recent AI developments pose risks to society and it is the responsibility of the state to mitigate these.
- II. Open sourcing of AI models enables the technology to be more transparent, accountable and explainable.
- III. Used responsibly, AI can improve human life and increase economic productivity.
- IV. That the owners of data that can be used to train AI have a right to monetise access to that data.
- V. That generative AI should not be used to create media of people who have not consented to this being done.
- VI. If someone consents to their likeness being included in a non-anonymised manner in a generative AI model, this may be used to generate media of them.
- VII. These rules will be difficult to enforce for some individuals who are so high-profile that they will be contained in the datasets even if this is unintentional. For such people, satirical media generation is acceptable so long as it is properly labelled as such.
- VIII. All AI-generated content should be clearly labelled as such in an appropriate manner, both in metadata and in the content itself.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The creation of an AI regulator to oversee the adoption and fair use of AI throughout the UK.
- 2. Regulation to ensure Generative AI models do not link words and phrases to individuals' likenesses without their permission.
- 3. Creation of a government-backed grant scheme to invest in projects that develop open-source AI models.



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4. The UK Government to work with the tech sector to develop standards that enable the monetisation of datasets.
5. The UK Government to make creating “deep faked” content of someone without their consent a criminal offence.
6. The UK Government to legislate to require the clear labelling of AI-generated content both in metadata and in the content itself.

Conference adopts the following lines from the IFLRY Resolution “Combating disinformation in the age of machine learning” adopted at the 75th Anniversary General Assembly, Dakar, Senegal as YL policy.

- a. The strengthening of the right to privacy in the digital space, to protect individuals from unlawful interference from private and state actors.
- b. Integrating AI, algorithmic machine learning and media literacy as part of the United Nations fourth Sustainable Development Goal on quality education
- c. An interdisciplinary approach to the contemporary and future problems of algorithmic machine learning with emphasis on the involvement of underrepresented social groups.

Conference adopts the following lines from the IFLRY Resolution The Democratic Frontier – Unleashing AI Responsibility” from the 52nd General Assembly, La Mesa, Colombia, as YL policy.

- i. More transparency of the data used to train machine learning-based AI models.
- ii. Ethical responsibility has to be upheld and guaranteed to prevent any potential misuses of Artificial Intelligence, such as mass surveillance or social scoring. We must ensure that Artificial Intelligence is guided by democratic principles and values to protect privacy and maintain trust in our technology. We are responsible for using Artificial Intelligence for the greater good while being mindful of the potential consequences and ensuring that it does not infringe upon our fundamental human rights.
- iii. The assurance of transparency, the obligation to provide information, and the disclosure of obligations for companies in the sphere where algorithms give rise concerning competition, as there is a need for transparency and understandability of the workings of algorithms and the data with which they have been trained.
- iv. International policies and regulatory frameworks ensure that Artificial Intelligence benefits humanity as a whole. The focus should be on creating AI systems with human oversight and rights of appeal.
- v. International cooperation on research, data sharing, and development of ethical guidelines is essential to ensure that Artificial Intelligence adheres to democratic standards.
- vi. Faster legislation cycles with regards to technological development to prevent negative scenarios involving bias of machine learning-based AI models
- vii. A balanced approach to providing a legislative framework for Artificial Intelligence that balances necessary regulation with minimal intervention;
- viii. The member organizations to promote technological openness and innovation.
- ix. Governments worldwide embrace AI as a tool and allow innovation to flourish for harnessing the full potential of AI, according to each state’s possibility to implement.

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*

# Culture, Media and Sport





## English National Anthem

### Conference notes:

1. The consultation before the 2010 Commonwealth Games where Jerusalem was chosen by the public to be used by the English team as our national anthem,
2. The efforts of Greg Mullholland to introduce an English National anthem at sporting events,
3. That currently most English sporting teams use the UK National anthem "God Save the Queen" in most international sporting events and in civic society,
4. That there is no current "official" national anthem for England;

### Conference believes:

- A. That using the UK national anthem for English teams and in civic society only encourages further divisions between England and the other nations of the UK,
- B. The 2010 Commonwealth Games consultation shows that there is an appetite for an official English national anthem to be used at sporting events,
- C. That a strong English national anthem will help spur our athletes to greater success at an international level and encourage national pride outside of sports;

### Conference resolves to:

- i. Lobby the UK Government to introduce legislation for a separate English national anthem to be used at international sporting events,
- ii. Lobby individual English sporting governing bodies to change the song we use before every sporting event and in English civic events.

*Passed: Manchester Summer Conference - Summer 2021*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2026*



## Making Football a “Fair” Game

### Conference notes:

1. Football clubs at all levels have a positive impact on their communities and are often important pillars of the local community, sometimes acting as a lifeline for older or otherwise socially isolated residents.
2. The four nations of England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have a strong footballing heritage that is key to the culture of our four nations
3. Football and football fans are key to the economy of many cities and towns across the United Kingdom
4. Many local football teams also add significant value to their communities through voluntary and fundraising work in the local area.
5. Football and other sports are vital to the health and wellbeing of people and that we should encourage as many people as possible to get involved in sports like football to lead a healthy life.
6. The demise of several football clubs in recent years, such as Bury, Bolton Wanderers, Macclesfield, Bangor City and Glasgow Rangers, due to incompetence and mismanagement by either ownership or by footballing authorities.

### Conference believes:

- I. Covid has devastated the finances of so many lower league clubs, and left dozens on the brink of survival.
- II. The current financial distribution model for football teams is broken with very little trickle down from top tier football teams to community teams
- III. The current Conservative government has failed to take any meaningful measures to protect local community football teams, instead leaving the financial burden on the FA, local government support and grants, and local fundraising efforts.
- IV. The organisation ‘Fair Game’ has already started working with both football teams and local authorities to try and pressure the government and address these issues.
- V. Issues exist within the footballing authorities in all 4 nations of the United Kingdom, and these issues often go overlooked because of the higher profile of English football.

