



CHANGE WALES' FUTURE

WELSH LIBERAL DEMOCRATS
MANIFESTO 2017

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Policy Note

Welsh Liberal Democrats have championed the devolution of powers from Westminster to the National Assembly for Wales.

Many decisions made in Westminster, such as those concerning health, education and local government, now affect only England. Policies in Wales are increasingly different from those in England – reflecting different choices, priorities and circumstances.

This manifesto sets out the policies and plans for which the Welsh Lib Dems seek your support at this election. To give a complete overview, we include priorities and aspirations for our party in devolved policy areas. In so doing, we aim to make clear what is a Westminster matter and what is for decision in Wales.

The Manifesto can be found in alternative format at:

www.welshlibdems.wales/manifesto

Published and promoted by Robert Griffin on behalf of the Welsh Liberal Democrats, all at 38 The Parade, Cardiff, CF24 3AD.





Your chance to change Wales' future – before it is too late!


This is a very special election. The key issue – leaving our 27 partner countries in Europe – will affect us and the lives of your and my children **for decades to come.**

Theresa May called the election to win a huge majority – taking advantage of Labour's inability under Jeremy Corbyn to provide strong leadership or even coherent opposition.

We Liberal Democrats are fighting to win more seats in Wales – and in every part of Britain – so that our MP team in Parliament will be stronger to undertake real scrutiny and challenge.

A huge Tory majority would give a blank cheque to Theresa May – to take Britain out of the EU regardless of the terms that can be agreed and the harm done.

That majority would also hand over power until 2022 to impose policies which would make Wales poorer through cuts in public services and make us a less fair and more unequal country in which to live – not what I believe the people of Wales really want.



Wales simply can't afford unchecked Conservative government for the next five years.

In this manifesto, we describe the Liberal Democrat approach to the challenges facing Britain and then we say how we would tackle the problems and seize the opportunities.

Some issues are decided in Westminster and others by the Welsh Government and National Assembly. So, this manifesto sets out our party's major policies and says how we want those themes to be carried forward in Wales – to meet our nation's specific needs.


I am passionate in standing up for Welsh interests. Those interests are at risk of being hit by a Brexit sledgehammer and Tory insensitivity to Wales.

Our future can be very different.

Liberal Democrats offer grounds for **hope**. Our country is full of decent people whose future could be bright.

You don't have to settle for a mean-spirited Britain, with run-down hospitals and social care. You could have a final say on the Brexit deal – with the option to stay in if you think it's a bad deal.





If you want an open, tolerant and united Britain, if you want a strong opposition in Parliament, if you want a prosperous and hopeful Wales, vote Liberal Democrat on 8th June.

Mark Williams

Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats



Change Wales' Future

**PROTECT
OUR PLACE
IN EUROPE**




1.1 Giving the people the final say

Liberal Democrats are open and outward-looking. We passionately believe that Britain's relationship with its neighbours is stronger as part of the European Union. Whatever its imperfections, the EU remains the best framework for working effectively and co-operating in the pursuit of our shared aims. It has led directly to greater prosperity, increased trade, investment and jobs, better security, and a greener environment. Britain is better off in the EU.

Liberal Democrats campaigned for the UK to remain in the EU. However, we acknowledge the result of the 2016 referendum, which gave the Government a mandate to start negotiations to leave. The decision Britain took, though, was simply whether to remain in or to leave the European Union. There was no option on the ballot paper to choose the shape of our future relationship with the EU on vital issues including trade, travel or security.

While much remains uncertain about Theresa May's approach, it is now clear that the Conservatives are campaigning for an extreme Brexit. This means leaving the Single Market, ending freedom of movement, and abandoning the Customs Union – even though these choices will make the UK poorer and disappoint even many leave voters who wanted a different outcome.





The effects of Brexit are already being felt. The value of the pound has plummeted. Inflation has risen. Growth in the economy has slowed, and the government is already borrowing billions more to fill the gap in lost tax revenue. Young people, who voted overwhelmingly to remain, are being told their voices do not matter. Urgent problems, such as the future of the NHS, are being neglected because of the sheer scale of the challenge posed by Brexit.

A harsh Brexit will make all these problems worse. It is the wrong choice for the country. Liberal Democrats will fight to prevent such an extreme Brexit.

At the end of negotiations, there will be a decision on the deal. The Conservatives want the decision to be in their hands. Liberal Democrats believe the British people should have the final say.

That's why, when the terms of our future relationship with the EU have been negotiated (over the next two years on the Government's timetable), we will put that deal to a vote of the British people in a referendum, with staying in the EU as the alternative option on the ballot paper. We continue to believe that, for the UK, there is no deal outside the EU as good as the arrangements it already has as a member.

Every vote for the Liberal Democrats in this election is a vote to give the final say to the British people.







1.2 Fighting an extreme Brexit

During negotiations, we commit ourselves to use our strength in Parliament to press for keeping Britain as close as possible to Europe. Our priorities will include:

- **Protection of rights for EU citizens and UK citizens:** We will press for the UK to unilaterally guarantee the rights of EU nationals in the UK, ending their ongoing uncertainty. We will call for the overhaul and simplification of the registration process and the requirements for EU nationals to obtain permanent residence and UK citizenship, as the current system is not fit for purpose. We will urge the government, and use our influence with Liberal leaders in European countries, to secure the same rights for UK citizens living in European Union countries.
- **Membership of the Single Market and Customs Union:** We believe that any deal negotiated for the UK outside the EU must ensure that trade can continue without customs controls at the border; and must maintain membership of the Single Market, which smooths trade between the UK and the continent by providing a common 'rule book' for businesses and a common mechanism to ensure that everyone abides by the rules.

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- **Freedom of movement.** We support the principle of freedom of movement – to abandon it would threaten Britain’s prosperity and reputation as an open, tolerant society. Any deal negotiated for the UK outside the EU must protect the right to work, travel, study and retire across the EU. Any restrictions sought by the government must take account of the vital importance of EU workers to the British economy, including public services.
 - **Respect for the interests of Wales:** We will fight to ensure Wales’ long-term interests are fully taken into account during negotiations, from our steel industry to our Universities and businesses. We will oppose any moves that risk making Wales a less prosperous nation or will see powers more concentrated in Westminster.
 - **Opportunities for young people:** In an increasingly globalised and complex world, it is vital that our young people are afforded the same opportunities which their parents enjoyed to work, study and travel abroad. To that end, we will do everything we can to protect Erasmus+ and other EU-funded schemes which increase opportunities for young people.
 - **Defending social rights and equalities:** Many important protections such as the right to 52 weeks’ maternity leave and rights to annual leave are currently based on EU law, and many





of these rights have been upheld at the European Court of Justice. Liberal Democrats will fight to ensure that these entitlements are not undermined.

- **Maintaining environmental standards:** The European Union has created the highest environmental standards in the world. We have a duty to future generations to protect our environment and tackle climate change. Liberal Democrats will ensure that everything is done to maintain those high standards in UK law, including the closest possible cooperation on climate and energy policy.
- **Law enforcement and judicial co-operation:** Europol, the European Arrest Warrant and shared access to police databases have helped make Britain's streets safer. We will fight to maintain maximum co-operation to ensure criminals are pursued quickly and effectively and police are not frustrated by huge amounts of red tape.
- **British Business and Jobs:** We must protect support to domestic industries such as farming, tourism and the creative industries, as well as regional support for deprived areas. The City of London is Europe's financial capital and must retain its full rights in EU financial markets.




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- **Science and research funding:** Research is vital for our long-term prosperity, security and wellbeing – but the Leave vote has already started to affect existing and proposed research programmes. We will campaign against any reduction in investment in UK universities and for their right to apply for EU funds on equal terms.
 - **Travel and tourism:** Britain is an outward-looking country with commercial and leisure interests around the world, particularly in Europe. We will strive to retain traveller and tourist benefits such as the European Health Insurance Card, reduced roaming charges and pet passports, all of which are at risk by leaving the European Union.
 - **Preserving a peaceful and united UK:** The peace settlement in Northern Ireland and the possibility of Scotland voting to leave the UK in order to re-join the EU are at stake in these Brexit negotiations.





Change Wales' Future

BREXIT AND WALES




The Welsh Liberal Democrats have the oldest roots of any party in Wales and we have stood up for our communities for over 150 years. We remain committed to furthering and protecting Wales' interests at every opportunity – interests that are at risk of being hit by Brexit shockwaves.

Wales receives more funding per person from the EU than other parts of the UK. We have received more than £4 billion in investment since 2000, building and improving roads, creating and protecting more than 17,000 jobs, and giving young people endless opportunities to work, live and travel abroad.

60% of Welsh exports make their way to the EU. From our smallest businesses to our biggest industries, we have benefited from our membership of the Single Market. Common rules – which UK ministers and MEPs play a full part in shaping – enable our farmers, factories and businesses to export their goods and services to the biggest single market in the world without facing excessive bureaucracy or tariffs pricing them out.

Our exported agricultural produce is world-class. Leaving the single market will see tariffs sky-rocket. We export 93% of Welsh lamb to the EU. On leaving the single market our farmers will face tariffs of up to 40% – and also quotas. Welsh hill farmers face a destructive






deal being handed down to them by politicians in Westminster. The £250m per year in CAP financial support Wales receives is at risk, threatening the future of our small farms; the backbone of the rural economy.

Tourism is a major source of employment in Wales. But our hotels and restaurants say that they need people from other European countries, as well as Welsh people, to fill all the jobs – especially in high season. If those workers from the EU and their Welsh employers are faced with complicated procedures, delays and uncertainties, our tourist industry will not have the workers to thrive and create still more jobs. Instead, some may downsize and others forced to close.

Finally, more than 4,000 of our doctors and nurses in Wales are EU citizens, who care for our loved ones and keep our hospitals running. A deal that will end free movement of people will have profound effects on our NHS – and also our social care services. We will protect these vital services by fighting to protect the rights of EU citizens to remain in the UK.

On leaving the EU, powers and responsibilities will come back to Britain. We will make the case for the appropriate powers and responsibilities to be devolved to Wales, so decisions are made closer to the people of



Wales. We will resist a power grab from Westminster making inroads into devolved policy areas.

Wales cannot afford the Conservatives' damaging approach to Brexit. Wales needs an opposition in Parliament that will fight for Wales' interests at every turn.

