



**YOUNG
LIBERALS**

POLICY BOOK

Last updated August 2025 following Cambridge Summer Conference

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Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations



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

- 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



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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 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 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:

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.



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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 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
- 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



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- 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 2022

Lapses: Summer (August) 2027



A Fair Deal for Slaughterhouse Workers

Conference notes that:

- A. According to Jessica Slade and Emma Alleyne the meat industry employs 75,000 people in approximately 250 slaughterhouses in the UK. The majority of these employees have limited educational attainment and come from a low socioeconomic background, with migrants making up 70% of employees.
- B. The same paper states that slaughterhouse workers (SHWs) have been shown to have lower physical and psychological well-being compared with other professions
- C. Studies connect this employment to increased rates of domestic violence, substance abuse and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).
- D. The Welfare of Animals (Slaughter or Killing) Regulations 1995 states shackle line speeds should be used without undue haste and with proper regard for the welfare of the bird. It sets no specific maximum speed and does not take into account the safety of workers, while providing no requirement for other animals
- E. The huge demand for meat has encouraged slaughterhouses to increase the pace of slaughter, putting immense pressure on workers.
- F. Slaughterhouse workers are often asked to work long shifts in cold, damp, and noisy environments with inadequate hygiene facilities
- G. The Safe Slaughter Movement, supported by Alumni from Yale, aims to improve working conditions in Slaughterhouses by first building public support. Followed by a voluntary retail certification for meat products to empower and inform consumers that would then help introduce new regulations

Conference further believes:

- I. To improve working conditions in Slaughterhouses there must be a greater understanding in how this type of work affects employee well-being. Further work by the government, independent bodies and other groups is needed to hold employers to account in order to protect employees
- II. The welfare of both animals and SHWs should be considered with regards to shackle line speeds in slaughterhouses.
- III. It is important for the public to be aware of how their food is produced to be able to make better informed decisions that align with their beliefs

Conference calls for:

1. Further research to be carried out to:
 1. Understand the link between slaughterhouse employment and psychological (i.e. mental health) as well as behavioural (i.e. antisocial behaviour) outcomes
 2. Examine the psychological characteristics of individuals who seek employment in slaughterhouses as well as the longer-term effects of animal killing
2. Slaughterhouse employers to review all reasons for employee burnout, turnover and other performance issues
3. Independent inspections of slaughterhouse facilities to include a review of employee support provision
4. The government to:
 1. Regulate specific and reasonable shackle line speeds that allow employees to work safely without excessive stress
 2. Put an end to long shifts in the Slaughterhouse industry
 3. Require the implementation of clinical supervision requirements for slaughterhouse employees to help in the early identification of psychological well-being issues
5. The measures presented above to be implemented in part by the methods introduced by the Safe Slaughter Movement

Passed: London Summer Conference 2024

The Intergenerational Triple Lock

Conference recognises

- A. At the time it was brought in, the pension triple lock was an essential reform proposed by the Liberal Democrats in Government to restore the link between pensions and earnings after years of Labour failures.
- B. That since 2021 the Conservative Government has frozen tax thresholds in order to raise additional tax revenue, with the resulting “fiscal drag” being an effective stealth tax on working people.
- C. National Insurance was introduced by the Liberals as the bedrock of the welfare state when we were in Government over 100 years ago and was an absolutely essential and transformative reform.
- D. Research by the Resolution Foundation in 2022 found that 80% of workers aren’t saving at a level likely to deliver an acceptable standard of living in retirement.
 - a. According to the Living Wage Foundation (based on the work of the Resolution foundation) this standard can be reached if person aged 25 starts saving a sum equal to 12% of their income per year (or £2,800 per year).
 - i. This assumes said person works 37.5 hours per week for a living wage.
 - b. To ensure more people have an acceptable standard of living in retirement the Foundation calls for:
 - i. Increasing the minimum employer contribution in workplace pensions to rise from 3% to 7% of employee salary, or a minimum of £1,630 per year.
 - ii. Decreasing the autoenrollment age from 21 to 18.
 - iii. Enrolling all employees into a workplace pension regardless of income.
- E. According to Profile Pension the ideal amount of pension savings for a comfortable retirement is £247,000.
 - a. [ONS data](#) for April 2018 to March 2020 shows that only the richest 30% of households can be expected to have this level of private pension wealth.
 - b. This amount is also below the median private pension wealth for a person aged between 55 and the state pension age.

Conference believes

- I. That while it is essential to ensure that the state pension continues to support those in old age and make sure that everybody is able to enjoy retirement without financial insecurity, the balance of burdens across different generations has come to weigh far too much on the young.
- II. The current workplace pension system places too much of the responsibility for saving for retirement on individuals
 - a. The current employer minimum defined contribution is insufficient to help people save for a dignified, comfortable, and secure retirement.
 - b. Employers should contribute more to retirement savings.
 - c. This amount should aim to eventually match the pension industry’s recommended savings rate.
- III. That the increasing tax burden via fiscal drag alongside the housing and rental crisis, brexit and many other issues have primarily hit young and working people and have significantly contributed to and worsened the cost of living crisis for those on low and middle incomes.
- IV. National Insurance far too often has been used by Governments as a way to raise additional tax revenue, further putting burden on young and working people, and fails on modern standards of progressive taxation.
- V. Nobody on the National Minimum Wage should have a real terms cut to their income due to increases in inflation.
- VI. That in order to ensure overall fairness between the different generations there needs to be fundamental overall of tax, pay and pensions.

Conference calls on



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1. The Government to introduce a “Intergenerational Triple Lock” to ensure intergenerational fairness and prosperity, which shall include legislating to endure that
 1. The Income Tax personal allowance shall automatically increase each year by inflation
 2. The National Minimum Wage shall automatically increase each year by at least the rate of inflation, as measured by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).
 3. The State Pension shall automatically increase each year by either inflation or earnings growth, whichever is higher.
2. The Government to abolish employee National Insurance contributions and increase income tax to ensure that there is an overall tax revenue neutral position, with the burden of income tax raises to fall primarily on those on higher incomes to compensate for years of Conservative fiscal drag and give real terms tax cuts to those on low incomes.
3. The adoption of the pension reforms outlined by the Living Wage Foundation to ensure that a dignified retirement is more accessible, including:
 1. Increasing the minimum employer pension contribution to the higher of 7% of pre-tax income or £1630 per year.
 2. Decreasing the pension autoenrollment age from 21 to 18.
 3. Auto enrolling all employees into a workplace pension regardless of income.
4. Gradually increasing the minimum employer contribution to 10.5% of employee income, following the implementation of the Living Wage Foundation’s recommended reforms.
 1. The 10.5% figure is in line with the pension industry’s rule of thumb, for a person starting work at the age of 21.
 2. This change should be done over a 5-year period.
 3. The absolute minimum employer pension contribution should be raised to 10.5% of the income of a full-time worker on the living wage working 37.5 hours per week.

Passed: London Summer Conference 2024

Lapses: Summer (August) 2029



Taxing Gifts, Not Just Inheritance

Conference believes:

- A. The principle of taxing inheritance at point of death is good as it is a windfall on recipients, and therefore would not distort investment decisions, as it is a transfer which if perfectly unintended, cannot have caused a difference in recipient behaviour.
- B. John Stuart Mill posited, during the 19th Century, that limits to inheritance received would not affect desire of those to further build their fortune further, with a similar view taken by the 1978 Meade Commission that inheritance and gifts should be more heavily taxed than productive investments by one's self.
- C. The UK's current form of taxing receipts is via Inheritance Tax (IHT) and is easy to avoid with tax planning earlier in life, as any bequeathments more than 7 years before death are not taxed
- D. The UK is unique in two ways for its inheritance tax:
 - a. A singular headline rate at 40%, higher than most developed countries bar Japan, Korea and France; and
 - b. The combination of the then generous Agricultural Property Relief (APR) and Business Property Relief (BPR) alongside unquoted shares, including AIM, cost £2.2 billion in 2022-23 based on Treasury non-structural relief cost estimates, out of £7.09 billion IHT revenue.
- E. The combination of high wealth-centric reliefs on IHT is postulated by Mirrlees in his 2011 review as the reason for such a strong dislike for Inheritance Tax, as it leads to the belief that Inheritance Tax can be easily avoided.
- F. Inheritance Tax currently is the greatest benefit to marriage and civil-partnership, allowing full unused inheritance tax property allowance between domiciled spouse or civil partners.

Conference recalls that:

- a. It was Liberal Party Policy in 1966 to abolish the Estates Tax (a forerunner to Inheritance Tax) in favour of a taxation on gifts, regardless of when given.
- b. Lifetime gifts were taxed under the Capital Transfer Tax regime, which existed between 1975, albeit on a donor-based system much like modern Inheritance Tax, and 1984, at which point lifetime gifts were excluded and Inheritance Tax was formed.

Conference further believes:

- I. Tax design should mean everything within its base should be treated equally, to not cause distortions in people's investment or consumption behaviours in favour of certain types of assets
- II. Tax subsidy is not the best way to promote the support of investing, agricultural use or business start-up where current reliefs exist, as noted by Mirrlees, and should be supported by other funding measures
- III. A reformed Lifetime Gifts Tax should be based on a progressive marginal tax system, and should include a lifetime allowance per person, and a de minimis threshold for gifts per year, as suggested by Resolution Foundation in 2018.
- IV. Capital Gains forgiveness at death further cements a lock-in effect for assets within families, and the presence of an inheritance or gifts tax does not justify it.
- V. For equal treatment of cohabiting circumstances, any IHT reform should allow designation of a cohabiting person to receive any remaining allowance not used upon their passing.

Conference reaffirms Chapter 3.5 of Liberal Democrat Policy Paper 7, "Opportunity and Independence for All: Proposals to Improve the Tax and Benefits System", passed in Liberal Democrat Autumn Conference 1994 in Brighton, calling for the taxation of gifts on a recipient basis, not just inheritance, and the end of absolute reliefs of APR and BPR.



Conference calls for The Liberal Democrats to campaign for:

1. The implementation of a broad-base lifelong gifts tax, including the following:
 - A. A lifelong gifts allowance of £200,000 per person and an annual gifts allowance of £4000, both indexed to the average annualised 10 year gilt yield
 - B. Gifts to be taxed at 20% past the annual threshold once applicable, and at 35% at any gifts above £650,000.
 - C. Any unused lifetime allowance to be inheritable by named inheritors or next-of-kin
 - D. The end of APR and BPR as well as the relief on unquoted shares inherited.
2. The extension of the transferable spousal relief on IHT into a lifelong gifts tax regime, alongside its application by nomination by a donor to a cohabitant recipient.
3. The end of Capital Gains forgiveness at death, with the option to delay tax paid up until disposal, adjusted for inflation.

Passed: Online Winter Conference 2025

Lapses: Winter (February) 2030



Adopt a Holistic Approach to Assessing the UK's Economy

Conference notes that:

- A. Key economic indicators considered by the UK Government include:
 - A. Gross Domestic Product and productivity.
 - B. Inflation and interest rates.
 - C. Earnings and employment.
 - D. Public spending, borrowing and debt.
 - E. Trade and exchange rates.
 - F. Retail sales and consumer confidence.
 - G. House prices.
 - H. Household debt.
- B. The Office of National Statistics' tracking and assessment of the environment and net investments as factors in the UK's economic performance are sporadic.
- C. There are multiple composite indexes – including Gross National Happiness, the Inequality-adjusted Human Development Index and the OECD's Better Life Index – which measure a nation's economic performance by considering in addition to conventional economic indicators factors including:
 - A. Physical and mental health.
 - B. Education.
 - C. Community.
 - D. The environment.
 - E. Good governance and democratic engagement.
 - F. Life satisfaction.
 - G. Safety.
 - H. Work-life balance.
- D. The UK ranked thirteenth on the IHDI in 2023 at 0.869.
- E. According to the latest YouGov polling from March 2025:
 - A. 81% of Britons said that the government was badly handling the cost-of-living crisis.
 - B. 70% of Britons said that the government was managing the economy badly when responding to the Spring Statement.

Conference believes that standard economic indicators such as GDP and employment rates fail to adequately assess individual or community experiences of the UK economy, including regional wealth inequality, income inequality, work satisfaction, underemployment, and social mobility.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat support for:

- I. Creating good jobs and prosperity in every nation and region of the UK.
- II. Fostering the stability, certainty and confidence that are vital for economic growth and investment.
- III. Increasing investment in green infrastructure, including renewable energy and zero-carbon transport, industry and housing.
- IV. Making the tax system fairer and raising the money needed for our investment plans.
- V. Ensuring the UK has the highest possible standards of environmental, health, labour and consumer protection, at least matching EU standards.
- VI. Tackling the productivity crisis by encouraging businesses to invest in training, take up digital technologies and become more energy efficient.
- VII. Unlocking British businesses' global potential, bring down trade barriers and use UK trade policy as a force.
- VIII. Cutting resource use, waste and pollution by accelerating the transition to a more circular economy that maximises the recovery, reuse, recycling and remanufacturing of products.
- IX. Remaining committed to delivering the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the UK and around the world.