### Conference calls for:

- A. The Young Liberals to support the manifesto for football proposed by Fair Game, making the Young Liberals the first youth political wing to do so.
- B. The creation of a sustainability index for football based on the following criteria:
  - a. Equality Standards
  - b. Fan engagement
  - c. Financial sustainability
  - d. Good governance
- C. The creation of an independent regulator for football through government legislation that incorporates members who can assess how fair football and current practices are.
- D. Stronger rules around club ownership through the creation of a owners and directors trust, aiming to address the issues of criminality and lack of transparency in club ownership
- E. The protection of a clubs heritage and traditions through giving fans final say on any changes made to a clubs ‘crown jewels’ which would include, but is not limited to, the following
  - a. Name
  - b. Nickname
  - c. Colours
  - d. Badge
  - e. The geographical location connected to the club
- F. A new financial structure for clubs that would see revenue shared more fairly across the different tiers of football. Specifically with 25% of Premier League TV revenue being shared outside of the premier league
- G. Reform of the Football Association (FA)

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*



## Using the Eurovision Opportunity

### Conference notes:

1. Ukraine's win of the Eurovision Song Contest in 2022 with 631 points and that the United Kingdom finished second with 466 points.
2. The regretful decision of the EBU on the 25th July 2022 that Ukraine will be unable to host the Eurovision Song Contest and that the United Kingdom would host it instead.
3. The active bids of Aberdeen, Birmingham, Bristol, Glasgow, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Manchester, Newcastle and Sheffield for the rights to host the contest in 2023.
4. The results of the BBC's shortlisting process, revealed on the 12th August 2022.
5. That there are considerable economic and cultural benefits of hosting the Eurovision Song Contest.
6. The historic importance of the Eurovision Song Contest to the LGBTQ community.

### Conference believes:

- A. In the words of Sam Ryder – that this is “Ukraine’s party and we are just hosting it”
- B. That holding the contest in an LGBTQ friendly northern city would help fit the government’s levelling up agenda.
- C. That a well funded contest will show the level of support Europe has for the Ukrainian people as well as providing vital inward investment into a region of the UK.
- D. Our efforts last year prove that the only thing holding us back at Eurovision, in recent years, has been our own ambition.
- E. The United Kingdom should always fight to win the Eurovision Song Contest.

### Conference believes:

- I. BBC to make every effort to work with the Public Broadcasting Company of Ukraine to make this a distinctively and wholly Ukrainian event.
- II. BBC to invite Ukrainian TV presenters to entirely host the contest.
- III. British government to make the funds and resources available to make this the most spectacular Eurovision Song Contest possible.
- IV. BBC to put up a song, artist and the staging to win the 2023 Eurovision Song Contest.
- V. EBU to reserve a significant proportion of tickets for Ukrainian people living in the UK as a result of the conflict in Ukraine.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*



## Arts for the Young – Protecting Britain’s Arts Industries into the Future

### Conference notes:

1. Several cuts to arts have taken place or been proposed over the last twelve months, for example Arts Council England (ACE)’s cuts to opera and the BBC’s proposed cuts to orchestras and cancelled closure of the BBC Singers.
2. These cuts have threatened the jobs of many creatives, for example 20% of BBC orchestral players according to the proposed BBC cuts and an as yet unspecified number of members of the Welsh National Opera (WNO) Orchestra.
3. The UK ‘creative industries’ and cultural sector are world-leading and substantial parts of the UK’s economy, contributing a combined £153.6bn to the UK economy in the 12 months up to and including September 2022 according to the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS).
4. Recent figures show that young people have little access to the arts and culture, with state schools especially unlikely to offer access. For example, according to 2023 figures from the Music in Secondary Schools Trust (MiSST), only 12% of state schools have an orchestra compared to 85% of private schools.
5. This trend in schools is concerning to arts companies, such as the LSO, who have historically relied on a diverse range of employees.
6. Germany has recently introduced the KulturPass – €200 given to each 18-year-old to be spent at cultural activities such as museums, concerts and cinemas – following on from a French scheme giving €300 which began in 2021.

### Conference believes:

- I. It is important to preserve the arts and culture, since these not only form an important part of the UK economy but also provide a key way to understand the past and have recreational and mental health benefits as well, as shown in studies by the University of Washington.
- II. The trend towards arts and culture becoming the domain of the rich, particularly those attending private schools, is a worrying development, since excluding groups, especially groups who are historically marginalised and underrepresented in private school populations, often leads to hegemonized culture and further entrenchment of the problem.
- III. Young people must be encouraged to produce and appreciate art and culture now in order to protect its continued production and development.
- IV. Schools, government, both local and national, and arts boards all have a role to play in allowing young people more access to the arts.

### Conference calls for:

1. The government to conduct a comprehensive review into arts provision in state schools.
2. The government to provide more funding to libraries, theatres, museums, etc. and to encourage the development of local arts boards by providing councils with increased funds for this purpose and education services such as the Solihull Music Service.
3. The government to make a KulturPass-style culture payment, to be given to all 18-25 year olds in the first year and all 18 year olds in subsequent years.
4. ACE and the BBC to reverse or cancel all planned cuts, and reviews to be held into both organisations to understand how they can better support arts organisations.

*Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2028*



# Political Reform and Local Government



## Languages in the House of Commons

Conference notes that:

- I. Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of (...) language”, including participation in government, access to legal and public services.
- II. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992), signed and ratified by the British Government, provides protections for regional and minority language varieties in education, justice, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic, and social activities.
- III. The UK has a number of national, regional, and minority language varieties, including English, Welsh, Scots, Gaelic, Cornish, Shelta, Anglo-Romani, Irish Sign Language, Northern Ireland Sign Language, and British Sign Language.
- IV. There are no de jure official languages of the UK, however English language varieties, spoken as a primary language by 95% of British people aged over 3, serve as the UK’s de facto official language.
- V. Regional and Minority Languages of the UK such as the Welsh and Scots languages have historically been regarded as inferior, their use suppressed and native speakers treated as second class citizens.
- VI. The derogation of languages in the House of Commons means that full speeches and questions in the chamber may only be given in English or Norman French.
- VII. Meetings of the Welsh Grand Committee and the Welsh Affairs Select Committee are now fully bilingual, whether in Wales or the Palace of Westminster, and real-time translation implemented at a marginal cost.
- VIII. The Liberal Democrats are committed to Federalisation of the United Kingdom.
- IX. The Speaker of the House of Commons, while generally acting as a neutral arbiter, can and should take stances on certain constitutional and procedural issues in order to maintain important democratic and representative principles.