We will be that constructive opposition.






Change Wales' Future

FIX A

BROKEN

SYSTEM



Britain suffers from an overcentralised political system with a lack of openness and accountability. Parliament does not fairly represent the electorate and it is weak in restraining the power of the Government. We still have an unelected House of Lords, local government is hobbled by central control, and people feel they have no effective means of securing attention to their concerns and priorities. It's no wonder people feel frustrated and angry at the system.

This anger found its most recent expression in the result of the EU referendum, but ironically this was as much a verdict on the performance of British political institutions as European ones. The Conservatives' proposed Great Repeal Bill threatens to centralise power even more, handing to central government powers to alter vast swathes of the statute book without proper parliamentary scrutiny.

We believe in a Wales where people have power over their own lives and how their country is run. To make this happen, we need to revitalise our political system – strengthen devolution, make the argument that we are stronger together than we are apart, and increase trust in our institutions.





Liberal Democrat priorities will be:

A more representative democracy, with a fair voting system in elections for local government and Westminster
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Delivering a stronger Assembly with more devolved powers, in a strong, federal and United Kingdom


Introducing votes from the age of 16 for all elections and reforming the House of Lords to give it a democratic mandate

3.1 Better politics


Unfair votes, over-centralisation of decision-making, the power of patronage and the influence of powerful corporate lobbies mean ordinary citizens and local communities are too often excluded and left alienated by politics today. We need to reform politics to make it more representative and more empowering of our citizens so it earns greater public confidence.

We will:

- Introduce votes at 16 for all elections and referendums.


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- Ensure that every reasonable effort is made to ensure that those people legally entitled to vote are included on the electoral registers, with far greater efforts to register under-represented groups.
 - Introduce the Single Transferable Vote for electing MPs across the UK.
 - Enable all UK citizens living abroad to vote for MPs in separate overseas constituencies, and to participate in UK referendums.
 - Reform the House of Lords with a proper democratic mandate.
 - Take big money out of politics by capping donations to political parties at £10,000 per person each year, and introducing wider reforms to party funding along the lines of the 2011 report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life.
 - Strengthen Trade Union members' political freedoms by letting them choose which political party they wish to support through the political levy.
 - Cancel the boundary review due to report in 2018. While new constituencies would need to be established for a new voting system, we believe constituency boundary reviews should respect natural geographical communities, with greater flexibility for the Boundary Commission to deviate from exact equality to take account of community ties and continuity of representation, and should take place every ten years.



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- Mandate the provision of televised Leaders' Debates in General Elections based on rules produced by Ofcom relating to structure and balance, and allowing for the empty-chairing of party leaders who refuse to attend.
 - Strengthen and expand the lobbying register and prohibit MPs from accepting paid lobbying work.
 - Introduce trials of weekend voting to help raise turnouts in elections.
 - Introduce legislation to allow for all-BAME and all-LGBT+ parliamentary shortlists.
 - Make Parliament more family-friendly, and establish a review to pave the way for MP job-sharing arrangements.

The recent media, police and Electoral Commission investigations into possible breaches of spending limits by candidates in the 2015 General Election show that the current system is not fit for purpose. The clear objective must be to ensure that all expenditure on campaign material targeted at an identifiable constituency, and in particular at voters within that constituency, is included in its expense return, rather than it being possible to count against a national party limit.

We do not believe that political parties themselves have an incentive to change the existing system. We will



therefore task the Electoral Commission with producing a framework for an up to date expenses system that adequately governs the running of a modern campaign, and put these proposals to a vote in Parliament.


3.2 A decentralised United Kingdom

Liberal Democrats have a proud record of leading the way on devolving greater powers to Wales and the other nations of the UK. We will deliver more powers to Wales and to each of the nations of a strong, federal, and United Kingdom.

Change has been taking place rapidly. We now need to make sure all the new arrangements work together coherently and we will therefore establish a UK Constitutional Convention, made up from representatives of the political parties, academia, civic society and members of the public, tasked with producing a full codified constitution for the UK, to report within two years.

We will ensure that any powers in devolved areas of responsibility which are repatriated as a result of Brexit are appropriately devolved, and ensure that such devolution of repatriated powers or responsibilities does not disadvantage the nations of the UK.






We welcome the new Wales Act, which is intended to implement the St. David's Day Agreement secured by Liberal Democrats in Coalition – but it does not go far enough.

Liberal Democrats will deliver more powers to Wales by implementing the remaining Silk Part 1 proposals on financial powers and the Silk Part 2 proposals to devolve powers over transport, all Welsh ports, energy, broadcasting, air passenger duty, youth justice, policing and other justice powers.

We will raise the status of the National Assembly, strengthening its capacity to scrutinise legislation and to hold the Welsh Government to account. We will drastically reduce the number of powers reserved to Westminster and prevent Westminster from being able to override Wales on devolved matters. We will recognise Wales as a distinct legal jurisdiction.

Among other powers which we would devolve are funding of Network Rail in relation to the Wales network, allow the Welsh Government to set its own bank holidays and give the Children's Commissioner for Wales the power to examine issues that affect children in Wales but are not within the control of the Welsh Government.



To help create jobs and boost growth in Wales, we will abolish the economically distorting tolls on the Severn Bridge, after the costs have been recouped in 2018.

3.3 Funding

The nations of the United Kingdom have long had different needs with regard to funding. The Barnett Formula is the mechanism used to adjust spending allocations across the UK.

The Liberal Democrats have already delivered a substantial extension of financial powers to the nations of the UK and we will devolve further fiscal powers to the devolved governments.


We recognise the findings of the Holtham Commission that the Barnett formula underfunded Wales and will commission work to update this analysis. We will address the imbalance by immediately ensuring that the Barnett floor is set so Wales is funded fairly, and seek over a Parliament to increase the Welsh block grant to an equitable level.





Change Wales' Future

**BUILD AN
ECONOMY
THAT WORKS
FOR YOU**



Our economy is unbalanced. There are stark contrasts between regions, between old and young, and between the successful and those left behind.

Wales needs a sustainable and balanced economy not just to help fund public services but because growth and enterprise create jobs and opportunities for all.

We will work to support growth now and put in place a sustainable economy that works for all for the long term: prosperous, green, open and fair.

The actions of the Conservatives have undermined the Coalition's work in fixing the economy. They have chosen to risk the long-term future of our economy by limiting vital spending on infrastructure and creating an over-reliance on consumer spending fuelled by debt to prop up growth. They have consistently put their own short-term ambition above long-term economic prosperity. Above all, a bad Brexit deal casts a shadow over our economy.

As a result, our economy is at its most fragile since the 2008 crash. We need a radical programme of investment to boost growth, develop new infrastructure fit for the future and get our economy back on track.



That's why Liberal Democrats will:

Boost the economy with a major programme of capital investment aimed at stimulating growth across all areas of the UK


Eliminate the deficit on day-to-day spending by 2020 to control the national debt, and then borrow only to invest

Put 1p on Income Tax to enable Wales to provide strong public services for the future.
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4.1 Responsible finances: Investing in Britain's Future

Liberal Democrats reject the Conservatives' damaging and irrational commitment to run budget surpluses on both capital and revenue, imposing unnecessary deep cuts in spending limiting the scope for much-needed capital investment. But we have no intention of just throwing away our hard-fought efforts to control the deficit during the Coalition years. We will therefore commit to eliminating the deficit in day-to-day spending by 2020. This means we will be able to keep debt as a share of national wealth falling through the Parliament, unless there is a recession. Once we have brought current expenditure into balance we will ensure that





overall public spending grows roughly in line with the economy.


A long-term stable economy requires more than just discipline over spending. It requires us to invest in order to give our economy the opportunity to remain competitive for the future.

Liberal Democrats will therefore commit to a responsible and realistic £100 billion package of additional infrastructure investment for the UK.

In Wales, we will prioritise:

- New direct spending on house-building to help build 15,000 additional homes, helping to achieve our target of 300,000 across the UK by the end of this Parliament.
- Improved access to mobile and broadband connections across Wales, especially in rural areas
- Capital investment in schools and hospitals to support capacity increases and modernisation.
- Additional funding to bring more private investment into renewable energy, such as the creation of the world's first tidal lagoon in Swansea Bay.
- The electrification of the North Wales Main Line and funding for a feasibility study into re-opening rail links between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen.



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- Investment in the South Wales Metro to connect communities in across the South Wales region. We will ensure that the National Infrastructure Commission takes fully into account the environmental implications of all national infrastructure decisions.

The Conservative pursuit of an extreme Brexit will have serious impacts on the UK's national finances – impacts which current government plans may not fully take into account. Liberal Democrats would choose to pursue a very different European policy, and therefore would expect a better financial situation.

We will initiate a Spending Review after the General Election focusing on delivering efficiency, funding proven spend-to-save initiatives, and investing in technology to get public services and frontline staff online.

Traditional indicators of economic activity such as GDP are poor guides to genuine prosperity and wellbeing. We will therefore introduce a UK wellbeing strategy covering all aspects of government policy, including health, housing and environment.




4.2 Fair taxes

In order to balance the books and build a sustainable economy for the future we must ensure that everyone pays their fair share. Liberal Democrats have a longstanding commitment to fairer taxation, and in government we raised the personal allowance for Income Tax. It remains our ambition to make taxes fairer and simpler, to help those on low and middle incomes, and to ensure that those on the highest incomes, and large international companies, make a fair contribution.

We will:

- Aim in the long-term, and as resources allow, to raise the employee National Insurance threshold to the Income Tax threshold, while protecting low earners' ability to accrue pension and benefit entitlements.
- Ensure those with the highest incomes and wealth are making a fair contribution. We have identified a series of distortions, loopholes and excessive reliefs that should be removed. These include reforms to Capital Gains Tax and Dividend Tax relief, and refocusing Entrepreneurs' Relief. We would reverse a number of the Conservatives' unfair and unjustified tax cuts, including:
 - The cutting of Corporation Tax from 20% to 17%
 - Capital Gains Tax Cuts



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- Capital Gains Tax Extended Relief
 - The Marriage Allowance
 - The raising of the Inheritance Tax Threshold
 - Take tough action against corporate tax evasion and avoidance, including by:
 - Introducing a General Anti-Avoidance Rule, setting a target for HM Revenue and Customs to reduce the tax gap and continuing to invest in staff to enable them to meet it.
 - Reforming Corporation Tax to develop a system that benefits the smallest companies while ensuring the biggest multinationals cannot avoid paying sums comparable to nationally-based competitors. We will consult on shifting away from a profits-based tax to one that takes account of a wider range of economic activity indicators, such as sales and turnover.
 - Working with all levels of government to reform the business rates system,, prioritising reforms that recognise the development of the digital economy, lessen the burden on smaller businesses, and ensure high streets remain competitive. We will also consider the implementation of Land Value Taxation.
 - Conduct a full-scale review into the burden of taxation and spending between generations to ensure that government policy promotes fairness between generations.


