

For a Fair Future

Young Liberals Youth Manifesto

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Plaintext Edition

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We have grown up through economic instability, a housing crisis, disruption to our education, declining public services, Brexit, COVID and an accelerating climate emergency. These are the results of political choices made at the expense of young people.

You deserve better.

Our manifesto is a positive vision of a Liberal Future for Young people, shaped by the ideas, experiences and priorities of Young Liberal members. We are ambitious for our communities and prepared to put forward serious solutions to the problems facing our generation.

We want an economy that's fair, a properly funded education system, affordable and secure housing, accessible public transport and an NHS that treats mental health with the same urgency as physical health.

We recognise that freedom means being able to be your authentic self everyday. We will always stand with the LGBTQ+ community, disabled people, women, ethnic minorities and those whose voices are ignored.

A future where your background doesn't determine your opportunities. Where everyone can live with dignity, security and freedom. Where the decisions made today don't come at the expense of the generations who will live with their consequences.

That is the fair future young people deserve, and it is the future the Young Liberals will continue fighting for.

So join us, and let's make it happen!

Will Tennison

Young Liberals Chair

Economy, Welfare, and Labour Relations

The Young Liberals believe in a fairer economy that works better across all generations. This economy should ensure everyone can prosper, achieve their potential, and realise their dreams for the future. To achieve this, we need a more holistic attitude towards the economy that focuses on growth, meaningful employment, reducing inequality, and protecting the environment.

We would create a fairer deal for young workers by:

- **Increasing the personal allowance** for the first time since 2021.
- **Ensuring clear communication** from employers to candidates regarding pay ranges and application progress, so candidates receive timely updates throughout the recruitment process.
- **Abolishing the under-25 rate** for Universal Credit, ensuring the safety net is fair for young people.
- **Bringing all over-18s** into the National Living Wage framework.
- **Gradually increasing employer minimum pension contributions** to 10.5%, ensuring everyone has a dignified pension in old age.
- **Incentivising businesses** to transition to a four-day working week with a five-day business week, with the UK Government and local councils adopting the same model.
- **Supporting workers' rights** to collective action, industrial action, and trade union membership.
- **Ending Sunday trading laws** to maximise choice and freedom for workers, consumers, and businesses.
- **Reforming business rates and licences** to make it easier for pubs, bars, and nightclubs to thrive.
- **Abolishing inheritance tax** and replacing it with a fairer lifetime gift tax.

Housing, Transport, and Infrastructure

The Young Liberals believe that everyone deserves a safe, secure and affordable place to live. Young people are being locked out of home ownership and forced to spend an increasing share of their income on poor-quality rented accommodation. This crisis cannot be solved without building substantially more homes in the places where people want to live.

To tackle the housing crisis, we would:

- **Retain national housebuilding targets** and oppose attempts to remove them.
- **Deliver a major housebuilding programme** that gives young people a realistic opportunity to rent or buy a secure home.
- **Require local pro-housing action** from Liberal Democrat campaigners and councillors in areas with the highest house-price-to-income ratios to support the homes their communities need.
- **Oppose NIMBYism vigorously** and reject election campaigns that seek to gain support by blocking necessary housing.
- **Introduce a Green Homes Act** setting high standards for insulation and energy efficiency, alongside the installation of heat pumps and solar panels wherever appropriate.
- **Provide sufficient government funding** so that higher environmental standards do not delay construction or make new homes unaffordable.
- **Abolish the blanket Green Belt restriction** on development and replace it with stronger, targeted protections for genuinely valuable green spaces.
- **Safeguard vital conservation sites**, including Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks, National Nature Reserves, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and places of significant historic value.
- **Repeal legacy Enclosure Acts** to return eligible common land to public use, with communities deciding whether it should support farming, rewilding, playgrounds or housing.

Homelessness must be treated with compassion rather than punishment. We would:

- **Ban anti-homelessness architecture** used by local authorities.
- **Campaign against hostile architecture** at every level of government.
- **Invest in long-term solutions** to rough sleeping, including suitable shelters, better temporary accommodation and a substantial increase in permanent housing.

Public transport gives people the freedom to access education, employment and their communities. Britain needs a railway that is affordable, reliable and accountable to the passengers who use it.

