



Stop Brexit
Stop Independence
Build a Brighter Future

Contents

Foreword from Jo Swinson and Introduction	5
Stop Brexit	11
Invest the £50 billion Remain Bonus in public services and tackling inequality	13
Our Plan for a Stronger Economy	15
Investment for the future across the UK	16
Our Plan for Better Education and Skills	26
A fairer economy with free childcare from 9 months	26
Our Plan for a Green Society and a Green Economy	32
Insulate all low income homes by 2025 to tackle the climate emergency	33
Our Plan for Health and Social Care	44
Treat mental health with the same urgency as physical health	45
Our Plan to Build a Fair Society	49
A safety net that works	51
Our Plan for Freedom, Rights and Equality	54
Our Plan for Better Politics	60
Giving Scotland a bigger say in the direction of the UK	64
Stop the division, chaos, new borders and economic cost of independence	65
Our Plan for a Better World	69

JO SWINSON'S PLAN FOR BRITAIN'S FUTURE:



STOP BREXIT



Invest the £50 billion Remain Bonus in public services and tackling inequality.

STOP INDEPENDENCE



Stop the division, chaos, new borders and economic cost that independence would cause.

BUILD A FAIRER ECONOMY



Provide money for free childcare from 9 months and investment in Scottish schools and nurseries.

TACKLE THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY



Generate 80% of UK electricity from renewables by 2030 and insulate all low-income homes by 2025.

TRANSFORMING MENTAL HEALTH

Treating mental health with the same urgency as physical health.







Foreword

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Only the Liberal Democrats are clear that we want Scotland in the UK and in the EU. We stand with the majority in Scotland who wanted both those things in the two referendums.

Liberal Democrats will stop another independence referendum in Scotland, and stop the division, chaos, new borders and economic cost that independence would cause.

We need to learn the lessons of Brexit, not repeat the mistakes with independence. Cutting ties with our closest neighbours is a backwards and isolating move – that's been the lesson of the past three years. Independence would bring all the chaos and distractions of Brexit, but multiply them.

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

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



Jo Swinson, Leader of the Liberal Democrats



Introduction

The Liberal Democrats are the only party contesting this election with a clear plan for how we will build a brighter future. The first step of our plan for a brighter future is simple: stop Brexit and use the Remain Bonus to invest in public services.

We are unashamedly fighting to stay in the European Union, and we are the strongest party of Remain in the UK. We believe that our best future is as members of the European Union. Any form of Brexit will damage our economy, put jobs at risk, hurt our NHS and put our family of nations under enormous strain. There is no Brexit deal that will ever be as good as the deal we currently have as members of the European Union.

Our determination to stop Brexit isn't just about retaining membership of this or that EU institution. It's about who we are as a country and the values that drive our choices. It's about choosing to work with others in taking on the big challenges that we face, whether it's the climate crisis or cybercrime. It's about recognising that the zero-sum games of the past no longer apply to a world where our future prosperity is so interlinked with that of our closest allies.

Staying in the European Union will secure a £50 billion Remain Bonus, with the economy two per cent larger by 2024-25. We can invest that bonus in our public services, and on tackling in-work poverty and inequality.

In Scotland the lessons of Brexit are the lessons for independence. Breaking up is hard to do. It creates borders, division and chaos. Another independence referendum will put chaos on top of chaos and we oppose one.

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

The Liberal Democrats are the only party with a radical, credible and detailed plan to

tackle the climate emergency as soon as possible. We will deliver a ten-year emergency programme to cut greenhouse gas emissions substantially straight away and phase out emissions from the remaining hard-to-treat sectors by 2045 at the latest. By 2030 we will generate 80 per cent of UK electricity from renewables and cut energy bills and emissions by insulating homes, prioritising bringing 3.5 million households out of fuel poverty by 2025.

In government, we will give every child the best start in life, no matter their ability or background, and we will empower them to make the most of the challenges ahead.

We will create a fairer economy, where every person can live a secure, happy and fulfilling life. To do that, we will provide free childcare for all children with parents in work from nine months and for all children from two years, up to the time they start school. This will plug the gap in provision, ensuring that parents have an easier choice when it comes to returning to work after parental leave. We will provide the Scottish Parliament with the money to implement this in Scotland.

Creating a fairer economy is about reinventing the relationship between business and the communities in which they operate, so that they are part of the solution to our biggest challenges, not the problem.

Finally, we will transform our mental health service by treating it with the same urgency as physical health. About one in four people in the UK experience a mental health problem each year, and while the NHS may be the envy of the world, our mental health service falls far short of what patients deserve.

Nearly two-thirds of children and young people with diagnosable mental health conditions are not receiving treatment, and waiting times for them can be up to two years. That must seem like a lifetime.

We will make mental health services 24-hour, including placing mental health staff in A&E departments, GP surgeries, in schools and alongside the police.



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Stop Brexit

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

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

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

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

Labour want to reopen the withdrawal agreement all over again and negotiate a new deal – but they will not say whether they want Britain to remain in the EU or leave.

The SNP have prioritised independence ahead of Remain and won't co-operate to stop Brexit unless they get another divisive independence referendum.

The fact is that whether Labour Red or Tory Blue, Brexit is bad for the UK.

The importance of the UK's membership of the EU has never been clearer. Working together through the EU, the countries of Europe have achieved peace and prosperity on a continent historically wracked by war and division. That is a tremendous achievement; it should not be taken for granted, particularly as Europe is faces new dangers from an increasingly aggressive Russia and as the US turns away from its old

alliances.

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

Remaining in the EU will maintain the European crime-fighting tools that keep us all safe, including Europol, the European Arrest Warrant and direct access to shared police databases.

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

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

Freedom of movement has brought the UK tremendous social, economic and cultural benefits. It gives people the opportunity to work, be together with their loved ones, study and retire anywhere in the EU. There is no contradiction between our European and our British, Scottish and regional identities: they enrich one another. By stopping Brexit, Liberal Democrats will protect and maintain freedom of movement, safeguarding the rights of UK citizens living elsewhere in the EU and EU citizens in the UK. Liberal Democrats will also support the right of the people of Gibraltar to remain in the European Union.

EU citizens are valued members of our communities and we believe that they should be afforded the right to full participation in civic life, including the ability to stand for

