

Fair Votes Now!

The 2024 general election has again exposed the flaws of the First Past the Post system. Leaving millions of voices unheard and creating a divisive, adversarial political climate where collaboration is discouraged and accountability is often sidestepped.

The previous Conservative government, by making voting harder and ignoring democratic integrity, has only deepened these systemic issues, eroded public trust, and allowed for a 'winner takes it all' attitude to infiltrate the democratic process.

The Liberal Democrats have long championed proportional representation, advocating for a voting system where every vote truly counts. We believe that reforming our electoral system is crucial for a fairer democracy and better governance.

Improving our democracy is an important end in itself, but it is also a necessary step to building a better country, with good schools and hospitals, affordable housing, safe communities and clean air. With a better electoral system and more democratic institutions, politicians and parties will have to be more focused on the things that really matter to people, and we'll have better public services and a fairer society as a result.

Liberal Democrats have a comprehensive plan to build a better politics, starting with a fair voting system so no one's vote is wasted:

- **Replace first past the post** with proportional representation via STV for UK General Elections and local elections in England.
- Ensure that the UK has **an automatic system of inclusion on the electoral register**.
- Protect and **strengthen the Electoral Commission**, including **by repealing the Government's power** to designate a strategy and policy statement for the Commission.
- **Scrap** the Conservatives' **Voter ID scheme**.
- Enable **all UK citizens living abroad to vote for MPs in separate overseas constituencies**, and to participate in UK referendums.

Give **young people the right to vote** in the first election after their 16th birthday, for UK general elections and referendums, and local elections in England.

Read our new policy in full

The First Past the Post system continues to be an unfair reflection of the UK, leaving many voices unheard and deepening divisions within our politics. It's time to move beyond this outdated system and create a political landscape that truly reflects and serves the needs of the public.

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Author:

[Murphy to strengthen economic ties and promote dual market access during visit to US and Canada](#)

Economy Minister Conor Murphy has arrived in Chicago to begin a five-day visit to North America with Invest Northern Ireland.

[Givan welcomes Unions' agreement to EA Pay and Grading Review](#)

Education Minister Paul Givan has welcomed confirmation from support staff unions of their acceptance of the Pay and Grading Agreement following consultation with their membership.

[Saving our NHS](#)

The NHS is in crisis.

A crisis that is the legacy of the former Conservative Government. They promised new hospitals but failed to deliver, they oversaw spiralling waiting times – hours for an ambulance, weeks to see a GP, and months for urgent cancer treatment. Now that the Conservatives are out of office, it's time to fix this mess.

The Liberal Democrats are leading the charge to restore our health and care

systems and are calling for this new Government to:

- Bring forward a plan to **save GP services** including increasing the number of full-time equivalent GPs by 8,000 to ensure everyone has the right to see a GP within seven days, or within 24 hours if they urgently need to.
- End DIY dentistry and 'dental deserts' by **guaranteeing access to an NHS dentist for everyone needing urgent and emergency care**, and fixing the broken NHS dental contract to bring dentists back to the NHS from the private sector.
- Boost cancer survival rates and **introduce a guarantee for 100% of patients to start treatment for cancer within 62 days** from urgent referral.
- **Increase the Public Health Grant** so that local authorities can improve the health of their communities and prevent ill health.
- Fix the life-threatening crisis in our ambulance services by **ending excessive handover delays** and increasing the number of staffed hospital beds.
- Improve **early access to mental health services** by establishing **walk-in mental health hubs** for young people in every community and introducing regular mental health check-ups at key points in people's lives.
- Prioritise the proposed bill brought forward in the King's Speech to **finally reform the Mental Health Act**.
- Implement **a ten-year plan to invest in hospitals and the primary care estate** to end the scandal of crumbling roofs, dangerous concrete and life-expired buildings.
- Introduce **free personal care**, a higher Carer's Minimum Wage, and a workforce plan for social care.

We believe everyone deserves high-quality healthcare, accessible when and where it's needed and free at the point of use. Our plan will ensure everyone receives the care they need and deserve.

Read our policy in full

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[National Nature Parks](#)

Everyone deserves the chance to enjoy open green spaces, clean blue rivers, and the stunning beauty of Britain's coast. These natural treasures are not just scenic; they are vital to preserving the ecosystem of many of the

nation's favourite animals.

Yet, despite the importance of these landscapes, the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Years of neglect and inaction from the Conservative government to meet their environmental pledges have left our green spaces and waterways in a precarious position.

Today the Liberal Democrats have laid out a bold and ambitious plan to restore the UK's natural environment and ensure that everyone can access a clean, healthy, and thriving green space:

- Create at least three **new National Nature Parks** to the existing 10 National Parks in England.
- Provide the **National Parks budget** with an **additional £50m a year** to support new and existing National Parks to become National Nature Parks.
- Ensure any **new National Park** has a clear **duty to manage protected areas** for nature's restoration.
- Launch a **consultation to determine which new areas should become National Nature Parks**, giving natural landscapes priority for the shortlist.
- Establish **new walking routes**, including routes through National Parks and ensure **local authorities** can **maintain existing walking routes**.

Read our new policy in full

The time to act is now. By embracing this plan, we can turn the tide, restoring the UK's natural environment to its former glory for everyone.

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