Conference believes that:

- i. The use of language policy as a proxy for sectarian politics as opposed to as a guarantor for an individual’s rights provided in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is deeply regrettable.
- ii. British Unionism should continue on the basis of mutual respect and consent between regions and nations, rather than English Imperialism, propagated through prescription of the English Language.
- iii. For the UK to truly function as a federal union of nations, all of its constituent countries, and their respective heritages, must be treated with equal respect at the UK wide level and the House of Commons must belong to them all equally.
- iv. Refusing to allow speeches and questions in the House of Commons Chamber to be given in Regional and Minority Languages of the UK sends the message that the U.K. parliament is primarily and English one and does not give equal respect to the constituent countries of the U.K.
- v. It is an important liberal principle for a parliament to be widely representative of the state it governs and that allowing the Regional and Minority Languages of the UK are to be spoken in the House of Commons chamber would mean better representation for those for whom it is a mother-tongue.
- vi. It is an important liberal principle for parliament and regional assemblies to be widely representative of the people it governs, including through linguistic access and representation.

Conference calls for:

1. The derogation of languages in the House of Commons to be amended so that Regional and Minority Languages of the UK are given equal status to English and their



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use for speeches and questions be allowed so long as the Speaker be notified sufficiently in advance.

2. A review panel to be commissioned by the House of Commons to discuss how this may be best achieved on a practical basis without compromising communication in the Chamber.
3. Liberal Democrat MPs to:
  - a. Publicly support the principles outlined in sections 1 and 2
  - b. Lobby their colleagues in the House to do the same and work with them to achieve change on the issue
  - c. Commit to the candidates' support for the principles laid out in sections 1 and 2 being a high priority in their considerations for future Speakers of the House of Commons.

*Passed: Glasgow Winter Conference - Winter 2019*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2024*



## Effective Governance and Efficient Administration in Local Government

### Conference notes:

- A. The House of Commons briefing note “Directly Elected Mayors” which explains the concept of a directly elected Mayor as a governance structure.<sup>1</sup>
- B. The effective working of Liberal Democrat Councils using each of the three governance structures (Committee, Leader and Cabinet, Mayor and Cabinet).<sup>234</sup>
- C. The existence of two-tiered local government in parts of England and the issues this creates with public accountability and confusion of roles

### Conference notes with concern

- a. The poor state of local authority finances
- b. The 2020/21 report on local government finance that details the how local government is currently funded<sup>5</sup>
- c. The inequalities in local government members allowances in English local government which can lead to young people being unable to serve as councillors

### Conference believes that:

- i. Serving as a councillor or another elected official is a noble pursuit and young people should not be excluded from this for financial reasons
- ii. Local government is concerningly underfunded and smaller district councils are becoming increasingly unsustainable and inefficient
- iii. Case studies such as Northamptonshire, demonstrate that local government needs reform
- iv. There are examples of Liberal Democrat Councils using any of the three governance structures effectively
- v. the devolution of power to the lowest practicable base is a sound principle
- vi. the Scottish and Welsh models of unitary local government represent a more effective model of local governance due to their clarity of function and economies of scale in administration
- vii. the allowances offered by Welsh and Scottish Councils allow younger people to undertake council duties fairly

### Conference therefore proposes:

1. That principle authorities in England be restructured with the view to the creation of unitary authorities based around existing and coherent communities
2. A regionally adjusted allowance scheme be implemented in order to ensure that people are fairly remunerated for the hours worked as a councillor and it is reflective of the cost of living in the area
3. That the decision which model of governance to follow should be a decision for the local party to agree on a case-by-case basis

1- <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn05000/>

2- Watford Borough Council

3- Chelmsford City Council

4- London Borough of Sutton

5- [LGFR England 2020-21.pdf](#)

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*





## Disestablishment of the Church of England

### Conference notes:

- A. That the legislative arm of the UK government includes members of the Church of England, alongside other faiths.
- B. The number of practicing Church of England protestants in the UK is rapidly declining, with average weekly attendance of Sunday services at just 1.3% of the UK's population, rendering it unrepresentative of the nation at large.
- C. Liberal history is ripe with precedent for this, namely William Ewart Gladstone's disestablishment of the Irish church in 1869.

### Conference believes:

- i. As society becomes more secular annually, the Church of England becomes redundant as a representative of spiritual guidance in the House of Lords.
- ii. Antidisestablishmentarianism would be a regressive policy for the youth wing of our party to support.
- iii. That replacement and/or reform of the House of Lords is a long-term policy, and that policies must be in place whilst the upper chamber continues to exist.
- iv. The Church of England would become easier to hold to account for numerous abuses of power once disestablished.
- v. A truly liberal society must separate the powers of the church and the state.
- vi. Disestablishment will place the Church of England on a level-playing field with other religions in the UK.

### Conference calls for:

1. The removal of the Church of England from the UK's legislative process, including the removal of existing representatives of the Church of England from the House of Lords.
2. Appointments to the House of Lords, prior to wider reform, to be made only on individual merit, regardless of religious beliefs.
3. The repeal of the 1701 Act of Settlement.
4. Full application of the Human Rights Act 1998 to all places of worship in the UK.

### Conference therefore overrules and repeals:

- A. The Young Liberals policy entitled "The Role of Church and State" passed at Activate in Summer 2016.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference – Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## Scotland Deserves Better Than a Second Independence Referendum

Conference notes that the Scottish Government has recently announced proposals for another Independence referendum in 2023, repeating the division of the 2014 debate.

Conference further notes that:

- a. Scotland decisively rejected independence in 2014 with 55.3% voting against independence.
- b. A recent survey by Panelbase showed that only 43% of voters supported a referendum next year.

Conference believes:

- I. Neither Independence nor a referendum will solve long lasting issues of wealth inequality and failing public services in Scotland. The latter of which the Scottish National Party continue to degrade and underfund.
- II. The current political system within the United Kingdom fails to deliver for people in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, and England. Reform is desperately needed.
- III. A lack of transparency and uniformity on the powers of the devolved governments within the United Kingdom hinders effective governance.