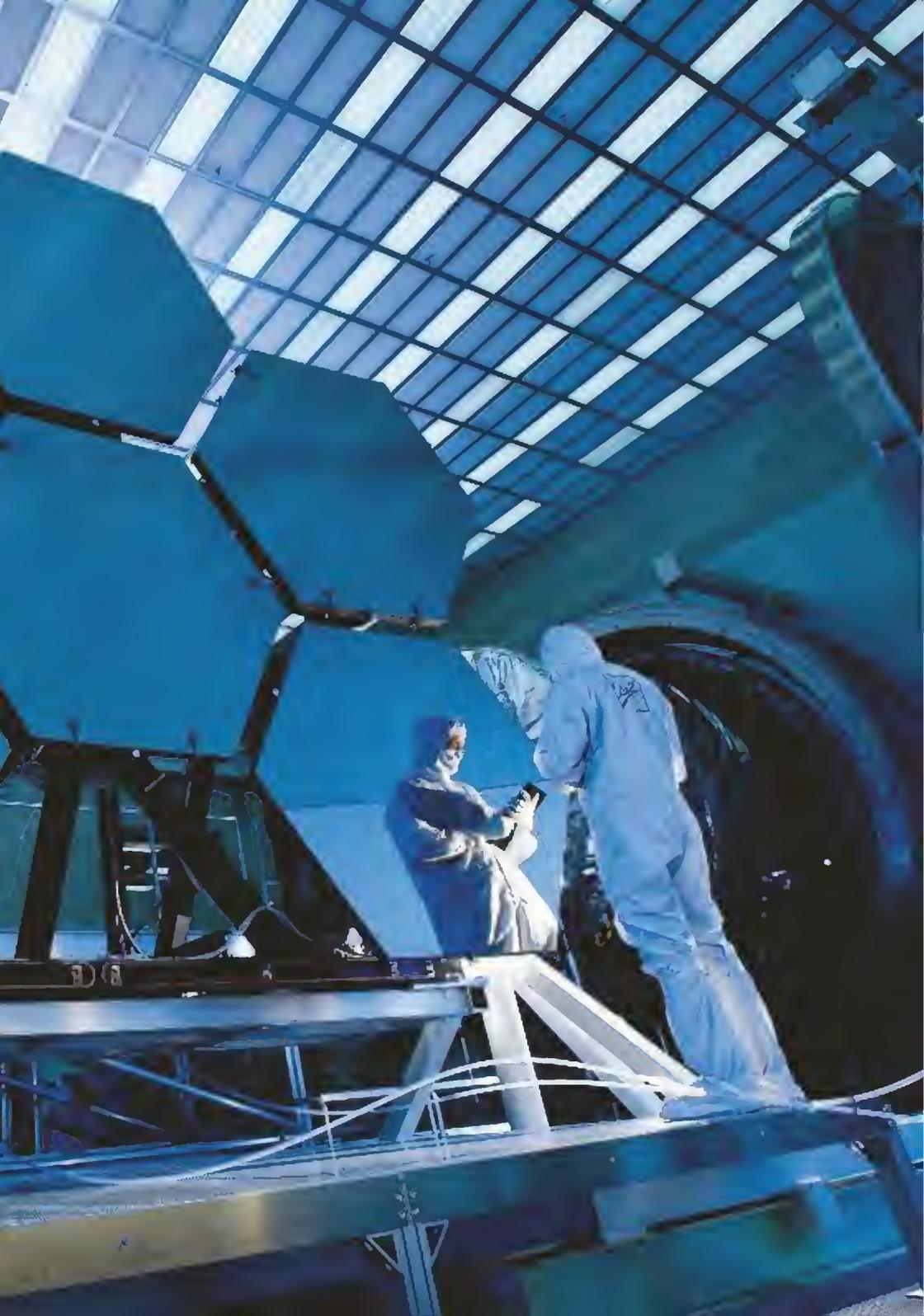


office and vote in UK referendums, European elections and general elections as well as local elections. Liberal Democrats will extend these rights to all EU citizens who have lived in the UK for five years or longer.

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

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

A Liberal Democrat government will stop Brexit – and build a brighter future for the UK by keeping us at the heart of the European Union.





Our Plan for a Stronger Economy

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

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

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

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

Our priorities in the next parliament will be:

- **Investing £130 billion in infrastructure – upgrading our transport and energy systems, building schools, hospitals and homes, empowering Scotland and the other nations and regions of the UK, and developing the climate -friendly infrastructure of the future.**
- **Introducing a wellbeing budget and basing decisions for government spending on what will improve wellbeing as well as on economic and fiscal indicators.**

Investment for the Future across the UK

Opportunity and access to employment and services are not fairly spread around the country. This means that many people become stuck in insecure work in which they have no prospect of promotion. The Conservatives pay lip service to the idea of growth outside of south-east England while pursuing a reckless Brexit that will deepen inequality and place trade barriers between Northern Ireland and the rest of the UK; Labour's backwards-looking approach of Westminster running renationalised industries denies people and communities autonomy and will hit investment and stifle innovation. Liberal Democrats are the only party looking to the future with a plan to give all parts of the UK a real say backed by meaningful financial muscle. This is the only sustainable answer to the divides in the UK. We will:

- Introduce a capital £50 billion Rebalancing Programme for infrastructure spend across the nations and regions of the UK, reinforced by a Just Transition Fund to support communities negatively affected by policies to tackle the climate emergency.
- Work with the major banks to fund the creation of a local banking sector dedicated to meeting the needs of local small and medium-sized businesses.
- Expand the British Business Bank to perform a more central role in the economy, to ensure that viable small and medium-sized businesses have access to capital, even when the rest of the commercial banking system can't provide it.
- Set an ambitious Industrial Strategy to transform the economy and incentivise clustering by businesses and universities with particular specialisations.



Liberal Democrats want to take advantage of historically low interest rates to increase borrowing for investment to build the economy of the future. We are committed to a responsible and realistic £130 billion package of additional infrastructure investment, which will prioritise:

- Significant investment in public transport, including converting the rail network to ultra-low-emission technology (electric or hydrogen) by 2035, and a continued commitment to major new strategic rail routes.
- A programme of installing hyper-fast, fibre-optic broadband across the UK, with a particular focus on connecting rural areas, which were promised improvements through the Scottish Government's R100 programme but are now behind schedule.
- New direct spending on housebuilding to help build 300,000 homes a year by 2024, including social housing.
- An emergency ten-year programme to reduce energy consumption from all the UK's buildings, cutting emissions and fuel bills and ending fuel poverty.
- £5 billion of initial capital for a new Green Investment Bank, using public money to attract private investment for zero-carbon priorities.

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

UK2050: Our Vision for an Innovation-Led Economy

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

Liberal Democrats have a transformative plan to make the UK a world leader in responsible innovation by taking advantage of the UK's strengths and what we are

good at: our natural advantages in renewable energy; our strong university sector; and our strengths such as bioscience in the Midlands, advanced materials in Yorkshire, zero-carbon technology in the North West and photonics in Scotland. We will build a growing economy in which people will have well-paid and fulfilling jobs. We will:

- Increase spending on research and development to three per cent of GDP. We will publish a roadmap to achieve this ambition by the earliest date possible, via an interim target of 2.4 per cent of GDP by no later than 2027.
- Support innovation, with a goal of doubling innovation spending across the economy.
- Build on the industrial strategy developed by Liberal Democrat ministers in government, working with sectors which are critical to the UK's ability to trade internationally, creating more 'Catapult' innovation and technology centres and backing private investment in particular in zero-carbon and environmental innovation.
- Develop the skilled workforce needed to support this growth by introducing a new two-year visa for students to work after graduation
- Continue to support investment in new UK digital start-ups by reforming the British Business Bank's support for venture capital funds to enable it to help funds 'crowd in' new backers rather than acting as a funder of last resort.
- Support growth in the creative industries, including video gaming – a Scottish strength – by continuing tailored industry-specific tax support, promoting creative skills, supporting modern and flexible patent, copyright and licensing rules, and addressing the barriers to finance faced by small creative businesses.
- Create creative enterprise zones to grow and regenerate the cultural output of areas across the UK.

Harnessing the Benefits of New Technology

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



ensure that new technology is developed and deployed ethically, so that it respects people's fundamental rights, including the rights to privacy and non-discrimination. We will:

- Support the UK's diverse, inclusive tech sector by reforming immigration rules – including enabling industry bodies to sponsor work visas.
- Support the growth of new jobs and businesses in the tech sector by allowing companies to claim R&D tax credits against the cost of purchasing data sets and cloud computing, simplifying the regulatory landscape and speeding up regulatory change.
- Ensure that new technologies are used in ethical and responsible ways by:
 - Introducing a Lovelace Code of Ethics to ensure the use of personal data and artificial intelligence is unbiased, transparent and accurate, and respects privacy.
 - Giving the Centre for Data Ethics and Innovation the power to 'call in' products that appear to breach this Code.
 - Introducing a kite mark for companies that meet the highest ethical standards in their development and use of artificial intelligence and other new technologies.
 - Convening a citizens' assembly to determine when it is appropriate for the government to use algorithms in decision-making.
- Develop a mechanism to allow the public to share in the profits made by tech companies in the use of their data.
- Empower consumers and ensure that everyone can enjoy the benefits of new technology, by setting a UK-wide target for digital literacy and requiring all products to provide a short, clear version of their terms and conditions, setting out the key facts as they relate to individuals' data and privacy.

