

[Lib Dem peers secure vital changes to protect civil liberties](#)

Last night, the Lords **passed an amendment** – tabled by a cross-party group of peers including Liberal Democrat Andrew Stunell – that will **force the Government** to carry out an **independent review** of its Prevent strategy and publish a report within **18 months**.

- **Creating exemptions** to the new offence of “entering or remaining in a designated area” so that it doesn’t apply to aid workers, journalists, people visiting ill relatives or those attending funerals.
- **Protecting journalism and academic research** from the new offence of accessing terrorism-related material online.
- **Requiring the Government to commission an independent review** of the Prevent strategy.
- **Limiting new powers to detain people at ports and airports** to cases involving national security.

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[10 Things Delayed by Brexit](#)

1. NHS 10 Year Plan

Our NHS badly needs support and everyone knows it. The Prime Minister was meant to put forward a ten year plan for the health service this year.

That didn’t happen. Instead she has been forced to scramble for backbench support for her broken Brexit deal and run around Europe trying to grab last minute concessions.

Brexit is a real danger to our NHS because of staff cuts and fewer resources – now more than ever we should have a plan to support the NHS.

2. Immigration White Paper

The Government’s Immigration White Paper was originally due 18 months ago but still hasn’t been published.

Theresa May claims her Brexit deal is about ending free movement, but she refuses to spell out what that really means: a lot more red tape for British businesses and a national shortage of NHS workers, carers and builders.

3. Fixing universal credit

Despite serious problems with Universal Credit, the Conservatives have failed to cut the long waiting times that are pushing people into destitution or fully restore the funding they cut back in 2015.

The billions of pounds allocated for Brexit preparations could instead have been used to fund UC and help the most vulnerable in society.

4. Tackling the housing crisis

Britain is in the midst of a housing crisis.

People across the country are unable to get onto the housing ladder and house-building is lagging well below targets.

The Government has fundamentally failed to address this problem. The Brexit shambles has distracted the Conservatives, meaning the British people are stuck with a system that reinforces inequalities.

5. Domestic Violence and Abuse Bill

2 million people suffer domestic abuse each year and action is urgently needed.

The Tories promised legislation to tackle this evil and protect victims in their manifesto and in last year's Queen's Speech. The consultation closed at the end of May, but there's still no sign of the Government's draft Bill.

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Improving mental health in schools

A **toxic combination** of exams, which needlessly heap pressure onto pupils from a young age; unhealthy competition between schools, leaving teachers dreading the next Ofsted inspection; and funding cuts which mean numbers of school nurses have been reduced, is having devastating consequences.

The NSPCC say the number of schools seeking help from mental health services is rising and on average, **183 children a day are referred to NHS child and adolescent mental health services.**

Children shouldn't be made to feel a failure because of exams

Among teachers, studies have shown **75% of the UK's education professionals suffered from either mental or physical health issues** in the last two years due to work.

It is no wonder we have such problems of retention and recruitment in the profession, with talented teachers being driven out of the jobs they love.

We cannot hope to deliver the excellent education children deserve, or a work environment which nurtures teacher's passion for their jobs, without radical reforms to testing, inspection and funding.

I know that tests can be helpful. I used to set them all the time! **The problem is how many exams have unnecessarily high stakes attached.**

Children shouldn't be made to feel a failure because their talents and learning style are not best reflected when sitting in silence, reiterating a bunch of facts they've learnt by heart.

I am proud that our Party is committed to scrapping SATS – removing some of these pressures on young pupils.

Tests also unhelpfully absorb the focus of teachers and school leaders. They know the school's position in league tables, and in some cases even their own jobs, depend on how well pupils perform. Fear of the next Ofsted inspection is part of the same problem.

Teachers should be giving their classes a broad and balanced education. This does not *just* mean literacy and numeracy – as important as these are! We must trust that teachers know how to do this, rather than reducing them to teaching to endless tests.

Parents have a right to information, but **league tables and inspections should reflect all a school has to offer** – not just test scores. They should include pastoral care and how well they look after the well being of teachers and pupils.

Our Party would radically reform both league tables and inspections – including scrapping the discredited Ofsted model altogether.

Far, far too many children and young people still wait a very long time for care

Of course, while prevention and early intervention are vital, when a young person needs mental health care, we must ensure it is provided. In the NHS, despite promises of extra funding, not enough has materialised. Far, far too many children and young people still wait a very long time for care, if they access any at all.

This is simply not good enough. The Government have warm words on this issue, but we need much more – both in resourcing for schools and the NHS, and ambitious reforms to the culture in our schools.

For our Party this issue will always be a priority and we will continue to demand better for teachers and pupils

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[Looking back on 2018](#)

Two years ago Brexit seemed inevitable. Now, with 117 Conservative MPs unable even to support the Prime Minister as Conservative leader, it is hard to see how she can get any version of her deal through when the Commons returns in January.

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[Chaos and Crisis](#)

Brexit is a national embarrassment

Brexit is a national embarrassment. The events of the last few weeks have proven that the government is in absolute chaos.

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