4.3 Supporting entrepreneurs and small business

As well as the need for public infrastructure investment, the role of entrepreneurs and small businesses in delivering a thriving economy is fundamental. Liberal Democrats believe there is a vital need for access to finance for new businesses, and those wishing to scale up. There are also many well-established small businesses and traders which form the backbone of local economies. Our priority in supporting entrepreneurs and small businesses is to ensure that they have access to the funding they need, and in particular long-term (and patient) capital.

Working with other levels of government we want to;

- Give local authorities a statutory duty for economic development, along with tools such as the local retention of a proportion of business rate income to incentivise it.
- Review business rates and exemptions to reduce burdens on small firms, and make them the priority for any future business tax cuts.
- Deliver a balanced, export-led economic strategy by improving Wales' skills and innovation, access to finance and capital and access to markets and growth across Wales.



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- Create a new ‘start up allowance’ to help those starting a new business with their living costs in the crucial first weeks of their business
 - Support emerging City Region initiatives in Cardiff and Swansea, and explore giving them statutory status as in Greater Manchester or Scotland, and bring forward Welsh versions of bespoke city deals to decentralise power from Cardiff Bay direct to communities.
 - Support the development of a Welsh Development Bank designed to support small businesses in accessing finance and support; developing international links including export and inward investment; and financing major infrastructure projects.

4.4 Helping everyone earn a decent living

Most businesses recognise the long-term value in treating their employees decently and developing their skills. However, there are still too many examples of unscrupulous employers who perpetuate bad practice, which not only exploits workers but can also undermine the competitive position of good employers. This has to change if we are to give everyone a decent chance of earning a living and move towards a more productive economy.






We will:

- Encourage the creation and widespread adoption of a ‘good employer’ kitemark covering areas such as paying a living wage, avoiding unpaid internships and using name-blind recruitment .
- Establish an independent review to consult on how to set a genuine Living Wage across all sectors.
- Extend transparency requirements on larger employers to include publishing the number of people paid less than the Living Wage and the ratio between top and median pay.
- Modernise employment rights to make them fit for the age of the ‘gig’ economy, looking to build on the forthcoming Taylor Report
- Stamp out abuse of Zero Hours Contracts. We will create a formal right to request a fixed contract and consult on introducing a right to make regular patterns of work contractual after a period of time.
- Strengthen enforcement of employment rights, including by bringing together relevant enforcement agencies and scrapping employment tribunal fees.

4.5 Helping everyone to share in prosperity

Too many people justifiably feel left behind. We believe that it is vital that everyone is given a stake in our economy, that we can only be united and competitive as a country if the rewards are reaped by all.






A well-functioning economy which works for everyone should seek to foster a diversity of types of business, including encouraging alternative models such as mutuals, social enterprises or community interest companies.

It is vital to ensure the engagement and involvement of employees; successful businesses work for all stakeholders. That is why we will:

- Encourage employers to promote employee ownership by giving staff in listed companies with over 250 employees a right to request shares, to be held in trust for the benefit of employees.
- Strengthen worker participation in decision-making, including staff representation on remuneration committees, and the right for employees of a listed company to be represented on the board. We will change company law to permit a German-style two-tier board structure to include employees.
- Reform fiduciary duty and company purpose rules to ensure that other considerations, such as employee welfare, environmental standards, community benefit and ethical practice can be fully included in decisions made by directors and fund managers.
- Reduce the reporting requirement for disclosure of shareholdings to 1% in order to increase transparency over who owns stakes in the biggest companies.

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- Require binding and public votes of board members on executive pay policies.

It is a scandal that in Britain today there are 1.7 million people without a bank account, 8 million experiencing problem debt and 40% of the working-age population who have less than £100 in savings. To tackle the problem of financial exclusion Liberal Democrats will:

- Take forward the recommendations of the House of Lords Select Committee on Financial Exclusion, in particular by expanding the Financial Conduct Authority's remit to include a statutory duty to promote financial inclusion as one of its key objectives.

4.6 Spreading opportunities to every part of the country

Prosperity is very unevenly spread across the UK. The prospect of Brexit, including the loss of £8.9 billion of European Structural and Investment Funds, is only likely to make the problems faced by disadvantaged areas worse.






We will:

- Give the immediate go-ahead to Swansea Bay tidal lagoon to generate sustainable growth in the region
- Use central government public procurement policy as tool of local growth and community development, for example by purchasing from diverse sources and using local, labour, goods and services, and encouraging local government to do the same.
- Require the major banks to fund the creation of a local banking sector dedicated to meeting the needs of local SMEs.



Change Wales' Future

**SAVE OUR
NHS AND
SOCIAL
CARE
SERVICES**



Good health is a prerequisite to taking full advantage of life's opportunities, and we must do all we can to help people stay healthy, as well as provide high-quality care when they are ill. Mental health is just as important as physical health and must make it a priority to deliver equality between the two.

We are living longer, but that means more people are living with conditions like diabetes and dementia who need help to live with dignity and the maximum degree of independence. We must set the highest standards in care and encourage effective collaboration between health and social services.

We will work to improve wider factors like warm homes, good air quality and access to exercise and healthy food so that everyone can have the best chance to lead a healthy life.

We recognise that powers over the running of the NHS are devolved to the Welsh Government, yet decisions made in England on health affect many people in Wales. These policies therefore make clear the Welsh Liberal Democrats' vision and priorities for how the Welsh NHS should deliver effective care for patients.

Therefore our ambitions for Wales will be:

Saving the NHS by putting a penny in the pound on income tax, enabling Wales to spend an extra £300m to give the Welsh NHS and social services the cash injection it needs.

Transforming mental healthcare with waiting time standards to match those in physical health care.

Ensuring that there are more nurses on hospital wards and in the community.


Home not Hospital: better integration of health and social care.

5.1 An NHS and social care services for the future

NHS and social care services have been left under-funded, while need continues to grow and patient care suffers. Too often people are routinely left stranded in hospital after they finish their treatment because the follow up care and support they need is not available.


We recognise that our health and social care services are our most treasured national institutions, and we need to take the right and essential choices to put our NHS on track for the future.





Liberal Democrats will put our health and social care system back on a sustainable financial footing:

- An immediate 1p rise on the basic, higher and additional rates of Income Tax. This will raise £6bn for the UK and £300m per year for Wales in additional revenue which we would see prioritised for the NHS and social care services.
- Direct this additional investment to GPs, nurses, social care, primary care (and other out of hospital care), mental health and public health.
- In the longer term and as a replacement for the 1p Income Tax rise, commission the development of a dedicated Health and Care Tax on the basis of wide consultation, possibly based on a reform of National Insurance Contributions, which will bring together spending on both services into a collective budget and sets out transparently, on people's payslips, what we spend on them.
- Continue to make the case for a cross-party health and social care commission, bringing together stakeholders to carry out a comprehensive review of the longer-term sustainability of the health and social care finances and workforce, and the practicalities of greater integration.
- Our 'More Nurses' Bill recently became law, which makes Wales the first country in Europe to introduce safe staffing levels. To build on this success, we will



conduct further research to see where further we should expand this law to other settings.

5.2 Valuing the NHS and social care workforce

Our health and social care services' greatest resource is their staff, working tirelessly under immense pressure.

We will:

- Guarantee the rights of all NHS and social care service staff who are EU nationals, the right to stay in the UK.
- End the public sector pay freeze for NHS workers.
- Protect NHS whistle-blowers and introduce a Welsh NHS whistleblowing hotline.

GPs in particular have been put under considerable strain, leaving many people waiting weeks to get appointments. GPs are the core of the NHS and they need support to ensure that the NHS is able to survive and thrive.





We want;

- A national workforce strategy, ensuring that we never again experience a shortage in the numbers of GPs, hospital doctors, nurses and other professionals that the NHS needs.
 - An Access to GPs Scheme, funding GP practices to make sure people can get the appointments they need.
 - To make it easier to register at a GP's practice near where you work
 - To develop alternative ways, using modern technology, to connect GPs and patients.
- Support GP federations and clusters being given real decision-making powers with delegated budgets.

5.3 Equal care for mental health

One in four people experience a mental health problem in any given year. For too long, mental health has been stigmatised and ignored. We strongly believe mental health should be taken as seriously as physical health and are determined to give it the equal attention it deserves. We know that not enough resources reach front line services and that in the fight for parity of esteem, there is still a very long way to go.





We will press for;

- Additional funding from within the one penny income tax rise to be used to provide additional investment in mental health services
- The introduction of access and waiting time standards and invest in access to therapies such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Counselling, and Interpersonal Psychotherapy.
- Better mental health support for pregnant women, new mothers and those who have experienced miscarriage or stillbirth.
- Strengthen the Crisis Care Concordat and improve follow-up support for people attending A&E after self-harm or a suicide attempt.
- New waiting time standards and better crisis care in Accident and Emergency, in the community and via phone lines to ensure that no one in crisis is turned away, with. This will enable us to end the use of police cells for people facing a mental health crisis.
- Out of area placements to be brought to an end, ensuring those admitted to hospital for mental ill-health are able to be treated close to home.
- All frontline public service professionals, including in schools and universities, receive better training in mental health.
- LGBT+ inclusive mental health services to receive funding and support they need.





5.4 Home not hospital: Supporting carers

We need services that fit around people's lives, not ones that force them to fit their lives around the care they need. We must move away from a fragmented system to more joined-up care so that people can get the care they need.

The number of family carers is rising, including in the 'sandwich generation' who find themselves trying to care for their children and their parents at the same time. Carers are unsung heroes; we need to do more to help them.

We would raise the amount people can earn before losing Carer's Allowance from £110 to £150 a week, and reduce the number of hours' care per week required to qualify.