To reform the railways, we would:

- **Overhaul the rail ticketing system** by conducting a comprehensive, passenger-first review.
- **Introduce a National Railcard** to make fares simpler and more affordable.
- **Allow open-access competition** from multiple operators on major intercity routes.
- **Establish a not-for-profit public operator** for subsidised and socially necessary routes.
- **Devolve commuter rail networks** to regional transport bodies such as Transport for London and Transport for West Midlands.
- **Expand regional transport authorities** so that more metropolitan areas can take control of their local networks.
- **Establish an arm's-length rail management body**, independent of the Department for Transport, to coordinate the day-to-day railway in partnership with operators.
- **Review Network Rail's operational role** in maintaining rail infrastructure and managing major stations.

The Young Liberals believe that investment in rail infrastructure is essential for economic growth, regional equality and the transition to net zero. We would:

- **Develop a national rail strategy** linking new transport investment with housebuilding, public services and projected population growth.

- **Review industry vocational qualifications** to ensure Britain trains the engineers and specialists needed to build and maintain the next generation of railways.
- **Begin a rolling electrification programme** across the rail network.
- **Electrify key cross-country routes**, specifically the route between York and Bristol, the South Wales Main Line to Carmarthen, the Chiltern Main Line and the Marches Line between south Wales and Manchester.
- **Complete core southern electrification** on routes connecting London with Sheffield, Bristol, Gloucester, Hereford and Cheltenham.
- **Fully electrify East West Rail** before the route officially opens.
- **Complete HS2 in full**, including new lines to Manchester and Leeds alongside the vital connection to London Euston.
- **Electrify the North Wales Coast Line** and upgrade it so that north Wales can benefit from HS2.
- **Deliver Barnett consequential funding** owed to Wales for HS2 and devolve further transport powers to the Senedd.
- **Extend the Borders Railway** and electrify its connection to Carlisle.
- **Establish a Scottish electric spine** by electrifying the main line between Edinburgh and Aberdeen and continuing through Perth and Dundee to Inverness.
- **Support Welsh valley electrification** on both the Maesteg and Ebbw Valley lines.
- **Connect underserved communities** by developing new rail links for Peterhead, St Andrews and Aberystwyth.
- **Invest in climate flood resilience** on the vulnerable Cambrian and Conwy Valley lines.

Buses are essential public services, particularly for people who do not own a car and communities without access to rail. We would:

- **Restore the bus fare cap** in England to £2.
- **Integrate multi-operator ticketing** between different bus operators and other forms of transport.
- **Improve local bus services** by enhancing evening schedules, passenger comfort, contactless payment options and the deployment of electric

buses.

- **Introduce a sustainable funding model** that directs the greatest support towards the communities most dependent on bus services.

To expand local and regional transport, we would:

- **Evaluate abandoned railway lines** to identify routes suitable for reopening or conversion into light rail.
- **Consult on expanding light-rail networks** to towns within their wider travel-to-work areas.
- **Support new suburban halt stations** close to existing railway lines to serve local communities.
- **Build rapid transit connections** via rail, metro or light rail to major airports, out-of-town retail centres, sports venues and university campuses.
- **Extend electrification transition support** to include motorcycles, light vehicles and quadricycles.

Walking, wheeling and cycling should be safe and realistic choices for people of every age. We would:

- **Substantially increase active-travel investment** at a national level.
- **Support Low Traffic Neighbourhoods** by working alongside councils and local communities to make active travel safer.
- **Build segregated infrastructure**, prioritizing cycle lanes and raised pedestrian crossings where they are needed.
- **Adopt a Vision Zero approach** to road deaths, designing infrastructure around the safety of all road users.
- **Introduce national direct-vision standards** for heavy goods vehicles, matching or exceeding those already operating in Greater London.
- **Support road space reallocation** where clear evidence shows that it will save lives and improve public health.

The Young Liberals recognise that driving remains essential for many people, especially those living in rural areas or places with inadequate public transport. Young people should not be excluded from driving by excessive costs or a shortage of tests. We would:

- **Expand DVSA testing capacity** urgently by recruiting more examiners and opening test centres in underserved areas.
- **Create a national driving bursary** to subsidise lessons and tests for young people on low incomes.
- **Reform youth car-insurance practices**, improve pricing transparency and limit unjustifiable age-based price multipliers for under-25s.
- **End mandatory black-box assumptions** requiring young drivers to accept intrusive monitoring policies just to obtain affordable cover.
- **Expand practical driver training** to include mandatory night-time and motorway driving in curricula or testing.
- **Introduce driver-education programmes** in schools and colleges covering safety, costs and consumer rights.
- **Fund young driver support** by allocating 2% of Vehicle Excise Duty revenue to a dedicated Young Drivers Support Fund.
- **Optimise road-safety spending** by redirecting £50 million of existing funds towards education and test access where it improves safety more effectively.
- **Establish commercial safety partnerships** with insurers and driving schools to provide voluntary contributions and discounted lessons.