Conference calls for:

1. The Scottish Government to abandon plans for a Second Independence referendum and focus on improving public services.
2. The creation of a federal United Kingdom that redistributes political power to address the concerns and needs of its citizens.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*



## Saving Local Councils

### Conference notes:

- A. Multiple local authorities (including Croydon Council and Slough Borough Council) have recently issued Section 114 notices (often referred to in the media as the local authority being bankrupt) and multiple others have warned they may be forced to do the same.
- B. When a Section 114 notice has been issued by a council, all spending not related to a statutory service (such as general waste collection) must stop, causing significant disruption to council services.
- C. Using the Consumer Price Index, inflation measured 10.7% in November 2022, according to Office for National Statistics data.
- D. In December 2022, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) announced that the local government funding settlement for 2023/24 would increase by 9%, which is less than inflation.
- E. Between 2010/11 and 2017/18, the real terms spending powers of local authorities fell by 29%, according to research from the National Audit Office.
- F. As part of the 2022 Autumn Statement, the Treasury has raised the cap that English Principal Authorities (District, County, Unitary and London Borough level authorities) can raise council tax by to 3% without holding a referendum for the 2023/24 financial year, up from the usual 2%.
- G. Councils with social care responsibilities (County, Unitary and London Borough authorities) will be able to raise the Social Care Precept element of council tax by 2% in 2023/24.
- H. Local councils have very few options to increase their income.

### Conference believes:

- i. Local Council finances are in crisis due to over a decade of cuts from Central Government, the Coronavirus pandemic and spiralling inflation.
- ii. While some local authorities have been forced to issue Section 114 notices due to mismanagement of council finances (such as Thurrock Council and the now defunct Northamptonshire County Council), many well run councils are facing the risk of Section 114 notices due to the extraordinary external pressures they face.
- iii. Council services have already been significantly cut over the past decade and further cuts will result in councils being unable to provide services to a satisfactory level.
- iv. Without Central Government intervention, there is a risk that a large number of local authorities will declare Section 114 notices in the next few years.

### Conference reaffirms:

- I. The Liberal Democrat commitment to campaign for a fair deal for local communities, councils and people.

### Conference calls for:

1. The UK Government to properly support local councils financially throughout the current crisis to allow them to deliver the essential services they provide.
2. The UK Government to provide local councils a funding settlement above inflation for the 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years to ease part of the immediate pressures on council finances.
3. The UK Government to investigate ways to allow local councils to have more powers to fundraise, which could include a local element of income tax or tourism taxes
4. Young Liberals and the Liberal Democrats to visibly and vocally support the Local Government Association's Save Local Services campaign."

*Passed: Reading Winter Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2028*



## Votes for Prisoners

### Conference notes:

- A. In the UK, convicted prisoners serving a custodial sentence are legally incapable of voting at any parliamentary or local government election (except those in Scotland) while they are detained in custody.
- B. Election eligibility, other than for Westminster elections, is a devolved matter.
- C. In Scotland, prisoners serving sentences of 12 months or less have voting rights in Scottish Parliament and local government elections.
- D. In Wales, a Senedd Committee inquiry in 2019 recommended that prisoners serving sentences of less than four years should be entitled to register to vote in Senedd elections.
- E. In 2005, the European Court of Human Rights ruled that the UK's blanket ban of prisoner voting at the time was indiscriminate and disproportionate, contravening Article 3 of Protocol No 1 of the European Convention on Human Rights that signatory states should "hold free elections".
- F. For January to March 2020, the overall proven reoffending rate was 24.7% for the offender cohort in England and Wales.
- G. Organisations such as Safer Wales, the Wales Governance Centre and the Youth Justice Board believe that the right to vote could play a significant role in the rehabilitation and reintegration of prisoners.
- H. Prisoners remain just as, if not more so, affected by public policy and public services inside prison as any other citizen.

### Conference believes:

- i. The ability to participate in free and fair elections is a human right, not a privilege, and is fundamental to a liberal democracy.
- ii. Being sentenced to any length of time should not forfeit a prisoner's right to vote, as it should not change their status as citizens.
- iii. Allowing prisoners to retain their voting rights will allow them to continue to actively partake in society and promote individual empowerment (especially among youth offenders), aiding rehabilitation and reintegration into society at the end of their sentence.
- iv. The disenfranchisement of prisoners is disproportionate and serves only to villainise and socially exclude prisoners, increasing their chance of reoffending upon release.
- v. Prisoners should be able to hold decision makers in elected positions to account, as people particularly affected by public policy.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. The UK Government to allow convicted prisoners, serving sentences of any length, to vote in elections at all tiers of government, should they be otherwise eligible to.
- 2. The Scottish and Welsh Governments to extend the same rights to the devolved parliaments and local government elections in their countries.
- 3. The Liberal Democrats to advocate for the right of prisoners to vote across the UK, Scottish and Welsh parliaments.

*Passed: Reading Winter Conference 2023*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2028*

# The Liberal Democrats and Business Motions



## Changing the Age Limit of the Young Liberals

### Conference notes:

- A. That Young Liberals membership is automatically granted to all Liberal Democrat Members age 25 and under, as well as Liberal Democrat members who are students, as determined by the Liberal Democrat Federal constitution.
- B. That Federal Young Liberals offer an opt-in membership for those between 26 and 29 and Scottish Young Liberals offer automatic membership for those age 29 and under, however the Federal Constitution does not recognise these individuals as members of Young Liberals.
- C. That the youth wings of many of our sister organisations in Europe and other UK parties have a higher age cut off than the Young Liberals.

### Conference believes:

- i. That there are a significant number of political and party issues where those between 26 and 29 and those 25 and under share common goals in virtue of their age.
- ii. That the low cut-off age results in Young Liberals suffering from a high turnover rate in members, many of whom are new to the party, causing organisational struggles with filling positions requiring specialist or professional skills and in retaining institutional memory.
- iii. That raising the cut off age would reduce membership turnover and retain experienced and skilled members.
- iv. That few Liberal Democrat, or Young Liberals, activities are focused on the needs of young professionals.
- v. That raising the age would bring in additional non-student members to the Young Liberals thus helping Young Liberals better serve young professionals in the party and provide this demographic with a social and political space in the party.
- vi. That raising the age limit of Young Liberals would therefore benefit the organisational structure and those members aged between 26 and 29.

### Conference supports:

- 1. Raising the age of automatic membership of the Young Liberals as to include all Liberal Democrat members under the age of 30.