A Better Deal for Entrepreneurs and Small Business

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

- Create a new 'start-up allowance' to help those starting a new business with their living costs in the crucial first weeks of their business.
- Support fast-growing businesses seeking to scale up, through the provision of mentoring support.
- Prioritise small and medium-sized businesses in the rollout of hyper-fast broadband.
- Require all government agencies and contractors and companies with more than 250 employees to sign up to the prompt payment code, making it enforceable.
- Ensure that the company at the top of a supply chain cannot abuse its position to shore up its own cashflow at the expense of smaller suppliers.
- Expand the activities of the British Business Bank, enabling it to perform a more central role in the economy by tackling the shortage of equity capital for growing firms and providing long-term capital for medium-sized businesses.
- Provide a supportive framework to develop social enterprises – businesses with a social focus rather than a profit motive.
- Expand the rights and benefits available to those in insecure forms of employment, such as offering parental leave and pay to the self-employed.
- Work to prohibit unfair delivery charges for businesses and people in rural and remote areas.
- Reform Universal Credit to be more supportive of the self-employed.

Better Business

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



enterprises and community interest companies – and empowers employees. We will:

- Encourage employers to promote employee ownership by giving staff in listed companies with more than 250 employees a right to request shares, to be held in trust for the benefit of employees.
- Strengthen worker participation in decision-making, including staff representation on remuneration committees, and require all UK-listed companies and all private companies with more than 250 employees to have at least one employee representative on their boards with the same legal duties and responsibilities as other directors.
- Introduce a general duty of care for the environment and human rights – requiring companies, financial institutions and public sector agencies to exercise due diligence in avoiding specified activities such as child labour or modern slavery, or specified products such as commodities produced with deforestation, in their operations and supply chains, and to report on their actions.
- Reform fiduciary duty and company purpose rules to ensure that all large companies have a formal statement of corporate purpose, including considerations such as employee welfare, environmental standards, community benefit and ethical practice, alongside benefit to shareholders, and that they report formally on the wider impact of the business on society and the environment.
- Encourage new forms of incorporation and a diversity of business types, such as for large firms contracting with the public sector or providing essential utilities and for smaller firms wanting a dual purpose to be profit-making and have a positive impact on society, workers, communities and the environment.
- Require binding and public votes of shareholders on executive pay policies.
- Extend the scope of the existing ‘public interest’ test when considering approvals for takeovers of large or strategically significant companies by overseas-based owners to recognise the benefits to the UK economy, workers and consumers of protecting UK companies from speculative or short-term interests.

Fair Taxes

Government must ensure the tax system meets the needs of a modern economy and is ready for the transition to a digital and zero-carbon economy. Businesses and

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

Labour and the Conservatives are looking to the past for answers that will not work today: Labour want to hike up income tax in a way that will not even ensure that more tax is paid; the Conservatives have no interest in making the taxation system fairer. Our plan for the future will see big businesses paying their fair share, support small- and medium-sized enterprises and ensure that income earned from wealth is not privileged when compared to income from employment – making sure the tax system is fair to all.

We will:

- Restore Corporation Tax to 20 per cent – reversing the Conservatives' reduction of this tax to 17 per cent – and keep the rate stable with a predictable future path.
- Tax income from capital more fairly compared to income from work by abolishing the separate Capital Gains Tax-free allowance and instead taxing capital gains and salaries through a single allowance.
- Simplify business taxation to lower administration costs – supporting smaller companies – and reduce opportunities for tax avoidance.
- Take tough action against corporate tax evasion and avoidance especially by international tech giants and large monopolies, including:
 - Introducing a General Anti-Avoidance Rule, setting a target for HM Revenue and Customs to reduce the tax gap and investing in more staff to enable them to meet it.
 - Reforming place of establishment rules to stop multinationals unfairly shifting profits out of the UK.
 - Improving the Digital Sales Tax to ensure tech giants pay their fair share.
 - Support and build on the OECD's proposals to require multinationals to pay a level of tax which is more closely related to their sales in every country in which they operate.



- End retrospective tax changes like the loan charge brought in by the Conservatives, so that individuals and firms are treated fairly and review recent proposals to change the IR35 rules.
- Scrap the Marriage Tax Allowance.

Future of Work

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

- Establish an independent review to consult on how to set a genuine Living Wage across all sectors. We will pay this Living Wage in all central government departments and their agencies, and encourage other public sector employers to do likewise.
- Establish a powerful new Worker Protection Enforcement Authority to protect those in precarious work.
- Change the law so that flexible working is open to all from day one in the job, with employers required to advertise jobs accordingly, unless there are significant business reasons why that is not possible.
- Modernise employment rights to make them fit for the age of the 'gig economy', including by:

Establishing a new 'dependent contractor' employment status in between employment and self-employment, with entitlements to basic rights such as minimum earnings levels, sick pay and holiday entitlement.

Reviewing the tax and National Insurance status of employees, dependent contractors and freelancers to ensure fair and comparable treatment.

Setting a 20 per cent higher minimum wage for people on zero-hour contracts at times of normal demand to compensate them for the uncertainty of fluctuating hours of work.

Giving a right to request a fixed-hours contract after 12 months for 'zero hours' and agency workers, not to be unreasonably refused.

Reviewing rules concerning pensions so that those in the gig economy don't lose out, and portability between roles is protected.

Shifting the burden of proof in employment tribunals regarding employment status from individual to employer.

- Strengthen the ability of unions to represent workers effectively in the modern economy, including a right of access to workplaces.

Responsible Finances

A good government should responsibly manage its finances: taking advantage of opportunities to borrow to invest in key infrastructure while making sure that day-to-day spending does not exceed the amount of money raised in taxes. The Liberal Democrats are the only party who will manage the country's finances properly. The Conservatives are pursuing a Brexit that will wreck the economy for a generation making it impossible to sustainably invest in public services. Labour will waste billions nationalising utilities – spending money that could be used to improve them just to bring them under state control. The SNP admit their plan would mean a decade of spending restraint. Our Liberal Democrat plan for the future is built on responsible management of the country's finances: stopping Brexit and using the increased revenue from a bigger economy to invest in services, and using the money that Labour would waste to tackle the climate emergency and invest in transport and energy infrastructure. We will:

- Use the £50 billion Remain Bonus to invest in services and tackle inequality, giving a major boost to schools and combating in-work poverty.
- Ensure that key UK services are properly funded and responsibly manage their budgets so that they rise year-on-year, with increases in the money for the Scottish Parliament to do the same.
- Ensure overall national debt continues to decline as a share of national income.
- Protect the independence of the Bank of England and keep the inflation target of two per cent.



Promoting Wellbeing

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

- Introduce a wellbeing budget, following the example of New Zealand – basing decisions on what will improve wellbeing as well as on economic and fiscal indicators.
- Appoint a Minister for Wellbeing, who will make an annual statement to Parliament on the main measures of wellbeing and the effects of government policies on them.
- Introduce wellbeing impact assessments for all government policies.
- Prioritise government spending on the things that matter most to people's wellbeing – both now and in the future – with the money for Scotland to match them:
 - Access to high-quality mental health and other health services.
 - Schools that properly prepare our children for both work and relationships.
 - Jobs for the future through further education.
 - Community services that tackle loneliness and prevent isolation.
 - Targeted support for those most at risk of poor wellbeing: vulnerable children, people who are homeless, victims of trafficking and exploitation.
 - Providing social security support to those who need it.
- Ensure that the environment is protected for future generations with clean air to breathe and urgent action to tackle the climate emergency.

Our Plan for Better Education and Skills

In the brighter Liberal Democrat future, children will be happier, healthier and with all the skills they need to succeed in life. Free childcare will allow parents to choose the balance of work and childcare that suits them, and help close attainment gaps in education and gender gaps in pay.