Conference urges the UK Government to:



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1. Adopt a model for economic policy formulation which, in addition to traditional indicators of economic performance such as GDP and employment rates, considers:
 - i. Additional economic factors including:
 - A. Work-life balance.
 - B. Work satisfaction.
 - C. Wealth inequality.
 - D. Income inequality.
 - E. Regional economic inequality.
 - ii. Societal factors including:
 - A. Environmental quality and health.
 - B. Physical and mental health.
 - C. Education.
 - D. Community and region.
 - E. Quality of governance and democratic engagement.
 - F. Life satisfaction and happiness.
 - G. Safety and crime.
2. Provide the ONS with the additional funding and staffing necessary for the tracking and assessment of such factors.
3. Promote a culture in which economic growth:
 - i. Is emphasised as a means of affording essential services.
 - ii. Is not prioritised at the expense of:
 - A. The environment.
 - B. Living standards.
 - C. Employment protections.
 - iii. Is not treated primarily as a mark of national prestige.

Passed: Summer Conference 2025

Lapses: Summer 2030



4 Day Work Week

Conference notes that:

- A. A four-day work week is considered to improve both work productivity and improve workers work/life balance.
- B. Sick leave and electricity usage is decreased, saving the business money and showcasing the benefit to wellbeing and productivity.
- C. Maintaining a five day business week would allow hours to be spread out to suit various lifestyles and provide the opportunity to engage in life admin within the work week more easily.
- D. A four-day work week increases recruitment opportunities for businesses.
- E. A four-day work week would greatly benefit liberation groups such as women and carers.
- F. A four-day work week for the majority of workers would increase sustainability and decrease carbon footprints.
- G. A four-day work week increases efficiency while decreasing hours spent at work on unnecessary tasks.

Conference believes that:

- I. A rebalance is needed for the majority of individuals' and sectors' work/life balance.
- II. A four day work week would invigorate the working population and increase economical outputs.

Conference calls for:

- 1. The UK Government to move to a four day work week for all employees while maintaining a five day business week.
- 2. The UK government to explore and then implement how to incentive businesses to move to a four day work week with a five day business week.
- 3. All councils to move to a four day work week for all employees while maintaining a five day business week.

Passed: Summer Conference 2025

Lapses: Summer 2030

Home Affairs and Justice



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 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 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 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.
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



Towards A Liberal Approach to Surveillance Technology

Conference believes:

1. In 2021, the UK was one of the most surveilled countries in the world, with London being the 2nd most surveilled city when measured in cameras per square mile.
2. The number of CCTV cameras operated by London borough councils has increased by 238.16% since 2012 however the crime rate between 2010 and 2022 only decreased by 5.6%.
3. The repeated attempts by the home office to restrict the scope of the surveillance camera commissioners' work with the role now having been abolished.
4. Police forces frequently fail to conduct sufficient security auditing of their systems including surveillance systems.
5. The failure of many current police forces to adequately assess the ethical implications of deploying UAVs with several forces having no external scrutiny mechanism.
6. Increasing prevalence of surveillance camera technology that is wholly or partially developed by companies with substantial links to China and its state surveillance practices
7. The projected 26% increase in the security and access control equipment market between 2021 and 2025.
8. Surveillance cameras reduce crime in an area but do not eliminate it and are most effective when used in combination with complementary measures.
9. The Surveillance Camera Code of Practice which provides compulsory guidance for government bodies on their use and advisory guidance for private CCTV operators.

Conference further believes:

- A. Individuals have a right to live their lives without being monitored or recorded in their day-to-day activities.
- B. The most effective way to reduce crime is to tackle the root causes and prevent re-offending.
- C. Surveillance technology can be used to reduce crime in the short term, however, this should be done in conjunction with other measures enabling the surveillance technology to be phased out.
- D. The proliferation of increasingly advanced surveillance cameras owned by individuals and businesses is a threat to the liberty of individuals.

Conference calls for:

- I. The creation of a classification system for surveillance cameras based on; the quality of footage acquired, duration of storage, internet access and other features based on a survey of options present in the market.
- II. For the classification system to be regularly updated in line with new developments to ensure it remains relevant.
- III. The government to update the Surveillance Camera Code of Practice and make it legally enforceable for all operators of CCTV above a level of capability to specified post consultation.
- IV. Require internet-connected surveillance technology sold in the UK to have undergone security auditing at a level to be set by the National Cyber Security Center.
- V. Local police forces to be given sufficient guidance on how they should provide ethical oversight to the use of surveillance technology.

Passed: Sheffield Winter Conference 2024

Lapses: Winter (February) 2029



For a fully regulated drug market

Conference believes:

1. The continued height of drug use deaths within England and Wales, standing at 4,907 deaths in 2022, according to the Office for National Statistics.
2. In a 2020 interview by PsychedelicsToday with neuropsychopharmacologist Dr Carl Hart, that preferential status given to both cannabis and psychedelics detracts from the universality to all substances of arguments for drug legalisation and regulation.
3. Over the past decade, Transform has released guides for legalised, regulated markets for the following drugs/drug classes, concerning:
 - a. Cannabis, through its "How to Regulate Cannabis: A practical guide" first released 2013, discussing approaches in how to regulate differential preparations, including setting standards for thc liquids and vaporisers; use of THC standard unit for taxation on production; standardised packaging and potential for home growing and government regulated centres.
 - b. Stimulants, through its "How to Regulate Stimulants: A Practical Guide" released in 2020, suggests a purchase licensing model for dexamphetamine, MDMA and powder cocaine; a commercial retail model for lower potency stimulants like cocoa leaves; and a tighter harm reduction approach of access to paraphernalia for crack cocaine, injected amphetamine and smoked/injected methamphetamine.
 - c. Psychedelics, through its "How to Regulate Psychedelics: A Practical Guide" released in 2023, suggesting both a membership based not-for profit association model for plant-based psychedelics, and a more open market/retail licensing model for plant-based psychedelics (and LSD) with its principles still applicable to other psychedelics.
4. In 2023, Bern's Legislature endorsed plans for pilots for sale of small amounts of cocaine for recreational use.
5. The recent scheduling of Nitrous Oxide as a Class C controlled substance by the UK Government, dismissing the advice of the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs in its 2023 updated harms assessment.
6. The plans by the Government to enact smoke-free generation legislation, banning the sale of any tobacco product for anyone born after January 1st 2009.
7. Criticism from Transform in October 2023 for a smoke-free generation policy was that non-combustible tobacco products can provide harm reduction and act as an avenue towards quitting smoking tobacco.
8. The Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs called for consideration of intranasal (IN) naloxone to be over-the-counter (OTC) through its 2016 report "Reducing Opioid-Related Deaths in the UK", as a wider public health approach to tackling fatal opioid overdoses.
9. That Canada changed the law in 2016 to allow for intramuscular (IM) (and later in 2018 for IN) prepared forms of naloxone sold OTC.

Conference Reaffirms That:

- a. Young Liberals commitment to Cannabis legalisation, most recently stated in the Summer 2021 motion "Legalisation of Cannabis" and the Liberal Democrats' long standing commitment most recently expressed in the 2019 General Election manifesto.
- b. Young Liberals commitment, via the Summer 2021 motion, for the decriminalisation of LSD and MDMA.

Conference further believes:

- A. As Liberals, it would be irresponsible to only prioritise certain psychoactive substances for regulation on equality grounds given potential to leave behind some drug users, when the arguments for regulation are consistent across all substances.
- B. The scheduling of nitrous oxide will not lead to a wide reduction in use or a reduction of harm of nitrous oxide, as previously seen in response to the psychoactive substances act where recreational use shifted away from whippets to larger cylinders.



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- C. That the pursuit of a smoke-free generation style policy on all tobacco is inconsistent with a well regulated drugs market policy, and will not credibly lead to the aims of low tobacco usage without other policies such as denicotinisation.

Conference Calls for:

- I. The Liberal Democrats to support a regulated market for as many psychoactive substances as possible, with regulations tailored towards their harms, repealing both the Misuse of Drugs Act and Psychoactive Substances Act in their entirety, as an extension to current policy on Cannabis legalisation.
- II. The Liberal Democrats to back the principles towards regulation of different drugs based on their classes and evidence of their harms presented within Transform's drug regulation guides.
- III. The Liberal Democrats to work cross-sector, with drug policy reformers, public health experts and economists, to develop a comprehensive proposal for a platform concerning drug regulation.
- IV. The Liberal Democrats to continue to oppose the piecemeal approach to making psychoactive substances illegal through the Misuse of Drugs Act, and the Government to reverse the recent scheduling of Nitrous Oxide, instead having its volume per canister sold to consumers regulated accompanied with a deposit return scheme.
- V. The Liberal Democrats, in line with having a regulated market for all psychoactive substances, to oppose proposals for the smokefree generation policy proposed by the U.K. government, but failing that, the Government to implement the policy only for combustible tobacco products.
- VI. The support IN prepared form of naloxone to be made OTC and to support a review on whether IM prepared form access could be further widened.

Passed: Sheffield Winter Conference 2024

Lapses: Winter (February) 2029

Emergency Motion: The Rise of the Far Right

Conference notes:

- A. The far-right riots that took place in many parts of the UK in Summer 2024, after widespread misinformation about the religion of the perpetrator of the tragic mass stabbing in Southport
- B. The targeting of these riots on migrants and asylum seekers.
- C. That these riots took place in places with high immigrant populations.
- D. That hate directed towards Muslims and South Asian communities has a distinctly gendered nature, with women being specifically targeted. For example having head scarfs forcibly removed whilst walking.
- E. Over 700 rioters have been arrested
- F. The initial weak response to these riots by the Labour Government along with poorly calculated statements by Labour MPs.
- G. Responses by some MPs helping to spread misinformation, such as so called 'two-tier policing'.
- H. Counter protests taking place to spread love over hate.

Conference believes:

- I. Everyone has the right to live in safety, free from the threat of violence.
- II. That violence against women and girls is explicitly linked to the violence of recent weeks. Not just through the triggering event but through the way in which women have been explicitly victimised.
- III. The far right has no place in our politics.
- IV. Diversity is our strength, and our communities are greater for it.
- V. Appropriate language must be used to describe these rioters (ie. Not protestors, but rioters)
- VI. There should be laws in place to prosecute those who spread misinformation leading to large-scale disruption, where "misinformation" is a statement passed on as fact, and is not known to be true
- VII. There should be corporate social responsibility for social media distributing the content, and AI services creating the content.

Conference calls for:

- 1. The party to continue to reach out to all communities who have been impacted by these riots.
- 2. The UK government to create a National Community Cohesion Fund, which would award grants to local authorities, community organisations, and charities to fund initiatives aimed at supporting community cohesion, tolerance, and integration.
- 3. The government to stand up for asylum seekers currently in the UK and guarantee basic civil liberties to refugees and asylum seekers.
- 4. The rioters to be sentenced as harshly as other rioters and protesters that seek to disrupt our way of life.
- 5. The UK Government to form a strategy for regulating social media companies, and AI services to ensure they are held to corporate social responsibilities.
- 6. The Liberal Democrats to call for a legal definition of misinformation and disinformation to be created in order to support liberal regulations for social media companies and AI services.

Passed: London Summer Conference 2024

Lapses: Summer (August) 2029

Social Justice



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.
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.



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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 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 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 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 LGBTIQ+ 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.
- 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 2021

Lapses: Winter (February) 2026



Children in Care and Care Leavers

Conference notes that:

1. 99,000 children are considered children in care in the UK.
2. The Liberal Democrats currently only mention care leavers in motions to do with other problems such as homelessness.
3. Care leavers only have a pathway plan from the age of 16 to 21.
4. 16 year olds who become homeless or estranged cannot easily find support
5. 1 in 4 young care leavers have had to sofa surf.
6. 14% of young care leavers have slept rough.
7. 40% of care leavers are unable to pay the required deposit for housing.
8. 57% of care leavers feel unsafe in the area they originally lived in.
9. 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.
10. Children in care are less likely to achieve their academic potential.
11. 12% of care leavers have entered higher education by the age of 23 - this has doubled over the last decade.
12. The average child in care enters care at aged 14, which is a crucial point academically.
13. Care leavers have sometimes lived in up to 20 foster placements and care homes.
14. Government statistics do not always match up with charity statistics on care leaver wellbeing.
15. Care leavers often rely on universal credit as their main source of income.
16. Care leaver/children in care mental health support.

Conference believes that:

- A. Care leavers are vulnerable young adults who need the support of both their local authority and government.
- B. 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.
- C. Care leavers starting at the age of 16 could be inhibiting their ability to attend education post 16.
- D. Children in care deserve equal access to education and support.
- E. All children deserve full support in reaching their potential, no matter their circumstances.

Conference resolves that:

- I. 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.
- II. Care leavers should have support transferring local authorities if they wish, including communication between the two and agreed funding.
- III. 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.
- IV. All 16 year olds should be allowed the opportunity to stay in care until the age of 25.
- V. 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.
- VI. Moving children in care should only happen when necessary.
- VII. Children in care should be supported with exam resits and revision support by both local authorities and schools.
- VIII. 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.
- IX. Children in care should be offered tutoring and mentoring from the age of 13 provided by local authorities and schools.
- X. All universities should be encouraged to provide support for care leavers outside of term time.



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- XI. 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.
- XII. Care leavers should have access to support in the form of mentors and advisors throughout their life, even after the age of 21.
- XIII. Care leavers should have access to CAMHS up until the age of 25.

Passed: Online Winter Conference 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 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



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4. A greater focus on tackling spiking within emergency services:
 - 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 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 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.
- 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:



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- 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.
 - 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.