Home Affairs and Justice

The Young Liberals believe the war on drugs has failed. It has reduced neither drug usage nor deaths. It has not made our streets safer; instead, organised gangs remain strong. The Young Liberals believe that drugs should ultimately be treated as a healthcare issue rather than a criminal one. That is why we would create a properly regulated drugs market. Alongside this, we would:

- **Expand the use of naloxone** by allowing intranasal versions to be sold over the counter, to ensure the safety of drug users.
- **Update school educational programmes** on drug misuse to focus strictly on harm reduction and safety, rather than criminality.
- **Expand drug testing centres** in areas experiencing high rates of drug fatalities.
- **Deploy drug testing facilities** in nightclubs and at festivals.
- **Expand the usage of safe injection sites** in areas with high levels of drug usage.

The Young Liberals believe in a Britain which is welcoming to everyone. We believe our country is richer because of migration, not despite it. This is why we would:

- **Expand safe and legal routes** offered to asylum seekers and migrants to settle in the United Kingdom.
- **Minimise detention centre stays** by significantly increasing the Home Office's capacity to process applications swiftly.
- **End the detention of children** for immigration purposes entirely.
- **Restrict emergency services and local government officials** from reporting undocumented migrants to border security, provided they have not committed a non-migration offence.
- **End the Hostile Environment policies** introduced by consecutive Conservative and Labour administrations.

International, Europe, and Defence

The Young Liberals believe Britain's future lies at the heart of the European Union. We are committed to working toward a European future where Britain plays a leading role in building a more secure, peaceful, open, prosperous, and united continent. We support:

- **Rejoining the European Single Market and the European Union** as soon as possible.
- **The UK's re-entry into Erasmus+**, providing young Brits with access to Europe's largest programme for youth mobility, education, and exchange.
- **Joining Creative Europe**, to boost vital investment into our cultural and creative industries.
- **Advocating for an inclusive Union** that embraces all of Europe, supporting the EU accession pathways of Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Moldova, and the Western Balkans.
- **Forging a common European defence agreement** alongside a modernized NATO, ensuring our armed forces and independent nuclear deterrent play a key role in securing our continent and defending liberal democracy worldwide.

The Young Liberals champion self-determination for all peoples globally. We stand with democratic movements across the world, including those in Belarus, Myanmar, Georgia, and Hong Kong. We oppose the People's Republic of China's aggression towards Taiwan, and Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

We support a lasting resolution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. We believe both Israelis and Palestinians deserve to live in a peaceful, secure region. To achieve this, we advocate for:

- **A negotiated two-state solution**, establishing a secure Israel alongside a viable, independent Palestine living in peace.
- **Promoting a state-level truth and reconciliation process** between both nations.

- **Extending immediate international recognition** to the State of Palestine based on the 1967 borders while facilitating free democratic political activity.
- **Securing a permanent cessation** of Israeli military operations in Gaza.

The global security landscape is increasingly unstable. Donald Trump's administration has made America an unpredictable ally for the United Kingdom and Europe. In light of this, the Young Liberals believe the UK must step up and assume a greater share of responsibility for continental defence. To position the UK as a leader in security and defence, we must:

- **Increase total defence spending** to 4% of GDP within the next five years.
- **Enhance strategic autonomy** by developing the capacity and capability to lead and execute joint operations independently of the United States.
- **Maintain a truly independent nuclear deterrent**, configured to contribute effectively to a future European nuclear umbrella.

Social Justice

The Young Liberals believe in building a society where women and girls are free to be themselves. This means we must combat misogyny in all its forms.

To ensure women and girls are safer, we would:

- **Apply a gendered lens** to how public sexual harassment is taught within Relationships, Sex, and Health Education (RSHE).
- **Support universities** in establishing clear, accessible protocols for handling public sexual harassment.
- **Run a national awareness campaign** across schools, universities, and wider society to combat public sexual harassment.
- **Train police and NHS staff** to better support victims of drink and needle spiking.
- **Mandate venue safety measures** to prevent spiking, including the provision of bottle caps, cup covers, and spiking test strips.