Our top priorities in the next parliament will be:

- **Providing free, high-quality childcare for children of working parents from nine months.**
- **Investment in schools across the UK, with money going to the Scottish Government to increase school budgets, recruit and reward teachers and support staff and raise attainment.**

The Best Start in Life

We will start with a bold offer of free childcare from the of age nine months (the end of paid parental leave), transforming the opportunities for early years education and helping parents who want to combine caring and working.

Nurseries are struggling. With no government support for most families between the end of parental leave and age three, and the average price for 25 hours a week of nursery childcare for a child under two now at £6,600 a year, too many new parents are forced to choose between caring for their child and their careers. At the same time, the achievement gap between richer and poorer, which can best be tackled in the early years, is rising.

The Conservatives have promised to help, but their childcare policy only covers three- and four-year-olds in working families, only amounts to 30 hours a week, less time than children spend in school, and doesn't cover school holidays. Even the hours they do offer are underfunded and this means that many providers struggle to deliver a quality Early Years education. Many parents who want to work, especially



mothers, can spend several years out of the workplace because they can't afford childcare. This affects their career trajectory, their confidence, and their long-term earning potential.

Liberal Democrats have a better plan to deliver the best start in life for children: free high-quality childcare from nine months for all working parents, properly funded. Parents wanting to go back to work will get the help they need, knowing that their child will be happy, healthy and ready to start school.

Making this a UK-wide shared commitment will help promote take-up and train enough staff.

We will:

- Offer free, high-quality childcare for every child aged two to four and children aged between nine and 24 months where their parents or guardians are in work: 35 hours a week, 48 weeks a year.
- Increase the funding for these free hours to cover the actual cost of nursery provision.
- Make a long-term commitment to funding childcare to improve career progression and give greater certainty to the workforce.

Supporting Scottish Schools

Scottish teachers have been messed about for too long by the Scottish Government. Year after year they face chaotic proposals for change that are badly delivered by ministers.

We will respect and restore the role of teachers in Scottish classrooms by conducting a proper review of their terms and conditions to respond to the changes they have faced in the last 15 years.

School budgets in Scotland are under pressure. We will increase school budgets. We will use Scotland's share of the extra public resources that come from remaining in the EU and achieving higher economic growth to pay for this.

For schools, teachers and pupils we will call for the extra resources to be used to:





- Make the Pupil Equity Fund permanent, giving schools confidence to make long-term decisions to recruit additional teachers and support workers, ending the current practice of employing them on unsatisfactory short-term contracts.
- Introduce a new armed forces pupil premium, in recognition of the disruption that can be caused to the education of children of service personnel and that they may require extra mental health and pastoral support.
- Secure a better deal for teachers by commissioning a McCrone 2 independent expert review of teachers' terms, conditions and the demands being placed upon them. The proposals we would submit would include:
 - A guaranteed minimum level of support staff in every school to allow teachers to focus on the needs of each individual pupil.
 - A new Teacher Premium for schools in disadvantaged areas consisting of pay supplements designed to attract and reward the best teachers for the schools in greatest need.
 - New optional three-year packages for probationer teachers to help local authorities get graduates to take up posts in certain geographical areas such as the Highlands and the North East.
 - New retention bonuses paid to new teachers who commit to posts in hard-to-fill areas.
- Protect free music tuition in schools, helping remove the barriers to pupils studying arts and creative subjects.
- Expand counselling services in schools.
- Promote school breakfast clubs.

Our reforms in Scotland will be supported by commitments from Liberal Democrats in the rest of the UK to raise the starting salaries of teachers to £30,000.

Learning Throughout Life

Our universities are examples of excellence throughout the world. Their ability to maintain top-quality research activity, to attract funding and to deliver the best teaching depends on being open and outward looking – which this Government's disastrous approach to Brexit is already damaging. Liberal Democrats will protect our world-leading higher education sector by stopping Brexit, enabling it to continue to rely on international collaboration and being able to attract leading academics from around the world.

With technology advancing and the world of work always and rapidly changing, skills learned at 18 or 21 will not last a lifetime and it has never been more important for people to continually develop new skills. Colleges are important to enable an adaptable, future-focused workforce. People should be able to retrain and upskill when they need to.

We will:

- Reverse the damage to universities posed by Brexit and related uncertainty by stopping Brexit and keeping the UK at the heart of the EU.
- Invest in colleges, including by refunding colleges for the VAT they pay.
- Repair the damage to colleges caused by the loss of 140,000 places under the SNP.
- Increase the grants and bursaries available to students from less well-off backgrounds, helping meet the widening access ambitions.
- Develop a national skills strategy for key sectors, including zero-carbon technologies, to help match skills and people.
- Expand the apprenticeship levy into a wider 'Skills and Training Levy' to help prepare the UK's workforce for the economic challenges ahead with 25 per cent of the funds raised by the levy going into a 'Social Mobility Fund' targeted at areas with the greatest skill needs.

Access to Culture and Sport

Arts, media and sports are essential for personal fulfilment and quality of life – they enlarge people's experience and are part of what turns a group of people into a community. Funding for these organisations is put at risk with Brexit. Stopping Brexit will protect Scotland's world-class creative enterprises, from the Edinburgh festivals to the Orkney Folk Festival. Liberal Democrats will ensure that we continue to invest in our cultural capital. We will:

- Maintain free access to national museums and galleries.
- Support anti-racism, anti-sectarianism and anti-homophobia campaigns in sport.
- Protect the independence of the BBC and set up a BBC Licence Fee Commission, and maintain Channel 4 in public ownership. .



- Build on the recommendations of the Smith Commission by extending the accountability of the BBC to the Scottish Parliament.
- Protect sports and arts funding via the National Lottery.
- Maintain current standards of intellectual property (IP) protection with continuing co-operation on enforcement of IP generated in the UK and working within the EU to ensure the continuation of territorial licensing of rights.
- Create creative enterprise zones to grow and regenerate the cultural output of areas across the UK.

Our Plan for a Green Society and a Green Economy

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Climate Action Now

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

- Require all companies registered in the UK and listed on UK stock exchanges to set targets consistent with the Paris Agreement on climate change and to report on their implementation; and establish a general corporate duty of care for the environment and human rights.

- Regulate financial services to encourage green investments, including requiring pension funds and managers to show that their portfolio investments are consistent with the Paris Agreement, and creating new powers for regulators to act if banks and other investors are not managing climate risks properly.
- Establish a Department for Climate Change and Natural Resources, appoint a cabinet-level Chief Secretary for Sustainability in the Treasury to coordinate government-wide action to make the economy sustainable resource-efficient and zero-carbon, and require every government agency to account for its contribution towards meeting climate targets.
- Establish UK and local Citizens' Climate Assemblies to engage the public in tackling the climate emergency.
- Guarantee an Office for Environmental Protection that is fully independent of government, and possesses powers and resources to enforce compliance with climate and environmental targets.
- Increase government expenditure on climate and environmental objectives, reaching at least 5 per cent of the total within five years.
- Support investment and innovation in zero-carbon and resource-efficient infrastructure and technologies by creating a new Green Investment Bank and increasing funding for Innovate UK and new Catapult innovation and technology centres on farming and land use and on carbon dioxide removal.
- Implement the UK's G7 pledge to end fossil fuel subsidies by 2025, and provide Just Transition funding for areas and communities negatively affected by the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions

Renewable Energy

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

- Accelerate the deployment of renewable power, providing more funding, removing the Conservatives' restrictions on solar and wind and building more interconnectors to guarantee security of supply; we aim to reach at least 80 per cent renewable electricity in the UK by 2030.



- Expand community and decentralised energy,
- Ban fracking because of its negative impacts on climate change, the energy mix and the local environment.
- Support investment and innovation in cutting-edge energy technologies, including tidal and wave power, energy storage, demand response, smart grids and hydrogen.
- Provide an additional £12 billion over five years to support these commitments, and ensure that the National Infrastructure Commission, National Grid, the energy regulator Ofgem, and the Crown Estate work together to deliver our net zero climate objective.