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- 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, whilst 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
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 Antisemitism and Reaffirming the IHRA Definition

Conference believes:

- A. The English Young Liberals passed interim policy titled "Recommitting to the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism" in December 2023.
- B. That there has been a significant increase in the levels of antisemitism, both online and in material violence and abuse, since the start of the Israel-Hamas War on 7 October.
 - a. With the Community Security Trust recording the highest 28-day total since it started counting in 1984 following 7 October with 1,019 antisemitic hate incidents including 47 assaults and incidents involving the targeting of children and schools
 - b. Furthermore the Metropolitan Police, covering London, showed that 218 antisemitic offences were recorded from 1 October to 18 October 2023, compared with 15 in the same period in 2022.
- C. The words of Layla Moran MP, Spokesperson for International Affairs in October 2023 that "Liberal Democrats stand in solidarity with the Jewish community - in the UK, in Israel and around the world - who feel fear and grief. We utterly condemn the antisemitic incidents in the UK which have tragically already increased following this awful violence. Israel has, without question, a right in international law to defend its territory and its citizens. We fully support that right."

Conference believes that while people are within their rights to critique the actions of the IDF and the Israeli Government in their response to Hamas' attacks this must not be used to excuse behaviour, words and actions that are antisemitic, and that antisemitism and antisemites have no place in the Liberal Democrats.

Conference recommits the Young Liberals to adopting, upholding and enforcing the IHRA Working Definition of Antisemitism and all of its working examples and stands in solidarity with Jewish members of the Young Liberals and the wider Liberal Democrats in the face of increased antisemitism.

Conference calls on:

1. All levels of the Liberal Democrats to continue to adopt, uphold and enforce the IHRA Working Definition and all of its examples
 - a. In particular that in the current climate ensure that it is made clear to both party members and non party members that the party continues to adopt and uphold the definition and takes a unequivocal zero tolerance stance against antisemitism.
2. The Young Liberals Federal Executive to operate a zero tolerance stance on antisemitism and breaches of the IHRA Working Definition and use all necessary sanctions and measures at their disposal.
3. All members of the Young Liberals and the Liberal Democrats to ensure they are at all times adhering to the IHRA Working Definition and its examples
 - a. In particular when discussing the aftermath of the Hamas terrorist attacks on Israel and subsequent military response from Israel against Hamas, including but not limited to not:
 - i. Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
 - ii. Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.
 - iii. Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
 - iv. Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
 - v. Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
 - vi. Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.



- vii. Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.

Passed: Sheffield Winter Conference 2024

Lapses: Winter (February) 2029

Representation Is Not Optional: Women at the Table

Conference notes that:

- A. Women are significantly left out of decision making both in terms of representation through election and in consultations.
- B. Women are more likely to rely on public transport
- C. Women are more likely to have a significant caring role throughout their lives. The societal expectation, or Motherhood Penalty, placed upon women to fulfil care responsibilities alongside their careers has financial implications for the autonomy of women.
- D. Many data sets are incomplete in terms of recognising gender.
- E. When attempting to pursue careers in male dominated spaces, women are often subjected to discrimination, gaslighting, and bias making it harder to sustain these jobs and roles without it impacting their emotional and physical health.
- F. Men's view of women matters and can delay equality, especially in the current contexts where leadership roles in Government, public bodies and private organisations are overwhelmingly held by men who are unwilling to hold space for women.
- G. The gendered pay gap, at an average of £631 deficit per month, results in women being more likely to find themselves in financial poverty.
- H. A significant number of people in financially vulnerable circumstances are women, with some figures showing a quarter of women of working age are economically inactive (often due to care arrangements and the cost of childcare) which can increase the debt risk and financial stressors in establishing financial independence.
- I. Women without a private pension sits at a doubled figure compared with figures of men who do not have in place. In addition, the gap between gender's contributions is wide as the payments stemming from income are reduced with the imbalance of family leave between men and women, and the expectation upon women to often shift their work roles to prioritise child rearing.
- J. That women from marginalised communities such as those coming from lower economic backgrounds and women of colour, are even more likely to experience these barriers.

Conference believes that:

- I. Every person deserves equal access and equal rights regardless of their gender.
- II. All genders should be empowered to achieve their best, independently.
- III. Addressing these issues should not be the sole responsibility of the affected genders, but also lies with our male allies.
- IV. Intersectionality is integral to achieving gender equity and inclusion.

Conference calls for:

1. The Government to mandate that all government supported or funded focus groups, outside of situations where only other genders are relevant, must include at least 40% women, 40% men (and remaining 20% open to any identification) mix at leadership levels.
2. The Government to only provide funding where gender (and sex when relevant) are acknowledged and taken into account as a variable.
3. The Government to enforce a gendered lens on all policy assessment moving forward and encourage all providers and local governments to do the same.
4. The Government to mandate that all NHS training should acknowledge a gendered view of diagnosis and treatment, including but not limited to, studies, textbooks and examples.
5. The Government to provide support in educating men and other genders in supporting women, such as: * Ensuring that all school textbooks with images must include photos of all genders. * Encouraging schools to abolish gender segregation in lessons around sex and puberty.
6. The Government to reform financial policies by: * Introducing automatic pension top-ups for women who take extended family leave, to compensate for income-based contribution gaps. * Mandating that all pension providers report and publicly disclose gender disparities in pension savings, access, and outcomes. * Providing targeted financial



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education and pension support schemes for women, particularly those in caring roles or economically inactive due to unpaid labour. * Rebalancing tax reliefs and incentives to better support lower-income earners - especially women affected by the motherhood penalty and gendered work patterns.

7. The Liberal Democrats to recognise the impact on all genders in policy moving forward.
8. The Liberal Democrats to use All Women Shortlists whenever legal and pursue embedding this practice alongside training and changing practices to ensure women are able to engage * The Liberal Democrats should furthermore fight to ensure All Women Shortlists include all women, inclusive of trans women.
9. The Liberal Democrats to proactively ensure that candidates, campaigners and staff have access to and are provided with education on gender inclusivity to combat micro aggressions and bias within our own organisations

Passed: Summer Conference 2025

Lapses: Summer 2030

LGTBQAI+ Liberation



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 life 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 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 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



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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 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.
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.



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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

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:

- I. It is in the best interests of the UK to remain a part of Erasmus+.
- II. Withdrawing from the Jean Monnet Actions will have a detrimental impact upon teaching and research in higher education in the UK.
- III. Efforts to create a scheme which extends beyond Europe should exist alongside participation in Erasmus+ and not replace it.
- IV. 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.
- V. The inability to access the Erasmus+ scheme in England, Scotland, and Wales may disincentivise Northern Irish students from studying there.
- VI. EU students will be disincentivised from coming to the UK and be more likely to go to other countries participating in Erasmus+.



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- VII. 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 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,
- 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;



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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 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
- 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



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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 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 2021

Lapses: Summer (August) 2026



A Brighter Future for Myanmar

Conference notes:

- I. 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.
- II. 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).
- III. In 2021, the Tatmadaw launched another coup to overthrow the civil government.
- IV. More than 710 people have been murdered since 1 February 2021, including 44 children (as of 31 March 2021).
- V. 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.
- VI. The major democratic opposition party National League for Democracy (NLD) won an overwhelming majority in the national elections held on the 8th November 2020.
- VII. Several elected cabinet ministers and parliamentarians of the NLD are still illegally detained by the Tatmadaw on spurious charges.
- VIII. 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 manner in future elections and governments.

Passed: Edinburgh Winter Conference 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 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 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



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 2022

Lapses: Summer (August) 2027



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 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 2022

Lapses: Summer (August) 2027

Restore Democracy and Liberty in Hong Kong

Conference believes that:

1. Hong Kong is now facing a democratic backslide given the proposal of reducing the amount of directly elected seats in the municipal-level organisation to about 20 percent from approximately the current 90 percent.
2. Hong Kong is a Special Administrative Region of China under the "one country, two systems"-framework and is supposed to be autonomous from Beijing. Hong Kong's autonomy is currently being stripped more and more by each passing day, with the CCP centralising more power from Hong Kong to Beijing. John Lee, the Chief Executive of Hong Kong has counterfactually stated that "[the] pure counting [of] election votes mean democracy".
3. The Hong Kong Government abused the newly legislated National Security Law to persecute their political opponents. As of April 2023, 250 Hong Kong citizens have been arrested under Beijing-imposed legislation since its implementation in 2020.
4. The Hong Kong police have put arrest bounties on political activists who are living in exile abroad, including two in the UK.
5. The British government has not sanctioned any Hong Kong and Beijing officials since the crackdowns on democracy and political dissenters.

Conference further believes that:

- A. The legislation of the National Security Law violates the rights of the citizens of Hong Kong. Political dissenters who expressed their disapprovals with the Government faced harsh imprisonment.
- B. The electoral reform proposed by Beijing, as an addition to other crackdowns, is not only a clear violation of the "one country, two systems" framework, but also a undemocratic progress to weaken Hong Kong citizens' rights.
- C. Universal suffrage is a human right. Hong Kong citizens deserve the right to participate in government, and to elect the Chief Executive, the head of the regional government.
- D. The will of the people shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections, which shall be by universal and equal suffrage.
- E. Putting arrest bounties on overseas political dissenters is a form of transnational repression.
- F. We, the Liberals, have the moral responsibility to fight against all sorts of transnational repression imposed by any authoritarian regimes, including the Hong Kong and Beijing governments.

Conference calls for:

- I. The condemnation of the newly imposed National Security Legislation, and ex post facto usage of the Law against political opponents and ordinary democratically inspired citizens.
- II. The condemnation of the recent parliamentary reforms as put forward by Beijing and Hong Kong governments.
- III. The Hong Kong government to reverse the new undemocratic changes that they made since 30 June, 2022, and to drop the politically motivated charges and release all the elected legislators and activists detained under the National Security Law.
- IV. Unwavering support for Hong Kong democracy movements, and their rights of self-determination
- V. Liberal democratic countries to acknowledge and commit to addressing the transnational repressions imposed by the Hong Kong and Beijing governments.

Passed: Sheffield Winter Conference 2024

Lapses: Winter (February) 2029



Justice and Freedom in Georgia

Conference believes:

- A. The Georgian people have consistently, and overwhelmingly indicated that they want to live in a state that is committed to the Rule of Law, Democratic Governance and the European Project. With every election in Modern Georgian history being won by a party promising further integration with the West.
- B. Sadly, Georgian democracy has come under violent attack both in the streets and within its legislature.

Conference further believes:

- I. Georgia's Democracy, and the Georgian people's rights have sadly and consistently been under attack for well over a decade now. With demands for further integration into the Western World being ignored, and Protesters and Civic society activists being subject to human rights abuses and state-sponsored violence.
- II. It's impossible to separate this attack on Georgian Civic Society from its relationship with its largest neighbour Russia, who in 2008 brutally and illegally invaded Georgia.
- III. That although the conflict has been 'frozen' for over a decade, Russian-facing politicians have been at the forefront of the fight to erode Georgia's democracy, with the 'Georgian Dream' Party which came to power in the years following the war being led by a group with strong ties to Russia. Initially, Georgian Dream continued to work towards better relations with Europe. But in recent years Georgian democracy and civic society have consistently come under attack.
- IV. That in spite of this, Georgian Civic Society has flourished, in no small part thanks to European based NGOs and TNOs such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, and Friedrich Naumann Foundation which have all sought to promote Liberal values in Georgia, alongside providing valuable professional and political opportunities for it's Youth.
- V. That the attack on Georgian Democracy and Civic Society has been highlighted through the Government's attempt to introduce a 'Foreign Agent' law which seeks to undermine NGOs independence and suppress freedom of speech, through shaming charities, events and individuals which receive significant funding from Western groups, cataloguing Individuals, as well as groups, who they deem to be 'Foreign Agents'.
- VI. Opposition to the introduction of the 'Foreign Agent' law has been met with widespread opposition, with thousands of, mostly young, protesters taking to the streets of Tbilisi. Unfortunately this was met with violence from both the Police, Armed Forces and counter-demonstrators.
- VII. The International Community's reaction has been mixed. Whilst several European Governments were quick to denounce the Government's actions, many have been quiet - including our own.
- VIII. In May the US State Department announced that it would sanction several figures at the head of Georgian Dream, restricting their ability to gain VISAs.
- IX. This commitment to sanctions has not been met by the UK, in spite of our strong ties with the elite of Georgia.

Conference reaffirms:

- X. That as outlined in the Liberal Democrats constitution 'Our [The Parties] responsibility for justice and liberty cannot be confined by national boundaries'
- XI. The Young Liberals, being the youth wing of the Liberal Democrats, are bound by this constitutional responsibility.

Conference therefore believes:



YOUNG LIBERALS POLICY BOOK

1. The Young Liberals have a duty to loudly support Youth lead movements that call for Justice and Liberty around the world.
2. That the United Kingdom, and the International Community have so far failed to support the people of Georgia.
3. That this year's Parliamentary elections in Georgia are pivotal.
4. That the Foreign Agent Law must be rescinded, justice must be served for the victims of Police brutality, and independent observers must be allowed to verify this year's elections.
5. That the Liberal Democrats and Young Liberals have an obligation to join other Liberal Groups in denouncing Georgian Dream and calling for sanctions.
6. That the actions of Georgian Dream are not only undemocratic and illiberal, but also a direct, violent attack on Georgia's youth.

