

# [Afghanistan](#)

**Global leaders should hang their heads in shame.**

We've all watched the heartbreaking scenes at Kabul Airport showing citizens of Afghanistan trying to escape from the terror of the Taliban. **Their situation is desperate.**

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## [Come to conference for just £1](#)

### **Only £1 to come to conference**

Our autumn federal party conference is being held online in September. **There's a brilliant offer for people who have not come to conference before: [you can register for just £1.](#)**

**Conference will include an important trio of linked debates:** on our party's values, our policy platform and our strategy. Traditionally, we have debated these separately at conference, even years apart. But all three need to fit together in a coherent way – which is one of the lessons from the 2019 election post-mortem. So this time we're doing things differently.

The values and platform come from our Federal Policy Committee (FPC), while the strategy is being proposed by the Board. **It sets out the practical approach which is needed to grow our party and win more elections, securing us more political power to deliver on what we believe.**

Among the other conference items is also **the latest stage in developing our post-2019 European policy, [which you can read about here.](#)**

As I [mentioned last month](#), the Board has also put in some important proposals for conference to decide on, including boosting our party bodies with an improved, simpler structure and set of rules. These come from the Party Body Review Group, which has run an extensive consultation with existing party bodies before drawing up the plans.

**The full conference agenda and reports to conference booklet [are both now out.](#)**

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## [The UK–EU relationship: the Liberal Democrat position](#)

Anyone who was at the last two Liberal Democrat conferences should remember the two debates that were held on the party's position on the future relationship between the UK and the EU. In a passionately argued debate last September, **conference resolved that the party should support a longer-term objective of UK membership of the the EU**, but we rejected a proposal for an immediate campaign to reverse Brexit, which, it was argued, was more likely to alienate voters sick of the recent history of Brexit-inspired division and bitterness. **Conference also called for the closest possible alignment between the UK and the EU on trade, security, environmental, social, judicial, educational and scientific issues.**

We aim to construct a 'roadmap to rejoin' that ultimately convinces the electorate that membership of the EU is in the UK's best interests

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## [Leaseholders are suffering due to Conservative inaction on cladding](#)

We all remember seeing the horrific scenes of the burning tower at Grenfell on the news over four years ago.

The tragic loss of 72 lives was a dark moment for our country and the cladding scandal that emerged emboldened me to stand up for the rights of all those living in unsafe buildings.

That event also was a lightning rod for the wider public and put a sharp focus on the quality of housing that many people live in – particularly in more densely populated urban areas.

millions of leaseholders now find themselves stuck in limbo and facing huge bills”

It was later found that the Grenfell tower was covered in unsafe, flammable cladding and lacked a whole host of basic fire prevention measures. Once again, **we saw the dangers of developers putting profit ahead of safety.**

Across the UK there were calls for swift action to support leaseholders to remove this dangerous cladding from their buildings. However, at both a Westminster and Devolved Government level, the response has been sluggish.

Due to Government inaction, millions of leaseholders now find themselves stuck in limbo and facing huge bills, often in the high tens of thousands of pounds, to remove this dangerous cladding.

They are unable to move or sell their property due to the cladding, leaving millions trapped as Mortgage Prisoners. Despite strong community action, and attempts to rally leaseholders together, the situation continues.

**It’s appalling that the burden of responsibility is being placed on these innocent leaseholders, rather than the building owners and developers who cut the corners in the first place.**

The Liberal Democrats will continue to fight to End the Cladding Scandal for good.”

The Conservatives strategy for dealing with this is to bury their heads in the sand and pretend everything is fine. They can announce big schemes all they want, but unless they listen to the concerns of leaseholders and shift the financial burden onto building owners – millions of men, women, and children will continue to suffer.

That is why I have been working tirelessly in Parliament to champion the voices and rights of leaseholders.

“Leaseholders have done everything right and nothing wrong yet they are being expected to pay for the failures of construction, of developers, and of materials manufacturers” [@KathPinnock](#)  
[#EndOurCladdingScandal](#)

– Lib Dem Lords (@LibDemLords) [July 20, 2021](#)

Working alongside other peers, I have tabled 8 amendments to various bills on this issue and am working closely with Liberal Democrat MPs to keep applying pressure on the Government to change tack.

The most recent of these amendments was debated yesterday, but **sadly the Conservatives once again voted it down. Their refusal to even explore what additional support we can give shows they simply don’t get the scale of the**

**issue – or how it is affecting people.**

For the sake of all those families who have seen their livelihoods destroyed we must act. We owe it to them to ensure they do not lose out due to developer greed.

The Liberal Democrats will continue to fight to End the Cladding Scandal for good.

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## **Getting support when you need it**

Being involved in politics should be fun and rewarding. But it can be stressful and at times any of us may need to turn to others for help or support.

Often that support can best come from colleagues in your local party or a party body you are active in. But sometimes help is needed elsewhere, and this piece sets out the main places to turn.

### **24/7 helpline**

For the most serious situations, all our members can access a **24x7 support helpline on 0800 028 0199**. It is run by [Health Assured](#), an **independent health and wellbeing specialist**. (When asked which organisation you are from, say the Liberal Democrats.)

Members can also download the **My Healthy Advantage app** from the Google Play store or the Apple App store to access a range of supporting materials. For people without smartphones, there is also a web-based version. For the registration code for the app and for web-based access details, please contact [people@libdems.org.uk](mailto:people@libdems.org.uk).

**The Health Assured service is provided to support members, regardless of whether the issue is a party-related one or not.**

Health Assured has a robust and thorough safeguarding procedure which covers in detail the steps to be taken in the event of risk being identified. All helpline staff receive training and regular updates on their safeguarding/risk policy and procedure. In all instances, Health Assured respects their client's right to confidentiality but also recognises the need and reserves the right to breach confidentiality in exceptional circumstances in line with the data protection legislation.

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