Warm Homes and Lower Energy Bills

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

We will:

- Cut energy bills, end fuel poverty by 2025 and reduce emissions from buildings, including by providing free retrofits for low-income homes, piloting a new subsidised Energy-Saving Homes scheme and reducing VAT on home insulation.
- Adopt a Zero-Carbon Heat Strategy, including reforming the Renewable Heat Incentive, to support the phased installation of heat pumps in homes and businesses off the gas grid, and piloting projects to determine the best future mix of zero-carbon heating solutions.
- Remove distribution charges that see consumers in the Northern Isles and the North of Scotland pay additional infrastructure costs through their electricity bills.
- Set a clear direction for changes in the construction industry in Scotland by requiring all new homes and non-domestic buildings in the rest of the UK to

be built to a zero-carbon standard by 2021, rising to a more ambitious Passivhaus standard by 2025.

Green Industry, Green Jobs and Green Products

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

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

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

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



community groups combat 'planned obsolescence'.

- Introducing legally binding targets for reducing the consumption of key natural resources and other incentives for businesses to improve resource efficiency.
- Work across the four UK administrations to extend, with consistency, deposit return schemes for all food and drink bottles and containers.

Saving Nature and the Countryside

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

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

We will:

- Introduce a Nature Act to restore the natural environment through setting legally binding near-term and long-term targets for improving water, air, soil and biodiversity, and supported by funding streams of at least £18 billion over five years.
- Combat climate change, and benefit nature and people by coordinating the planting of 60 million trees a year and introducing requirements for the greater use of sustainably harvested wood in construction.
- Invest in large scale restoration of peatlands, heathland, native woodlands, saltmarshes, wetlands and coastal waters, helping to absorb carbon, protect against floods, improve water quality and protect habitats.
- Work across the four UK administrations on a framework for agricultural support payments to support the public goods that come from effective land management, including restoring nature and protecting the countryside, preventing flooding and combating climate change through





measures to increase soil carbon and expand native woodland.

- Support producers by broadening the remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator and supporting them with access to markets.
- Establish a 'blue belt' of marine protected areas covering at least 50 per cent of UK waters by 2030, in partnership with UK overseas territories.
- Create a new 'British Overseas Ecosystems Fund' for large-scale environmental restoration projects in the UK Overseas Territories and sovereign bases, home to 94 per cent of our unique wildlife.
- Ensure that sustainability lies at the heart of fisheries policy, rebuilding depleted fish stocks to achieve their former abundance. Fishers, scientists and conservationists should all be at the centre of a decentralised and regionalised fisheries management system. Immigration policy should also be flexible enough to ensure that both the catching and processing sectors have access to the labour they need.

Clean and Green Transport

Much of the UK's public transport system is broken. This has made air pollution – mostly caused by cars – one of the biggest causes of preventable illness in the UK, causing at least 40,000 premature deaths a year and costing the NHS £15 billion. And surface transport is now the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, with almost no progress in reducing them since 1990. The UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions has risen by almost 80 per cent since 1990.

Liberal Democrats will meet this challenge by:

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

Together these steps will tackle the clean air crisis, meet the challenge of climate change, improve people's health, stimulate local and regional prosperity and develop British zero-carbon industries, with benefits for jobs, growth and exports.

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

- Accelerate the rapid take-up of electric vehicles by reforming vehicle taxation, cutting VAT on EVs to 5 per cent and increasing the rate of installation of charging points, including residential on-street points and ultra-fast chargers at service stations. We will ensure that, by 2030, every new car and small van sold is electric.
- Pass a Clean Air Act, based on World Health Organisation guidelines. The Act will enshrine the legal right to unpolluted air.
- Shift more freight from road to rail, including electrifying lines leading from major ports as an urgent priority, and amend the current HGV road user levy to take account of carbon emissions.
- Support innovation in zero-emission technologies, including batteries and hydrogen fuel cells, supplementing government funding with a new Clean Air Fund from industry.
- Reduce the climate impact of flying by reforming the taxation of international flights to focus on those who fly the most, while reducing costs for those who take one or two international return flights per year, placing a moratorium on the development of new runways (net) in the UK, opposing any expansion of Heathrow, Gatwick or Stansted and any new airport in the Thames Estuary, and introducing a zero-carbon fuels blending requirement for domestic flights.

Fixing Britain's Railways

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



- Extend the rail network, improve stations, reopen smaller stations and restore twin-track lines to major routes. This will include the case to re-open lines in Scotland closed since 1968, such as to Levenmouth and in the North East, and opening new stations such as Newburgh in Fife.
- Convert the rail network to ultra-low-emission technology (electric or hydrogen) by 2035.
- Support major strategic projects but ensure far tighter financial controls and increased accountability to ensure that these projects are value for money, and address problems with implementation to ensure that HS2 opens as early as possible to meet our decarbonisation goals while minimising the destruction of precious UK habitats and woodland.
- Start a revolution in rail franchising for services outside of Scotland by opening up the bidding process to public sector companies, local or combined authorities, not-for-profits and mutuals – which have the potential to deliver much better services than private operators.
- Build into new UK rail franchise agreements a stronger focus on customers, including investment in new stations, lines and modern trains.
- Be far more proactive in sanctioning and ultimately sacking train operators if they fail to provide a high-quality public service to their customers.
- Fix the UK's broken fares and ticketing system so that it provides better value for money.
- Improve disabled access to public transport via the Access for All programme.

Animal Welfare

Liberal Democrats believe that all possible steps should be taken to promote animal welfare and prevent animal suffering, with better protection for animals, and full regard for animal welfare. We will:

- Enshrine the principle of animal sentience in UK law to ensure that due regard is paid to animal welfare in policymaking.
- Ensure that the National Wildlife Crime Unit is properly funded.
- Ban the sale of real fur, end the use of primates as pets, clamp down on illegal pet imports and establish an independent regulatory body for horse welfare to prevent the abuse and avoidable deaths of racehorses.

- Develop safe, effective, humane, and evidence-based ways of controlling bovine TB, including by investing to produce workable vaccines.
- Minimise the use of animals in scientific experimentation, including by funding research into alternatives.
- Work within the EU to ensure that future trade agreements require high environmental and animal welfare standards, and legislate to ban the importation of hunting trophies that do not contribute to environmental protection.



Our Plan for Health and Social Care

Everyone should be able to live a healthy life with the support they need in their local community. That means properly investing in the NHS and social care, doing more across Government to promote wellbeing and to reduce inequality at every stage of life. It means making the shift from healthcare that kicks in only when people are ill to systems of wellbeing that help them to stay healthy and minimise levels of physical and mental ill health.

Our commitment to stop Brexit will ensure a brighter future for patients and staff. We will retain a warm welcome to staff from across the EU who work in our health and social care services.

Stopping Brexit will keep our NHS safe from the hands of Donald Trump who has his eyes on a trade deal that opens up NHS services to American corporations.

Leaving the European Union would pose serious threats to the sustainability of the NHS and social care systems. It would severely threaten the scope to recruit or retain staff from elsewhere in Europe, a problem which will be made worse by the Conservatives' proposed "nurse tax". It risks potential delays to medicines, cancer tests, and treatments using radioisotopes. Above all it means a long-term loss of financial resources as a result of reduced UK economic growth.

While the SNP have been obsessed with independence, our mental health services have suffered. The Scottish Government's flagship strategy was 15 months late, delaying decisions and investment. The Scottish Government went without a suicide strategy for more than 500 days. Services are hundreds of staff short.

Across the UK, Liberal Democrats will support and sustain our NHS and social care system. We will boost spending in the NHS, with extra money coming to Scotland:

- Use £10 billion of our capital fund to make necessary investments in equipment, hospitals, community, ambulance and mental health service buildings, to bring them into the 21st Century.