Conference calls for:

7. The UK government to condemn the Actions of the Georgian Government both in its attempts to crack down on civil liberties and its violent response to peaceful protests.
8. The UK government to match all sanctions introduced by the USA, and explore further measures until the Georgian government rescinds the Foreign Agent Law, releases all prisoners detained during the protests, and allows for a fair enquiry into the handling of the for protests.
9. The UK government to support all efforts to observe this year's elections in Georgia in order to ensure there is a fair, democratic outcome.
10. Renewed support for Georgian efforts to join NATO and the EU.

Passed: London Summer Conference 2024

Lapses: Summer (August) 2029



Fighting Against Transnational Repression in Asia

Conference believes that:

- A. Transnational authoritarianism is characterised by the breaking down of the boundaries between state-led, domestic forms of control over citizens living “at home” and long-distance forms of repression targeting those who reside “abroad”.
- B. Authoritarian states, such as China, Laos, Myanmar, and Cambodia, conduct political repression against their citizens who reside abroad.

Conference further believes that:

- I. Transnational repression creates and encourages domestic political persecution abroad, precipitating unjust negative impacts on both targets of repression and the foreign communities in which they may reside.
- II. There is no room for authoritarianism in a liberal democratic world.
- III. No one should face any form of persecution because of their political opinions.
- IV. Nation states have no jurisdiction or just cause to actively pursue or repress individuals residing outside of their borders without the express consent of the government under which those individuals currently reside.
- V. Under the principle of state sovereignty, it is unacceptable for any foreign government to coerce, or attempt to coerce, another country into oppressing exiled dissenters who reside abroad.

Conference calls for:

- 1. The condemnation of all forms of transnational repression imposed by Asian authoritarian states.
- 2. Sanctions to be imposed upon the relevant officials of Asian authoritarian states who conduct transnational repression.
- 3. The Young Liberals and the Liberal Democrats to work closely with our Asian regional sister party, the Council of Asian Liberals and Democrats Youth (CALD Youth), to support their campaign to fight against transnational repression in Asia.
- 4. The British government to work with like-minded democratic countries to acknowledge and commit to combating the transnational repressions perpetrated by authoritarian countries.

Passed: London Summer Conference 2024

Lapses: Summer (August) 2029



Somaliland Recognition Bill

Conference Believes:

- A. That nobody should live under the oppression of another government.
- B. That violent rebellions are never the right answer and that diplomatic measures are always superior and the first resort.
- C. The Memorandum of Understanding given to Somaliland by Ethiopia is exploitative despite its good effect.
- D. That people are in a very bad situation in this region, living in poverty with little infrastructure and a very unstable political situation.
- E. That by giving international recognition it would receive much needed investment from UN bodies, the World Bank, the IMF and many countries.

Conference affirms:

- I. Article 15 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of human rights.
- II. The sentiments and effects of A/HRC/RES/32/5.
- III. The Constitution of Somaliland which was voted for by 97% of voters with a turn out of 99.9% of eligible voters
- IV. Somaliland's interest in joining the commonwealth

Conference Calls for:

- 1. The United Kingdom of Great Britain to recognise the state of Somaliland and its government as a legitimate and sovereign nation and hopes to proceed with further diplomacy with the nation, including but not limited to establishing (with permission from the Government of Somaliland) an embassy in Somaliland as well as offering Somaliland an embassy in the United Kingdom.
- 2. The UK to bring forward a motion in the United Nations so as to bring forward a General Assembly resolution, like that done with Palestine, so as to have it an officially and internationally recognised country:
 - a. Additionally the UK will, upon the passing of such a resolution:
 - i. the United Kingdom will further the call for aid from bodies like the World Bank and International Monetary Fund so as to provide this nation with funds which it strongly needs to help stabilise the nation;
 - ii. the United Kingdom will continue to call for Somaliland to become a fully fledged and legitimate member of the United Nations;
 - iii. the United Kingdom to ensure that a diplomatic conference between Somalia and Somaliland is held, no more than 6 months after international recognition is given through the UN to Somaliland, which will be held in a neutral country with a neutral mediator decided by the countries, for the purpose of negotiating the disputes like border diplomatically so as to avoid conflict;
- 3. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland to start the process for the then recognised country of Somaliland to be a member of the Commonwealth following its request.

Passed: Online Winter Conference 2025

Lapses: Winter (February) 2030



A Liberal Future for Two States

Conference affirms and acknowledges the strong policy positions that the Young Liberals have associated with on the issue of the conflict including: The Autumn 2021 Federal Conference motion F39, Towards a Lasting Peace, and the Autumn 2024 Federal Conference motion F32, The Israel-Gaza Conflict - an immediate bilateral ceasefire and securing two states. The 44th IFLRY General Assembly's motion, On the Future of Israel Palestine. However it recognises the need for the Young Liberals to have its own, defined position on the conflict.

Conference notes:

- A. That a two state solution has been the stated, consensus goal of the International Community since 1947.
- B. Despite this consensus, there has sadly been no consistent, meaningful progress towards the long term establishment of a normalised, two state solution, with multiple conflicts resulting in 10,000s of deaths and the eventual occupation of much of the former Palestinian state by Israel.
- C. That the Oslo process, meant to result in a two-state solution on the basis that Israel would halt the expansion of settlements in the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, and that Palestinian groups would cease terrorist activities directed against Israel, failed as neither side honored these intentions.
- D. The failure to justly resolve the Israel-Palestine question fuels extremism, violence and instability throughout the region and beyond.
- E. Israeli and Palestinian civilians are the victims of this impasse, as demonstrated so cruelly by the murderous violence of both the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories and the attacks of 7th October 2023.
- F. That the illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories by Israel, the expansion of illegal settlements and mass forced displacement of Palestinians in the West Bank, the oppressive dictatorship of Hamas within Gaza, as well as the devastation caused by Israel's military operation in Gaza has led to Palestinians being unable to establish their own state or live free lives.
- G. That none of this violent repression has brought lasting security to Israeli civilians from dangers posed by Palestinian and non-Palestinian militants.
- H. That the continuation of the conflict and inability to find a lasting, peaceful two-state solution has led to erosion of civil society in both Israel and Palestine respectively; with Hamas capturing much of the state mechanism within the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli Government being dominated by corrupt, anti-democratic, pro conflict extremists who have used the continuation of the war as an excuse to erode Israel's democratic society.
- I. Although the horrific conflict sparked by the October 7th massacre was briefly halted by a bilateral ceasefire, Israel violated it by resuming military operations in March 2025 and renewed its murderous war in Gaza leading to the collapse of all semblance of state based authority in the territory, whilst escalating its brutal policy of ethnic cleansing in the West Bank.
- J. That Israel's blockade of humanitarian aid into Gaza has caused catastrophic hunger, medical collapse and suffering, with international agencies blocked from delivering life saving supplies; that the only way is to resolve this is to allow full unimpeded access to the UN and aid agencies, with an end to the dangerous US backed militarised aid delivery system.
- K. The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity, whilst other Israeli Ministers have been sanctioned by the UK government - three members of Hamas have also been prosecuted but have since passed away.
- L. The decision of the International Court of Justice in January 2024 found that there are plausible grounds to believe that Israel is committing acts of genocide against Palestinians in Gaza; and that it ordered Israel to take immediate measures to prevent genocide, punish those who incite genocide and allow in humanitarian aid.



- M. That the current Israeli government not only failed to take any steps to prevent genocide but has ramped up its activities and its rhetoric, which has led human rights experts to conclude that genocide is being committed.
- N. That the UK and other western governments have failed to hold Israel to account, and are continuing to supply arms and provide military support to Israel, despite condemning the actions of the current Israeli government; including by providing training to Israel Defence Forces Personnel on UK soil and conducting surveillance flights over Gaza.
- O. That the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement remains in effect despite explicitly including respect for human rights as an “essential element” in the agreement.
- P. Hamas has still not released all of the hostages, let alone returned all of the bodies of deceased hostages, so cruelly taken on 7th October 2023, and that Israel has increased by thousands the number of Palestinians it has seized from Gaza and the West Bank and unlawfully imprisoned.
- Q. That Jerusalem:
 - a. Has been divided into west and east since the 1948 Arab-Israeli War, with the former recognised as Israeli territory and the latter recognised as part of the Palestinian Territories by the international community.
 - b. Is claimed by both Israel and Palestine as their capital.
 - c. Is subject to conflicting national recognitions as the capital of Israel, Palestine or neither.
 - d. Is of great shared religious significance to Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
 - e. Was to be made an internationalised corpus separatum under the unrealised United Nations Partition Plan for Palestine.
 - f. As a dual capital of Israel and Palestine was endorsed by the United Nations and the European Parliament in 2012.

Conference believes that:

- I. Since Israel has taken no steps to comply with the ICJ’s January 2024 demands, provided no evidence to rebut the allegations or address its concerns, continues to be represented by ministers who regularly make unambiguous statements in support of the genocide of Palestinians and has been accused by huge numbers of respected human rights lawyers of committing genocide in the 18 months since the ruling; it is right that we now describe Israel’s actions in Gaza as genocidal.
- II. Only a political and diplomatic solution, not a military one, will resolve the future of the populations of Israel and Palestine in a way that will deliver lasting justice and peace.
- III. While a two-state solution remains the best way to deliver the dignity and security which Palestinians and Israelis have a right to expect, it is the right of both peoples collectively to decide, if they wish, to alternatively agree to alternative democratic constitutional arrangements based on the principle of self determination.
- IV. A lasting peace between Israel and Palestine can only be achieved through cooperation between the two nations, and not via a settlement imposed upon the two by outside powers.
- V. Hamas must release the remaining hostages held in Gaza, as part of a long term ceasefire agreement that ends all military operations on a permanent basis.
- VI. The release of hostages by Hamas must be accompanied by release of the nearly 10,000 Palestinian prisoners currently held in Israeli jails who have not received a fair, or any trial, in violation of international legal standards.
- VII. There is no place in the Liberal Democrats for individuals who defend the unlawful taking of civilian life by State or Non-State Actors.

Conference calls on the Liberal Democrats and the Young Liberals to:

- a. Continue working with partners across the Middle East and beyond who are pushing for a ceasefire, the creation of a sustainable two state solution and the rebuilding of Israeli, Lebanese, Syrian and Palestinian Civic Society.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:



1. Work to bring about a durable ceasefire and an immediate end to Israel's atrocities in Gaza, including by demanding: a. The release of all remaining hostages held by Hamas and all Palestinian prisoners unlawfully detained by the Israeli authorities. b. The total and permanent cessation of Israeli military operations in Gaza. c. The unrestricted delivery of humanitarian aid through a UN-led corridor, replacing the failed and dangerous US-Israel aid distribution plan.
2. Immediately recognise the state of Palestine with de-jure territorial rights based on the 1967 border.
3. Ensure respect in full for the provisional measures the ICJ ordered in January 2024; respect the July 2024 ICJ advisory opinion on the unlawfulness of Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, and accordingly:
4. Introduce legislation to ban all trade in goods and services with illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.
5. Sanction any representatives or employees of the Government of Israel supporting or enacting illegal acts proposed or promoted by ministers who have already been sanctioned.
6. Immediately suspend the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement until a lasting, meaningful agreement has been reached between the two parties.
7. Cease all military and security cooperation with Israel until it brings itself in line with international law. Ban UK citizens from serving in the Israeli military.
8. Prosecute British citizens for whom there is credible evidence of their having committed war crimes in Israel & Palestine.
9. Make all possible efforts to ensure that as a State party to the Rome Statute, the UK upholds its obligations, by arresting individuals who are subject to arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court (ICC), and lobbying other countries to ensure that international arrest warrants are enforced against individuals entering their territory.
10. To provide funding and support to educational charities and organisations in the UK working to educate and promote positive dialogue about the conflict, as well as other conflicts, in British schools.
11. Launch a public enquiry into the British government's involvement in the conflict, specifically in regards to the possibility that Ministry of Defence assets and intelligence may have been utilised by the IDF when conducting military operations which violated international law.
12. Press for a just and lasting resolution, including by:
 - a. Working to establish an international peace process with mediation carried out by independent third parties under the supervision of the UN Secretary General.
 - b. Working with the international community to facilitate free political activity in Palestine, advocating for the release of potential candidates currently held in Israeli detention, working to facilitate elections among Palestinians as soon as possible including in occupied East Jerusalem.
 - c. Promoting a process of truth and reconciliation within the Two States.
 - d. Providing financial and political support to the rebuilding of civil society in Palestine; promoting robust liberal democratic institutions and encouraging young democratic leaders to come forward in both States.
 - e. Providing support to organisations within Israel and Palestine which promote co-existence, reconciliation, mediation, and democracy.
 - f. Advocating for a process of mediation, compensation and coexistence within the West Bank to ensure that displaced Palestinians are able to live free within their own country, whilst avoiding further forceful displacement unless necessary under international law, and avoiding violence at all cost.
 - g. Imploring Israel and Palestine to hold formal discussions to resolve the status of Jerusalem, namely its constitutional relationship with both countries.

Passed: Summer Conference 2025

Lapses: Summer 2030

Health and Social Care



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 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 pandemic¹, 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 2021

Lapses: Winter (February) 2026

Note: Amendment successfully passed, calling for the rejection of the blanket issuing of



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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 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 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 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 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.

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.



