

[If not us, who? If not now, when?](#)

That's the saying I live my life by, because taking action is the only way to change things in this world, and bugger me this world needs some change.

That saying has led me to a lot of places. I joined the party, started delivering leaflets, knocked on doors, stood for council and stood for parliament because I needed to act.

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Author:

[The spring conference motions – explained](#)

Is a full programme of training, events, networking and parties not enough for you? At spring conference this year we have a huge package of policy motions, which all members have the chance to debate, amend and vote on. Here's a quick run-down for you! And if you haven't yet, book your place right here:

[Book now →](#)

F4 – Hong Kong

This motion introduces new party policy on the human rights situation in Hong Kong. It calls for:

- Extending of the right to abode to all British National (Overseas) citizens
- The government to use its relationship with China to persuade Beijing to not end the protests through military force
- An indefinite suspension of export licenses for crowd control equipment to Hong Kong.

[Read the full motion here](#)

F6 – Children's Social Care

(England only)

This motion updates party policy on children's social care. It calls for:

- Extra funding for children's social care
- Higher priority for looked-after children in the education system
- More care places for children who need it
- A new scheme to help older looked-after children find accommodation to transfer into when they are ready to live independently
- The government to review allowances and pay for foster carers
- An exploration into whether an allowance scheme for kinship carers (who look after children of their relatives) should be set up
- A national workforce strategy for social workers and children's home managers

[Read the full motion here](#)

F8 – Electoral Reform

This motion updates party policy on electoral reform. It calls for:

- The use of Single Transferable Vote as the voting system for all Parliamentary elections and English local elections
- The voting age to be lowered to 16
- The rights of EU citizens to stand and vote in local elections to be protected, and extended to general elections when they've lived here for 5+ years
- The use of Alternative Vote for elections to single positions like directly-elected mayors in England
- The scrapping of voter ID law plans
- A legal requirement for local authorities to inform citizens of the steps required to be successfully registered to vote. This includes a far greater effort to register under-represented groups

[Read the full motion here](#)

F13 – Supporting The Trans and Non-Binary Communities within the Liberal Democrats

This is a business motion (one that deals with how the party works internally). It seeks to improve accessibility to Liberal Democrat events for trans and non-binary people and protect their rights by:

- Requiring Lib Dem HQ and all conference venues (Federal and Regional) to have at least one gender-neutral bathroom
- The option to have your preferred pronouns on your conference pass
- The option to include your preferred pronouns on speaker's cards
- Training for presenters at party events on how to avoid unnecessarily gendered language

[Read the full motion here](#)

F16 – Welcoming Child Refugees

This motion calls on the Government to fulfil its existing obligations to provide sanctuary to child refugees, as well as to:

- Extend family reunion rights so child refugees in the UK can sponsor family members to join them
- Provide specialist legal advice for all child asylum seekers
- Resettle 10,000 unaccompanied child refugees from elsewhere in Europe over the next 10 years

[Read the full motion here](#)

F17 – Student Mental Health Charter

(England only)

This motion calls on the Government to legislate for universities to ensure a strong provision of mental health support for students by:

- Developing a Student Mental Health Charter for universities in consultation with students, universities and mental health charities
- Including in the Charter guaranteed access to quality mental health support and the recording and reporting of waiting times
- Ensuring all universities have the aim to reach zero suicide

[Read the full motion here](#)

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Author:

[Not all your recycling is actually being recycled](#)

When a person puts their empty plastic bottle in a recycling bin, they understandably assume it gets recycled.

When I was the Cabinet member for the environment on Rochdale council, and when we sent our paper and cardboard to be recycled, we knew it had new lives as cardboard inserts to kitchen roll.

The plastic bag tax introduced by the Liberal Democrats in the Coalition government was hugely successful, but it was only ever intended to be the first step.

However, this is not always the case.

Far too often our waste, including recyclable items, are sold to private contractors who can incinerate or export waste to unregulated facilities.

We've all become aware of the devastating effect that plastic pollution is having on our oceans.

This isn't the fault of our cash-strapped councils, who need to balance good waste management with ever-decreasing funding from the government.