To make public parks and playgrounds a welcoming space for girls, we would:

- **Invest in community spaces** around parks, such as cafes, ice cream stalls, and bandstands.
- **Improve public infrastructure** by ensuring parks are well-lit, located in accessible places, and equipped with increased CCTV provision.
- **Incorporate girls into urban planning** by requiring local councils to co-create parks directly alongside young women and girls.
- **Transform parks into community hubs** by introducing exercise initiatives, social seating, and dedicated dance spaces.

To ensure women are fairly represented across society, we must:

- **Mandate a gendered lens** in all publicly funded research and policy development where multiple genders are impacted.
- **Update NHS medical training** to ensure it acknowledges gendered

differences in clinical diagnosis and treatment.

- **Provide robust financial support, education, and relief** to limit the effects of the motherhood penalty, gendered work patterns, and asymmetric caring responsibilities.
- **Campaign actively** to elect women at all levels of political governance.

To empower mothers with choices regarding careers and families, we continue to support the expansion of free childcare. The Young Liberals believe we should transition to a system of shared parental leave, where both parents are treated equally, to rebalance domestic responsibilities, and dismantle the motherhood penalty.

Britain's strength is its diversity, and we believe everyone should be able to live authentically, hence to build a society which is truly multicultural and free of prejudice, we would:

- **Roll out comprehensive unconscious bias training** to all government officials and police forces.
- **Mandate ethnicity pay gap reporting** for medium and large businesses.
- **Collaborate with people of colour** to publish actionable workplace guidance on discussing and addressing systemic racial issues.

The Young Liberals believe that children in care, and care leavers, deserve to succeed in life. This is why we believe that care leavers should be granted the choice to remain in care until the age of 25. We also believe it is essential that local authorities ring-fence dedicated savings for children in care, ensuring they possess a financial foundation to help them flourish as young adults.

The Young Liberals believe all disabled people deserve to live freely and achieve their full potential, where society remains systemically inaccessible for many disabled people. To change this, we would:

- **Tackle the disability employment gap** by rolling out specialist disability employment support services.
- **Adopt modern accessibility standards** for all public spaces.
- **Accelerate disabled access upgrades** across the national rail network and public transport interchanges.
- **Amplify disabled voices** and representative organizations in any overarching redesign of the welfare state.

- **Ensure an individual's eligibility** for means-tested disability benefits is assessed solely on their personal income.
- **Directly fund accessible, disability-friendly** school grounds and classrooms.

LGBTQ+ Liberation

The Young Liberals believe everyone should be free to be who they are, which is why we stand proudly in solidarity with the LGBTQ+ community. Over recent years, the UK has seen a stark rise in homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. To support our LGBTQ+ community, we would:

- **Establish a dedicated Secretary of State** for Women and Equalities.
- **Ensure all pupils receive** LGBTQ+ inclusive Relationships and Sex Education (RSE).
- **Train teachers** so they can best perform their pastoral and safeguarding duties to support LGBTQ+ youth.
- **Ensure all mental healthcare staff** receive comprehensive training regarding issues uniquely affecting LGBTQ+ individuals.
- **Abolish the discriminatory requirement** forcing lesbian couples to fund private artificial insemination before accessing NHS IVF services.
- **Roll out a national online portal** to seamlessly provide at-home HIV/STI testing kits and streamlined PrEP prescriptions.
- **Ban all forms of conversion ‘therapies’** and coercive practices.

In recent years, we have seen a stark and clear decline in trans rights in Britain. This has coincided with a clear, concerted attack on the trans community. We stand in solidarity with trans individuals. We would:

- **Expand the capacity of gender services** for young people, ensuring all trans children have access to specialist healthcare support.
- **Reverse the ban on puberty blockers**, ensuring adolescents have safe access to age-appropriate, gender-affirming care.
- **Transition towards an informed-consent model** for gender-affirming care, empowering GPs to prescribe HRT directly to trans patients.
- **Amend the Equality Act** to explicitly guarantee that trans people are legally protected and treated as their lived gender.
- **Legally recognise non-binary identities**, allowing individuals to update their legal gender markers to ‘X’.