### Conference calls for:

- 1. Young Liberals Federal Executive to lobby the Federal Party to raise the automatic membership age of Young Liberals to include all members under the age of 30.
- 2. Liberals Federal Executive to submit a constitutional amendment to Federal Liberal Democrat conference to raise the age of Young Liberals to include all members under the age of 30.

*Passed: Glasgow Winter Conference - Winter 2019*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2024*



## Stand with Hong Kong. Boycott HSBC and Standard Chartered.

### Conference notes:

- A. The recent intervention by two large UK banking firms, HSBC and Standard Chartered, into the debate surrounding Hong Kong's "security" law, in which they both expressed their corporations support for the law.
- B. The Young Liberals policy "Young Liberals Stand with Hong Kong" passed in the summer of 2019 which, amongst other measures, called for "Imposing sanctions on those persons complicit in or responsible for suppressing Hongkongers' human rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Joint Declaration."

### Conference welcomes:

- i. The actions taken by politicians from across the UK political spectrum against the move by the banks which include:
  - a. Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, Alistair Carmichael, saying the move represents a "serious error of judgement" and is "foolish".
  - b. Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Lisa Nandy, writing a letter to HSBC's and Standard Chartered's chief executives expressing her "profound concerns" with the banks support for the law and calling on the banks to "immediately rescind their support".
  - c. Conservative Chair of the Foreign Affairs Select Committee, Tom Tugendhat, writing that the banks have "effectively endorsed the introduction of laws that will end free speech and many other civil rights in the city, and gone further than most companies would."

### Conference resolves:

1. For the Young Liberals to engage in a boycott of HSBC and Standard Chartered, unless they rescind their support for the law.
2. To call for the wider party, including both local parties and SAO's/AO's, to similarly engage in a boycott of these banking firms, unless they rescind their support for the law.

*Passed: Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020*

*Lapses: Summer (July) 2025*



## Towards a Humane and Caring Immigration Policy

### Conference notes:

- A. The new post-Brexit immigration system, colloquially known as a points-based system.
- B. The positive cultural, economic, and social benefits of large-scale immigration.
- C. The longstanding commitment of the Liberal Democrats to freedom of movement.

### Conference notes with concern:

- i. The repeated mistakes made by the Home Office in relation to immigration have led to unlawful deportations, such as the Windrush Scandal.
- ii. That changes to the financial qualifies for immigration often lead to the break-up of families.
- iii. The treatment of asylum seekers by the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal, including the high deportation rates amongst LGBT+ refugees.
- iv. The unwillingness of the UK Government to engage with humane objectives in relation to refugee crossings in the English Channel.
- v. The use of immigration as a political football by the Conservative and Labour Parties.
- vi. The inadequate rights and freedoms given to immigrants in the United Kingdom before naturalisation.

### Conference believes that:

- I. The current approach to immigration by Home Office officials and political leaders is callous and inhumane.
- II. The points-based system creates unfair bias in favour of migrants who are wealthy and whose first language is English.
- III. Immigration creates a benefit to our country that goes beyond economics.
- IV. The current tribunal system is fundamentally broken.
- V. The current public discourse around the subject of immigration fosters toxic, xenophobic, and racist attitudes.

### Conference therefore resolves:

- 1. That the Young Liberals reach out to other youth wings with similar values with a view to the creation of a cross party commission with the following objectives:
  - i. A meaningful and fair alternative to the current tribunal system.
  - ii. A reform of immigration policy with a view to abolition of the points-based system.
  - iii. A cross party consensus on approaches to public discourse around immigration.
  - iv. A campaign for the rights of immigrants, asylum seekers, and all other migrants.
- 2. To actively campaign for a more positive approach to immigration from the Liberal Democrats.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference – Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*





## A Constitutional Convention

Conference notes that the Young Liberals constitution is an important document, setting out the governance and procedure of the organisation.

Conference agrees that the constitution should be easy to understand, without sacrificing content or guidance.

Conference recognises that the current Young Liberals constitution is long, complex, and often difficult to understand.

Conference therefore calls for a temporary constitutional reform working group to be established, chaired by an Honorary Vice President and consisting of at least 5 members, including the federal Finance Officer and at least one other representative of the Federal Executive.

This working group is instructed to bring proposals to the next Young Liberals Conference, to replace the existing constitution and constitutional documents, along the following principles:

The new constitution should be written in plain English, and should be understandable by lay people.

Existing documents attached to or referenced in the constitution, such as the Executive Regulations, Election Regulations, and Conference Standing Orders, should be moved to new By-Laws.

The structure and content of the new constitution and By-Laws shall be decided by the working group, save that they may not alter the election regulations, nor sections 1 and 2 of the constitution.

No proposal brought forward as a result of this motion may contravene the existing Young Liberals constitution, the federal party constitution, or the law.

The working group will draw up a model By-Law setting out the standing orders of a federal committee, which each federal committee shall adapt to be put forward as a part of the overall proposal, forming one By-Law for each existing federal committee as set out in section 7 of the constitution. Any committee which does not put forward a proposed By-Law will be deemed to have accepted the model By-Law unamended.

The working group will be required to publish its proposal no later than 2 weeks before the deadline for motions to the conference at which it will be heard, allowing sufficient time for amendments to the proposals to be put forward. Constitutional amendments put forward and passed at that conference will be deemed to amend the relevant content of the working group's proposal, if it is also passed.

*Passed: Online Winter Conference – Winter 2021*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2026*



## Campaigning for Liberals

### Conference notes:

- A. There still exists within the Liberal Democrats membership and candidates-pool individuals who do not align themselves with Liberal values, particularly on LGBTQ+ and women's rights.
- B. The recent, albeit infrequent, selection of candidates who hold regressive views on LGBTQ+ and women's rights issues.
- C. The motion 'Trans Rights', which unequivocally calls upon YL to support LGBTQ+ rights, with particular note to trans rights, both within the party and country-at-large.
- D. The Young Liberals motion 'Freedom of Choice on Abortion'.

