

# For a Fair Deal

In very tough times, the British people have shown remarkable decency and strength. Everywhere I go across our great United Kingdom, I see people from all backgrounds and all walks of life, working hard, raising families, helping others and playing by the rules – but finding it harder and harder to make ends meet.

Now more than ever, **people deserve a fair deal.**

Everyone should be able to afford a decent home in a safe, clean neighbourhood – with a comfortable retirement when the time comes. Every child should be able to go to a good school and have real opportunities to fulfil their potential. If anyone in your family is ill, frail or disabled, they should get the high-quality healthcare they need.

But that's not the reality for too many people in the UK today, because **this out-of-touch Conservative Government is letting us all down and taking everyone for granted.**

Soaring energy bills, food prices and housing costs are overwhelming millions of families and pensioners. We need a Government with a plan to tackle this cost-of-living crisis, but instead the Conservatives have made it so much worse because they just don't care.

They have let the NHS crisis spiral out of control, failing to deliver the new hospitals they promised and making people wait hours for an ambulance, weeks to see a GP or months for urgent cancer treatment. They are allowing water companies to pump filthy sewage into our rivers, damaging our precious local environment.

**All that must change.**

More and more people are turning to the Liberal Democrats to put an end to this terrible Conservative Government. They know that every vote for the Liberal Democrats is a vote to elect a strong local champion who will fight for a fair deal for you and your community.

**A fair deal that gives everyone the opportunity to get on in life,** wherever they start.

**A fair deal that puts power in your hands,** so you can do your bit – for your children, your community, your business and your environment.

**A fair deal that holds the powerful to account,** to make sure they do their bit too. Where everyone plays by the same rules.

**That is the fair deal the Liberal Democrats are fighting for.** I know we can achieve it.

## Our Fair Deal

Today Liberal Democrat members have backed our plan for a fair deal, setting out our priorities ahead of the next generation:



### **A fair, prosperous and innovative economy that promotes opportunity and wellbeing**

Everyone deserves the chance to get on in life and see their hard work and aspiration properly rewarded. Businesses and entrepreneurs should be supported to create worthwhile jobs in every part of the UK. But the Conservatives' botched deal with Europe has damaged trade and prosperity and is acting as a permanent brake on the economy.

Liberal Democrats are the champions of small businesses – the engines of our economy and the beating heart of local communities. We put people first, with a focus on education, training and flexible working. We believe in harnessing the benefits of new technology and innovations for everyone. And we understand that to grow the UK's economy we must fix the broken relationship with Europe.



## **Fair access to good public services and a strong social safety net**

Every child deserves the best possible start in life. Everyone should receive the care they need when they are ill or frail, and a helping hand when they fall on tough times. Liberal Democrats believe that an active state is essential to empower people and provide the support they need.

That means a government which helps struggling families and pensioners when they face a cost-of-living crisis, rather than one which plunges them into poverty. We understand that education is the key to opportunity and the best possible investment in our country's future. We cherish the NHS, a Liberal invention and one of the UK's proudest achievements.



## **A flourishing environment, with fair access to nature for all**

Everyone should be able to enjoy the benefits of our wonderful natural environment, and our children should inherit the future they deserve. The climate and nature emergencies are the most pressing threats to prosperity facing the UK and the world.

We must act now: investing in green technologies and skills training, cutting air and water pollution, and taking a new approach to farming and the countryside. The UK can lead the world with innovation and ingenuity, while boosting the economy and enhancing everyone's quality of life.



## **A strong United Kingdom and a fair international order**

Liberal Democrats are proud internationalists. We believe that our country and our people thrive when we are open and outward-looking. The UK can be an incredible force for good when it stands tall on the world stage, championing the values of equality, democracy, human rights and the rule of law. Both the Covid pandemic and Vladimir Putin's illegal war in Ukraine show that events beyond Britain's borders inevitably become our concern.

We are passionate about close British-European cooperation, which benefits us and our allies. While we support a longer-term objective of EU membership, we recognise that the Conservatives have damaged trust in the UK so badly that there is a lot of work to do before that is possible. We have therefore set out a comprehensive step-by-step plan to rebuild our ties of trade, trust and friendship with our nearest neighbours – ties that can only be built back gradually over time.



## **A truly fair democracy, where everyone's rights are respected and individuals and communities are empowered**

Every person matters. Every life is precious. Liberal Democrats believe that basic rights and dignity are the birthright of every individual, to be respected, cherished and enhanced. We want to shift more power out of the centre in Whitehall, so local decisions are made by and for the people and communities they affect. We want to break up concentrations of power, and put real power in everyone's hands.