5.5 Helping people keep healthy


It is better for patients and for the NHS if we keep people healthy in the first place, but 40% of NHS spending is on diseases that are preventable. We need to do more to promote healthy lifestyles, making people aware of the dangers of smoking and excessive consumption of alcohol and other drugs, and helping to improve mental health and wellbeing.



We will:

- Develop a strategy to tackle childhood obesity including restricting the marketing of junk food to children, restricting TV advertising before the 9pm watershed, and closing loopholes in the sugary drinks tax.
- Encourage the traffic light labelling system for food products and publication of information on calorie, fat, sugar and salt content in restaurants and takeaways.
- Introduce mandatory targets on sugar reduction for food and drink producers.
- Reduce smoking rates, introducing a levy on tobacco companies so they fairly contribute to the costs of health care and smoking cessation services.
- Introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol, subject to the final outcome of the legal challenge in Scotland.
- Support good practice among employers in promoting wellbeing and ensure people with mental health problems get the help they need to stay in or find work.
- We want to;
- Move towards a health and social care system that empowers and encourages people to better manage their own health and conditions and to live healthier lives.



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- Make Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention available on the NHS.
 - Support effective public awareness campaigns and learn from what works when designing new health promotion campaigns to change behaviour.
 - Develop a public health campaign promoting the steps people can take to improve their own mental resilience.


We will develop a just settlement for haemophiliacs who were given contaminated blood, and their families.





Change Wales' Future

**OUR
NATIONAL
MISSION OF
EDUCATION
REFORM**



Education reform is our national mission. Liberal Democrats have always put education at the heart of our agenda. We believe every child deserves a great start in life so they are equipped to shape their own future, and we are determined to make sure that the education system finds and unleashes the best in everyone.

We recognise that powers over schools and colleges are devolved to the Welsh Government, yet decisions made in England on education affect decisions in Wales. Now, with Kirsty Williams AM as Cabinet Secretary for Education, we will deliver on our national mission to raise standards, reduce the attainment gap and deliver a system of national pride and confidence.

Liberal Democrats recognise the dual role of education in giving young people the knowledge and skills they need to be part of a productive, competitive economy, and helping them grow into happy, healthy and engaged citizens.

That's why our priorities for Wales are:

Increasing school budgets and the Welsh Pupil Premium to protect against rising costs and pupil numbers, and investing in cutting infant class sizes.

Continue to expand the Welsh Pupil Premium to close the attainment gap between our most disadvantaged pupils and their peers.

Introduce the most progressive higher education and student support policy in the UK - we will oversee a fundamental shift to a system that provides financial support for the daily living costs of all students.


6.1 Quality really counts in early years

Investing in high quality early years education has a huge impact on children's attainment as they enter school. Our most vulnerable children have the most to gain from excellent early years setting, with partnership with parents a key component.

We will:

- Increase our Early Years Pupil Premium funding
- Support a national project to help boost the computing skills of primary school children



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- Promote the use of community buildings, leisure centres and school premises to increase level of childcare provision

We want to;

- Offer 10 hours a week of free, quality childcare to all working parents from the end of paid parental leave (nine months) until their child is two.
- Offer 10 hours a week of free, quality childcare for all children aged two to three.

6.2 Teachers – our biggest asset in education

We want to empower teachers and make sure they feel valued. We want to raise the status of the teaching profession, and support and nurture teachers in their work – driving up standards in every school.

Following the devolution of teachers’ pay, we will ensure teachers in Wales continue to have guaranteed parity with teachers across the UK and we will take the opportunity to enshrine a national approach to professional learning and standards.



We will:

- Introduce new accreditation standards for teacher training courses to attract the best talent to the profession.
- Ensure that bureaucracy in the classroom is reduced to ensure teachers can dedicate their time to teaching.
- Ensure that there are annual Welsh Professional Teaching Awards to celebrate best practice
- Expand use of highly skilled business managers in order to provide more effective support for school leaders.
- Introduce new teaching standards to promote teaching excellence and support career-long professional learning for all teachers and education workforce.
- Attract and retain more high-quality applicants and high calibre mature graduates into teaching through a re-designed Graduate Teacher Programme.

6.3 Driving up education standards


Far too many children are still failing to get the opportunities they need. We cannot fail our children. Liberal Democrats want to give every child the chance of attending an excellent local school.





We will:

- Design, develop and deliver a world-class curriculum that will help raise academic standards across our schools
- Establish a National Academy of Educational Leadership to prepare all leaders in our education system with the right skills and knowledge to benefit pupils
- Reduce infant class sizes so that teachers have time to support individual pupil needs so they can reach their full potential.
- Introduce a National Network of Excellence for Science and Technology, alongside a National Network of Excellence for Maths, to raise standards in our schools.
- Introduce online adaptive assessments for Literacy and Numeracy tests that will adjust the level of questions to provide an appropriate level of challenge for each learner.
- Establish a single regulatory, oversight and co-ordinating authority for the post-compulsory education sector
- Continue to tackle the lack of availability of Welsh language textbooks and ensure world-class bilingual resources for our new curriculum
- Invest £20 million to support the Additional Learning Needs Bill.


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- Establish new rules setting out a presumption against the closure of rural schools and invest in a rural and small schools policy to raise standards in all schools no matter where they are based.
 - Invest in school broadband to ensure that all schools across Wales can embed the new Digital Competence Framework and access resources made available through the Hwb platform.

6.4 Curriculum and qualifications

We want schools to have flexibility, but we also believe that parents and children need to know that the curriculum in every school will cover the essentials, and that teachers will be skilled educators who inspire a love of learning.

The Welsh language is an inherent strand of the fabric of our country and improving access to Welsh education is critical. We believe that learning Welsh should be open to all and that everyone, wherever they are in Wales, should be able to access the best quality of teaching.





Alongside introducing a new curriculum for Wales, we will:

- Include in SRE teaching about sexual consent, LGBT+ relationships, and issues surrounding explicit images and content.
- Improve the quality of vocational education, including skills for entrepreneurship and self-employment, and improve careers advice in schools and colleges.
- Make better use of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans, ensuring that councils are able to provide Welsh medium education for those communities where there is a need;
- Improve links between employers and schools, encouraging schools to participate in employment and enterprise schemes that promote regular experiences in business. In particular, we will seek to inspire more children and young people to follow technical and scientific careers through partnership with relevant businesses.
- Challenge gender stereotyping and early sexualisation, working with schools to promote positive body image and break down outdated perceptions of gender appropriateness of particular academic subjects.
- Establish a National Endowment for Music, which will enable more young people to access musical opportunities.



6.5 Getting children and families ready to learn


Schools are on the front line in dealing with children and young adults with mental health issues. We also know that children cannot learn properly if they are undernourished.

Parents are under huge pressure and receive little support even though home is the biggest influence on children's learning. Parents need to be properly empowered and supported with the tools they need to raise the next generation, and be involved in the running of their children's schools.

We will:

- Ensure that all teaching staff have the training to identify mental health issues and that schools provide immediate access for pupil support and counselling.
- Support a 'Ready to Learn' campaign to help parents and carers prepare their child for school.
- Ensure collaboration between leading education and family organisations to improve the flow of helpful information between home and school without increasing teacher workload.
- Help provide quality meals and activities in primary schools during the school summer holidays.



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- Tackle bullying in schools, including bullying on the basis of gender, sexuality, gender identity, or gender expression.

6.6 A world class university sector, open to all

The ability of universities to attract funding to maintain top quality research activity and deliver the best teaching depends on being open and outward looking. The ability to attract and retain the best staff and students in our world class universities is vital. Brexit undermines these at every turn.

In government, the Liberal Democrats are introducing a fundamental shift to a system that provides financial support for the daily living costs of all students, where all students receive the equivalent of the National Living Wage, and a £1,000 annual non-means-tested universal maintenance grant.




We will:

- Ensure that all universities work to widen participation across the sector, prioritising their work with students in schools and colleges, and require every university to be transparent about selection criteria.
- Recognise the value of international staff and students to universities and promote international collaboration.
- Continue to make the case that students are not migrants and should not count towards national migration statistics.
- Make the case for participation in the ERASMUS+ scheme of staff and student exchange.
- Fight to retain access to Horizon 2020 and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions funding.
- Encourage Universities to help raise standards in schools by expanding undergraduate mentoring schemes in key disciplines such as science, languages and computing.

6.7 Lifelong opportunities to learn

We need to grow the country's skills base, especially in the technologies and industries that are most important to Wales' economic future. We want it to become the norm for businesses to take on and train up young people as apprentices in every sector, and for higher






level apprenticeships to be understood as a respected alternative to university education.

As our economy rapidly changes, the need for people to retrain and reskill has never been more important. It is no longer the case that the skills learnt at 18 or 21 will last throughout a career. The ability to learn new skills or change careers is also vital in creating the opportunity for people to succeed no matter their stage in life. That's why Liberal Democrats support the need for lifelong learning.

We will:

- Expand access to apprenticeships, including higher level apprenticeships, across key sectors such as creative, digital and engineering, through increased collaboration between universities, Further Education colleges and industry.
- Aim to increase the number of apprentices from BAME backgrounds, ensure gender balance across industry sectors, and encourage underrepresented groups to apply.
- Ensure that all the receipts from the Apprenticeship Levy in Wales are spent on improving the types and access to training.

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- Introduce an enhanced package of support for students who want to study part time or on post graduate courses to ensure equal access to higher education for all students.
 - Place the needs of learners at the heart of the education system by establishing clear and flexible learning and career pathways.





Change Wales' Future

**SUPPORT
FAMILIES
AND
COMMUNITIES**



A fair society is one in which everyone has the means to get by and the chance to get on. It means being able to provide for your family, afford somewhere to live, and work within your community.

That's why we will increase the availability of childcare why we will ensure that the benefits system is fair – focusing on helping people and not just saving money. It's why we will work to build more houses and make them affordable. And it's why we will empower local communities to determine their own future – free from the interference of central government.

Our priorities for Wales will be:

Extend free childcare to all working parents from the end of paid parental leave to 10 hours until their child is two, and increase the statutory duty on local authorities to provide a funded early education place for three to four year olds to fifteen hours a week.
Building an additional 15,000 homes as part of our commitment to building 300,000 new homes across Wales over the next Parliament.
Introduce a new, improved Young Person's Bus Discount Card for young people aged 16–21.