- Establish a cross-party health and social care convention that builds on the existing body of work from previous conventions, select committees and the 2018 citizens assembly to reach agreement on the long-term sustainable funding of a joined-up system of health and social care. We will invite patients' groups, professionals, the public and the governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to be a part of this work.

We want Scottish ministers to prepare an annual workforce planning report to get the right staff for our NHS.

In the rest of the UK we will raise £7 billion for health and social care services generated from a 1p rise on the basic, higher and additional rates of Income Tax. This will not be levied on earnings in Scotland where income tax is the responsibility of the Scottish Parliament.

Treating Mental Health Seriously

Physical and mental health should be treated equally in the NHS.

The NHS may be the envy of the world, but our mental health service is not. People are struggling. When they turn for help, it is often not there. Problems that can start small, become crises as help is either not available, or arrives too late.

Waiting times for mental health services are long. The targets for treating children and adults have never been met. People are waiting up to two years for the help they need. For young people that must feel like a lifetime.

That is why we are dedicated to transforming mental health services and treating mental health with the same urgency as physical health.

We want to break down the barriers of stigma and shame, which leave people suffering, alienated and isolated.

As part of our Plan for the Future, a Liberal Democrat government will commit extra funding to transform our mental health services in Scotland. This would enable the creation of new services, operating 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Our plan for mental health is to:

- Expand the mental health workforce, ending the waiting times scandal
- Treat mental health as seriously as physical health
- Establish fast access to talking therapies through a new mental health practitioner for every GP practice, providing one million additional treatment sessions each year
- Create new 24-hour mental health practitioner coverage in every A&E and police division
- End long journeys for treatment, ensuring young people and new mothers especially can get the care they need close to home.
- Develop a scheme to reward employers who invest in the mental wellbeing of their employees, and provide mental health first aid training to staff.

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

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

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

Help to Stay Healthy

It is better for people and for the NHS if we keep people healthy in the first place, rather than just waiting until people develop illnesses and come for treatment, but with 40 per cent of NHS spending on diseases that are preventable, we need to do more to support people to lead more active and healthy lives, and to help to improve the mental health and wellbeing. This is everybody's business – in our communities, places of work and education; the NHS and social care can't do it alone.



Our understanding of what causes physical and mental ill health is evolving all of the time. It is clear that there are strong links between illness and both environmental and social factors. We know that poor housing, unsafe streets, poor air quality, unhealthy diets and financial uncertainty can create the conditions for people to become both physically and mentally unwell.

We will:

- Publish a Wellbeing Strategy, which puts better health and wellbeing for all at the heart of government. Ministers from all departments will be responsible for implementing the strategy.
- Develop a strategy to tackle childhood obesity including restricting the marketing of junk food to children, and closing loopholes in the Soft Drinks Industry Levy. We will extend it to include juice- and milk-based drinks that are high in added sugar.
- Demand labelling for food products, in a readable font size, and publication of information on calorie, fat, sugar and salt content in restaurants and takeaways.
- Restrict how products high in fat, salt and sugar are marketed and advertised by multiple retailers.
- Reduce smoking rates by introducing a new levy on tobacco companies to contribute to the costs of health care and smoking cessation services.
- Legislate for the right to unpolluted air, and take urgent action to reduce pollution especially from traffic.
- Introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol in the rest of the UK, taking note of the impact of the policy in Scotland.
- Fund public information campaigns to tackle stigmas within specific communities.
- Review on the basis of evidence any unscientific and discriminatory practices aimed solely at LGBT+ people, such as around blood donations.
- Work to make sure Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention is fully available to all who need it on the NHS.

The prohibitionist attitude to drug use of both Labour and Conservative Governments over decades has been driven by fear rather than evidence and has failed to tackle the social and medical problems that misuse of drugs can cause to individuals and their communities. Liberal Democrats will take a different approach,

and reform access to cannabis through a regulated cannabis market in UK, with a robust approach to licensing, drawing on emerging evidence on models from the US and Canada. To combat the harm done by drugs, we will:

- Move the departmental lead on drugs policy to the Department of Health and Social Care, and, crucially, invest in more addiction services and support for drug users.
- Extend the involvement of the Scottish Government in the development of UK-wide policy frameworks on drugs, and enable the establishment of safe injecting services and heroin-assisted treatment in Glasgow and other parts of the UK where drug deaths are shockingly prevalent.
- Divert people arrested for possession of drugs for personal use into treatment, and impose civil penalties rather than imprisonment.
- Help to break the grip of the criminal gangs by introducing a legal, regulated market for cannabis. We will introduce limits on the potency levels and permit cannabis to be sold through licensed outlets to adults over the age of 18.

Our approach will support and encourage more clinical trials of cannabis for medicinal use to establish a clear evidence base. In the meantime, we will allow those who feel that cannabis helps to manage their pain to do so without fear of criminal prosecution.

We believe that everyone has a right to make independent decisions over their reproductive health without interference by the state, and that access to reproductive healthcare is a human right. With abortion law already devolved to the Scottish Parliament we will decriminalise abortion in the rest of the UK while retaining the existing 24-week limit and legislate for access to abortion facilities within Northern Ireland.

We will act on the recommendations of the Public Inquiry into Infected Blood, ensuring a just settlement for victims and their families.



Our Plan to Build a Fair Society

People should have enough money to keep a roof over their heads, buy food, heat their home, access services and opportunities online, or afford a simple bus journey to visit or care for family. But this is sadly beyond the reach of too many people: life has become unaffordable. While the UK is one of the world's richest countries, the benefits and opportunities that should follow from that are felt increasingly unevenly across our communities. A fifth of the country live in poverty, one and half million people are destitute and can't afford the most basic essentials – the situation is so bad that the UN felt the need to send its Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty to the UK to assess the situation.

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

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

Our priorities in the next parliament will be:

- **Investing £6 billion per year to make the benefits system work for people who need it and reducing the wait for the first benefits payment from**





five weeks to five days.

- **Introducing a principle of universal access to basic services: starting by building more social housing in the UK, ending rough sleeping and bringing in a new legal right to food.**
- **Creating a £50 billion capital Rebalancing Programme to address the historic investment disparities between our nations and regions.**

A Safety Net that Works

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

- Make the welfare system work by:
 - Reducing the wait for the first payment from five weeks to five days.
 - Tackling child poverty by removing the two-child limit and the benefits cap.
 - Making work pay by increasing work allowances and introducing a second earner work allowance.
- Establish a legal right to food to enshrine in law the government's responsibility to ensure that existing and new public policy is audited for its impact on food security.
- Reform Universal Credit to be more supportive of the self-employed.
- Abolish the bedroom tax and introduce positive incentives for people to downsize.
- Ensure that everyone gets the help they need by separating employment support from benefits administration and increase spending on training and education.
- Introduce an incentive-based scheme to replace the current sanctions system, which does not encourage people into work, penalises people with mental health issues and deters people from claiming support.
- Reverse the cuts to Employment Support Allowance for those in the work-related activity group.
- End Work Capability Assessments and replace them with a new system that is run by local authorities and based on real world tests.

- Reinststate the Independent Living Fund.
- Radically overhaul the Bereavement Allowance, slashed by the Conservatives, so that widows and widowers receive far more support and extend the payments to unmarried couples when a parent dies.
- Aim to end fuel poverty by 2025 through joint work between the UK and Scottish governments to provide free energy retrofits for low-income homes as part of our emergency programme to reduce energy consumption from all the UK's buildings.
- Work with the Scottish Government to ensure the effective deployment and smooth transition of the new social security powers devolved through the Scotland Act 2016, including those that the Scottish Government has asked the DWP to retain until 2024.
- Raise the amount people can earn before losing their Carer's Allowance from £123 to £150 a week, and reduce the number of hours' care per week required to qualify for it.