### Conference believes:

- I. The Liberal Democrats should not stand candidates who do not publicly support the rights of marginalised groups, including LGBTQ+ people, women, and ethnic minorities.
- II. No elected official of the Liberal Democrats should represent views unrecognisable from the membership-at-large, particularly on social issues.
- III. Liberal Democrat candidates at any level must engage with concerns about their suitability, particularly in cases where they do not consistently and proactively uphold the values and policies of the party on LGBTQ+, women's, and ethnic minorities' rights.
- IV. There should be no religious exemptions for candidates' views on LGBTQ+ or women's rights, especially in parliament.
- V. No member of the Party should be pressured to withdraw their nomination for an internal or public election because of their promotion of Liberal Democrat values and policy, particularly on LGBTQ+, women's, and ethnic minorities' rights, conflicts with the views of another officeholder or prospective candidate.
- VI. Young Liberals should not be expected to campaign for candidates who do not acknowledge the struggles many within our membership face.
- VII. The Liberal Democrats cannot honestly promise a progressive future when candidates regressive on LGBTQ+ and women's rights are fielded.

### Conference calls for:

1. YL to boycott candidates who do not share YL's values, and the values outlined in the Preamble to the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats.
2. YL to use its social media platforms to hold already-selected candidates to account on such views, and highlight our boycott of such candidates.
3. The Liberal Democrats to tighten its candidate-vetting process, particularly surrounding potential infractions on LGBTQ+ and women's rights.
4. The Liberal Democrats at all levels to ensure that they uphold every member's right to criticise in public or in private candidates who undermine or fail to promote the values of the Liberal Democrats, particularly on LGBTQ+, women's, and ethnic minorities' rights.
5. Where feasible, appropriate, and strategically viable, Young Liberals to counter illiberal tendencies at the local level by supporting young local party officers and young candidates to local party office who have a track record of promoting and upholding the values of Young Liberals and the Liberal Democrats, particularly on LGBT+, women's, and ethnic minorities' rights.
6. The Young Liberals to continue to work closely with relevant Associated Organisations including Liberal Democrat Campaign for Race Equality, Lib Dem Women, and LGBT+ Liberal Democrats to ensure the party's liberal values are upheld.

*Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference – Winter 2022*

*Lapses: Winter (February) 2027*



## Cross-Party Cooperation in Campaigns

### Conference notes:

- A. There are multiple parties with voter bases which overlap with that of the Liberal Democrats, requiring voters to tactically vote in order to avoid candidates from non-progressive, populist or nationalist parties being elected without an absolute majority. This voter behaviour is a direct result of the first past the post voting system.
- B. There are calls, from both outside and from within the Liberal Democrats, for various forms of cooperation between certain parties, all with the intention of electing as many representatives as possible from the cooperating parties.
  - a. One proposal, commonly called a 'progressive alliance', would require each party to stand down in different seats to allow the strongest party in a given area the best chance of victory.
  - b. Another proposal calls for non-aggression between opposition parties, where each party can stand their own candidates as they see fit, but do not publish literature needlessly attacking each other, or minimally campaign on the ground.
  - c. The parties most commonly associated with any such agreement are the Liberal Democrats, Labour, and the Green Party.
- C. Under first-past-the-post, the relative value of winning a seat is significantly greater than the value of coming second.
- D. The Liberal Democrats hold and challenge in predominantly Conservative-facing seats, but this is, however, by no means true of all seats.
- E. In Scotland, the SNP hold a disproportionately large number of representatives as a result of divisions among the unionist vote, to the detriment of the Liberal Democrats.
- F. In the 2019 General Election, an alliance between the Brexit Party and Conservatives resulted in a large number of gains and close second places for the Conservatives.
- G. Incumbent parties have historically weaponised the 'progressive alliance' narrative to deter voters from voting Liberal Democrat.
- H. The English Party constitution states that a local party must have the support of their region for any deal they want to do.

### Conference reiterates:

- I. The following views espoused by Daisy Cooper in her December 2021 article "Why progressive alliances in politics don't work", published in The Independent.
  - a. Seats such as North Shropshire would not be attainable by the Liberal Democrats in the event of a formal electoral alliance, which may be viewed by voters as a "stitch up" and that such pacts may prove counterproductive.
  - b. Under first past the post, whilst perhaps distasteful, tactical voting and selective resource allocation are essential tools in securing the election of more Liberal Democrats and candidates from cooperative parties.
  - c. The Liberal Democrats are uniquely placed to convince voters across the political spectrum to vote for us, in a way that other parties are unable to do.
- II. The findings of Lord Stunell and Anood Al-Samerai in the 2021 report "Local election arrangements with the Green Party and other local parties". Findings of particular note include:
  - a. Electoral arrangements did not deliver benefits for local Liberal Democrats in the long nor short-term, and that they damaged the campaigning profile of local parties.
  - b. When denied a Liberal Democrat candidate, many voters, against the intent of those forging electoral pacts, would sooner vote Conservative or SNP rather than for the intended beneficiaries of a given deal.
  - c. In standing and campaigning for a Liberal Democrat candidate, parties such as Labour are often beneficiaries, due to the reduction in the Conservative vote that would otherwise not occur.



# YOUNG LIBERALS POLICY BOOK

Conference believes:

- i. The Liberal Democrats' main objective should be to stand a candidate in every seat, and secure as many victories as possible.
- ii. A 'progressive alliance' agreement should not be made.
  - a. Every voter should have the option to vote Liberal Democrat at every level of government.
  - b. Standing down for a party is, in effect, an endorsement of them. We should not do this, because as Liberal Democrats, we have our own unique values and message. This is also likely to deter voters, should parties start endorsing one another.
  - c. The Liberal Democrats are the only party that are committed to liberalism, and we are the only party that can be trusted to truly champion our values.
  - d. A 'progressive alliance' falsely assumes that voters will migrate to the leading party in the agreement. This is however an unrealistic expectation, and it is not how voters behave.
  - e. As aforementioned, in standing a candidate, even when unlikely to win the seat, the Liberal Democrats can increase the likelihood of a more politically advantageous candidate winning.
- iii. Non-aggression could be beneficial to both the country and to the party, and would allow for Liberal Democrats to focus our resources into the areas where they will be most effective.
  - a. Unlike Labour and the Conservatives who are able to rely upon extensive national media coverage, by focussing our resources upon key target seats we are able to better communicate our messaging and secure a greater number of seats.
  - b. In the interest of the progression of our values in the country, there are parties that share more of our values than others and, should they win more seats, would contribute more towards a society that we would like to see. Further, the removal of incumbents (especially Conservative and SNP) with views repugnant to our own should be a priority.
  - c. Numerous seats exist, to Westminster, devolved parliaments and councils, that would benefit from unspoken cooperation between opposition parties with certain common values. This cooperation would serve to weaken the strength of the majority party in their respective institutions.
  - d. Liberal Democrat campaigns should still occur in, for example, target council wards within a constituency that we are not in a position to win. However, campaign organisers should consider with care whether resources are best spent promoting a positive Liberal Democrat vision or negatively campaigning against candidates who are likely to defeat Conservative or SNP incumbents.
  - e. The retention of deposits, reduction of the Conservative and SNP vote and the maintenance and development of an enthusiastic activist base must form key considerations in decisions regarding campaigns.
  - f. The principle of non-aggression must be mutual and not at the sole expense of the Liberal Democrats.