7.1 Help with childcare costs

Parents often want to take time out from paid work to care for young children but in many families both parents want, or have, to work. The costs of childcare can be prohibitive and opportunities for flexible working are scarce.


We will:

- Expand Shared Parental Leave with an additional ‘use it or lose it’ month to encourage fathers to take time off with young children. We would make Paternity and Shared Parental Leave a ‘day one’ right.
- Encourage employers to provide more flexible working, making this a ‘day one right’, so that there is a presumption that work is flexible unless there is a clear business reason it cannot be.

In Wales we want to;

- Offer 10 hours a week of free, quality childcare to all working parents from the end of paid parental leave (nine months) until their child is two.



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- Offer 10 hours a week of free, quality childcare for all children aged two to three by removing childcare from Flying Start and reinvesting this funding in more flexible, universal provision.
 - Increase the statutory duty on local authorities to provide a funded early education place for three to four year olds to fifteen hours a week.


7.2 Helping people find work

Having a paid job is for many people the key opportunity they need to be able to achieve their life goals. Unemployment isn't just an economic challenge – it's a personal problem, and government must do everything it can to help those who can work find a job and provide for themselves and their family.

To that end, we will:

- Separate employment support from benefits administration – making Jobcentres places of training and support into work.
- Take children out of poverty by letting both parents earn before their Universal Credit is cut, and also reverse cuts to the Family Element.
- Encourage people into work by reversing the cuts to Work Allowances in Universal Credit, enabling people to work for longer before their benefits are cut.



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- Raise awareness of, and seek to expand, Access to Work, which supports people with disabilities in work.
 - Improve links between Jobcentres and Work Programme providers and the local NHS to ensure all those in receipt of health-related benefits are getting the care and support to which they are entitled.

7.3 Treating people fairly

The Liberal Democrats are clear - balancing the books on the backs of the poor and disabled, and demonising people who claim benefits, is neither acceptable nor responsible. Although all government budgets must be scrutinised to minimise waste and ensure value for money, this must not be used as an excuse to attack the poor and vulnerable. In any case it is more effective to tackle the causes of the benefits bill – low pay, high rents, unemployment and ill-health.

That's why we will reverse unfair Conservative policies like reducing support for younger people and cutting the benefits of people not fit for work. We will reinstate the legally binding poverty targets of the Child Poverty Act.



We will:

- Uprate working-age benefits at least in line with inflation.
- Abandon the two-child policy on family benefits, and abolish the Conservatives' 'rape clause' where a woman has to declare children that are born as a result of rape in order to access benefits.
- Reverse cuts to housing benefit for 18-21-year-olds and increase the rates of Job Seeker's Allowance and Universal Credit for those aged 18-24 at the same rate as minimum wages.
- Reverse cuts to Employment Support Allowance to those in the Work-related Activity Group.
- Scrap the 'bedroom tax', while seeking to achieve the aim of making best use of the housing supply through incentivising local authorities to help tenants 'downsize'.
- Scrap the discredited Work Capability Assessment and replace it with a new system, including a 'real world' test that is based on the local labour market.
- Withdraw eligibility for the Winter Fuel Payment from pensioners who pay tax at the higher rate (40%). We will retain the free bus pass for all pensioners.
- Ensure that those using food banks are aware of their rights and how they can access hardship payments where relevant.





7.4 Saving for and enjoying your retirement

Life expectancy is increasing. This is good news, but it brings challenges; older people may need a pension income that will last for 20, 30 or even 40 years. We want Britain to be the best place in the world to save for, and enjoy, your retirement.

We will:

- Maintain the ‘triple lock’ of increasing the State Pension each year by the highest of earnings growth, prices growth or 2.5% for the next Parliament.
- Establish a review to consider the case for, and practical implications of, introducing a single rate of tax relief for pensions, which would be designed to be simpler and fairer and which would be set more generously than the current 20% basic rate relief.

7.5 Building more and better homes

The housing crisis has become an emergency. For far too long we have built many fewer homes than we need; unless we build enough to meet demand, year after year, we will find that housing costs rise further out of reach.



We will:

- Set up a new government-backed UK Housing Investment Bank to provide long-term capital for major new settlements and help attract finance for major house building projects.
- Create a Community Right of Appeal in cases where planning decisions go against the approved local plan.
- Ensure that new houses are sustainably planned to ensure that excessive pressure is not placed on existing infrastructure.


7.6 Buying and renting

House prices are high across the country – even where houses are available to buy, they are often unaffordable for first time buyers. In many areas, the rental market has also become unaffordable. Young people, in particular, need support from the government to help them find and keep a home of their own.

We want to:

- Help people who cannot afford a deposit by introducing a new Rent to Own model where rent payments give tenants an increasing stake in the property where they can eventually own it outright.
- End the scandal of rough sleeping by increasing support for homelessness prevention and adequately






funding age-appropriate emergency accommodation and supported housing, while ensuring that all local authorities have at least one provider of the Housing First model of provision for long term, entrenched homeless people.

7.7 Investing in the transport we need

High-quality public transport is essential to building sustainable communities. Wales needs better transport infrastructure, a modern railway system run for the benefit of its customers, and less congestion and pollution on the roads. We also need to ensure that local communities, particularly rural communities, remain connected with local rail and bus services.

To build a transport system fit for the 21st century, we will:


- Ensure new rail franchises include a stronger focus on customers, and completing a programme of investment in new stations, lines and station facilities as a matter of urgency. Allow public sector bodies and mutual groups involving staff and passengers to bid for franchises. Continue the Access for All programme, improving disabled access to public transport as a key priority.

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- The electrification of the North Wales Main Line and funding for a feasibility study into re-opening rail links between Aberystwyth and Carmarthen.
 - Investment in the South Wales Metro to connect communities in across the South Wales region.
 - Abolish the economically distorting tolls on the Severn Bridge, after the costs have been recouped in 2018.
 - Develop a strategic airports policy for the whole of the UK. We will focus on improving existing regional airports, and encourage, in particular, the development of Cardiff airport. We will ensure no net increase in runways across the UK.

To protect and extend local public transport, we will:

- Introduce a Rail Ombudsman to enforce passenger rights and improve the provision of compensation, with the power to sanction rail companies as appropriate
- Introduce a new improved Young Person's Bus Discount Card, for young people aged 16–21, allowing young people to access education and training.
- Halt the decline in bus services, especially in rural areas, and carry out a review of bus funding and bus policies.




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- Provide Local Authorities and communities with the powers to improve transport and ticketing with the ability to introduce network-wide and smart ticketing systems.
 - Design towns and cities as safe and attractive walking spaces and implement the recommendations of the *Get Britain Cycling* report.

7.8 Local communities working together

Liberal Democrats believe in community politics – in the power of local people to come together to solve their own problems and make a better life for their neighbourhoods. This means rejuvenating democratic local government, and supporting community organisation and empowerment. We will:

- Promote tenant management in social housing.
- Support social investment, ensuring charities and social enterprises can access the support and finance they need to strengthen their governance and deliver innovative, sustainable solutions to challenges in their communities.
- Enable central and local government to prioritise employee-owned and community benefit companies in awarding procurement contracts by strengthening the Social Value Act.

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- Encourage authorities to protect high streets and consumers by reducing the proliferation of betting shops and capping the maximum amount able to be bet on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals (FOBTs) at one time to £2.

7.9 Welsh language and culture


The Welsh language is an inherent strand of the fabric of our country. We believe that everyone should be enabled to speak their native language, that everyone should be able to access good quality Welsh public services, and that learning Welsh should be open to all.

Everyone in Wales must have the right to speak and learn Welsh – whether you come from a Welsh-language family or are newly-arrived in our beautiful country, you should be able to speak Welsh in your community.

We want to:

- Ensure that all children in Wales are able to access quality Welsh-language education, ensuring that Welsh in Education Strategic Plans meet the needs of communities.
- Protect the funding and editorial independence of Welsh language broadcasters, including considering the devolution of the licence fee to Wales.




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- Improving access to public services in Welsh by promote the ‘active offer’ model for, enabling it to be implemented systematically and effectively across public services.
 - Make language impact assessments of proposed developments a statutory requirement before planning permission is granted, including making the language a material consideration in determining planning applications where appropriate.

7.10 Access to culture and sport

Arts, media and sports are essential for personal fulfilment and quality of life – they are part of what turns a group of people into a community. Funding for these organisations is put at risk with Brexit, and the Liberal Democrats will ensure that we continue to invest in our cultural capital.

We will:

- Move towards introducing ‘Safe Standing’ at football clubs, requiring the Sports Ground Safety Authority to prepare guidance for implementing this change.
- Protect the independence of the BBC and set up a BBC Licence Fee Commission. Protect the funding and editorial independence of Welsh language broadcasters, including considering the devolution of the licence fee to Wales.


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- Protect sports and arts funding via the National Lottery.
 - Maintain current standards of Intellectual Property (IP) protection with continuing cooperation on enforcement of IP generated in the UK and working within the EU to ensure the continuation of territorial licensing of rights.
 - Examine available funding and planning rules for live music venues and the grassroots music sector, protecting venues from further closures





Change Wales' Future

**MEETING
THE NEEDS
OF RURAL
WALES**



Rural communities are vital to the character and strength of Wales. Liberal Democrats have a long tradition of representing these communities and understand their needs. We will always give rural interests a high priority.

In our policies on transport, health, education and communities set out in more detail elsewhere in this manifesto, we have ensured that rural needs and perspectives are included.

Our priorities for Rural Wales are:

Fighting to prevent or counteract the adverse impacts on our farmers of losing CAP support and easy access to European markets.

Ensuring good local services and community facilities such as schools, public transport, local shops, cultural venues and pubs, as well as more houses to meet local needs.

Boosting the attractiveness of Wales as a tourist destination.
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8.1 Farming, food, and agriculture

Leaving the EU puts farming and agricultural businesses in huge danger. It threatens cuts to the financial support, which underpins farmers' livelihoods and their ability to manage the countryside, and tariffs on exports. For agricultural products, EU tariffs average 22.3% – putting Britain's £18 billion of food exports in danger.

Our system must support farmers, ensure food production, and protect the environment.