- **Update the Gender Recognition Act** to allow legal gender recognition to operate smoothly on a self-identification basis.
- **Ban all medically unnecessary, non-consensual treatments** or surgeries performed on intersex infants and children.

Health and Social Care

The Young Liberals want to build a resilient NHS that actively delivers on the unique needs of young people. We would place mental health at the absolute centre of our structural reforms, by:

- **Creating ‘Talk Tickets’** worth £520 to fully subsidise talking therapy sessions for young people who are on Universal Credit, or qualify for the Pupil Premium.
- **Reforming the physical education curriculum** to place an equal focus on mental resilience and physical wellbeing.
- **Providing specialized counseling services** to abortion service users upon request.
- **Establishing integrated rehabilitative pathways** to ensure patients transitioning out of inpatient mental healthcare remain fully supported in the community.

We believe firmly in an individual’s right to make autonomous, informed choices regarding their own body. This is why we support the total decriminalisation of abortion, and will fiercely resist any future attempts to roll back reproductive rights.

Alongside this, we support the legalisation of voluntary euthanasia and assisted dying, underpinned by robust medical safeguards and clear mechanisms for informed consent.

Environment, Energy, and the Climate Emergency

The Young Liberals believe that tackling the climate emergency is essential to protecting our future prosperity, security and freedom. The transition to a sustainable economy must be rapid and ambitious, but it must also be fair. Those responsible for the most pollution should bear the greatest cost, while households must be supported to choose cleaner and more affordable alternatives.

To reduce emissions fairly, we would:

- **Introduce a comprehensive carbon tax** on fossil-fuel energy, collected at the point of production or import.
- **Publish expected carbon tax rates** several years in advance, giving households, businesses and investors the confidence to plan for the transition.
- **End subsidies and tax incentives** for fossil-fuel production.
- **Return additional revenue to UK residents** through a universal climate dividend, including through any future Universal Basic Income.
- **Invest a proportion of the revenue** in public transport, home insulation, clean heating and other measures that help lower-income households reduce their energy bills.
- **Explore carbon border adjustments** on imports with significant embedded emissions, while pursuing international agreements that avoid unnecessary tariffs.
- **Expand carbon pricing** over time to cover the full range of greenhouse-gas emissions.
- **Strengthen pollution-permit systems** so that they support falling emissions and ensure that polluters pay.

Britain cannot claim to be a climate leader while continuing to search for new sources of oil and gas. We would:

- **End new licensing** for onshore and offshore oil and gas prospecting,

exploration and extraction.

- **Remove the investment allowance** from the Energy Profits Levy.
- **Ensure the whole United Kingdom joins** Wales as a core member of the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance.

A clean energy system must also be secure, reliable and capable of meeting future demand. The Young Liberals support nuclear power as part of a diverse low-carbon energy mix. We would:

- **Support new nuclear construction** alongside the continued expansion of renewable energy.
- **Develop a long-term nuclear strategy** that supports both new and existing projects.
- **Allow existing reactors to extend operations** where this is approved by the Office for Nuclear Regulation.
- **Work with the energy sector** to ensure the next generation of reactors is ready before existing stations are decommissioned.
- **Ensure evidence-led energy statements** are made by Liberal Democrat representatives to guarantee they are scientifically accurate.

Protecting the environment means restoring the health of our rivers, holding polluters accountable and defending public access to nature. We would:

- **Restore Environment Agency budgets** so that water companies and other major polluters can be properly monitored.
- **Increase inspections of water companies and farms**, with stronger enforcement and prosecution where environmental law is broken.
- **Empower regulatory bodies** by giving the Environment Agency and Ofwat the resources and powers needed to hold water companies accountable.
- **Fund local and highways authorities** to prevent road pollutants from entering rivers and other watercourses.
- **Work with farmers and agricultural organisations** to prevent nutrient run-off and require transparent reporting on the action being taken.
- **Establish a responsible right to wild camp** across the United Kingdom's National Parks, subject to the principles of the Countryside Code.

The Young Liberals will also work to minimise the environmental impact of our own campaigning and activities. We will continue to support peaceful demonstrations, local campaigns and community groups working to end the climate emergency.

Education

The Young Liberals believe that education is central to the liberal promise that no one should be enslaved by poverty, ignorance, or conformity. Every young person deserves an education that is engaging, inspiring, and broad enough to help them discover their talents, develop their confidence, and prepare for adult life. We want an education system that treats every child as an individual and gives them the support, skills, and opportunities they need to thrive.