For a hundred years, Liberals and Liberal Democrats have been fighting for fair votes, to give everyone equal power in our democracy and hold all Members of Parliament properly to account. Our goal is to transform the nature of British politics itself to make it more relevant, engaging and responsive to people's needs and dreams.

Read our Pre-Manifesto in full

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# Investing in Our Children's Future

Every child, no matter their background, deserves the opportunity to achieve greatness.

It's a principle we hold dear in the Liberal Democrats. We believe that every child should have the best possible start in life. They deserve good local schools and colleges that help them to achieve their full potential and grow up into happy, healthy and confident adults.

Education is an investment, not just in the present, but in our country's future.

Yet this Conservative Government has consistently let down children, parents and teachers. Our schools and colleges have been neglected. Meanwhile, the Government has failed to grasp the pandemic's impact on children's learning and mental health.

Since 2019, at least 39 schools have fully or partly closed because they were unsafe. It's time to end the scandal of crumbling schools.

The number of children with mental health needs has skyrocketed during the pandemic, yet children are waiting months for help.

Conservative cuts and teacher shortages continue to undermine the quality of education. They have driven tens of thousands of young teachers out of the profession.

The Pupil Premium – targeted support for the most disadvantaged pupils – has been cut in real-terms. Meanwhile, 800,000 children in poverty go without a free school meal.

That's why today Liberal Democrat members have passed a new policy which reflects our commitment to give every child a great start:

- **Extending Free School Meals:** extending free school meals to every child in primary school and to secondary school pupils whose families receive Universal Credit.
- **Supporting Our Teachers:** tackling the crisis in teacher recruitment and retention with a workforce strategy that ensures every secondary school pupil is taught by an expert in their field.
- **Reforming Ofsted Inspections:** giving parents a clear picture of the true strengths and weaknesses of each school, and giving schools the guidance and support they need to improve.
- **Keeping Parents Informed:** improving communication and engagement with parents, with regular surveys and accessible information on what their children are learning.

Read the motion in full

It's time for a new era in education: one where every child's potential is nurtured and celebrated. The Liberal Democrats are committed to creating a fair and equitable education system that truly invests in our children's future.

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## [Transforming the Nation's Health](#)

**Under this Conservative Government the UK has only become sicker** and is lagging far behind its international peers. Instead of taking action they have allowed our health to decline, particularly that of children.

To make matters worse, more than 7 million people are currently waiting for NHS treatment, cancer wait times targets continue to be missed across the board, and demand for GPs services continues to outstrip supply.

**50% of the health burden across the country is lifestyle induced.** We must tackle this head on, to ensure that people have good physical health, mental health, and social health, and to protect our NHS for the future.

The Liberal Democrats want a healthier and brighter future for all. That's why today, our members have passed new policy to transform the nation's health:

- 1. Focus on Prevention and People's Health:** Make the improvement of the nation's health a key priority for government, emphasising prevention, addressing inequalities, and adopting an 'invest to save' funding model.
- 2. Empowering Communities:** Progressively restore the Public Health Grant to 2015 levels, with a proportion of these funds set aside for local communities experiencing the worst health inequalities to co-produce plans on how the money should be spent in their area.
- 3. Children's Health:** Ban energy drink sales to under 16s, only allowing junk-food advertising after 9pm, and grant local authorities powers to restrict junk-food advertising and unhealthy food outlets near schools.
- 4. Promoting Movement:** Launch a government-backed nationwide campaign to encourage exercise and healthier habits, dedicating an existing bank holiday for wellness events.



- 5. Schools and Hospitals:** Implement higher food standards in schools and hospitals to ensure every child and patient receives a healthy balanced diet.
- 6. Vaping:** Tackle vaping and smoking among children with standardised packaging, advertising restrictions and banning disposable vapes. Reduce vaping among non-smokers, while recognising the important role vaping plays in helping adults quit smoking.
- 7. Blood Pressure Checks:** Widen access to blood pressure tests in community spaces like pharmacies and libraries to reach underserved populations.
- 8. Social Prescribing:** Invest in community projects that counter loneliness and share best practice across local authorities, the NHS, GPs, and primary care services.
- 9. Digital Health:** Introduce a new kite-mark for clinically proven health apps, enabling individuals to manage their own health.
- 10. Critical Health Infrastructure:** Consider a new national designation to safeguard local health facilities in times of crisis.

Read the policy in full

Liberal Democrats believe that investing in prevention through public health initiatives and primary care is the most effective way to enhance well-being and reduce the burden on NHS services.

These new policies will set us on the path to a healthier future for our country.