That's why we will:

- Continue our long campaign to reform agricultural subsidies – making sure British farming remains competitive.
- Ensure that smaller farms are protected and move support away from large landowners, whilst delivering a more localised agricultural policy.
- Focus support and subsidies towards effective land management including countryside protection, flood prevention, food production, and climate change mitigation.

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- Encourage new and younger entrants to farming by championing different forms of ownership including longer tenancies, share farming, and community ownership.
 - Continue to improve standards of animal health and welfare in agriculture and promoting the responsible stewardship of antibiotic drugs.
 - Bovine TB is a horrifying disease that causes suffering to wild and domestic animal populations. In the 12 months to October 2016, there were 9935 cattle culled due to TB. We wish to continue efforts to eradicate the disease in the British Isles.

8.2 The food chain

- We will tackle issues in the whole food chain, so we will:
- Introduce a National Food Strategy to promote the production and consumption of healthy, sustainable and affordable food.
- Increase the powers of the Groceries Code Adjudicator and extend its remit to include businesses further up the supply chain, helping to ensure that farmers receive a fair price.
- Ensure that future trade deals require imported food to have as high safety, environmental and animal welfare standards as domestic products, including clear and unambiguous country of origin labelling for meat and dairy products.





8.3 A sustainable fishing industry

Despite reform, the Common Fisheries Policy has failed to deliver the economic or environmental objectives necessary and has suffered from being remote, overly-centralised, and bureaucratic. Brexit and the consequential loss of export markets threatens to further damage the industry, which has long suffered from being used as a bargaining chip by UK governments.

Liberal Democrats would defend and maintain our fishing industry by not allowing fishing rights to be traded away against other policy areas, and work with the industry and other stakeholders to develop a national plan for sustainable fisheries.

8.4 Rural communities

A thriving rural community needs local services and community facilities such as schools, public transport, local shops, cultural venues and pubs. It needs enough homes, affordable for local families, to ensure those services are viable. Liberal Democrats understand the changes needed to support a living, working countryside.



We will:


- Ensure that every property and business in Wales has access to superfast broadband and good mobile phone coverage.
- Commit to preventing Post Office closures and protect Royal Mail's Universal Service Obligation to deliver across the UK for the same price.
- Work to deliver a significant increase in social and affordable housing in rural areas.

8.4 Tourism

Tourism is a major source of employment in Wales – and it is another of our industries likely to be hit by Brexit.

The ease of travel from the continent to Wales could be hindered by more elaborate border checks – no longer that 'EU citizens' faster queue. It might deter travel here. We must find ways to boost the attractiveness of Wales as a tourist destination, if we lose our EU advantages.






Our hotels and restaurants say that they need people from other European countries, as well as Welsh people, to fill all the jobs – especially in high season. We will press to minimise the impact of complicated procedures, delays and uncertainties on both employers and prospective workers.

Our policies to improve transport to and within Wales are another way in which we aim to help tourism here to thrive and even expand.



Change Wales' Future

**KEEP OUR
COUNTRY
GREEN**



A year ago, it seemed that the world had come to a consensus on the need to take the perils of climate change seriously. Countries across the globe had recognised that rising temperatures and pollution were not just an environmental issue, but an economic and security issue. But with the election of Donald Trump in the US and Britain's vote to leave the EU, the tides of isolationism and populism could halt or even reverse the progress that has been made.

The Conservatives seem determined to take Britain back to the 1980s, when the UK was the 'dirty man of Europe'. They have cut support for renewable energy and home insulation, sold off the Green Investment Bank and failed to control air pollution.

Liberal Democrats are determined that we live up to our environmental obligations. That's why we will pass five green laws: a Green Transport Act, a Zero-Carbon Britain Act, a Nature Act, a Green Buildings Act, and a Zero Waste Act to incorporate existing EU environmental protections, maintain product standards such as for energy efficiency, and establish a framework for continual improvement.

We will:

Prevent 40,000 deaths a year with our Air Quality Plan to reduce air pollution across the UK.

Give the immediate go-ahead to Swansea Bay tidal lagoon to generate sustainable growth in the region.

Ensure farming remains competitive and doesn't lose out – refocusing support towards producing healthy food and public goods.

9.1 Clean air and green transport

Air pollution in the UK is a killer. It contributes to 40,000 premature deaths a year and costs the NHS £15 billion.

That's why the Liberal Democrats will pass a Green Transport Act, introduce an Air Quality Plan to reduce air pollution and protect UK citizens and support the manufacture of low-emission and electric vehicles, generating jobs and exports. This plan will include:

- A diesel scrappage scheme, and a ban on the sale of diesel cars and small vans in the UK by 2025.
- Extending Ultra-Low Emission Zones to more towns and cities.
- All private hire vehicles and diesel buses licensed to operate in urban areas to run on ultra-low emission or zero emission fuels within five years.




- We will also reform vehicle taxation to encourage sales of electric and low-emission vehicles and develop electric vehicle infrastructure including universal charging points.

9.2 Low-carbon energy and green jobs

In government, we championed green energy, and oversaw the trebling of renewable electricity generation. But the Conservatives have repeatedly cut support for green energy producers – damaging the environment and costing British jobs. Liberal Democrats will expand renewable energy, reducing carbon emissions, cutting dependence on fossil fuel imports and generating more jobs and prosperity.

We will:

- Set up a British Housing and Infrastructure Development Bank to mobilise investment into the low carbon and sustainable infrastructure the UK needs to remain competitive.
- Support the Paris Agreement by ensuring the UK meets its own climate commitments and plays a leadership role in international efforts to combat climate change.
- Expand renewable energy, aiming to generate 60% of electricity from renewables by 2030, restoring government support for solar PV and onshore wind



in appropriate locations (helping meet climate targets at least cost) and building more electricity interconnectors to underpin this higher reliance on renewables.

- Support investment in cutting-edge technologies including energy storage, smart grid technology, hydrogen technologies, off-shore wind, and tidal power (including giving the go-ahead for the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon), and investing heavily in research and development.
- Support an ambitious carbon capture and storage programme, which is essential for delivering clean industrial growth.
- Oppose ‘fracking’ because of its adverse impact on climate change, the energy mix, and the local environment.
- Accept that new nuclear power stations can play a role in electricity supply provided concerns about safety, disposal of waste and cost are adequately addressed, new technology is incorporated, and there is no public subsidy for new build.
- Maintain membership of Euratom, ensuring continued nuclear co-operation, research funding, and access to nuclear fuels.





9.3 Greener homes, lower energy bills

At over £1,200 a year, the cost of heating and lighting an average home in the UK is too high – and with a falling exchange rate, costs will rise further.

Liberal Democrats will reduce energy bills permanently by improving home insulation and encouraging small-scale, community and local authority renewable schemes. We will make saving energy a top infrastructure priority, slashing energy bills and carbon emissions, creating thousands of jobs and helping end the fuel poverty crisis once and for all.

Throughout the UK we want to;

- Ensure that at least four million homes are made highly energy efficient (Band C) by 2022, with priority given to fuel-poor households.
- Expand community energy schemes, encourage councils to develop community energy saving projects and local electricity generation and promote city-scale demonstration projects in electric vehicles and clean energy.
- Continue to back new entrants to the energy market, aiming for at least 30% of the household market to be supplied by competitors to the 'Big 6' by 2022.

9.4 Protecting nature


Our natural environment is precious. The countryside, biodiversity, wildlife and urban green spaces are critical to health, wellbeing and a sense of community. The quality of the environment also underpins key industries such as agriculture and tourism.

We will:

- Ensure that the conservation of nationally important natural and cultural environments is balanced with local accountability and sustainable economic activity
- Reverse the current sharp decline in the rate of woodland creation and protect remaining ancient woodlands.
- Suspend the use of neonicotinoids until proven that their use in agriculture does not harm bees or other pollinators.
- Introduce stronger penalties for animal cruelty offences, increasing the maximum sentencing from six months to five years.
- Clamp down on illegal pet imports through legal identification requirements for online sales, and minimise the use of animals in scientific experimentation, including by funding research into alternatives.

98.5 Cutting waste, using resources wisely





Britain's economy fails to make the most efficient use of natural resources. We aim to cut waste, increase recovery, reuse and recycling and move towards the so-called 'circular economy' in which resource use, waste and pollution are minimised and product lifetimes are extended.

We will:


- Benefit consumers by promoting better product design to improve repairability, reuse and recycling.
- Building on the success of the plastic bag charge, introduce a 5p charge on disposable coffee cups to reduce waste.





Change Wales' Future

**DEFEND RIGHTS,
PROMOTE
JUSTICE
AND EQUALITIES**




Liberal Democrats believe that every person is entitled to the same opportunity to succeed in life. That means breaking down the barriers that hold people back – reducing inequality, fighting discrimination, and defending individuals against an overreaching government.

It means promoting universal liberal values like openness, tolerance, and unity. It also means opposing the extreme and divisive forces that now blight our politics and public life. The rise in hate crime, the abuse of refugees, the toxic rhetoric on immigration and about immigrants themselves is not the future Liberal Democrats want for Britain. We will not let campaigners for an extreme Brexit pretend that racism and discrimination are a kind of patriotism.

We will fight to make sure that what you do and where you get to in life are not affected by your gender, the colour of your skin, or who you love. That's why for Liberal Democrats in this Parliament, our priorities will be:

<p>Making the positive case for immigration and reducing hate crimes by targeting the people who commit them and making all hate crimes aggravated offences, allowing for harsher sentencing of perpetrators</p>
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Defending human rights: we will vote against any attempts to scrap the Human Rights Act or withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights and we will strengthen the UK's commitment to international human rights law.

Offering safe and legal routes to the UK for refugees, expanding the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme to offer sanctuary to 50,000 over the lifetime of the next Parliament and reopening the Dubs scheme to take 3,000 unaccompanied refugee children from Europe.

10.1 Rights and Equalities

Whether by righting past wrongs, protecting citizens, or increasing freedom, the Liberal Democrats believe that legislation defending rights and liberties protects individuals and drives opportunity for many under-represented groups.

Liberal Democrats oppose all discrimination and believe that government should take an active role both in punishing discrimination and in ensuring it does not happen in the first place. Our society is only strong once it includes everybody – regardless of their background.





