



Conference Report

Autumn 2021

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Policy Motions

A Fairer, Greener, More Caring Society

Conference notes that Britain is renowned for its:

- I. Commitment to fairness, a system in which people who work hard can succeed, and where everyone is free to live their lives in the way they choose.
- II. Caring and mutually supportive society, manifested in institutions such as the NHS.
- III. Democratic traditions and institutions and deep-seated respect for the rule of law.
- IV. Educational tradition, creativity and innovation, including in green technologies and medicine.
- V. Open, trading, entrepreneurial culture and commitment to a fair international system and contributing to key international institutions.

Conference condemns the Conservative UK government's betrayal of the people of Britain, their needs and wishes by their:

- A. Incompetent handling of the pandemic, which has seen one of the highest rates of Covid infection, serious illness and death of any country in the world.
- B. Encouragement of a divided and profoundly unfair society, in which one set of rules applies to an extremely wealthy and privileged few with close connections to the government, while NHS and care workers are paid too little.
- C. Lack of urgency and ambition in tackling the climate and nature emergency.
- D. Institutionalisation within government of lying and corruption, willingness to break international law, including treaties they themselves negotiated and signed recently, and historic rupture with Britain's successful trading economy past, leaving the world's largest and most successful free-trade area.
- E. Mishandling of the United Kingdom as a whole, with the place of Scotland and Northern Ireland in the UK now in question.

Conference therefore welcomes policy paper 143, *A Fairer, Greener, More Caring Society*, as a statement of Liberal Democrat policy priorities to make Britain:

1. A fair society in which all contribute their fair share, and every person can have a decent income and a secure home, and can rely on good public services, by:
 - a) Creating a properly funded commitment to free childcare from 9 months until the day a child starts school.

- b) Making the £1000 pa uplift to Universal Credit permanent and extend it to all legacy benefits.
 - c) Scrapping the sanctions system
 - d) Introducing a 20% higher minimum wage for people on zero-hour contracts, and a clearer 'dependent contractor' status with basic protections, between employment and self-employment.
 - e) Introducing an equitably funded Universal Basic Income that will make household finances more resilient and help empower people to make their own choices about work and training.
2. A caring society in which everyone's health and care needs are met and we give carers the support they deserve, by:
- a) Raising Carer's Allowance by £1,000 a year and funding regular breaks for every unpaid carer.
 - b) Building a broad and cross-party agreement on a long term, sustainable system of social care that is at least as generous as that proposed by the Dilnot report.
 - c) Raising £7 billion a year in additional revenue by putting 1p on Income Tax, ringfenced for spending on the NHS (focusing on mental health services) and social care.
3. A leader in the fight against the climate and nature emergencies, by:
- a) Delivering a green recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic, spending £150 billion to kick-start programmes to retrofit all UK homes, generate 75% of electricity from renewables by 2030, decarbonise transport, and introduce a green jobs guarantee, offering a well-paying green job to anyone who wants one.
 - b) Protecting the natural environment, including supporting nature-friendly farming, ensuring that UK environmental and animal welfare standards are maintained, and setting legally binding targets for improving the quality of water, air, and soil and biodiversity.
 - c) Increasing the availability of housing and supporting sustainable communities, including opposing the Government's planning reforms and backing councils to build 380,000 new homes a year, including 150,000 for social rent.
4. A beacon for individual rights, diversity and inclusion, by:
- a) Ending violence by men against women and girls, including by making misogyny a hate crime, giving police, prosecutors and judges better training

and more resources, and improving age-appropriate sex and relationship education in schools.

- b) Combating racial injustice, including by abolishing the Conservatives' Hostile Environment, ending the disproportionate use of Stop and Search, and implementing a new Race Equality Strategy.
 - c) Opposing the Conservatives' dangerous and draconian crackdown on protests, and defending the Human Rights Act, the European Convention on Human Rights and judicial review from Tory attacks.
 - d) Strengthening LGBT+ rights at home and abroad, including by banning conversion therapy, strengthening trans rights and healthcare services, improving inclusive education on LGBT+ issues in schools, and ending the current regime of dehumanising processes and deportations to instead provide support and welcome for LGBT+ people from around the world who seek sanctuary in the UK.
5. A modern, open, democratic state in which people can have real control over decisions which affect them and confidence in the integrity of politicians and institutions, by:
- a) Making every vote count through reforming the electoral system to make it more proportional, using the single transferable vote, for all public elections in the UK; and through votes at 16.
 - b) Giving power back to the people by strengthening local government in England.
 - c) Making the Ministerial Code legally enforceable.
6. The best place in the world to start and to grow a business, by:
- i. Quadrupling the Employment Allowance, massively reducing small businesses' national insurance contributions bills, and giving small businesses relief on their rent arrears.
 - ii. Creating an Entrepreneur's Allowance to help people start new businesses.
7. A model of a truly world class education and skills system, by:
- a) Extending eligibility for Free School Meals to every primary school student and child living in poverty, providing food vouchers during school holidays and tackling the 'digital divide' by making household internet more affordable.
 - b) Giving every adult the chance to access education and training opportunities throughout life by introducing Skills Wallets and providing training courses free to those not in work via a training guarantee scheme.