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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:
 - a. 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
 - b. 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.
 - c. to extend the indoor smoking ban to include all vapes and e-cigarettes
4. 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



Medical Cannabis - No More Waiting

Conference believes that:

1. Despite medical cannabis being legalised in 2018, few patients can access this vital medicine.
2. Only a few people have been handed a prescription for medical cannabis on the NHS, with most people having to obtain it through private practice - but this is only accessible to those that can afford it.
3. Illegal supply of cannabis is a route also used due to lack of NHS provision. Illicit supply is rife with issues, not least that the product sold has no control over strength and quality.
4. A YouGov poll commissioned by Sapphire Medical Clinics in October 22 found that there were approximately 1.8m medical cannabis users in the UK that used the illicit market.
5. There are thought to be only 20,000 medical cannabis users, accessing it from the private sector, as of 2023.
6. Many of those believed the product difficult to obtain, too expensive to buy, and a quarter not even aware that a legal, licensed product is available.
7. Parents of children who use the medicine have reported that epilepsy or other conditions have reduced hundreds or even thousands of seizures per month to zero.
8. Chronic pain, mental health issues and other medical issues can also be treated or majorly reduced via medical cannabis.
9. Not all patients would benefit from medical cannabis, but this is the same with all medicines - the principle is to ensure as many treatments are available to as wide a range of people as possible. Locking people out, for example, on a cost basis to improve their health is deeply illiberal and makes little sense in terms of public health.
10. Only specialist doctors can currently prescribe medical cannabis, locking GPs out of this treatment approach.
11. There isn't uniform awareness in the Police of the legalisation of medical cannabis, causing issues when people are drug tested (such as drivers).
12. The Drug Science "T21" project, amongst others, provides resources and information on the effectiveness of medical cannabis

Conference reaffirms:

- A. That existing party policy continues to call for the legalised, regulated market of cannabis to reduce crime, reduce harm to people, communities, and the environment, and take the power out of the hands of organised criminal gangs
- B. That medical cannabis must be accessible, should be available on the NHS or failing that, available at a lower cost via private sector clinics

Conference calls upon the government to:

- I. Licence GPs to be able to offer medical cannabis as treatment.
- II. Ensure the Police are fully aware of the legally allowed medicines containing THC.
- III. Fund subsidies to improve access to medical cannabis accessed from the private sector, in order to reduce costs and improve accessibility for patients, in the event the NHS will not provide access. Subsidies could be funded by taxes already imposed on exports of medical cannabis, given the United Kingdom is the world's largest producer and exporter of medical cannabis.
- IV. Inform cannabis users, who use it for medical purposes, of schemes which reduce criminal liability (some already exist, as licensed by the Home Office) and of legal routes of access, such as private clinics.
- V. Remove unnecessary, arbitrary restrictions on which devices patients can use to consume their medication.
- VI. Consider the regulated right for patients to grow their own medical cannabis to allow patients agency in their own care, subject to consultation.

Passed: Sheffield Winter Conference 2024

Lapses: Winter (February) 2029



Defending and Reforming Trans Healthcare

Conference believes:

- A. That healthcare for trans and gender questioning people, both children and adults, is and has been fundamentally broken in the United Kingdom, with underfunding, political interference and a lack of joined-up comprehensive care.
- B. Decisions around healthcare and bodily autonomy should be made between an individual and their doctor, and politicians should not impose politically motivated restrictions, unsupported by medical evidence, upon healthcare.
- C. Trans and gender questioning children and young people deserve to be listened to and given access to the care and support that they need.

Conference further believes:

- A. That there are serious questions and concerns around the Cass Report including its methodology, its findings and its recommendations, and a lack of clarity in many key areas. The Cass Report should not be taken unquestionably and should not be used as a political tool to restrict the rights of trans and gender questioning children.
 - a. There should not be restrictions on the ability of trans and gender questioning children and young people to socially transition, including in schools, and all schools should be supportive of children expressing themselves.
 - b. Access to private trans healthcare options should not be restricted, and instead access to free NHS trans healthcare should be expanded and waitlists brought down.
 - c. Neurodivergence, disability or other health conditions should not impact on access to gender affirming care, including through longer waits caused by lengthy waiting lists for full assessment for other conditions. Neurodivergent young people who are autistic should not be infantilised and treated as less trustworthy in articulating their trans identity.
- B. While there are serious concerns with the report, it does recognise the existence of trans children and young people and rightly acknowledges what they have been saying for years: NHS services are comprehensively failing them.
- C. That the Cass report has been misrepresented and weaponised by anti-trans media organisations, politicians and groups, with Hillary Cass herself expressing concern that her review was being weaponised to suggest that trans people do not exist.
 - a. Cass also clarified that her review was not about defining what trans means or rolling back health care, stating "There are young people who absolutely benefit from a medical pathway, and we need to make sure that those young people have access — under a research protocol, because we need to improve the research — but not assume that that's the right pathway for everyone."
- D. That the Cass report was correct in its recommendation against a blanket ban on puberty blockers.
- E. That puberty blockers may be the correct treatment, and this should be a matter of medical judgement based on the needs of the child or young person and informed by best medical practices and evidence.
- F. There needs to be comprehensive reform of trans healthcare in the United Kingdom to ensure that all trans and gender questioning young people have access to timely, holistic and supportive healthcare.

Conference reaffirms that:

- G. Trans men are men, trans women are women, and non-binary people are non-binary.



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- H. Trans children should be free and empowered to live as who they are and have their rights and liberties protected.
- I. Everyone deserves to have access to healthcare at no significant cost or unnecessary hindrance.
- J. There is no conflict or contradiction between supporting and protecting trans rights and the rights of women.
- K. WPATH guidance is the best practice for transgender healthcare.

Conference further reaffirms the policy motions "Trans Rights" (Online Summer Conference - Summer 2020), "Supporting the Prescription of Hormone Blocking Medications to Gender Diverse People Under the Age of 18" (Online Winter Conference - Winter 2021) and "Trans Children" (Edinburgh Winter Conference – Winter 2022).

Conference calls on:

1. The Government to reverse both the ban on the prescribing and supply of puberty blockers and reverse the restrictions within the NHS on the prescription of puberty blockers.
2. The NHS to work and consult with trans people and healthcare professionals to reform healthcare for all trans and gender questioning people, including children and young people, in a way that ensures everyone has access to timely, holistic and supportive healthcare including by
 1. Encouraging and empowering local GPs to deliver healthcare in a primary care setting, including prescribing hormones and agonists and monitoring these as something within their competency.
 2. Replacing the gender identity clinic system with regional hubs of secondary tier support to support primary care practitioners in complex cases or with adolescents.
 3. Removing NHS gatekeeping by treating specialists equitably regardless of if they work in the NHS or not when establishing shared care arrangements.
 4. Reducing the burden on gender specialists by moving to a model of informed consent for starting treatment in line with international best practice.
 5. Investing in healthcare research for transgender medicine to establish a high quality research base for medical decision making, including formally assessing the impact of progesterone in a hormone regime.
 6. Ensuring where a transgender person presents with a non-gender-related issue or comorbidity they are treated appropriately and not as a second class citizen where all issues are blamed on the trans healthcare regime.
3. Liberal Democrats parliamentarians to resist the restrictions proposed on trans healthcare, including the ban on puberty blockers and to support comprehensive trans healthcare reform.

Passed: London Summer Conference 2024

Lapses: Summer (August) 2029



Building a Holistic Liberal Democrat Psychoactives Policy

Conference notes that:

- A. The Liberal Democrats have a proud history of championing ethical consumption and harm-reduction strategies for the general population when discussing psychoactive substances.
- B. Recent neuropsychopharmacology research demonstrates that psychedelic treatments show promise for a wide range of conditions, including:
 1. The Division of Brain Science at Imperial College London conducting studies on treatment-resistant depression and fibromyalgia; and
 2. trials from around the world on cluster headaches, PTSD, anorexia nervosa and traumatic brain injuries
- C. The failure of policymaking in this area has been widely covered, including within Westminster.
- D. The lack of newly approved mental health treatments is stark, with government data showing almost ten times more cancer trial applications (29.4% of all trials) than mental health studies (3.3%) between 2019 and 2023. In 2023, over 19 people died by suicide per day in the UK, the highest rate since 1999.
- E. The UK is being left behind despite establishing the first psychedelic research centre in the world. Other countries are taking steps to address this policy area, including:
 1. Canada, Australia, New Zealand and parts of the US have legalised psychedelics for clinical treatments.
 2. The European Medicines Association is addressing the mental health clinical trials imbalance, adopting new guidelines for depression trials, with a dedicated section on psychedelics.
 3. The Czech Parliament has, in July 2025, passed legislation that paves the way for qualified psychiatrists to administer psilocybin.
 4. The Ukrainian Ministry of Health has proposed legislative changes to facilitate national psychedelic research.
- F. In a recent review of barriers to research, the government's Advisory Council for the Misuse of Drugs recommended an extension of Schedule II research rights (significantly-less burdensome in terms of administrative process and cost) to Schedule I substances.

Conference believes that:

- I. Liberal policy on Psychoactives should, in addition to harm reduction strategies, promote the therapeutic potential of psychoactive substance research."
- II. Disabled people and those suffering with mental health conditions deserve research into treatment to be unhindered by government regulation that is not fit for purpose.
- III. Those living with physical conditions also deserve uninhibited access to breakthrough therapies that may ameliorate the psychological burden of navigating chronic health conditions.
- IV. We stand to gain economically from bringing policy in line with science. By securing innovative treatments for underserved conditions, benefit dependency can be reduced as physically disabled and mentally unwell people are able to rejoin the workforce.
- V. To ensure equitable outcomes, access on the NHS will be necessary, especially as the burden of mental and physical disabilities disproportionately falls upon economically disadvantaged groups and minorities.
- VI. The UK can and should recapture its early-mover advantage in neuropsychopharmacology research.

Conference welcomes, in part, the July 16th 2025 Government response to ACMD "Consideration of Barriers to Research Part 2: Schedule 1 Controlled Drugs" that:



- i. Accepts improvements to accessibility for the import/export Licensing System for first-time or infrequent applicants and to evaluate if any implemented policy change reduces barriers to research, and
- ii. Agreement in principle on exempting supply of Schedules 1 substances by Research Institutions from licensing and exempting MHRA/MHA/REC approved clinical trials from further Home Office licensing

Conference, however, notes with concern from the July 16th 2025 Government response, the rejection of Recommendation 3, which recommends granting hospitals and universities the ability to supply Schedule 1 substances for research under the same license provided for schedules 2 to 5. "

Conference calls upon the government to:

1. Immediately accept and implement all of the recommendations and suggested further options in the ACMD's 2023 report, Consideration of barriers to research part 2: schedule 1 controlled drugs to ensure that research is no longer obstructed by unnecessary bureaucracy.
2. Accept and implement all of the recommendations of the Home Affairs Committee's 2023 Drugs Report, including: a. to undertake review of the classification system and the scheduling system under the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 and Misuse of Drugs Regulations 2001 respectively, b. to move psychedelic drugs to Schedule 2 in order to facilitate research on the medical or therapeutic value of these drugs c. to urgently widen access to unlicensed cannabis-based products for medicinal use (CBPMs) available on the NHS and enable randomised controlled trials into CBPM use for chronic pain
3. Address structural issues of underfunding. Coordinate resources and research via a national Centre of Excellence for psychoactive research to restore our advantage and expedite innovation and progress.
4. Investigate routes to accessing psychedelic treatments through the NHS
5. Set out a timeline culminating at the end of the 2024-29 Parliament, the implementation of the recommendations from both the ACMD "Consideration of Barriers to Research Part 2: Schedule 1 Controlled Drugs" report and the Home Affairs Committee 2023 Drugs Report.

Education



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 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 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 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.
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 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 antisestablishmentarianism.

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 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 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 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:

- 1. The UK Government to publish a strategy for increasing the number of apprenticeships and vocational education opportunities in England.



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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 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.
- 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.



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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 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.
- 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.
- 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.



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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



Reforming Citizenship Education

Conference believes:

1. According to the report released by the Electoral commission in 2023, only 60% of 18-19 year olds are registered to vote, while over 90% of people aged over 40 are registered to vote.
2. There is currently a compulsory section of the education system known as Citizenship education which is supposed to teach young people about necessary life skills including Government and Democracy.
3. A GCSE subject known as Citizenship studies exists and teaches lots of necessary life skills including the importance of voting.
4. Only 22,410 people were in the provisional entries for Citizenship Studies for the most recent, Summer 2023 set of GCSE exams, according to government reports.
5. PSHE has to be taught in all schools and doesn't have a set framework.
6. Reports from the House of Lords have been conducted as recently as September 2023.

Conference further believes:

- I. The aforementioned report from the electoral commission demonstrates the amount of apathy young people have towards voting.
- II. Citizenship education isn't taught or enforced to a standard that the importance of the subjects merit.
- III. Citizenship studies contain many of the topics that should ideally be understood by an educated population to create an ideal nation.
- IV. Citizenship studies isn't offered in many schools which limits the knowledge of the topics.
- V. Citizenship studies should be treated to the same standards as other humanities.
- VI. The lack of structure to PSHE leads to the subject being sidelined by many schools and fails to teach students useful life skills.
- VII. The reports from the House of Lords haven't been seriously considered in debate and have often been brushed aside with the excuse of 'mixing up Wellbeing and PSHE' without tackling the concerns.