To extend diversity in public life and business, we will:


- Fund more extensive childcare, and provide better back-to-work support to reach an ambitious goal of a million more women in work by 2025.
- Continue the drive for diversity in business leadership, pushing for at least 40% of board members being women in FTSE 350 companies and implementing the recommendations of the Parker review to increase ethnic minority representation.
- Extend the Equality Act to all large companies with over 250 employees, requiring them to monitor and publish data on gender, BAME, and LGBT+ employment levels and pay gaps.
- Extend the use of name-blind recruitment processes in the public sector and encourage their use in the private sector.
- Require diversity in Public Appointments. We will introduce a presumption that every shortlist should include at least one BAME candidate.
- Extend requirements on companies to strengthen responsibility for supply chains. Focus on good practice in tackling modern slavery, including training for police and prosecutors in identifying and supporting victims and implement the Ewins' report recommendations on domestic workers.



To safeguard rights and promote equalities, we will:

- Campaign to reduce intolerance, including anti-Semitism, and hate crimes alongside organisations such as Show Racism the Red Card, the Anne Frank Trust UK, and Kick It Out.
- Ask the Advisory Committee on Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs periodically to review rules around men who have sex with men and other related groups donating blood to consider what restrictions remain necessary.
- Guarantee the freedom of people to wear religious or cultural dress, and tackle the growing incidence of Islamophobic hate crime.
- Introduce an 'X' option on passports, identity documents, and official forms for those who do not wish to identify as either male or female, and campaign for their introduction in the provision of other services e.g. utilities.
- Decriminalise the sale and purchase of sex, and the management of sex work; reducing harm, defending sex workers' human rights, and focusing police time and resources on those groomed, forced, or trafficked into the sex industry. We would provide additional support for those wishing to leave sex work.
- Strengthen legal rights and obligations for couples by introducing mixed sex civil partnerships and extending rights to cohabiting couples.



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- Extend protection of gender reassignment in equality law to also explicitly cover gender identity and expression, streamline and simplify the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to allow individuals to change their legal gender without unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, for example the intrusive medical tests currently required.
 - Remove the spousal veto, and abolish remaining marriage inequalities in areas such as pensions, hospital visitation rights, and custody of children in the event of bereavement.
 - Develop a government-wide plan to tackle BAME inequalities, and review the Equality and Human Rights Commission to determine whether it is effectively fulfilling its role and whether its funding is adequate.
 - Increase accessibility to public places and transport by making more stations wheelchair accessible, improving the legislative framework governing Blue Badges, setting up a benchmarking standard for accessible cities, and bringing into effect the provisions of the 2010 Equality Act on discrimination by private hire vehicles and taxis.
 - Outlaw caste discrimination.
 - Enshrine the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in UK law.






10.2 Liberty

Liberal Democrats believe that we should all be free from an overreaching state and that the individual freedoms guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act are central to a free and democratic society.

For that reason, the Liberal Democrats will:

- Oppose any attempt to withdraw from the ECHR or abolish or water down the Human Rights Act
- Introduce a Digital Bill of Rights that protects people's powers over their own information, supports individuals over large corporations, and preserves the neutrality of the Web.
- In light of the press's failure to engage in effective self-regulation, seek to ensure delivery of independent self-regulation, and commence Part 2 of the Leveson Inquiry as soon as practicable
- End the Ministerial veto on release of information under the Freedom of Information Act, and take steps to reduce the proportion of FOI requests where information is withheld by government departments.




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- Order Ofcom to launch an immediate full assessment of media plurality in the UK, including a review of the ‘fit and proper persons test’ and whether the communications regulator, and the Competition and Markets Authority, have appropriate powers to deal with concentrations of power in the digital economy.

10.3 Crime and policing

After years of reduction in traditional crime, we have seen an increase, particularly in violent crime, since 2015. At the same time police forces are under pressure from reduced funding, with less money available for the community policing we all value.

For these reasons, Liberal Democrats will:

- Increase community policing in England and Wales by giving an additional £7.5m a year to local police forces in Wales to reverse the increase in violent crime, boost community confidence and increase the flow of community intelligence.
- Maintain, as part of our fight against an extreme Brexit, cross-border co-operation in combating serious organised crime, including international fraud and child sexual exploitation, by retaining the European Arrest Warrant, membership of Europol and access to EU information databases.
- End the 1% cap on police pay rises.

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- Require all frontline officers to wear body cameras on duty, protecting the public from abuse of power and police officers from malicious accusations.
 - Resource BAME staff associations such as the National Black Police Association to increase ethnic diversity and BAME participation in the police.
 - Provide government funding for a national rape crisis helpline with increased opening hours and advertisement.
 - Replace Police and Crime Commissioners, elected at great expense in elections with very low turnout, with accountable Police Boards made up of local councillors.
 - Build on the success of crime maps to use data more effectively to reduce crime and improve policing, including exploring the feasibility of mandatory reporting of fraud losses by individual credit and debit card providers.

10.4 Criminal Justice


The criminal courts need modernising. There are too many people in prison. Our reoffending rates are terrible and our prisons, many old and squalid, are in crisis – overcrowded and woefully understaffed, with drug abuse, violence, suicide and self-harm endemic.





That's why Liberal Democrats will:


- Introduce a Victims' Bill of Rights that will create a single point of contact for victims in the criminal justice system, increase victims' access to information about their cases, and give victims the right to request restorative justice rather than a prison sentence.
- Introduce a presumption against short prison sentences and increase the use of tough, non-custodial punishments including weekend and evening custody, curfew, community service, and GPS tagging.
- Promote Community Justice Panels and restorative justice that brings victims and wrongdoers together to resolve conflict, reduce harm and encourage rehabilitation.
- Extend the responsibility of the Youth Justice Board to all offenders under 21, giving it the power to commission mental health services.
- Establish a Women's Justice Board with a remit to meet the special needs of women offenders.
- Transform prisons into places of rehabilitation, recovery, learning, and work, with suitable treatment, education or work available to all prisoners; adopt a holistic approach to prisoners with multiple problems; ensure that courses started in custody can be completed on release.

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- Review the investigation, prosecution, procedures and rules of evidence in cases of sexual and domestic violence.
 - Ensure that trans prisoners are placed in prisons that reflect their gender identity, rather than their birth gender.
 - Reduce the overrepresentation of individuals from a BAME background at every stage of the criminal justice system, taking into account the upcoming recommendations of the Lammy Review.
 - Secure further funding for criminal legal aid from sources other than the taxpayer including insurance for company directors and changes to Restraint Orders.

10.5 Civil and Family Justice

The justice system is under pressure; Brexit threatens international cooperation; the Conservatives have failed to defend the rule of law which is the cornerstone of our democracy and cuts to legal aid have denied effective access to justice to many.





For these reasons, Liberal Democrats will:

- Ensure that the UK retains international arrangements for jurisdiction, the recognition and enforcement of judgments and for family cases, currently enjoyed under the EU Brussels I and Brussels II Regulation and the Hague Child Abduction Convention
- Conduct an urgent and comprehensive review of the effects of the Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act on access to justice, particularly funding for social welfare appeals, and domestic violence and exceptional cases
- Reverse the massive increases in court and tribunal fees, which prevent many from pursuing good cases
- Continue to modernise and simplify court procedures
- Protect our system of judicial review from further attack, retaining government accountability for unlawful action and offer a staunch defence of our judiciary and the rule of law

10.6 Terrorism and Violent Extremism

As recent events across Europe – and at the heart of our own democracy, have shown, terrorism and violent extremism threaten us all. As liberals, we must have an effective security policy which is also accountable, community- and evidence-based, and does not unduly restrict personal liberty.




That's why the Liberal Democrats will:

- Continue cross-border co-operation between security forces across Europe.
- Permit intercepts where justified and permit surveillance of those suspected of serious crime and terrorism with proper judicial oversight.
- Scrap the failed Prevent strategy and replace it with a scheme that prioritises community engagement and supports communities in developing their own approach to tackling the dangers of violent extremism.
- Roll back state surveillance powers by ending the indiscriminate bulk collection of communications data, bulk hacking, and the collection of Internet Connection Records.
- Oppose Conservative attempts to undermine encryption.
- Notify innocent people who have been placed under targeted surveillance where this can be done without jeopardising ongoing investigations.

10.7 Combatting the harm done by drugs

The war on drugs has been a catastrophic failure. Every year, billions flow to organised crime, while we needlessly prosecute and imprison thousands of people, blighting their employment and life chances, and doing nothing to address the impact of drugs on their health.






Our current approach to drugs helps nobody except criminal gangs.

For that reason, Liberal Democrats will:

- End imprisonment for possession of illegal drugs for personal use, diverting those arrested for possession of drugs for personal use into treatment and education (adopting a health-based approach), or imposing civil penalties.
- Break the grip of the criminal gangs and protect young people by introducing a legal, regulated market for cannabis. We would introduce limits on potency and permit cannabis to be sold through licensed outlets to adults over the age of 18.
- Concentrate on catching and prosecuting those who manufacture, import, or deal in illegal drugs.
- Repeal the Psychoactive Substances Act which has driven the sale of formerly legal highs underground.
- Move the IL departmental lead on drugs policy to the Department of Health.

10.8 Immigration and Asylum

Immigration and asylum are under attack. Liberal Democrats do not believe that this is right. Immigration is essential to our economy and a benefit to our society. We depend on immigration to ensure we have the people we need contributing to the UK's economy and



society, including doctors, agricultural workers, entrepreneurs, and scientists and so many others. Immigration broadens our horizons and encourages us to be more open, more tolerant.


Refugees are human beings fleeing from war zones and persecution and we have a legal and moral obligation to offer them sanctuary. The Liberal Democrats are proud of the UK's historic commitments to assisting those seeking refuge from war, persecution and degradation, and believe that we should continue to uphold our responsibilities.

The immigration and asylum systems have suffered from inefficiency and severe backlogs and delays over many years, harming their credibility and ability to operate effectively. We recognise that large-scale immigration has placed strains on some local communities and services. Major improvements are urgently needed.