To build that system, we would:

- **Ensure every school day matters by:**

- Endorsing the Liberal Democrat commitment to embed a dedicated mental health professional within every single school.
- Abolishing punitive fines for term-time holidays, which serve only to alienate struggling families from the school system.
- Working with the travel industry to curb the hyper-inflation of holiday costs outside term times, ensuring family time is not restricted to the wealthy.

- **Cultivate dignified, inclusive learning environments by:**

- Fully funding schools to adapt classrooms to be physically and sensorially inclusive of all SEND needs.
- Partnering with disability charities to center disabled voices within teacher training, alongside mandatory annual refresher courses for existing staff.
- Reaffirming the Liberal Democrat commitment to dismantle the SEND postcode lottery via a National Body for SEND equipped with the resources to fund high-needs local authorities.

- **Make learning engaging for all by:**

- Funding enrichment opportunities so every child can access sports, arts, cultural activities, and vocational pathways, regardless of household income.
- Creating targeted teacher-training bursaries for all shortage subjects,

helping schools recruit the specialist educators they desperately need.

- Including Religious Studies and Citizenship GCSEs within the academic breadth element of Progress 8, recognising their value in fostering critical thinking, democratic participation, and global awareness.

No child's future should be dictated by the circumstances of their birth. Income background and geography continue to heavily distort educational outcomes. To shatter these barriers, we would:

- **Reaffirm the commitment** to expand universal free school meals to all children living in poverty.
- **Campaign relentlessly against** the retention of the cruel two-child welfare limit.
- **Increase targeted funding for the most disadvantaged young people by:**
 - Tripling the Early Years Pupil Premium to £1,000 a year, boosting high-quality early-years provision, and expanding support for disadvantaged children before formal schooling begins.
 - Introducing a 'Pupil Premium Plus' model tailored specifically for schools located within areas of concentrated, structural deprivation.
 - Introducing a dedicated 'Young People's Premium' to extend vital Pupil Premium funding architectures to disadvantaged 16-to-18-year-olds.
 - Introducing a 'Young Carers' Pupil Premium' as the cornerstone of our comprehensive Education Guarantee for Young Carers.
- **Embed financial inclusivity** straight into the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, assessing schools on whether all pupils can realistically afford to participate fully in school life.
- **Phase out fee-paying, faith-based, and selective academic structures** to ensure access to excellent education is rooted purely in local need and individual potential, rather than wealth or selection.
- **Establish an Information, Advice, and Guidance (IAG) guarantee** to ensure all care leavers and NEET youth have access to professional, unbiased career advisors.

The Young Liberals believe universities are a vital force for social mobility, regional growth, research, innovation, and cultural life. However, the higher education sector faces acute structural pressure, and students are unfairly expected to shoulder the financial burden of a broken funding model. We will protect the future of higher education while ensuring it remains open to all. We would:

- **Reintroduce meaningful, non-repayable maintenance grants** and ensure overall maintenance baselines reflect the true, contemporary cost of living.
- **Incentivise universities** to provide guaranteed, year-round accommodation options for care leavers.
- **Protect regional educational access** and vulnerable priority subjects through strategic consolidation, introducing a statutory regional access duty, an active ‘at-risk’ register for higher education cold spots, and mandatory public interest tests before course closures.
- **Incentivise employer co-contributions** where clear workforce dependencies exist, particularly across high-public-need courses, clinical placements, and lifelong upskilling frameworks.
- **Develop mutually beneficial study agreements** with global neighbours, expanding reciprocal rights for young people to live, work, and study abroad.
- **Champion international higher education** as a pillar of long-term economic and demographic sustainability, recognising international graduates as vital contributors to our skilled workforce and tax base.
- **Introduce a ‘Graduate to Growth’ visa pathway**, granting international graduates three years of full work rights, an automatic transition into skilled work visas upon employment, and allowing time on the route to count toward permanent settlement.

We would also:

- **Ensure parity of esteem across educational pathways by:**
 - Substantially increasing the total number, scope, and funding of high-quality apprenticeships.
 - Launching personal ‘Skills Wallets’ and lifelong learning endowments that individuals can flexibly deploy for modular study throughout their

careers.

Science and Technology

The Young Liberals believe that science and technology should expand human freedom, improve public services and help solve the greatest challenges facing society. Innovation must be encouraged, but it cannot come at the expense of privacy, equality or democratic accountability.