Conference calls for:

1. The Liberal Democrats to focus their national campaigning efforts in the seats where only they can beat the incumbent party, in order to maximise the return of Liberal Democrat representatives.
2. Both the Liberal Democrats and Young Liberals to be highly selective in choosing which seats to direct their national campaigning resources to, in order to elect as many representatives as possible from politically advantageous parties.
3. Local parties should at minimum campaign enough to ensure that the party keeps its deposit in every seat.
4. Young Liberals to remain staunch in their opposition to a 'progressive alliance' and the principle of standing down for other parties.



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5. The Liberal Democrats to remain ambitious with regard to target seat selection.
6. Young Liberals to reaffirm their commitment to helping as many young candidates as possible stand and win.

*Passed: Birmingham Summer Conference – Summer 2022*

*Lapses: Summer (August) 2027*

## Policies by Conference and Expiry

Motion	Conference	Expires	Policy Area
Towards a Radical Liberal Economic Policy	Glasgow Winter Conf 2019	Feb 2024	Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations
Universal Credit	Glasgow Winter Conf 2019	Feb 2024	Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations
Mental Health Provision	Glasgow Winter Conf 2019	Feb 2024	Health and Social Care
Languages in the House of Commons	Glasgow Winter Conf 2019	Feb 2024	Political Reform and Local Government
Changing the Age Limit of the Young Liberals	Glasgow Winter Conf 2019	Feb 2024	Liberal Democrats and Business Motions
Traveller Liberation	London Summer Conf 2019	Aug 2024	Social Justice
Young Carers	London Summer Conf 2019	Aug 2024	Social Justice
Ukrainian Political Prisoners	London Summer Conf 2019	Aug 2024	International Affairs and Europe
Young Liberals Stand with Hong Kong	London Summer Conf 2019	Aug 2024	International Affairs and Europe
Free Periods	London Summer Conf 2019	Aug 2024	Health and Social Care
Learning Disabilities	London Summer Conf 2019	Aug 2024	Health and Social Care
Deforestation and Sustainability	London Summer Conf 2019	Aug 2024	Environment, Energy and the Climate Emergency
The Climate Emergency	London Summer Conf 2019	Aug 2024	Environment, Energy and the Climate Emergency
No to Minimum Unit Pricing	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations
Supporting Drug Testing at Festivals and in Nightclubs	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Home Affairs and Justice
Anti Corruption Pledge - The 5 step plan to cut abuses of power	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Home Affairs and Justice
Police Reform	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Home Affairs and Justice
LGBT+ Youth Homelessness	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	LGBTQIA+ Liberation
Autism Support	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Social Justice
Universal Basic Income	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations
Trans Rights	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	LGBTQIA+ Liberation
Hungary and Poland	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	International Affairs and Europe
Future Relationship with Europe	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	International Affairs and Europe
Recognising the Uyghur Genocide and Supporting Sanctions	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	International Affairs and Europe
Britain and Russia in the context of the Russian Report	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	International Affairs and Europe
Isolation and Mental Health	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Health and Social Care
Accessibility in Education	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Education
A More Diverse Curriculum	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Education
Fair Higher Education Standards	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Education
Demanding Better for Transport in Our North	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Housing, Transport and Infrastructure
Renewal of Trident: Security in Insecure Times	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Defence
Effective Governance and Efficient Administration in Local Government	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Political Reform and Local Government
Stand with Hong Kong. Boycott HSBC and Standard Chartered	Online Summer Conf 2020	July 2025	Liberal Democrats and Business Motions
Becoming a World Leader in Space	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Science and Technology
Black British Rights: Inequality in the UK	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Social Justice
Abolishing the Term BAME	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Social Justice





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Public Sexual Harassment	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Social Justice
Children in Care and Care Leavers	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Social Justice
Funeral Support for Student and Young Adult Carers	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Social Justice
Putting Our Futures First: Reverse the Decision to Leave Erasmus+	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	International Affairs and Europe
Supporting the Prescription of Hormone Blocking Medications to Gender Diverse People Under the Age of 18	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Health and Social Care
The Duality of Healthcare	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Health and Social Care
Protecting Disabled People During COVID-19	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Health and Social Care
A Three-Pronged Public Health Response to Drug Testing	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Health and Social Care
Education in COVID Britain	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Education
A Progressive Carbon Tax	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Environment, Energy and the Climate Emergency
Disestablishment of the Church of England	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Political Reform and Local Government
Towards a Humane and Caring Immigration Policy	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Liberal Democrats and Business Motions
A Constitutional Convention	Online Winter Conf 2021	Feb 2026	Liberal Democrats and Business Motions
Saving the Hospitality Industry	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations
Legalisation of Cannabis	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	Home Affairs and Justice
Pride is a Protest	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	LGBTQIA+ Liberation
Continuing the Journey to Equal Marriage	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	LGBTQIA+ Liberation
For Peace and Democracy in Belarus	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	International Affairs and Europe
A Liberal Approach to Free Trade	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	International Affairs and Europe
Young Liberals in Solidarity with Uyghurs	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	International Affairs and Europe
Voluntary Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	Health and Social Care
Talk Tickets	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	Health and Social Care
School Attendance	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	Education
Nationalisation of Exam Boards	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	Education
Faith Schools	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	Education
Facilitating Young People's Independence and Wellbeing Through Active Travel	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	Environment, Energy and the Climate Emergency
The Climate Crisis	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	Environment, Energy and the Climate Emergency
English National Anthem	Manchester Summer Conf 2021	Aug 2026	Culture, Media and Sport
Abolishing Sunday Trading Laws	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations
For Fair and Effective Fines	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	Home Affairs and Justice
Trans Children	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	LGBTQIA+ Liberation
Confronting the Spiking Crisis	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	Social Justice
A Brighter Future for Myanmar	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	International Affairs and Europe
Standing in Support of Armenia and Armenians	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	International Affairs and Europe
A Sovereign Ukraine	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	International Affairs and Europe
Education for Everyone: Resolving the SEN Crisis	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	Education