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Author:

[Losing a parent can be devastating](#)

When my dad died, my mum was left with three boys under the age of ten. At age four, I remember her going to pick up her widow's pension every other week. It was a lifeline for her and for us. It helped her adjust, and to take good care of my brothers and I.

For any family, losing a parent can be devastating not just emotionally, but financially too. My family weren't particularly poor, but I still don't know what we'd have done without that support.

Bereavement Support Payments are supposed to help families adjust to life after the tragedy of losing a parent.

From my own experience, and from working with my constituents and nationwide bereavement charities, **I know how overwhelming it can be to suddenly find yourself a single parent.** You have sole responsibility of putting food on the table and paying for childcare while dealing with your own grief. Add to this the needs of grieving children, such as specialist counselling, and an overwhelming financial burden is placed on families needing breathing room to heal.

[.@EdwardJDavey](#) secures Boris Johnson's commitment to look into the injustice surrounding Bereavement Support Payments, where grieving children are not entitled to support if their parents are unmarried. [#PMQs pic.twitter.com/8yBNJIgKUz](#)

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [February 12, 2020](#)

Bereavement Support Payments are supposed to help families adjust to life after the tragedy of losing a parent. **Yet for 2,000 families a year, the law says they aren't entitled to this support, because the parents weren't married.**

With cohabiting couples being the fastest growing family type in the UK, how many more children need to suffer before the Government takes action?

Last week the High Court ruled that the difference in Bereavement Support Payments between married and cohabiting couples **is a breach of children's human rights.** In 2018, the Supreme Court made a similar ruling.

Today, I asked the Prime Minister to make sure that all grieving children are supported, whether their parents were married or not.

Enough is enough. Today, I asked the Prime Minister to legislate to respond to both rulings, and make sure that all grieving children are supported, whether their parents were married or not.

I am pleased that Boris Johnson has agreed to look into the issue, and **I hope that his Government will legislate to make sure that no child is left without the support they need.**

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Author:

[My campaigning priorities](#)

The tiniest of silver linings in that of the Tory majority and the near enough certainty that this Parliament will sit for at least the next four years, is that we now have time to be strategic. **We have time to plan.**

The fact that our leadership race will not take place until the summer also allows us time to pause, reflect, and consider what we need going forward.

How do we reconnect with the voters and who will be the right person to do that for us?

We have had some spectacularly good leaders, but the next will also have to be someone special to break the cycle in which we find ourselves trapped.

They will need Tim's ability to hold and inspire a crowd.

The current law on assisted dying offers no dignity, choice or

compassion to those in the final stage of their life.

Jo's steely determination and vision.

But most of all they will need something of that particular gift which both Paddy and Charles had in spades. Empathy.

That indefinable ability to connect with people on a level that says: "I understand, I know, I appreciate what you are going through and I'll do my damndest to fix it".

Over the next few months we will have the time and space for that leader to emerge.

In the meantime I will concentrate on three progressive, liberal campaigns that will make a real difference to peoples' lives.

This first is to push for a **change in the law on assisted dying.**

The current law offers no dignity, choice or compassion to those in the final stage of their life. It also criminalises family members who support their loved one's wishes.

We often pride ourselves on how far have come as a liberal, progressive society that treats everyone with compassion and equality. **But, at the end of their lives, we're letting them down.**

The prescription of medicinal cannabis is legal but many sufferers of pain are still not getting easy access to the relief they need.

Then there is cannabis.

The prescription of medicinal cannabis is legal. It was hard won, but the law remains so overly rigid and ambiguous that many sufferers of pain are still not getting easy access to the relief they need.

The only way to properly solve this is to **introduce a legal, regulated market for cannabis.**

This would also protect young people, free up precious police time by breaking the grip of criminal gangs and **raise an estimated £1.5bn**, which could be used to treat addiction and fight crime.

A common sense, grown up and evidence-based policy that would radically change the lives of thousands of people.

Just like changing the law to allow asylum seekers the right to work while waiting for their applications to be processed.

A simple change in the law would help the economy and, more importantly, allow people who have risked everything the opportunity contribute fully to

our society, and give them the dignity they deserve.

They are liberal, radical and what we need.

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