- c) Delivering an ambitious, long-term plan to support young people's educational and emotional recovery from the pandemic.
8. A strong and responsible international partner for peace, democracy and prosperity, by:
- a) Reversing cuts to development aid and ensuring the UK keeps its word by protecting existing aid projects.
 - b) Creating the closest possible alignment between the UK and the EU, including rejoining the Customs Union, Single Market and other EU agencies and programmes as appropriate, and supporting a longer-term objective of UK membership of the EU.

Applicability: Federal; except 1. a) (lines 37–38), 2. b)–c) (lines 48–53), 3. c) (lines 64–67), 4. a) (lines 69–72), 5. b) (lines 87–88) and 7. (lines 96–105), which are England only.

Background briefing

This motion restated existing policy, acting as a mid-term manifesto.

This built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019).

Amendments: Conference passed three amendments.

The amendment added line 1b and c on Universal Credit and the sanctions system, adding a reference in line 3a to the green job guarantee and in 7b expanding on the Skills Wallet.

Conference voted on the amendment in three separate votes. Conference passed the first part by 280 to 17, the second by 231 to 51 and the third by 267 to 10.

The second amendment added line 1d on Universal Basic Income.

Conference passed the amendment by 246 to 69.

The third amendment added line 4d, strengthening the commitment to LGBT+ rights.

Conference passed the amendment by 265 to 25.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 318 to 10.

A Framework for England in a Federal UK

Conference believes that:

1. The UK's constitution is no longer fit for purpose, failing to deliver appropriate representation, disempowering communities and risking the break-up of the UK.
2. Too much power and control over people's lives is hoarded in Westminster and Whitehall, especially in England, with regions and communities excluded from decision making over their areas, leading to a dangerous sense of powerlessness and alienation from government.
3. Power and decision making should be dispersed as widely as possible across the UK, which is best delivered through a federal system of government.
4. In England, many of the decisions about areas which are currently taken in London should be taken instead at the regional level, which should become powerful centres of decision-making in their own right, empowering and engaging communities, improving the quality and efficiency of public services, leading to a sustainable levelling-up of the UK, and strengthening the union.

Conference calls for:

1. The creation of a UK Constitutional Convention, with the aim of drafting a new Federal Constitution that sets out the powers of the government at each tier, founded on the principles of democratic engagement, liberal values and respect for diverse identities, underpinned by a fair distribution of resources based on respective needs.
2. English Ministries and ministerial functions to be separate from those of the United Kingdom Federal Government.
3. The Convention to establish an inclusive approach for determining the structure of government in England, including a regional tier of government and special protections for rural communities where necessary.
4. A new Declaration of Rights, which will ensure human rights are integrated fully into the new system of government and respected at all levels.
5. The replacement of the House of Lords with an elected Senate of the federal UK Parliament which will represent the federal states of the UK.
6. A target of at least 50% of public spending to be controlled by state, regional and local government, in line with other successful federal states. Achieving this will be a prerequisite for successfully and sustainably levelling up the UK.

Conference further calls for:

1. A federal system in which the UK government primarily has responsibility over matters affecting the whole of the United Kingdom, including;
 - a. International Aid.

- b. Defence and security.
 - c. Transnational and cross-boundary crime.
 - d. Foreign policy.
 - e. Monetary policy.
 - f. Overall fiscal policy.
 - g. International trade.
 - h. Employment and the United Kingdom internal market, working in partnership with the nations and regions.
 - i. Immigration.
 - j. Strategic transport.
 - k. Strategic environmental and decarbonisation policy.
 - l. Ensuring financial resources are shared fairly across the UK.
 - m. Pensions and core social security benefits.
2. A tier of directly elected regional government throughout England which will have responsibility for:
- a. Regional economic development.
 - b. NHS and social care services.
 - c. Policing.
 - d. Strategic housing and planning policy.
 - e. Regional transport.
 - f. Education, including skills.
 - g. Agriculture and rural affairs.
 - h. Local environmental and decarbonisation policy.
3. A smaller range of functions to be exercised at the all-England level, including the legal system and universities.
4. A process based on natural communities and local consent for determining the boundaries of regions.
5. The interest of rural communities within England to be given enhanced protection both within the federal constitution and in the processes and practices of English regions.
6. The powers and standing of local government to be enhanced and strengthened in the new federal constitutional settlement.
7. Individual regions within England to be federal states, with a constitutional standing equivalent to that of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, with England remaining as a single legal jurisdiction and some common functions being managed at an all-England level.
8. An English National Chamber with representatives appointed by the English Regions.