Support for Pensioners

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

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



Access to Affordable Housing

People are struggling to afford good homes in safe communities: house prices are often out of reach and the possibility of owning a home seems remote for many people; the private rental market is expensive and insecure; and there are not enough homes for social rent to meet demand. We need to build 300,000 homes per year across the UK just to meet current demand, but are barely building half that amount. Liberal Democrats are looking to the future and will oversee a substantial building programme to ensure that everybody has a safe and secure home. We will:

- Build at least 100,000 homes for social rent each year and ensure that total housebuilding increases to 300,000 each year.
- Help finance the large increase in the building of social homes with investment from our £130 billion capital infrastructure budget.
- Build new houses to zero-carbon standards and cut fuel bills through a ten-year programme to reduce energy consumption from all the UK's buildings.

End Rough Sleeping

Nobody should have to spend a night sleeping on the streets. However rough sleeping has been increasing since the 2008 recession and is one of the most visible signs of increasing poverty and inequality. Liberal Democrats have a plan to end rough sleeping within five years. To do this, we will:

- Urgently publish a cross-Whitehall and cross-UK plan to end all forms of homelessness.
- Exempt groups of homeless people and those at risk of homelessness from the Shared Accommodation Rate.
- Make providers of asylum support accommodation subject to a statutory duty to refer people leaving asylum support accommodation who are at risk of homelessness to the local housing authority.

Our Plan for Freedom, Rights and Equality

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

The Conservatives and Labour have entirely failed to stand up to hatred or combat entrenched inequalities. The Conservatives have been relentlessly hostile in their rhetoric and policy around migration and have failed to take allegations of Islamophobia within their party seriously; Jeremy Corbyn has done nothing to stop members of his own party spreading anti-Semitism. For decades, both parties have seen civil liberties as an inconvenience standing in the way of other priorities, which has meant attacks on individual rights and surveillance of citizens conducted outside the law.

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

Our priorities in the next parliament will be:

- **Standing up for human rights by championing the Human Rights Act and the European Convention on Human Rights.**



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

Protect Civil Liberties

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

- Defend the Human Rights Act, resist any attempt to withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights and oppose any laws that unnecessarily erode civil liberties.
- End the bulk collection of communications data and internet connection records.
- Introduce a Lovelace Code of Ethics to govern the use of personal data and artificial intelligence to ensure it is unbiased, transparent and accurate, and respects privacy.
- Immediately halt the use of facial recognition surveillance by the police.
- Extend limited legal rights to cohabiting couples, for example, to give them greater protection in the event of separation or a partner's death.
- Complete the introduction of equal marriage in the rest of the UK, by:
 - Removing the spousal veto.
 - Allowing those marriages that were dissolved solely due to the Gender Recognition process to be retrospectively restored.
- Introduce legal recognition of humanist marriages in the rest of the UK to match Scotland.

Demand Equality

People should be able to go about their lives without fear of discrimination. However, hate crimes are on the rise and too many groups of people no longer feel safe. We believe that government needs to take an active role both in punishing discrimination

and ensuring that it does not happen in the first place. We will:

- Complete reform of the UK Gender Recognition Act to remove the requirement for medical reports, scrap the fee and recognise non-binary gender identities, and encourage the Scottish Government to support this approach to ensure there are no cross-border barriers to mutual acceptance.
- Introduce an X gender option on passports and extend equality law to cover gender identity and expression.
- Introduce a British Sign Language Act to give BSL full legal recognition.
- Remove VAT on sanitary products.
- Scrap the so-called 'Pink Tax', ending the gender price gap.
- Outlaw caste discrimination.

Promote Diversity

Liberal Democrats believe that the diversity of the UK should be represented in public and working life. That means that women, ethnic minority groups, LGBT+ people and disabled people should be properly represented and paid fairly. But deep-seated and – normally – unconscious biases mean that too many workplaces lack diversity and inequalities remain entrenched. We will tackle institutional biases and promote equality by holding power to account through values of openness, transparency and accountability. We will:

- Increase statutory paternity leave from the current two weeks up to six weeks and ensure that parental leave is a day-one right, and address continuing inequalities faced by same-sex couples.
- Require organisations to publish parental leave and pay policies.
- Continue the drive for diversity in business leadership, pushing for at least 40 per cent of board members being women in FTSE 350 companies and implementing the recommendations of the Parker review to increase ethnic minority representation.
- Extend the Equality Act to all large companies with more than 250 employees, requiring them to monitor and publish data on gender, BAME, and LGBT+ employment levels and pay gaps.
- Extend the use of name-blind recruitment processes in the public sector and encourage their use in the private sector.



- Improve diversity in public appointments by setting ambitious targets, which go further than targets for the private sector, and require reporting against progress with explanations when targets are not met.
- Develop a free, comprehensive unconscious bias training toolkit and make the provision of unconscious bias training to all members of staff a condition of the receipt of public funds.
- Develop a government-wide plan to tackle BAME inequalities and review the Equality and Human Rights Commission to determine whether its funding is adequate.

A Compassionate and Effective Immigration System

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

The Liberal Democrats are the only party with a plan for a fair migration system that works for everyone. A plan to ensure that migrants coming to the UK are welcomed for the skills and contribution that they bring, while ensuring that everyone has confidence that the immigration system is functioning as it should. We will:

- Stop Brexit and save EU freedom of movement.
- Scrap the Conservatives' hostile environment.
- Invest in officers, training and technology to prevent illegal entry at Britain's borders, assist seekers of sanctuary and combat human trafficking and the smuggling of people, weapons, drugs and wildlife.
- Make immigration detention an absolute last resort, introduce a 28-day time limit on detention and close eight of the UK's ten detention centres.
- Establish a firewall to prevent public agencies from sharing personal information with the Home Office for the purposes of immigration enforcement and repeal the immigration exemption in the Data Protection Act.

- Move policymaking on work permits and student visas out of the Home Office and into the Departments for Business and Education respectively, and establish a new arms-length, non-political agency to take over processing applications.
- Extend the involvement of the Scottish Government in the development of UK-wide policy frameworks on work permits and student visas, to tackle the skills shortages in important Scottish industries and to retain excellence in universities in Scotland.
- Replace Tier 2 work visas with a more flexible merit-based system.
- Introduce a 'Training up Britain' programme to make the most of migrants' skills.
- Create a new two-year visa for students to work after graduation, restoring the approach of the Fresh Talent initiative pioneered when Liberal Democrats served in the Scottish Government in the first terms of the Scottish Parliament.
- Reduce the fee for registering a child as a British citizen from £1,012 to the cost of administration.
- Abolish the arbitrary, complex minimum income requirement for spouse and partner visas.
- Waive application fees for indefinite leave for members of the Armed Forces on discharge and their families.
- Enable people who came here as children to apply for resident status.

Dignity for Refugees and Asylum Seekers

We must do all we can to protect people forced to flee their homes to escape war and persecution. The UK has a proud history of providing sanctuary to those in need, but Labour and Conservative governments have introduced a harsh system that fails to respect people's dignity. Thousands of asylum seekers are forced to wait many months for a decision, unable to work, rent a home or support their families. Too many people are wrongly denied asylum, with 40 per cent of refusals overturned on appeal. Liberal Democrats are the only party who can make the system work fairly for seekers of sanctuary. We will:

- Give asylum seekers the right to work three months after they have applied, enabling them to work in any role so that they can support themselves, integrate in their communities and contribute through taxation.



- Provide safe and legal routes to sanctuary in the UK by resettling 10,000 vulnerable refugees each year and a further 10,000 unaccompanied refugee children from elsewhere in Europe over the next ten years, and expanding family reunion rights.
- Fund community-sponsorship projects for refugees, and reward community groups who develop innovative and successful ways of promoting social cohesion.
- Offer asylum to people fleeing the risk of violence because of their sexual orientation or gender identification, end the culture of disbelief for LGBT+ asylum seekers and never refuse an LGBT+ applicant on the basis that they could be discreet.
- Move asylum policymaking from the Home Office to the Department for International Development and establish a dedicated unit to improve the speed and quality of decision-making.
- Provide free basic English lessons to refugees and asylum seekers and scrap the 16 hours-per-week rule with respect to financial support for those unable to work due to insufficient English.
- Provide public health services, including maternity services, to people from the moment they arrive in the UK.
- Increase the “move-on period” for refugees from 28 days to 60 days.