Conference therefore calls for:

- A. A new national commission should be set up with relevant individuals to organise a comprehensive syllabus for Citizenship education which:
 - a. Takes inspiration from Citizenship studies
 - b. Ensures that Citizenship studies still holds further educational value as a subject.
 - c. Is to be reiterated as a compulsory section of the curriculum and for dedicated lessons in schools to teach this, with Ofsted reiterating this education in their reports.
- B. Encourage schools to offer Citizenship studies as a GCSE subject and for it to be treated nationally as a humanity similar to the credibility subjects like History and Geography receive.

Passed: Sheffield Winter Conference 2024

Lapses: Winter (February) 2029



Poverty Proofed Schooling

Conference believes:

1. Poverty proofing is “The assessment of policies and programmes at design and review stages in relation to the likely impact they will have or have had on poverty and on inequalities likely to lead to poverty with a view to poverty reduction”
2. In the context of schools, it is the principle that “No activity or planned activity in schools should identify, exclude, treat differently or make assumptions about those children whose household income or resources are lower than others”
3. Day-to-day school activities can incur a financial burden on families who are already struggling, some of these activities are fundraising events for charities supporting those same families.
4. The School Uniform Act 2021 introduced a requirement for the government to produce statutory guidance on the cost of school uniforms and the subsequent guidance produced as a result
5. In 2023 parents spend on average £422 and £287 a year on secondary and primary school uniforms respectively.
6. A third of all school-age children in poverty are currently ineligible for free school meals.

Conference further believes:

- A. No child should be excluded from school activities due to poverty.
- B. Families should not be burdened with unnecessary costs due to school uniform policies.

Conference calls for:

- I. For Ofsted (or any future replacement inspectorate) to provide guidance on poverty proofing in schools, which will eventually form part of their inspections. This guidance should be developed in conjunction with teachers, charities and relevant experts.
- II. Schools to carry out poverty-proofing audits to identify where they can reduce the impact of poverty on children's experience at school.
- III. Statutory guidance on school uniforms to be updated to:
 - a. Limit the number of branded items to a maximum of two.
 - b. Ensure all non-branded items can be purchased from local high street retailers.
- IV. Ofsted, The Department for Education and teaching unions, to work together with national retailers to ensure they can provide stock to local schools of the relevant school uniforms.
- V. The Government should increase child benefit by £20 per week per child and remove the two child cap on child benefit

Passed: Sheffield Winter Conference 2024

Lapses: Winter (February) 2029



Abolish Fee Paying Schools

Conference believes that:

- A. Research has shown that simply attending a fee paying school enhances prospects for entry to top universities and jobs, regardless of innate ability.
- B. State schools in richer areas often have better results and more involved parents, which benefits all children regardless of their own background, showing the positive impact of people from all backgrounds being encouraged to go to the local school, but also showing the postcode lottery of education which richer families can buy their way out of
- C. People who hold the top jobs in Britain – in politics, the judiciary and the media – are five times more likely to have gone to private school than the general population
- D. The average annual fee for a non-boarding school is £16,656, with the average UK salary being £34,963
- E. Finland has few private schools, having banned the ability to profit from education, and has one of the best education systems in the world (PISA)

Conference further believes that:

- I. Every child should have equal access to a good education
- II. Equality starts with education, and all children should receive equal access to a high standard of education
- III. The United Kingdom has an education system which has a history of being fee paying, as opposed to Finland which has a history of free education, and so there are different approaches which need to be taken.

Conference calls for:

- 1. The government to make it their aim to abolish the need for all fee paying schools within the next 50 years, inclusive of private and public schools, throughout England, and to push other regional governments to follow suit.
 - a. Introduce legislation to make profiteering from mandatory education illegal.
 - b. Conduct this transition effectively by ensuring sufficient investment into public schools to increase the standard of free education nationally.
- 2. The current system of private education to be monitored by government-ran regulators, which ensure that schools are being held to their charitable status and not profiteering, and providing sufficient forms of sanctions if they aren't.

Passed: London Summer Conference 2024

Lapses: Summer (August) 2029

Environment, Energy and the Climate Emergency



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 (CO₂) derived from fossil fuel, however a noteworthy proportion are measured instead using Carbon Dioxide Equivalents (CO₂e).
- 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 CO₂ emissions in a very cost-effective and efficient way, encouraging both energy efficiency and the use of low-CO₂ 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 CO₂ 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 CO₂.
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 CO₂ tax to also include more widely CO₂e 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 CO₂e at some stage in the roadmap for implementation.

Passed: Online Winter Conference 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 (AQMAs), 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.
- 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.



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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 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 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 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 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.
- 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.



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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.

Passed: Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference 2023

Lapses: Summer (August) 2028



Direct Lithium mining (DLE) the method that can avoid another climate catastrophe

Conference notes:

- A. Lithium is a fundamental resource that the modern world depends on which is now powering many vital green technologies such as electric vehicles, wind power and electric vehicles.
- B. Lithium at this current point is being mined in a way that severely damages the ecosystem with whole lakes and communities having to suffer because of this.
- C. This environmental problem must be solved rapidly so that we can avoid another climate disaster.
- D. Direct Lithium extraction known as a DLE is more environmentally friendly than the current methods that we are using.

Conference believes:

- I. The Young Liberals have expressed great need to protect the environment in past motions.
- II. The Young liberals recognise the climate crisis is catastrophic and must be delayed and stopped in all aspects of society.
- III. The Young Liberals proudly support local governments/communities when it comes to concerns that are not being addressed.
- IV. The Young Liberals also champion the end of fossil fuels. This can be stopped by the introduction of better quality materials and produced in environmentally sustainable conditions

Conference calls for:

- 1. The Young Liberals to promote the use of DLE as the best way to mine lithium sustainably.
- 2. The Young Liberals to raise the concerns of harmful effects that current lithium mining methods are having on the environment when mining lithium.
- 3. The Young Liberals to work with other organisations such as the Cornish Lithium and British lithium to help guarantee that direct lithium extraction becomes the dominant mining method in the mining industry. Which will guarantee that this more sustainable method is being used.

Passed: Summer Conference 2025

Lapses: Summer 2030

Housing, Transport and Infrastructure



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 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 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.



YOUNG LIBERALS POLICY BOOK

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 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 2022

Lapses: Summer (August) 2027



Repeal the Enclosures Act

Conference notes that

- A. The 1773 enclosure act took away 28,000 km² 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.
 - 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



Stop the Anti-Pylon Pile-On

Conference believes:

- A. According to industry bodies, Electricity demand in Great Britain is set to rise significantly as the UK moves closer to its net zero targets.
- B. The Electricity System Operator's "Beyond 2030" and "Holistic Network Design" sets out the recommended Grid infrastructure (onshore and offshore) required to facilitate this rise in demand, and UK, Scottish, and Welsh net zero targets.
- C. The queue for grid connections, including for renewable energy projects, is now decades long, with transmission infrastructure being a significant contributing cause of this.
- D. Building a new electricity transmission circuit in Great Britain can currently take around 14 years.
- E. The Electricity Networks Commissioner's report (the Winsor report) highlighted the need to accelerate construction of grid infrastructure, and provided options to help accelerate this process, including compensating those living near new energy infrastructure.
- F. There has been opposition to the construction of new transmission infrastructure across Great Britain, with some campaigners calling for an "offshore grid" to be built.
- G. Electricity System Operator network designs and studies place a significant amount of proposed infrastructure offshore, although a fully offshore grid is not a viable option.
- H. Underground cabling of transmission circuits is possible, but extremely costly to consumers and can cause long term damage to the environment.
- I. Grid infrastructure unlocks opportunities, and economic growth, for local areas and the country.

Conference further believes:

- I. There is a Climate Emergency.
- II. There are no landscapes worth protecting on a dead planet.
- III. Green infrastructure needs to be built at a rate to match the crisis we face.
- IV. The needs of the many outweigh the desires of the few.
- V. The grid connection queue is unacceptably long, with too many renewables projects trapped in the queue.
- VI. There is an urgent need to invest in Great Britain's infrastructure, including its grid.
- VII. Local opposition to new infrastructure is somewhat understandable, and in a small number of cases justified, but essential major schemes cannot be held up in endless consultations or unreasonably blocked.
- VIII. Local communities should be compensated for hosting new grid infrastructure.
- IX. Starmer's Labour have said they want to act on this issue, and they now need to turn words into action.

Conference calls for:

- 1. The UK Government to streamline the process to construct transmission infrastructure in England, and lobby the Devolved Nations to follow suit.
- 2. The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero to implement the "Pounds for Pylons" compensation element of the Winsor report.
- 3. Elected Liberal Democrats to be reasonable and balanced in their rhetoric on new grid infrastructure.
- 4. Parliamentary Liberal Democrats to hold Labour to account on their pledges to speed up the construction of grid infrastructure and cutting the connections queue.
- 5. Young Liberals to speak up in support of building infrastructure required to meet vital net zero targets.

Passed: London Summer Conference 2024

Lapses: Summer (August) 2029



Bus Travel in England

Conference believes:

- A. According to the Transport Statistics for Great Britain 2023, bus ridership is more than double that of the railways.
- B. According to statistics from the Department for Transport, bus ridership in England outside London has decreased by 50% since deregulation, from 3.56 million in 1986, to 1.78 million in the year ending March 2024.
- C. The current system of bus funding encourages public and private operators to overpromise and underdeliver in order to gain funding for improvements and maintenance of current service quality and service levels.
- D. The £2 fare cap rose to £3 in January 2025 in most areas.
- E. According to the 2021 Bus Strategy for England (Bus Back Better) bus investment has a benefit to cost ratio of 4.2
- F. Buses allow for greater access to employment and education as highlighted by the 2019 Department for Transport National Travel Survey highlighted, which notes 44% of bus journeys are made for this purpose.
- G. Not all buses, especially in rural areas, accept cards, the dominant method of payment.
- H. Most bus funding is delivered by competitive tendering, not targeted to where it is needed most.
- I. The bus network is still shrinking, reducing journey opportunities, with 22% of local bus coverage being lost since 2011.
- J. The Government has announced investment worth £955 million in buses, but it is not enough.

Conference further believes:

- I. Buses are key to securing economic growth.
- II. Buses are key for young people's independence.
- III. Buses are not integrated enough with other transport modes.
- IV. Buses are key to the decarbonisation of transport.
- V. While bus franchising works well for urban areas, it is not a one size fits all solution.

Conference calls for:

- 1. Bus fare cap to revert to £2.
- 2. The government to integrate ticketing with other bus operators and forms of transport; such as railways for 'last mile' transport.
- 3. National, Regional and local governments to improve bus routes with improved evening services, comfort and electric vehicles, as well as contactless facilities.
- 4. A sustainable funding model where bus services which need it most are given the most funding.

Passed: Online Winter Conference 2025

Lapses: Winter (February) 2030



Improve Transport Accessibility and Development

Conference believes that:

- A. In the 2024 Budget, the UK Government announced major investments in transport, including:
 - i. Improvements in rail connectivity, such as:
 - 1. Extending HS2 beyond Old Oak Common to Euston.
 - 2. Committing to East West Rail.
 - 3. The TransPennine Route Upgrade
 - ii. An additional investment of £200m for City Region Sustainable Transport Settlements for 2025-26, which Chancellor Rachel Reeves pledged would finance the creation of new light rail systems, or the renewal of existing systems.
 - iii. An investment of £120m for 2025-26 to support the purchase of electric vans.
 - iv. An investment of £200m for 2025-26 to support the rollout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
 - v. A five-year £2bn investment in the automotive industry.
- B. Rail fares in England will increase by 4.6% in 2025, with most rail cards facing a £5 increase.
- C. The price cap on single bus fares in England will be raised from £2 to £3 in 2025, equivalent to a 1p income tax increase for those reliant on public transport.
- D. Young people's access to transport:
 - i. Can impact their:
 - 1. Chances of accessing further and higher education.
 - 2. Employability.
 - 3. Physical and mental health.
 - 4. Sense of self-value
 - 5. Capabilities in using transport options as adults.
 - ii. Is limited by:
 - 1. Poor provision of public transport services in areas such as rural communities.

Conference further believes that:

- I. Convenient access to transport is essential to ensuring:
 - a. Individual freedom and independence.
 - b. Connectivity within the UK.
- II. Mitigating climate change requires:
 - a. Greater use of public transport.
 - b. Electrification of transportation modes.
 - c. Private road vehicle use should remain an option if public transport use is unfeasible.

Conference affirms Liberal Democrat commitments to:

- 1. Freezing rail fares.
- 2. Exploring the introduction of an annual pass for all railways.
- 3. Boosting bus services whilst maintaining the £2 single fares cap.
- 4. Integrating bus, rail and light rail ticketing systems.
- 5. Making public transport more affordable for young people.
- 6. Devolving greater decision-making powers for public transport infrastructure to local authorities in England.
- 7. Reducing the climate impact of flying.
- 8. Making electric vehicle charging cheaper and more accessible.
- 9. Protecting motorists from rip-offs such as unfair insurance and petrol prices.

Conference urges the UK Government to:



10. Undertake a comprehensive review of abandoned railway lines in England to assess which may be suitable to be reopened or redeveloped as light rail routes.
11. Undertake consultations to extend existing metro and light rail systems to towns not served by them but within travel to work areas in which they operate.
12. Support the creation of new halt stations to serve suburban communities located along or near existing railway routes.
13. Support the creation of new railway, metro or light rail terminals and associated infrastructure for:
 - a. Major airports.
 - b. Out-of-town shopping centres and retail parks.
 - c. Sports stadiums and other large event venues.
 - d. University campuses.
14. Lower the minimum driving age to 14 for:
 - a. Mopeds.
 - b. Motor tricycles
 - c. Light vehicles.
 - d. Quadricycles.
15. Extend support for electrification to:
 - a. Motorcycles.
 - b. Light vehicles.
 - c. Quadricycles.

