



Liberal Democrat **policies for men**



change that works for you

BUILDING A FAIRER BRITAIN



Liberal Democrats want to build a society where men can fully share the responsibilities of family life if that's what suits them and their partner.

Men are often a forgotten group in political debates. But the ongoing challenge of securing equality for women mustn't blind us to the problems specifically faced by men, especially when it comes to juggling work and family.

I'm a working father with three young boys. I know how hard it can be to get the balance right. And I know that there are many men who want more flexibility at work so that they can play a more hands-on role at home. That's not just good for men – it helps women and, most importantly, it's good for children too.

Liberal Democrats want to build a society where men can share the responsibilities of family life if that's what suits them and their partner. We will make parental leave interchangeable between mothers and fathers and introduce policies to help keep fathers involved in their children's lives, even if they separate from their partner. We will promote flexible working so everyone has the opportunity to balance work with the other parts of their life.

Liberal Democrats will also help close the gap that sees too many boys fall behind girls at school, and we'll make it easier for men to get the healthcare they need.

Here we outline our key policies to deliver a fairer Britain for men:

- Shared parenting
- Equal parenting
- Cutting Income tax
- More flexible working
- Better education for boys
- Better access to health services

Only the Liberal Democrats will bring the change that works for you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Clegg". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Nick Clegg
Leader of the Liberal Democrats

shared parenting

At the moment, fathers do not have the right to time off to attend maternity appointments and are only allowed to take a meagre two weeks of paternity leave following their child's birth. This is not fair.

Liberal Democrats recognise that that the fathers who are involved at the start of their children's lives are more likely to stay involved. We will ensure fathers do get time off work to attend these appointments and can, if they want to, share the mother's current entitlement to maternity leave.

In addition to the existing 2 weeks of paternity leave, Liberal Democrats will reform the existing 12 months statutory maternity leave to allow mums and dads to share the time between them so they can arrange family life in the way that suits them best – they could even take the leave at the same time, up to six months each, if they wish to.

equal parenting

When parents separate, it can sometimes be too easy for the father to be left out of his child's life. We will work to create a less adversarial family courts system.

Liberal Democrats will introduce a Default Contact Arrangement, (if there is no threat to the safety of the child), which would divide the child's time between the two parents. We will encourage mediation wherever possible and create a less adversarial system, introducing measures to make the courts more informal and approachable. We will also ensure schools and colleges communicate equally with both parents.

cutting income tax

We live in a country where the poorest fifth of people still pay more in tax as a proportion of their income than the richest fifth. Under this Government, millions of people on low incomes are forced to pay hundreds of pounds in Income Tax every year. This means that for many people in low paid jobs, work simply doesn't pay. Even a person working full-time earning the minimum wage sees nearly £1000 taken from them in income tax.

Liberal Democrats will ensure that you do not pay income tax on the first £10,000 you earn – this will put £700 back into the pockets of millions of people on low and middle incomes, and free 3.6 million more people on low incomes from having to pay any income tax at all.

The change will be paid for by introducing a mansion tax, closing loopholes that benefit the wealthy and making sure airlines pay for the pollution they cause.

more flexible working

The right to request flexible working cannot currently be made for any other reason than certain parental or caring responsibilities. However, there are many valid reasons why someone may wish to work flexibly, for example to undertake voluntary work or to look after grandchildren.

As we move away from the nine-to-five routine, many employers believe that flexible working makes good business sense. That is why the Liberal Democrats will give all employees the right to request flexible working. Like now, employers' rights to turn down a request will remain unchanged if the nature of the work or the needs of the business do not make flexible working possible.

better education for boys

Boys are being failed by an unequal education system, scoring an average of 9 per cent below girls for the past five years. To stem this problem we will invest more in the crucial early years of education to deliver smaller class sizes and help for those who are struggling to promote good learning habits and encourage a positive attitude to education.

Liberal Democrats will cut class sizes and provide more one-to-one tuition in our schools to ensure everyone gets a fair start and boys are not left behind. We will spend an extra £2.5bn on schools, guaranteeing them the money they need to support those children who are struggling. It will be targeted at schools taking on children who need more help but will benefit everyone.

We also want to see more men employed in childcare and early education who can act as good role models. We will therefore address the stigma attached to men who want to work with children which means that just 3 per cent of childcare workers today are male.

access to health services

Men are much less likely than women to go to the doctor when they should, and that has knock-on effects for their health. Long working hours can make it difficult to get to the doctor.

Liberal Democrats will improve access to GPs by giving patients the freedom to register at practices near their work. We will make it easier for people to switch GP if they are unhappy with the service they are getting. And patients will also have greater freedom to contact their GP by email, making the service more convenient and reducing the number of unnecessary appointments.



Liberal Democrats have championed the devolution of powers to Scotland and Wales, and many decisions made in Westminster now apply to England only. That means that policies in those nations are increasingly different from those in England – reflecting different choices, priorities and circumstances. Our Scottish and Welsh Parties make their own policy on those issues. This document sets out our priorities for a Liberal Democrat Government in Westminster.

Published & promoted by Chris Fox on behalf of the Liberal Democrats, both at 4 Cowley Street, London, SW1P 3NB
www.libdems.org.uk Design and printed by APDA, www.apda-london.com