Artificial intelligence has enormous potential, but its development must remain under meaningful human control. To ensure AI works for the public good, we would:

- **Establish an independent AI regulator** to oversee the adoption and fair use of artificial intelligence across the United Kingdom.
- **Accelerate legislative review cycles** so that regulation can keep pace with technological development.
- **Mandate developer data transparency** by requiring AI developers to publish meaningful information about the data used to train their models.
- **Require algorithmic transparency** where automated systems make decisions that significantly affect individuals.
- **Guarantee human oversight** and meaningful rights of appeal against automated decisions.
- **Involve under-represented communities** directly in the development, testing and regulation of AI systems.
- **Prohibit mass surveillance AI** alongside social scoring or other practices that undermine fundamental rights.
- **Strengthen digital privacy rights** against unlawful interference by both private companies and the state.
- **Protect individual likeness rights** by preventing generative AI systems from using or reproducing a person's likeness without explicit permission.
- **Criminalise non-consensual deepfakes** that impersonate a real person, while maintaining appropriate protections for journalism, research and satire.

- **Enforce AI content labelling** to ensure synthetic content is clearly marked both within the content itself and in its metadata.

We want Britain to be a leader in open and responsible innovation. We would:

- **Launch state-backed grant programmes** for projects developing open-source AI models.
- **Create fair dataset standards** in collaboration with the technology sector to balance licensing and monetisation.
- **Support proportionate regulation** frameworks that protect civil rights without stifling beneficial innovation.
- **Promote international AI cooperation** focusing on shared research, data sharing and robust ethical standards.
- **Advance global digital literacy** to make AI, algorithmic and media literacy part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal on quality education.

The Young Liberals believe that online safety cannot be achieved by weakening privacy, restricting legitimate speech or undermining secure communication. We would:

- **Pause and review Ofcom codes** of practice under the Online Safety Act to ensure that they comply fully with human-rights law.
- **Amend the Online Safety Act** to replace rights-infringing elements with legislation that clearly defines illegal content and avoids vague categories of harm.
- **Protect end-to-end encryption** to guarantee the legality and availability of secure communication.
- **Prohibit mandatory client-side scanning** and any other intrusive measures that compromise private messages.
- **Defend freedom of expression** by introducing strong protections for satire, political debate and journalistic reporting.
- **Exempt low-risk digital platforms**, community-run forums and non-profit organisations from disproportionate regulatory burdens.
- **Reform platform content moderation** by requiring transparent and proportionate systems with independent oversight and appeals.

- **Oppose future authoritarian legislation** that attempts to recreate or expand the intrusive elements of the Online Safety Act.

We would introduce a comprehensive Digital Bill of Rights, including:

- **Legal protections for encryption**, anonymity and online privacy.
- **A right to algorithmic awareness** so individuals know when an important decision has been made using an automated system.
- **A right to human review** to guarantee meaningful appeals against automated decisions.
- **Proportionate online platform regulation** that respects fundamental civil rights.
- **Strong digital safeguards for children** that empower families, educators and civil society rather than concentrating power in corporations or state regulators.

Children and young people should be able to participate safely and meaningfully in digital life. A single digital age of adulthood does not reflect the different needs and capacities of a young child, a teenager and an older adolescent. We would:

- **Implement a graduated autonomy framework** to replace a single digital age threshold with age-appropriate stages.
- **Provide enhanced default protections** and structured guidance for younger children.
- **Foster teenage digital independence** to help adolescents build personal judgement and self-regulation.
- **Prepare older adolescents thoroughly** for full, responsible participation in adult digital life.
- **Shift online safety accountability** primarily onto digital platforms rather than individual users or families.
- **Mandate maximum default privacy** settings on all digital platforms used by individuals under the age of 18.
- **Ban behaviourally targeted advertising** aimed at users under 18.
- **Require age-appropriate content systems** alongside clear user controls that preserve core platform functionality.

- **Enforce strict moderation response times** for user reports involving serious or imminent harm.
- **Enforce default safer modes** for under-18s, featuring reduced algorithmic amplification and limits on addictive design features.
- **Offer optional safer modes** voluntarily to adult users who wish to opt out of addictive design.