Passed: Online Winter Conference 2025

Lapses: Winter (February) 2030



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 CO₂ (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



Abolishing Anti-Homelessness Architecture

Conference notes

- A. That anti-homelessness architecture, such as slanted or divided seating, is commonplace in many local authorities in the UK.

Conference believes

- I. That making an area inhospitable for rough sleepers is counter-productive, and helps to criminalise them rather than encouraging and allowing them to get help
- II. That anti-homelessness architecture often also makes public seating less accessible for many disadvantaged groups.

Conference calls for

- 1. All local authorities, especially those run by the Liberal Democrats, to stop using hostile architecture and to combat homelessness compassionately.
- 2. The Liberal Democrats to campaign at all levels of government against anti-homelessness architecture and for improved funding to be spent on long term solutions to rough sleeping such as homelessness shelters, more efficient temporary accommodation, and solving the housing crisis.

Passed: Summer Conference 2025

Lapses: Summer 2030



Driving Forward: Road to Access

Conference notes that:

- A. Learning to drive is a vital life skill for many young people, particularly in rural and semi-rural areas where public transport is limited. It is also especially important for many disabled people, for whom driving can offer greater independence, flexibility, and access to work, education, and social opportunities than relying on public transport.
- B. The average cost of learning to drive, including lessons, tests, and insurance, now exceeds £3,000, according to Quote Zone's research.
- C. Long waiting times for practical driving tests, often several months, are causing additional stress and financial strain for young learners.
- D. The cost of car insurance for young drivers remains disproportionately high and often requires restrictive telematic policies (insurance plans that use a black box or mobile app to monitor driving behaviour, such as speed, braking, and mileage, in order to determine premiums).
- E. Black box insurance policies often include curfews, speed monitoring, driving score tracking, and location surveillance, with limited transparency or accountability from insurers.
- F. The DVSA practical driving test does not currently require experience with night-time driving, motorway driving, or adverse weather conditions, leaving many new drivers underprepared for real-world situations.

Conference reaffirms that:

- I. Access to transport is a matter of social and economic justice, and no one should be locked out of learning to drive due to financial or geographical barriers, including young people, who are often among the most affected.
- II. Public transport must be improved and expanded, but driving remains essential for upholding the freedom of many young people, especially in rural areas.
- III. Privacy and autonomy should be respected, and the use of telematics in insurance should not be a condition of affordability for young drivers.
- IV. Improving access to high-quality driver education, testing infrastructure, and fair insurance options will enhance road safety and opportunity without relying on intrusive surveillance.

Conference calls for:

- 1. Urgent investment to expand DVSA testing capacity, including more examiners and new test centres in underserved areas.
- 2. A national bursary scheme to subsidise driving lessons and tests for low-income young people.
- 3. A formal review and reform of car insurance practices for under-25s, ending reliance on black box policies and improving pricing transparency, with regulated limits on policy price multipliers due to age.
- 4. Inclusion of real-world driving conditions like night and motorway driving in tests or training.
- 5. Nationwide driver education programmes in schools and colleges covering safety, costs, and driver rights.
- 6. Commitment to transport equity with accessible, affordable driving alongside improved public transport.
- 7. Giving 2% of Vehicle Excise Duty revenue to fund the Young Drivers Support Fund.
- 8. Reallocating £50 million annually from road safety enforcement to education and test access, which in turn will improve road safety.
- 9. Establishing public-private partnerships with insurers and driving schools to generate voluntary contributions and discounted lessons.

Passed: Summer Conference 2025

Lapses: Summer 2030

Defence



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 2022

Lapses: Summer (August) 2027



Commitment to NATO and Security

Conference notes:

1. NATO was formed in 1949 to maintain peace and security following the Second World War.
2. The UK's contribution to NATO in 2020/21 was 2.1% of GDP.
3. The newest member of NATO, Finland, joined on 4 April 2023 with Sweden in the process of accession as a result of the full scale Russian invasion of Ukraine.
4. NATO's Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) was created after Russia's illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014 and deployed for the first time for the collective defence of the Alliance after Russia's full-fledged invasion of Ukraine in 2022 as reported by the government in 2023.
5. European countries bolstering their armies since 2022 such as Poland and Germany with the former raising its target defence spending from 2.4% of gross domestic product to 5% as reported by Politico.
6. Some European countries like Poland turning to South Korea for hardware instead of the US due to it being cheaper.
7. Protectionist and non-interventionist undertones echoed during the Trump presidency in the US with some of these sentiments subdued during the Biden presidency.

Conference reaffirms:

- a. The Liberal Democrat commitment to halt plans to reduce the size of the regular Army from 82,000 personnel to 72,500 by 2025 as passed at Spring Federal Conference 2023 in The UK's Nuclear Deterrent.

Conference believes:

- I. NATO's commitment to peace in Europe is a force of good for geopolitical stability on the continent.
- II. The expansion of NATO eastwards since the end of the Cold War has guaranteed security in that part of Europe.

Conference calls for:

- A. Call on UK government to increase spending to NATO in the wake of the full-scale Russian invasion.
- B. Call on UK government to support the immediate accession of Sweden to NATO.
- C. Continued support for Ukraine for as long as necessary until Ukraine is victorious against Russia as outlined in A Sovereign Ukraine. Support includes lethal aid and air defences against Russian attacks.

Passed: Sheffield Winter Conference 2024

Lapses: Winter (February) 2029



Towards a European Army

Conference notes that:

- A. NATO underpins the current security architecture of the United Kingdom.
- B. The European Union has increasingly sought a security role within Europe in the post-Cold War era.
- C. The United Kingdom left the Common Defence and Security Policy, PESCO and the broader European security architecture during Brexit.
- D. Western Allies in Europe have been free riding the United States for its security in the post-Cold War world
- E. The Trump Administration has increasingly made it clear that it is less interested in European security, including the defence of Ukraine.
- F. The Trump Administration has made provocations to NATO allies, such as wanting to annex Greenland and Canada.
- G. European militaries are currently divided, underfunded and have different security focuses.
- H. Militaries in the EU use 178 different types of weapon systems (tanks/frigates/destroyers/fighter planes) compared to the US's 30.

Conferences believes:

- I. The United Kingdom has a responsibility to support and deliver security in Europe.
- II. European Security must be underpinned by countries with common liberal values and interests. European Security must be autonomous of the United States in order to avoid dependency.
- III. The Trump Administration is an unreliable ally, which requires the UK and EU to strengthen their own capabilities.

Conferences welcomes:

- i. The UK-EU Security Pact as the first step towards better cooperation with European allies in defence and security of the continent.
- ii. That the Security Defence Review recognises the importance of European security, and the UK's central role to it.
- iii. That the Security Defence Review recognises that the UK should play a greater role in nuclear defence and deterrence in Europe.
- iv. That the Security Defence Review calls for greater industrial partnership with European allies in developing our collective capabilities.

Conference affirms:

- a. LYMEC's 'Defending Europe in times of need' policy

Conference calls for:

- 1. The UK and EU should work together to develop a new security and defence architecture which can defend Europe, autonomously from the United States.
- 2. In order to achieve this, the UK should be granted access to the Security Action for Europe Fund
- 3. The UK and EU should work together on a common procurement strategy for defence capabilities across European militaries
- 4. This should involve developing a continental industrial strategy which supports the European defence industry
- 5. The end point should be standardising kit across European allies and their militaries.
- 6. The UK should be involved in PESCO missions, and seek to negotiate a deal with the EU for the UK to join PESCO.
- 7. The UK and EU member states should agree to increasing defence spending to at least 3.5%.
- 8. Alongside this, increasing the number of personnel in militaries across Europe.



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9. The UK and France to consider and negotiate implementing a new nuclear umbrella for Europe, underpinned by their nuclear weapons.
10. The UK and European NATO allies should maintain engagement with NATO, despite concerns for the Trump Administration

Passed: Summer Conference 2025

Lapses: Summer 2030

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.
- 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.



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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 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.
- 4. The UK Government to work with the tech sector to develop standards that enable the monetisation of datasets.



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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



A Fair Deal for Independent Creators

Conference notes with concern:

- A. The length that copyright is held for has increased by upwards of 70 years since its introduction.
- B. The current length of copyright (death + 70 years) stretches too far and does not benefit the original artist for much of that duration.
- C. Licencing fees are often completely inaccessible for small and new creators starting out in their own creative works, taking inspiration from older works to create new stories
- D. There are many independent works which use copyrighted material to create a new story. These are currently in no way protected by fair use and may easily be taken down by corporations at any time.
- E. Copyright law, which was created to protect independent creators from having their works stolen by more popular artists, has ended up benefiting corporations more than the independent artists it was designed to protect.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- I. Recognise the individual's right to develop their talents to the full.
- II. Ensure a society in which class and finance is not a barrier for anyone.
- III. Nurture an individual's creativity .

Conference calls for:

- 1. A fundamental change to the law around fair dealing which considers both the non-commercial nature of much independent creation, as well as the transformative nature of the works in question.
- 2. An addition to copyright law which states that, whilst parody or criticism and review is still protected for both commercial and non commercial use, the use of copyrighted material in an artistic context which is not of a critical or parodic nature is also considered transformative for non-commercial purposes.
- 3. A significant shortening to the limits for copyright in which a work enters the public domain after 50 years.
- 4. A change to royalty fees in which, after 25 years, the cost of royalties to a copyrighted work is no longer determined solely by the market, but instead, charged as a percentage of revenue:
 - a. Whilst not wholly defined by market value, creators and corporations can still choose to purchase a market-defined licence, from the copyright owner, for said works.
 - b. This percentage does not need to be defined in this motion, but is recommended to be roughly 20% for all revenue under £100,000, 40% for all revenue between £100,000 and £1,000,000, and 50% for all profit above that.
 - c. The purpose of such thresholds is to ensure that such a policy is not abused by large media corporations, and discourages the use of this law in order to pay less than would be necessary for an ordinary licence.

Passed: Online Winter Conference 2025

Lapses: Winter (February) 2030



A Liberal Vision for Digital Rights - A proportional alternative to the Online Safety Act

Conference notes with concern:

- A. The implementation of Ofcom's Protection of Children Codes of Practice (CoPs) on 25th July 2025, as part of statutory duties under Sections 12 and 29 of the Online Safety Act 2023, resulting in wide reaching obligations to ensure that no inappropriate content is shown to children.
- B. The result of obligations to online platforms, to consider a wide range of content as sensitive and age-gate via intrusive age verification and compel scanning of private messages, undermining End-to-End Encryption.
- C. That online platforms that serve vulnerable persons, whether it be for forums for LGBTQ+ people or for addiction services, the broad remit of CoPs may lead to larger platforms and search engines to delist or shadowban these communities, harming access to common experiences for marginalised groups.
- D. That public interest forums, such as Wikipedia, are being treated as category 1 platforms and therefore are required to age gate their platform, putting barriers to entry for great repositories of knowledge for people for all ages.
- E. Amendments to the Investigatory Powers Act and Sections 121-123 of the Online Safety Act give Government multiple avenues to try access encrypted messages and sees encryption as a threat to safety, therefore undermine privacy by demanding the technologically impossible.

Conference further notes that due to the concerning implementation of the Online Safety Act CoPs in requiring a presumption of gating access to content to avoid fines, multiple civil liberty groups, such as Open Rights Group, have voiced concern over the current Act and its lack of proportionality.

Conference believes that:

- I. Online safety is essential but must not come at the expense of fundamental civil liberties.
- II. The Online Safety Act represents a disproportionate and authoritarian approach to content regulation and digital oversight.
- III. Age verification, when mandated without robust privacy and security protections, creates unacceptable risks of data abuse and surveillance.
- IV. The government has failed to strike a reasonable balance between protecting vulnerable users and safeguarding freedom of expression, data privacy, and access to secure communication.
- V. That VPNs and encryption are fundamental and sacrosanct principles of right to privacy
- VI. That ID verification requirements have and will continue to disproportionately affect small businesses cost-wise, further cementing dominance of big tech companies
- VII. Liberal Democrats must continue to champion digital rights as an essential part of liberal democracy in the 21st century.

Conference therefore reaffirms Liberal Democrat commitments to stand up for protection of End-to-End Encryption and reject any push for so-called "encryption backdoors" as pursued by the Home Office, as most recently passed by Spring Conference 2025.

Conference therefore calls for:

- 1. The suspension of currently issued CoPs by Of-Com and a pause of implementing further CoPs until legislation can be reviewed to ensure compatibility with Human Rights Law.
- 2. The drafting and introduction of replacement legislation that: a. Clearly defines illegal content and avoids vague or subjective categories of "harmful" material. b. Upholds the legality and availability of end-to-end encrypted communication. c. Prohibits client-side scanning or other technical mandates that compromise private messaging. d. Includes strong safeguards for freedom of expression, satire, political discourse, and journalistic



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- reporting. e. Exempts low-risk platforms, community-run forums, and nonprofits from disproportionate regulatory burdens. f. Establishes transparent and proportionate content moderation expectations, with meaningful appeals and oversight.
3. A Liberal Democrat-led campaign for a comprehensive Digital Bill of Rights, including: a. Legal protections for encryption, anonymity, and online privacy. b. Proportional and rights-respecting regulation of online content and platforms. c. Strong protections for children that empower families, educators, and civil society—not just corporations or state regulators.
 4. Continued opposition to any future attempts by this or future governments to pass laws that replicate or expand the authoritarian aspects of the Online Safety Act.