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## [Fixing Fast Fashion: A Sustainable Path Forward](#)

The allure of fast fashion has led to a pervasive cycle of consumption that not only affects our wallets but also the planet. With the fashion industry accounting for a staggering 10% of global greenhouse gas emissions, the need for a radical transformation is undeniable.

As we indulge in the latest trends, our planet pays the price – from water pollution caused by dyeing to the proliferation of microplastics from synthetic fabrics.

In the UK alone, the wastefulness of the fashion industry is evident, with over 800,000 tonnes of fabric waste produced in 2016. Astonishingly, only 1% of this waste is recycled, leaving a detrimental footprint on our environment.

And the fast fashion industry has been linked to unethical labour practices and modern slavery, tarnishing the appeal of the garments we wear.

**Liberal Democrats are leading the charge for change. We recognise the urgency to reduce pollution, curtail environmental damage, and transform the way fashion operates.**

This new policy, passed by our members today, sets out a strategy for a more sustainable fashion industry:

**Reduce:** Extending the virgin plastics tax to textile products, to incentivise the recycling of synthetic fibres. And increasing research and development investment in designs that minimise synthetic fibre emissions.

**Reuse:** Introducing tax incentives to encourage the reuse of clothing, nurturing a culture of thrift and sustainability.

**Recycle:** Banning on incineration and landfilling of textiles that could be used or recycled and introducing a new 1p levy on garments to fund local recycling facilities

We would also **make clothing more affordable:** including clothing costs in benefit rate calculations, acknowledging the essential role of clothing in daily life. And ensuring school uniforms remain affordable, relieving parents of undue financial burden.

Read the motion in full

## **Putting Sustainability at the Heart of Fashion**

We cannot ignore the environmental crisis exacerbated by the fashion industry. It's time to break free from the grip of fast fashion and embrace a sustainable path forward.

Liberal Democrats champion not only a greener future but a more equitable one, where the fashion industry takes responsibility for its impact on both the planet and people. Together, we can weave a fabric of sustainability that reflects our values and safeguards the planet for generations to come.

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## [Making Climate Change Action Inclusive](#)

Climate change stands as one of the defining challenges of our era, demanding a united effort across all fronts, including individual action. Yet, in our pursuit of a sustainable future, we must ensure that no one is left behind.

While there have been many progressive steps in reducing climate change in recent years, efforts to consider the specific needs of disabled and older people have often been missed.

**This inaccessibility not only hampers disabled individuals' ability to contribute to the fight against climate change, but also perpetuates their feelings of exclusion from society.** Striving for equality and addressing the climate crisis are interwoven objectives that must be pursued hand in hand.

Single-use plastics used in Health and Social Care contexts create millions of tonnes of plastic waste a year, much of which will go to landfill or be incinerated.

While there are some alternatives to single-use plastics in equipment used for medical, social care and accessibility equipment, many are unavailable, unaffordable or impractical for some people.

Many older and disabled people have experienced difficulties with different climate change or pollution prevention strategies such as the banning of plastic straws, pedestrianisation, cycle lanes and Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, which often fail to take their needs into account.

Many transport alternatives to private cars remain inaccessible or unaffordable for disabled and older people, especially where they require adaptive or alternate provision.

Liberal Democrats have passed new policy today to make the fight against climate change accessible to all:

- Allocating 3% of government **research and development funding on environmental and anti-climate change** projects centred around bringing benefits and changes to the health and social care sectors.
- And a further 2% to projects that will support disabled people to live more **environmentally friendly lives**.
- Requirements on NHS trusts, care agencies, residential facilities and local authorities to develop strategies to **reduce plastic use**.
- Introducing schemes to support **accessible environmentally friendly transport** options such as tricycles or handcycles.

- Ensuring all **public transport** and infrastructure companies make their provision completely accessible by 2027.
- Requiring the government to **work with disabled people** to mitigate any negative impact on them from reducing emissions, improving public transport and improving public spaces.

Read the motion in full

The imperative for inclusive climate action arises from the disproportionate impact of climate change on disabled individuals. Regrettably, they are often excluded from discussions shaping our response to this crisis, leading to policies that inadvertently perpetuate inequalities. From urban planning that neglects disabled accessibility to the removal of parking spaces for cycle lanes, these oversights hinder their day-to-day lives.

This inequitable approach has ripple effects, hampering our quest for climate neutrality. With over 10 million disabled individuals in the UK, excluding them from active climate change engagement poses a significant obstacle to achieving our net-zero goals.

By championing inclusive climate change policies, **we stand not only for a more equitable society but also for a sustainable future** that embraces and uplifts every individual, leaving no one behind.

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