Education is more effective than blanket prohibition. We would:

- **Introduce a progressive digital curriculum** that is compulsory and covers digital literacy and digital citizenship.
- **Teach modern digital ethics** including online relationships, consent, critical media literacy, privacy, data protection, algorithms and democratic participation.
- **Address modern online pressures** within the curriculum, focusing on emotional resilience, body-image issues and the effects of addictive platform design.
- **Train youth support workers**, teachers and counsellors to fully understand the digital context of modern adolescence.
- **Provide accessible mental-health support** that directly recognises online experiences as integral to young people's real social lives.

Young people should also have a voice in the rules that shape their online lives. We would develop a Children's Digital Rights Charter establishing rights to:

- **Safe and meaningful digital participation** across online spaces.
- **Robust personal privacy** and comprehensive data protection.
- **Universal access to information** and targeted support services.
- **Direct policy consultation** on all future rules and regulations that affect their digital lives.

The Young Liberals also believe that people who earn their living through digital content deserve proper recognition and protection. We would establish a clear legal status for professional content creators as self-employed workers and extend appropriate rights relating to fair contracts, collective representation and protection from exploitation.

Culture, Media and Sport

The Young Liberals believe that culture, sport, and media should be accessible, community-focused, and serve the public good. We will support reforms that increase participation, improve access, and ensure that cultural and sporting institutions work for the people they serve, by:

- **Conducting a comprehensive review** of arts provision within schools
- **Increasing core funding** for libraries, museums, and theatres.
- **Introducing a ‘KulturPass’-style cultural allowance** for young people, and renewing formal participation in European cultural programmes.
- **Reversing planned funding cuts** to Arts Council England and the BBC, and reviewing into how both can better foster diverse cultural output.
- **Creating a National Community Cohesion Fund**, backing localised initiatives that actively promote grassroots integration, tolerance, and civic engagement.
- **Formulating a robust regulatory strategy** for social media and AI platforms, establishing clear legal definitions for misinformation and disinformation, whilst strictly safeguarding free expression.

Football is a major part of our culture, however there have been threats to it, including rich foreign investment funds buying into English clubs. We demand that action be taken to save the game we love, and adapt the rules and regulations to be fit for the 21st century. Our vision for football includes:

- **The adoption of the manifesto for football** as drafted by the independent football think-tank Fair Game.
- **The active promotion of footballing leagues** outside the top tier, dedicating resources toward women’s football and non-league setups.
- **Launching an intensive national consultation** geared toward restoring club governance to the fans, leaning on industry specialists and fan groups to cover:
 - Comprehensive reviews of ticket pricing models.
 - Statutory guarantees for the free-to-air broadcasting of select major

fixtures.

- Club ownership overhauls, inspired by successful models like German football's "50+1" fan-ownership rule.
- Structural Football Association (FA) reform, building out a fairer, independent practice for modern football regulation.

Political Reform and Local Government

The Young Liberals would deliver a fair deal for the people of Scotland and Wales by empowering their devolved governments to make decisions on a local level, including through further devolving powers on youth justice, prisons, policing and rail infrastructure to the Senedd.

The Young Liberals believe that democracy should be inclusive, representative, and accessible to all. Every citizen should have a voice in the democratic process, and public bodies should actively engage with the communities they serve rather than relying on consultation systems that favour the loudest or most privileged voices. We would:

- **Support the immediate introduction of Votes at 16** paired alongside mandatory, robust citizenship education.
- **Enact automatic voter registration** whilst completely scrapping voter ID rules that systematically suppress democratic participation.
- **Empower and financially unshackle local councils** to directly build the homes, childcare networks, green transport links, and youth spaces their communities need.
- **Ensure local democracy explicitly amplifies under-represented voices** rather than merely catering to those with disproportionate time, resources, and access, through:
 - The deployment of citizens' assemblies, including dedicated youth assemblies, representative panels, and stratified surveying methods that match local demographics.
 - Initiating deep outreach campaigns to marginalized communities via schools, further education colleges, youth organizations, and accessible pop-up community setups.
 - Guaranteeing that all public consultation processes are accessible by default, utilizing plain language, multiple digital/physical formats, and flexible modes of participation.
- **Extend full voting rights to all convicted prisoners** across the United

Kingdom, spanning elections to the UK Parliament, devolved legislatures, and local government.

- **Disestablish the Church of England** and remove the Lords Spiritual from the House of Lords, reaffirming our commitment to completely reform the upper house with a robust democratic mandate.

For a Fair Future

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