For that reason, when it comes to immigration the Liberal Democrats will:

- Ensure that the immigration system is operated fairly and efficiently, with strict control of borders, including entry and exit checks and adequately funded Border Force policing of entry by irregular routes




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- Hold an annual debate in Parliament on skill and labour market shortfalls and surpluses to identify the migration necessary to meet the UK's needs
 - Continue to allow high-skilled immigration to support key sectors of our economy, and ensure work, tourist and family visas are processed quickly and efficiently
 - Recognising their largely temporary status, remove students from the official migration statistics.
 - Ensure the UK is an attractive destination for overseas students. We will reinstate post-study work visas for graduates in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths) subjects who find suitable employment within six months of graduating. Give the devolved administrations the right to sponsor additional post-study work visas.
 - Work with universities to ensure a fair and transparent student visa process and find ways to measure accurately the number of students leaving at the end of their course.
 - Establish a centrally-funded Migrant Impact Fund to help local communities to adjust to new migration and meet unexpected pressures on public services and housing
 - Provide additional government funding for English as an Additional Language classes to help migrants and residents gain independence and integrate with their local communities.



And for asylum, the Liberal Democrats will:

- Apply the asylum system fairly, efficiently and humanely including the process for those who have no right to be here.
- Offer safe and legal routes to the UK for refugees to prevent them from making dangerous journeys, which too often result in the loss of life for example via reform of family reunion rules to make it easier for refugees to joining relatives already living in safety in the UK.
- Expand the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme to offer sanctuary to 50,000 over the lifetime of the next Parliament.
- Re-open the Dubs unaccompanied child refugee scheme, ensuring Britain meets its responsibilities by taking in 3,000 unaccompanied refugee children. Liberal Democrats would offer these children indefinite leave to remain, meaning they will not be deported once they turn 18.
- End indefinite immigration detention by introducing a 28-day limit.
- Speed up the processing of asylum claims, reducing the time genuine refugees must wait before they can settle into life in the UK.
- Expect working-age asylum seekers who have waited more than six months for their claim to be processed to seek work like other benefit claimants, and only to receive benefits if they are unable to do so.




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- Offer asylum to people fleeing countries where their sexual orientation or gender identification means that they risk imprisonment, torture, or execution and stop deporting people at risk to such countries.



Change Wales' Future


**MAKE A
BETTER
WORLD**



Liberal Democrats are internationalists – we understand that by working together, people and countries can achieve so much more than they can alone.

It is a difficult time for people who believe in international co-operation. Liberals have been challenged by the vote to leave the EU, the election of increasingly nationalist and isolationist leaders across the globe, and a Conservative government seeking new trade deals with countries who are fundamentally opposed to our liberal values. With the election of Donald Trump and an increasingly assertive Russia, we must work to defend the international liberal order.

Liberal Democrats believe that we should work with our European and other international partners to promote the ideals that bring us together and make us more secure. Championing human rights, helping the poorest people in the world, protecting our country and our allies.



In the next Parliament our priorities will be:


Protecting, promoting, and defending the open and co-operative rules-based international order, including multilateral organisations like the UN and NATO which are increasingly under threat.

Continue to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income on aid: reducing poverty, defending human rights, protecting the environment, and preventing violent conflict worldwide.

Controlling arms exports to countries listed as human rights priority countries in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's annual human rights report, and suspending arms sales to Saudi Arabia.

11.1 Working for peace and security across the world


This is a challenging time for peace and security across the world. Terrorist organisations prosper, the conflict in Syria continues to present a significant problem to the region and the world, and rising tensions between Russia and the USA threaten a longstanding balance of power.



The UK has a proud record of playing a leading role in the European Union and in international institutions like the UN, NATO and the Commonwealth and should continue to do so, promoting wherever possible the liberal values of freedom and opportunity for all.

We will:

- Champion the rules-based international order, which provides a strong basis for multilateral action to address the world's most pernicious problems including poverty, armed conflict, disease, climate change, and the abuse of human rights including forced marriage, so-called 'honour' killings, and Female Genital Mutilation.
- Use all aspects of government policy – trade, aid and diplomacy as well as military cooperation – to strengthen UK efforts to prevent violent conflict.
- Work with our international partners to address the ongoing refugee crisis, which has seen more people displaced across the world than ever before.
- Support the UN principle of Responsibility to Protect, focusing on conflict prevention, and only resorting to military intervention to prevent mass civilian atrocities if all other means of resolution have been fully exhausted.

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- Improve control of arms exports by:
 - Implementing a policy of ‘presumption of denial’ for arms exports to countries listed as Human Rights Priority Countries in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office’s annual human rights report.
 - Enforcing end-user certification on all future arms export licenses with an annual report to Parliament on this certification.
 - Creating a public register of arms brokers.

Liberal Democrats believe that despite efforts to prevent violent conflict, sometimes military intervention is necessary. The UK should only militarily intervene when there is a clear legal and/or humanitarian case, endorsed by a vote in Parliament, working through international institutions whenever possible. We will encourage dialogue and mediation to reduce conflict between and within countries, working through the UN and other agencies.


In response to current major conflicts worldwide, we will:

- Work with international partners to tackle violent extremism manifested by organisations like Daesh and Boko Haram, paying special attention to UK citizens who have fought overseas for terrorist





- organisations, and may become significant sources of terrorist activity if and when they return to Britain.
- Seek new ways to bring an end to the conflict in Syria, working within the UN to break the deadlock in the Security Council. We will work to deter the use of chemical and conventional attacks on civilians, and demand humanitarian access and the release of political prisoners and their families.
 - Remain committed to a negotiated peace settlement to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which includes a two-state solution. We condemn disproportionate force used by all sides. We condemn Hamas' rocket attacks and other targeting of Israeli civilians. We condemn Israel's continued illegal policy of settlement expansion, which undermines the possibility of a two-state solution. We support recognition of the independent State of Palestine as and when it will help the prospect of a two-state solution.
 - Suspend UK arms sales to Saudi Arabia in response to their consistent targeting of civilians, in breach of International Humanitarian Law, in Yemen. We will work with international partners to re-commence the peace process in Yemen.


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- Promote democracy and stability in Ukraine and neighbouring countries against an increasingly aggressive Russia. We will work closely with European and other international partners to exert maximum economic and political pressure on Russia to stop interfering in the affairs of sovereign Eastern European nations, and will stand by our obligations under the NATO treaty in the event of threats to NATO member states.

11.2 Our armed forces and security services

The UK must be able to defend itself and the territories for which it has responsibility, support its neighbours and allies, and engage in humanitarian intervention. The security challenges the UK faces are shared by our partners and allies in the EU and NATO and the UK is more effective and more resilient when we work closely with those partners.


We will:

- Commit to spending 2% of GDP on defence.
- Strengthen our armed services and address critical skills shortages by recruiting STEM graduates to be armed forces engineers, providing 'golden handshakes' of up to £10,000.
- Recognise the expansion of warfare into the cybersphere, by investing in our security and

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- intelligence services and acting to counter cyberattacks.
- Work to lead international nuclear disarmament efforts
 - Maintain a minimum nuclear deterrent. We propose continuing with the Dreadnought programme, the submarine-based replacement for Vanguard, but procuring three boats instead of four, and moving to a medium-readiness responsive posture. This would mean replacing continuous at-sea deterrence – instead maintaining the deterrent through measures such as unpredictable and irregular patrolling patterns.
 - Build on the framework for defence co-operation that is already well-established with France, the Netherlands, Germany and other European partners, and promote European defence integration where appropriate by enhancing European defence industry co-operation.

Liberal Democrats recognise the vital role the UK's armed forces play in the defence of the nation and believe that it is the role of government to safeguard the interests of service personnel and veterans. We will:

- Support the Armed Forces Covenant and ongoing work to support veterans' mental health.

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- Review the current Career Transition Partnership (CTP) with a view to extending its remit to provide free Further or Higher Education for anyone who has served in the Armed Forces for 12 years or more.
 - Improve the quality of service housing by bringing the MoD into line with other landlords, giving tenants the same legal rights to repair and maintenance as private tenants.


11.3 International development

Liberal Democrats have always been – and remain – strongly committed to ensuring justice and equity for poor people around the world. Through implementing the UN Sustainable Development Goals, we believe that the UK must continue to play a leading role in ending poverty and promoting environmentally sustainable development.

We will:

- Maintain our commitment to spend 0.7% of UK Gross National Income on overseas development assistance, in line with the OECD definition, which we legislated for in the last Parliament.

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- Invest to eliminate within a generation preventable diseases like TB, HIV and malaria and explore new ways to support research and development into vaccinations and treatment to combat these and other deadly diseases and infections.
 - Develop a global education strategy to address the urgent funding crisis causing 263 million children to miss out on schooling.
 - Lead international action to ensure global companies pay fair taxes in the developing countries in which they operate, including tightening anti-tax haven rules and requiring large companies to publish their tax payments and profits for each country in which they operate.
 - Continue building the resilience of poorer countries to resist future disasters, investing in healthcare and infrastructure and training emergency response volunteers, and respond generously to humanitarian crises wherever they may occur.
 - Provide greater resources for international environmental cooperation, particularly on climate change and on actions to tackle illegal and unsustainable trade in timber, wildlife, ivory, and fish.

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- In light of the US government's dangerous and anti-science attacks on international programmes of vaccination and family planning, which impact disproportionately on the health of women and children, seek to protect global spending on these essential provisions.

11.4 Standing up for Liberal values

Liberal Democrats believe that British foreign policy and international aid should seek to promote the liberal values of human rights and democracy throughout the world.

We will:

- Support free media and a free and open Internet around the world, championing the free flow of information.
- Support the current UN initiative to protect journalists and to combat the impunity with which many countries treat those who attack reporters on the frontline. To this end, we will provide ad hoc funding to UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication.
- Campaign strongly for the abolition of the death penalty around the world.
- Champion global anti-corruption initiatives to safeguard global security and economic development and maintain a strong voice in international



platforms on ending corruption. We will implement outstanding commitments made by the British Government at the 2016 Global Anti-Corruption Summit.

- Publish a government anti-corruption strategy.
- Introduce Sustainable Development Goal audits of new trade, investment and development deals, reviewing the impact of the deal on People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnership
- Maintain funding for the BBC World Service, BBC Monitoring and the British Council.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy for promoting the decriminalisation of homosexuality around the world, and advancing the cause of LGBT+ rights.
- Prioritise support, protection and equal rights for women and girls, which is both right and essential for effective, sustainable economic development. We will aim to end female genital mutilation worldwide within a generation.
- Appoint an Ambassador-level Champion for Freedom of Belief to drive British diplomatic efforts in this field, and we will campaign for the abolition of blasphemy, sedition, apostasy and criminal libel laws worldwide, having already been responsible for ending them in this country