Passed: Summer Conference 2025

Lapses: Summer 2030

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 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 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



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 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 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



Elections here, there and everywhere

Conference believes:

1. Many organisations in the UK run elections under a variety of systems for the selection of their governance.
2. All elections being run outside of the jurisdiction of the Electoral Commission will be referred to as 'non-government elections', this term covers elections of any size and of any purpose, including ballots for strike action.
3. The widespread use of online voting systems in non-government elections.
4. There are no official standards, certification or external monitoring of non-government elections in the UK.
5. The threat of elections both government and non-government being tampered with by both state and non-state actors.
6. The prevalence of a 'quick vote' option in many non-government elections, which selects the options chosen by the election organiser for the elector with only one click instead of having to vote on each issue individually.
7. Since the last general election, two prime ministers have been 'elected' in elections that had minimal oversight from the electoral commission.

Conference further believes:

- A. That power should be distributed as widely as possible throughout society, including within non-government organisations.
- B. Organisations should be able to choose the level of security for their elections; a Parent Staff Association should be able to choose to have a lower level of security for their elections than a major bank or a political party.
- C. Electors in any election have a right to know what measures are being taken to ensure it is running fairly.

Conference calls for:

- I. The electoral commission's remit to be expanded to provide advice and best practice on guidance on any election carried out in the United Kingdom.
- II. A set of standards on how to run elections at varying levels of integrity; from a very low level suitable for small community groups to elections requiring high integrity such as those used by political parties to determine their leader.
- III. These standards to clearly define at what level of integrity, tools such as online voting and quick vote should be allowed to be used.
- IV. Certification badges to be awarded to organisations who can demonstrate that their elections meet the requirements of different levels of the standard.

Passed: Sheffield Winter Conference 2024

Lapses: Winter (February) 2029



Let Them Eat Biscuits and Go To the Bar

Conference believes:

- A. News reports in the right wing press attacking the Ministry of Defence for expenditure on biscuits with headlines like "TAKING THE BISCUIT Defence chiefs have blown £50k of taxpayers' cash on posh biscuits for top brass and civil servants" and "Defence chiefs under fire for 'blowing taxpayer cash on biscuits'"
- B. That the reality is that a Freedom of Information request showed that the Ministry of Defence has spent £50,000 since 2016, which over the 8 year period averages as £6,250 per year, with a Ministry of Defence spokesperson saying "Limited refreshments are supplied in a small number of diplomatic meetings and such spending continues to reduce."
- C. That the Ministry of Defence has already previously cut tea and biscuits in most meetings.
- D. Reports that Sue Grey, the new Downing Street Chief of Staff, has plans to cut and restrict the subsidised bars in Westminster in an effort to tackle inappropriate behaviour and sexual harassment in Westminster.

Conference further believes:

- I. Civil Servants and Military Personnel working in the Ministry of Defence and other Government Departments, who have dedicated their careers to public service, should not have to work in an environment where they are constantly under attack and have even minor and inconsequential "perks" such as free tea and biscuits stripped away.
- II. While there are legitimate criticisms on ways in which the Government spends money, especially in regards to Defence, biscuit budgets are not a legitimate criticism and the news stories are part of long standing attacks and harassment against the Civil Service meant to undermine it as an institution.
- III. Staff in Westminster work long hours in an intense and stressful environment and due to the political realities of public finances and expenses for Members of Parliament are underpaid for the work that they do, which is essential for our democracy to function.
- IV. The realities of public finances means that the Civil Service is not able to effectively compete with the city and other high paying jobs to attract and retain talent.
- V. The Government should do everything possible to ensure that it retains top talent including by offering light refreshments to civil servants, tea and biscuits in meetings and other relatively low cost perks and measures to ensure a positive work environment.
- VI. Inappropriate behaviour and sexual harassment must be dealt with strongly and quickly, alongside cultural changes within Westminster to prevent the behavior taking place, but closing the bars in Westminster unfairly punishes everyone and is not an effective solution at fixing the issues.

Conference calls for:

1. The Government to resist calls for expenditure on biscuits to be cut further and to restore tea and biscuits in the Ministry of Defence.
2. The Government to expand light refreshments across Government departments and look at other relatively low cost small ways of improving the work environment for civil servants.
3. The bars in Westminster to remain open and for the Government and Parliamentary Authorities to continue working on more effective ways to tackle cultural and behavioural issues within Westminster.

Passed: London Summer Conference 2024

Lapses: Summer (August) 2029

The Liberal Democrats and Business Motions



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:

- a. The new constitution should be written in plain English, and should be understandable by lay people.
- b. 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.
- c. 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.
- d. 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 LGBTQ+, 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.

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.
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.



Business Motion: Recognising Tessa Munt MP

Conference recognises the service of Tessa Munt MP as the Young Liberals Honorary President from September 2015 until October 2023, noting the following comments:

1. Michael Chappell, Chair of Young Liberals UK in 2015 commented: "Tessa Munt joined Young Liberals as the Honorary President in the 2015/2016 Executive to support young liberals in the wake of the Morrissey Report. There was a feeling that Young People were excluded from the party as a whole and Tessa injected her wisdom and vigour in working to change that."
2. Thomas Gravatt and Finn Conway commented: "Tessa continued as Honorary President of the Young Liberals in 2017/18 Executive. She attended conferences in both Oxford and Swansea, and provided learning & development sessions on canvassing and self-advocacy. Tessa supported Young Liberals with a range of issues including lobbying on changes to the party disciplinary processes in the wake of the Morrissey Report, and motivating Young Liberals in the run-up to the Brexit Referendum and its fall-out. Tessa also offered mentoring to Young Liberal members with career development and the Young & Winning Campaign."
3. Callum Littlemore & Dan Schmeisling commented "As Honorary President of the Young Liberals in the 2018/19 Executive, Tessa attended the Glasgow and London conferences listening to members and motivating them in the run-up to the 2016 General Election. Tessa would always help troubleshoot issues and workshop problems and solutions which was invaluablely supportive. Tessa's positivity helped motivate our executive and members, and Tessa helped YL's advocacy as we raised YL's age changes as a constitutional change within the Liberal Democrats."
4. Tara Copeland, commented "As Honorary President of the Young Liberals in the 2019/20 Executive, Tessa was great in her endless support for YL, and was an incredible source of help during some difficult times and the good! Everyone I knew in the organisation loved and respected her so much and this giant force for good!"
5. Eleanor Kelly commented "As Honorary President of the Young Liberals in the 2021/22 Executive, Tessa was an invaluable source of support and guidance to Young Liberals on a whole range of areas, and was a huge help in motivating the executive throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. Tessa supported the executive throughout our online events during the lockdown period and was able to attend our Manchester Conference virtually"
6. Janey Little, Young Liberals Chair commented "Conference thanks Tessa for her hard work and dedication to the organisation and her unrelenting commitment to championing young members and always having our backs."

Conference therefore confers Honorary Life Membership upon Tessa Munt MP under Section 5(9) of the Young Liberals Constitution and further confers the title of "Honorary President Emeritus" for her contribution to the organisation, its objectives and most importantly the young members throughout her tenure that she has helped and supported.

Passed: Online Winter Conference 2024

Lapses: Winter (February) 2029

Note: under 5(9), Tessa Munt MP will keep Honorary Life Membership regardless of the lapsing of this motion.

Policies by Conference and Expiry

Motion Name	Date and Conference Passed	Expiry Date	Affected Policy Area
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
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
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



YOUNG LIBERALS POLICY BOOK

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
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
Commitment to NATO and Security	Sheffield Winter Conf 2024	Feb 2029	Defence
Elections here, there and everywhere	Sheffield Winter Conf 2024	Feb 2029	Political Reform and Local Government
For a fully regulated drug market	Sheffield Winter Conf 2024	Feb 2029	Home Affairs and Justice
Medical Cannabis – No More Waiting	Sheffield Winter Conf 2024	Feb 2029	Health and Social Care
Poverty Proofed Schooling	Sheffield Winter Conf 2024	Feb 2029	Education
Reforming Citizenship Education	Sheffield Winter Conf 2024	Feb 2029	Education

Restore Democracy and Liberty in Hong Kong	Sheffield Winter Conf 2024	Feb 2029	International Affairs and Europe
Tackling Antisemitism and Reaffirming the IHRA Definition	Sheffield Winter Conf 2024	Feb 2029	Social Justice
Towards a Liberal Approach to Surveillance Technology	Sheffield Winter Conf 2024	Feb 2029	Home Affairs and Justice
A Fair Deal for Slaughterhouse Workers	London Summer Conf 2024	Aut 2029	Economy, Welfare and Labour Rights
Defending and Reforming Trans Healthcare	London Summer Conf 2024	Aut 2029	Health and Social Care
Stop the Anti-Pylon Pile-On	London Summer Conf 2024	Aut 2029	Housing, Transport and Infrastructure
The Intergenerational Triple Lock	London Summer Conf 2024	Aut 2029	Economy, Welfare and Labour Relations
The Rise of the Far Right	London Summer Conf 2024	Aut 2029	Home Affairs and Justice
Let Them Eat Biscuits and Go To the Bar	London Summer Conf 2024	Aut 2029	Political Reform and Local Government
Justice and Freedom in Georgia	London Summer Conf 2024	Aut 2029	International Affairs and Europe
Fighting Against Transnational Repression in Asia	London Summer Conf 2024	Aut 2029	International Affairs and Europe
Recognising Tessa Munt MP	London Summer Conf 2024	Aut 2029	The Liberal Democrats and Business Motions
Abolish Fee Paying Schools	London Summer Conf 2024	Aut 2029	Education
Bus travel in England	Online Winter Conf 2025	Feb 2030	Housing, Transport and Infrastructure
Improve Transport Accessibility and Development	Online Winter Conf 2025	Feb 2030	Housing, Transport and Infrastructure
Taxing Gifts, Not Just Inheritance	Online Winter Conf 2025	Feb 2030	Economy, Welfare and Labour Rights
A Fair Deal for Independent Creators	Online Winter Conf 2025	Feb 2030	Science and Technology
Somaliland Recognition Bill	Online Winter Conf 2025	Feb 2030	International Affairs and Europe
Towards a European Army	Cambridge Summer Conf 2025	August 2030	Defence
A Liberal future for Two States	Cambridge Summer Conf 2025	August 2030	International Affairs and Europe
Adopt a Holistic Approach to Assessing the UK's Economy	Cambridge Summer Conf 2025	August 2030	Economy, Welfare and Labour Rights
Abolishing Anti-Homelessness Architecture	Cambridge Summer Conf 2025	August 2030	Housing, Transport and Infrastructure
Driving Forward: Road to Access	Cambridge Summer Conf 2025	August 2030	Housing, Transport and Infrastructure

Direct Lithium mining (DLE) the method that can avoid another climate catastrophe	Cambridge Summer Conf 2025	August 2030	Environment, Energy, and the Climate Emergency
4 Day Work Week	Cambridge Summer Conf 2025	August 2030	Economy, Welfare and Labour Rights
Building a Holistic Liberal Democrat Psychoactives Policy	Cambridge Summer Conf 2025	August 2030	Health and Social Care
Representation Is Not Optional: Women at the Table	Cambridge Summer Conf 2025	August 2030	Social Justice
A Liberal Vision for Digital Rights - A proportional alternative to the Online Safety Act	Cambridge Summer Conf 2025	August 2030	Science and Technology

Revisions Log

- May 2020
 - Major reformatting and redesign
 - Policies removed due to expiry in 2020:
 - Policies removed due to being redundant :
- July 2020
 - Policies added due to being passed at Online
- - Policy replaced: "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
 - Policies added due to being passed at Online Conference 2021
 - Policies replaced: 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
 - Policies added due to being passed at Manchester Summer Conference 2021
- March 2022
 - Policies removed due to expiry in January 2022
 - Policies added due to being passed at Edinburgh Winter Conference 2022
- September 2022
 - Policies removed due to expiry in August 2022
 - Policies added due to being passed at Birmingham Summer Conference 2022
- March 2023
 - Reformatting and design to comply with new Brand Guidance.
 - Policies removed due to expiring from in February 2023
 - Policies added due to being passed at 2023 Reading Winter Conference.
- December 2023
 - Policies removed due to expiring from Swansea 2018 Summer Conference
 - Policies added due to being passed at 2023 Newcastle/Gateshead Summer Conference:
- March 2024
 - Policies removed due to expiring from Glasgow 2019 Winter Conference
 - Policies added due to being passed at 2024 Sheffield Winter Conference
- April 2024
 - Reformatting to ensure consistency across the Policy Book
- August 2024
 - Policies removed due to lapsing from London Summer Conference 2019
 - Policies added due to being passed at 2024 London Summer Conference
- February 2025
 - Lapsed policies removed
 - Policies added due to being passed at 2025 Online Winter Conference
- August 2025
 - Lapsed policies removed
 - Policies added due to being passed at 2025 Cambridge Summer Conference
- August/September 2025
 - Creation of new/condensed policy books to accompany this 'master' policy book