

# Getting children back to school

The past few months have been incredibly difficult for pupils and teachers. We must ensure no child's opportunities are diminished due to this terrible pandemic – that means getting children back to school safely.

A comprehensive test, trace and isolate system is critical to reopening classrooms as safely as possible.

Ministers need to work with local authorities to improve the NHS Test and Trace service, which is still failing to reach enough close contacts. <https://t.co/GsFQkDDYov>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [August 10, 2020](#)

**However, school leaders, teachers, parents, and pupils need to feel confident that their schools will be COVID-safe once term begins in September.**

Boris Johnson needs to step up and take action if this is going to happen. We must have a comprehensive test, trace, isolate system in place. The current NHS Test and Trace service is failing to reach enough close contacts; we need to see significant improvement before September if we are going to safely reopen schools.

The Government must also address the practical and financial support requirements that are involved with fully reopening schools. School leaders and teachers will be under serious pressure to adapt to making schools COVID-safe – they deserve a Government that fully supports them through this difficult time.

**Liberal Democrats want to see radical steps to support education providers,** from making community spaces available to schools, to a Teach for Britain campaign that can bring in new staff in this difficult time.

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# UK Government must grant refugee status to all Uyghur asylum seekers

The world has watched in horror as the persecution of the Uyghur people in Xinjiang has been revealed. From the initial reports of mass surveillance, to

**evidence of up to 3 million people forced into so called re-education camps, the situation is bleak and all too familiar.**

We remain clear that the UK has a duty to act.

In just the last few months, drone footage believed to be from Xinjiang in China, showed Uyghurs kneeling and blindfolded, waiting to be led onto trains. At the same time, the Chinese Government is also accused of undertaking a programme of forced sterilisation against Uyghur women.

The situation is abhorrent. Over the course of the last three years, Liberal Democrats have urged the UK government to do more to stop this gross violation of human rights. We have led cross-party letters, parliamentary debates, and parliamentary motions.

**We remain clear that the UK has a duty to act.** That is why we have led on a cross-party letter this week to Priti Patel urging her to do the right thing and automatically give refugee status to the Uyghur people.

As Liberal Democrats, human rights are at the core of who we are as a party.

Internationalism, as well as our fundamental belief in equality and civil liberties, drives everything we do.

We cannot sit idly by while the Chinese government seeks to carry out a genocide on the Uyghur people.

That is why we are calling on the government to offer the Uyghur population asylum in the UK, so that they can flee the unthinkable horrors of the situation in Xinjiang and find safety here.

We are also urging the government to immediately bring forward Magnitsky legislation so that those individuals who are found to have committed human rights violations can be sanctioned.

History is watching us. **We cannot sit idly by while the Chinese government seeks to carry out a genocide on the Uyghur people.**

There is no justifiable excuse for failing to act. Liberal Democrats will keep pushing the government to do the right thing.

Uighur people seeking refuge in the UK should not have to prove their case – the evidence is now in plain sight.

The home secretary must take steps to grant automatically refugee status to all Uighur people fleeing this brutal crackdown on their rights. <https://t.co/vWK4dxAyID>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [August 7, 2020](#)

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## [There are no quick fixes to rebuilding our party](#)

In this campaign, I've really been put through my paces. Through 20 hustings, with more to come, and hundreds of media interviews for newspapers, blogs, TV & radio, I've been making my pitch for the leadership.

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## [5 ways we have fought to protect jobs during coronavirus](#)

**Throughout this terrible disease, people have not only faced heartbreaking loss of life, but also crushing anxiety over their livelihoods.**

Lockdown has been necessary to prevent an even greater catastrophe, but the economic shutdown has thrown millions of people into financial hardship.

Liberal Democrats have been fighting to make sure people do not feel left behind as the country slowly recovers. **We cannot allow this to create a new wave of inequality in Britain;** the damage done to businesses and jobs falls harder on some than others.

Here's how we've been fighting to ensure no one is left behind.

### **1. Pushing the Government to help the self employed**

Back in March, as the Government announced its financial support plans for businesses and employees, there was one group of workers that was conspicuously left out: the self-employed.

Over five million people – cleaners, taxi drivers, hairdressers, builders – all of these people faced tremendous uncertainty with the lockdown, but were not initially included in Rishi Sunak's plans. We spoke out and pushed the Government to go further.

A key Liberal Democrat amendment to the emergency [#CoronavirusBill](#) could help support 5 million self-employed people through this national emergency.

We urge the Government to ensure that no-one is forgotten as this crisis continues. <https://t.co/qwLcXJL84>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [March 24, 2020](#)

It worked. The Government expanded their offer, and we urged them to move even quicker to ensure that these people had enough to get by throughout the hardest period of lockdown.

## **2. Fighting for the furlough scheme to be extended**

In early May, Rishi Sunak suggested he was hoping to “wind down” the furlough scheme in the coming weeks.

The furlough scheme has been a lifeline for millions of people this year whose employers were shut down or suffering dramatic loss of business.

In fact, it is estimated that the furlough scheme covered around a quarter of all jobs. The fact is that the scheme prevented even greater numbers of redundancies than we have seen – it has been essential in preventing cruel mass unemployment. Yet Rishi Sunak wanted to wind it down prematurely.

That’s why we spoke out against his plans and launched our “Safe to Return to Work” scheme that would give people that time and that confidence and help avoid further large-scale job losses.

## **3. Speaking up for the hardest-hit sectors**

The economic turmoil of COVID-19 has not been felt equally across all sectors. That’s why we’ve spoken out for those who are feeling the pinch the hardest.

Take the creative industries.

We enjoy a world-leading creative sector, but without additional support they risk emerging smaller, weaker and with lasting damage.

That’s why in July Daisy Cooper called for a package of support to reinvigorate creative industries. Daisy’s plan, Power of Creativity: Recovery and Renewal, pushed the Government to take ambitious action to address the specific needs of a vulnerable sector.

## **4. Standing up for the 3m Excluded**

We have heard too many heart-breaking stories from those who have lost their livelihoods as a result of coronavirus and are excluded

from the Government's support

Jamie Stone MP

Even now, there are too many people not receiving the help they need.

There are still around 3 million people who are not currently covered by the Government's support.

New starters, newly self-employed people and freelancers all face difficulty getting the help they need.

But these people cannot be left behind as our economy begins to recover – that's why we're campaigning hard to get the Government to go further for the 3 million excluded.

Jamie Stone led the creation of an All-Party Parliamentary Group dedicated to helping these people, and as a party we're going to keep pushing the Government to take action to support these people

## **5. Calling for an extension of the Brexit transition period**

Instead of acting in the national interest, Conservative Ministers have been content to drive the UK towards a disastrous Brexit in the midst of a pandemic.

Refusing to extend the Brexit transition period not only threatens our vital medical supplies during this crisis, but also risks a huge economic hit.

Liberal Democrats have been speaking out against this reckless behaviour from the Government, calling for an extension of the Brexit transition period in order to protect jobs in Britain for those only just recovering from lockdown.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

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## **[Returning Officer's Ruling 5th August 2020](#)**

A complaint has been made about Ed Davey's campaign's conduct in its communication with members as to their voting intentions, specifically that they instructed canvassers not to disclose the identity of the campaign they

were actually calling on behalf in calls made on the 11th and 14th of July 2020.

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