Our Plan for Better Politics

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

Neither Labour nor Conservatives are interested in changing our broken system, because it works to keep them in power. They have been driven to the extremes and their leaders seek to win power by being slightly more palatable than the alternative – but the UK deserves better than the choice of the lesser of two evils.

Liberal Democrats have a plan to radically transform our political system so that it works for a modern democracy. A plan that will mend our broken politics so that we can get on with building a fairer society that protects our planet.

Our priorities in the next parliament will be:

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



Fair Votes

The current voting system is not working: it means that too many people do not have their voices heard. Liberal Democrats are the only party that realises that the system is broken and will change it so that it works for the future: Labour and Conservatives will not change the system that has always entrenched their privileged position. We are the only party who understand that British politics needs to be reformed to make it more representative and empower citizens. We will:

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

High-Quality Public Debate

A well-functioning democracy should have a high standard of public debate in which citizens are supported, educated and empowered to distinguish between facts and





lies; there is a pluralistic media environment where journalists have the resources they need to find the truth and to hold the powerful to account; civility in public discourse is protected; election procedures and rules are upheld robustly and quickly. However, these foundations of our democratic way of life are under threat. Liberal Democrats are the only party forward-looking enough to do what it takes to foster high quality public debate. We will:

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

Power for the Nations and Regions

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

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

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

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

Scotland

Only the Liberal Democrats are clear that we want Scotland in the UK and in the EU. We stand with the majority in Scotland who wanted both those things in the two referendums.

Liberal Democrats will stop another independence referendum in Scotland, and stop the division, chaos, new borders and economic cost that independence would cause.



We need to learn the lessons of Brexit, not repeat the mistakes with independence. Cutting ties with our closest neighbours is a backwards and isolating move – that’s been the lesson of the past three years. Independence would bring all the chaos and distraction of Brexit, but multiply it.

Our ties with Europe are deep and valuable. Our ties with the UK are even deeper and even more valuable. Cutting ties with Europe after 40 years is torture. Imagine the pain of breaking 300-year-old ties. Just like Brexit, it would be the vulnerable who would suffer the most.

The last thing we need is another bitter and divisive independence referendum. It unleashed a new type of politics and caused splits that are still apparent today.

And the case against independence is still strong.

The SNP have now opened the door to a hard border between England and Scotland.

The head of the Scottish civil service warned the SNP Government that their referendum planning would mean “de-prioritisation” of domestic policy. That means they will once again take their eye off the ball. Services that really matter, from education to mental health, will suffer.

Liberal Democrat MPs will vote against another independence referendum.

New borders and barriers are bad for business, jobs and the economy. A brighter future comes from a reformed United Kingdom inside the European Union.

In addition to the steps to ensure Scotland has a strong voice within the UK, we will:

- Work hard to ensure that Scotland remains a part of the United Kingdom.
- Oppose a second independence referendum and oppose independence.
- Allocate to the Scottish Parliament all of the powers set out in the Scotland Act 2016, many of which have already been used by the Scottish Parliament, with others awaiting the request of the Scottish Government.
- Build on the recommendations of the Smith Commission by extending the accountability of UK-wide bodies such as the BBC and Ofgem to the Scottish Parliament.

- Continue to develop city deals in Scotland by bringing together all spheres of government, including a more ambitious Islands Growth Deal which will allow the tremendous potential of the Islands to be realised.
- Review the UK excise duty structure to better support whisky exports.

Scotland benefits from being inside the UK and EU single markets. Each is worth billions of pounds and supports tens of thousands of Scottish jobs. Under the Liberal Democrats inclusion in those single markets will continue.

Wales

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

We will complete the next stage of devolution in Wales by implementing the remaining Silk proposals and substantially reducing the number of powers reserved to Westminster.

In addition to the steps to ensure Wales has a strong voice within the UK we will:

- Devolve Air Passenger Duty.
- Create a distinct legal jurisdiction for Wales to reflect the growing divergence in law as a result of devolution.
- Devolve powers over youth justice, probation services, prisons and policing to allow Wales to create an effective, liberal, community-based approach to policing and tackling crime.

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



Northern Ireland

We wish to see a permanently peaceful Northern Ireland, with stable devolved government and a truly shared society. Northern Ireland and its institutions rely on sharing and interdependence, but Brexit has already increased tensions and risks new divisions, barriers and friction. We will:

- Work constructively with the political parties in Northern Ireland and the Irish Government to urgently restore the devolved institutions.
- Support policies and initiatives that promote sharing over separation and counter the cost of division.
- Help to grow the economy in Northern Ireland, boost infrastructure and support local businesses.

Funding Devolution

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

England

Devolution and the transfer of power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland has implications for the UK parliament and its dual role in legislating for England as well as the federal UK. Liberal Democrats support an English-only stage in legislation affecting England, so that English MPs can have a separate say on laws that only affect England. However, this should be on a proportional basis, genuinely reflecting the balance of opinion in England.

In some areas of England there is a greater appetite for powers, but not every part of the country wants to move at the same speed and there cannot be a one-size fits-all

approach. All areas should however have access to the same opportunities and mayoral authorities should not be ranked higher in terms of the powers with which they can be granted. We will enact permissive legislation to empower groups of authorities to come together to establish devolved governance - for example to a Cornish Assembly or a Yorkshire Parliament, building on the One Yorkshire campaign. We will proceed by consensus as far as possible but will not allow one local authority to veto a coherent proposal.



Our Plan for a Better World

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

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

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

Our priorities in the next parliament will be:

- **Defending international co-operation against the rising tides of nationalism and isolationism, supporting multilateral organisations like the UN and NATO which are increasingly under threat.**

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

A Peaceful World

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

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

Liberal Democrats believe that despite efforts to prevent violent conflict, sometimes military intervention is necessary. The UK should only intervene militarily when there is a clear legal or humanitarian case, endorsed by a vote in parliament – working



through international institutions whenever possible. We will encourage dialogue and mediation to reduce conflict between and within countries, working through the UN and other agencies. In response to current crises, we will:

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

A Secure Defence in the 21st Century

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

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

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

Trade, Aid and Investment

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



nationalist and committed to leaving the EU, the biggest champion of the liberal order in our part of the world; Jeremy Corbyn's Labour spring to the defence of authoritarian regimes in Venezuela and Iran, while failing to fight to stop Brexit. Our plan for the future is built on championing liberal and international values, ending poverty and promoting the UN Sustainable Development Goals both in the UK and abroad. We will:

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





Promoting Human Rights and Equality Around the World

Human rights are global. An individual's liberty should be equally respected wherever they live. However, as authoritarian regimes trample over freedom of speech and belief and LGBT+ and other people are continuing to suffer discrimination, this is far from being the case. Liberal Democrats are the only party capable of renewing international liberalism and combating discrimination: the Conservatives' Brexit will mean prioritising trade deals over people's rights and Labour cannot hope to tackle discrimination abroad when they cannot even root out anti-Semitism in their own party. We are the only party with a credible plan to enhance the UK's soft power and to use it to promote human rights and democracy around the world. We will:

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

Global Climate Action Now

The climate emergency is a global challenge and requires a global solution. However, with the US withdrawing from the Paris Agreement and with most national climate policies falling well short of the Agreement's ambition to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C, this global solution looks a long way off. Neither the Conservatives or Labour have a plan to tackle this: the Conservatives have given no real thought to the climate emergency, and Labour are only interested in repeating empty slogans. Liberal Democrats are the only party with a detailed plan to lead global efforts to combat the climate emergency. We will:

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