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Supporting UCU Strikes	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	Education
Liberalising Britain's Railways	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	Housing, Transport and Infrastructure
National Housebuilding Targets	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	Housing, Transport and Infrastructure
Campaigning for Liberals	Edinburgh Winter Conf 2022	Feb 2027	Liberal Democrats and Business Motions
In Support of Trade Unions	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations
A Fair Deal for Young Workers	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations
Protecting Our Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller (GRT) Communities	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Social Justice
Remembering All Who Serve	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Social Justice
Decolonising British Heritage	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	International Affairs and Europe
Renewing UK-Taiwanese Relations	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	International Affairs and Europe
For a Free, Peaceful, and Democratic Ukraine	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	International Affairs and Europe
Healthcare for Trans and Non-Binary People	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Health and Social Care
The Big Fat Problem With BMI	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Au 2027	Health and Social Care
Vocational Education and Apprenticeships in England	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Education
Selective Schools	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Education
An End to Fossil Fuel Exploration	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Environment, Energy and the Climate Emergency
Save Our Rivers	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Environment, Energy and the Climate Emergency
Taking on the Housing Crisis	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Housing, Transport and Infrastructure
Canals: A Place for All	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Housing, Transport and Infrastructure
Making Football a "Fair" Game	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Culture, Media and Sport
Using the Eurovision Opportunity	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Culture, Media and Sport
Scotland Deserves Better Than a Second Independence Referendum	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Political Reform and Local Government
Cross-Party Cooperation in Campaigns	Birmingham Summer Conf 2022	Aug 2027	Liberal Democrats and Business Motions
Protecting Asylum Seekers and Undocumented Immigrants	Reading Winter Conf 2023	Feb 2028	Home Affairs and Justice
Sex Work	Reading Winter Conf 2023	Feb 2028	Social Justice
In Opposition to the use of a Section 35 Order Regarding the Gender Recognition Reform (Scotland) Bill	Reading Winter Conf 2023	Feb 2028	LGBTQIA+ Liberation
The Right to Abortion	Reading Winter Conf 2023	Feb 2028	Health and Social Care
Wild Camping	Reading Winter Conf 2023	Feb 2028	Environment, Energy and Climate Change
Repeal the Enclosures Act	Reading Winter Conf 2023	Feb 2028	Housing, Transport, and Infrastructure
Saving Local Councils	Reading Winter Conf 2023	Feb 2028	Political Reform and Local Government
Votes for Prisoners	Reading Winter Conf 2023	Feb 2028	Political Reform and Local Government
The Problem With Single-Use Vapes	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Health and Social Care
Protecting Arts and Humanities Education	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Education
Respecting Secularism and Humanism	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Social Justice
High Speed Rail for High Speed Growth	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Housing, Transport, and Infrastructure



Promoting Equality in the Playground	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Social Justice
Avoiding Gridlock: Supporting Nuclear Energy	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Environment, Energy, and the Climate Emergency
Religious Education - A Way Forward	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Education
Disabled Marriage Equality	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Social Justice
Tackling Maternal Discrimination	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Social Justice
Tackling road use - A Novel Strategy for Vehicle Taxation	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Housing, Transport, and Infrastructure
Deep Learning, Deep Fakes	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Science and Technology
Arts for the Young - Protecting Britain's Arts Industries into the Future	Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conf 2023	Aug 2028	Culture, Media and Sport



## Revisions Log

- May 2020: Major reformatting and redesign
- May 2020: Policies removed due to expiry in 2020
  - Extending Sex and Relationship Education
  - Supporting Disadvantaged Young People
  - Against Minimum Alcohol Pricing
  - Ukraine
- May 2020: Policies removed due to being redundant
  - Bank shares [topic of motion no longer relevant]
  - Abortion (Northern Ireland) [content of policy has become law]
- July 2020: Added policies passed at Online Conference 2020
- July 2020: Removed “Renewal of Trident: Security in Insecure Times” (Sheffield, Activate 2017), replaced by “Renewal of Trident: Security in Insecure Times” (Online, Summer Conference 2020)
- March 2021: Added policies passed at Online Conference 2021
- March 2021: Removed “The Role of Church and State” (Bristol, Activate 2016), replaced by “Disestablishment of the Church of England” (Online, Winter Conference 2021)
- August 2021: Policies removed due to expiry in April and July 2021 & added policies passed at Manchester Summer Conference 2021
- March 2022: Removed “Progressive Alliance” (Sheffield, Hibernation 2017) due to expiry in January 2022 & added policies passed at Edinburgh Winter Conference 2022
- September 2022: Removed “The Monarchy”, “In Defence of the Gig Economy”, “Injustice Facing Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller Young People”, “A Higher Minimum Wage for Hours that are Not Guaranteed in a Contract”, “Equal Rights for Mental Health Patients”, and “Liberal Future for Housing” (Nottingham, Activate 2017) due to expiry in August 2022 & added policies passed at Birmingham Summer Conference 2022
- March 2023: Reformatting and design to comply with new Brand Guidance.
- March 2023: Added new policies passed at 2023 Reading Winter Conference. Policies removed due to lapsing from 2018 Oxford Winter Conference:
  - No to Unpaid Internships, Yes to Real Opportunities
  - Protection for Undocumented Immigrants
  - Freedom of Choice on Abortion
  - USS Enterprise: Let Lecturers Live Long and Prosper
  - True Universal Suffrage: Votes for Prisoners
  - All-You-Can-Eat Policy Buffet
- December 2023: Added new policies passed at 2023 Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference and removed policies due to lapsing from Swansea 2018 Summer Conference:
  - Immigration in a Globalised World
  - Criminal Records
  - Inequalities for Young People in the Workplace and Welfare System
  - Towards Greener Homes for Britain
  - Towards Better Social Housing
  - Defending Our Defence
  - Adopting the IHRA Definition of Anti-Semitism