Applicability: Federal; except II. to VIII. (lines 60–98), which are England only.

Background briefing

This motion updated existing constitutional and devolution policy.

This built on existing policy as set out in the policy motion The Creation of a Federal United Kingdom (September 2020), the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019), policy paper 130, Power for People and Communities (2018), and policy paper 117, Power to the People (2014).

Option Votes: Conference was given three optional votes to determine the final motion.

The first vote was between England or the English regions being federal states, which became line 7.

Conference voted for English regions to be the federal states 199 to 95.

The second vote was between a directly elected English Parliament or an English National Chamber with regional appointees, which became line 8.

Conference voted for an English National Chamber by 181 to 110.

The third vote was between an English National Chamber managing all-England affairs or the UK parliament holding these powers.

Conference voted for an English National Chamber 250 to 58.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion with these options incorporated by 385 to 30.

Ban Conversion Therapy

Conference notes with concern that:

- i) Conversion therapy, an abhorrent and harmful practice which seeks to suppress or change a sexual orientation and/or gender identity, or to induce or compel a person to do so, is still practiced throughout the UK.
- ii) Despite repeated commitments, government has not proposed any legislation or other action to end conversion therapy.
- iii) According to a 2017 Government survey of LGBT+ people, nearly 1 in 13 LGBT+ people have been offered, or compelled to receive, conversion therapy, rising to 1 in 7 among transgender people, with transgender men being the most at-risk.
- iv) According to that same survey, 51% of conversion therapy practices are conducted by faith organisations, with a further 19% being conducted by healthcare and medical professionals.
- v) According to the annual review by ILGA-Europe, the UK is no longer the leading country for LGBT+ rights in Europe, and has been steadily declining in the rankings since 2015.
- vi) The ongoing pathologisation and social exclusion of LGBT+ people puts pressure on LGBT+ people to conceal or conform their orientation and/or identity, which further exposes LGBT+ people to predatory practices, such as conversion therapy.

Conference reaffirms:

- A. That Liberal Democrats champion the autonomy of the individual, the fostering of diversity, and the right to privacy, including the right to medical autonomy. These principles are crucial to the protection of LGBT+ orientations and identities.
- B. Our commitment to ensure that the withdrawal of medical conversion therapy by NHS England is effectively extended to transgender, non-binary, and intersex people.
- C. Our alignment with the position of NHS England, NHS Scotland, Public Health Wales, and other leading health, social care, and aid organisations, as noted in the Memorandum of Understanding on Conversion Therapy (2017), that conversion therapy has “no medical or therapeutic value” and that a conversion therapy ban is not intended to exclude LGBT+ people from accessing “qualified and appropriate” therapists and support. Practices which seek to affirm or support an LGBT+ orientation or identity are not conversion therapy.

Conference calls for:

1. The banning of conversion practices in all forms – this should include the following:
 - a) A criminal ban on all forms of conversion therapy; including those claiming to be psychiatric, psychological, therapeutic, or consultative; or a religious practice such as a prayer or exorcism; or any other medical, scientific, or cultural activity seeking to suppress or change a person’s sexual orientation or gender identity.
 - b) A criminal ban on referrals, transportation of minors overseas, and advertising and promotion, for any of the above.
 - c) No exemption for religious and faith-based organisations for any of the above.
2. A campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of conversion therapy among vulnerable people and in social environments where conversion therapy is most likely to be promoted.
3. Our elected representatives to work to ensure that all LGBT+ people are able to live in freedom, authenticity, and safety.

Applicability: England and Wales.

Background briefing

This motion created new policy with regards to conversion therapy.

Vote to refer back: A vote was held to refer the motion back, which was rejected 155 to 216.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 368 to 44.

Boosting Small Businesses and Jobs in the Post-Pandemic Economy

Conference believes that:

- I. The economic recovery from Covid-19 starts with small business: small businesses are the backbone of our economy, the heart of our local communities, and they create the jobs we all rely on.
- II. Everyone should have access to good, decent-paying jobs.
- III. To cope with the unpredictable nature of the pandemic, people and businesses need certainty and long-term support – not last-minute announcements and knee-jerk reactions.
- IV. We must rebuild a post-pandemic economy that is fair, creates new opportunities for people and tackles the climate emergency.

Conference notes with concern that:

- a) The UK's economy is 4% smaller than before the pandemic, and according to the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR), it won't reach its pre-covid size until the end of 2022.
- b) 1.6 million people are out of a job, and there are 553,000 fewer people on payroll than pre-pandemic; according to the OBR, by the end of the year another 600,000 people will lose their job.
- c) Unemployment is disproportionately impacting the young and people from ethnic minorities, as people aged 16-24 are the likeliest to be out of a job, and young black people experienced the highest unemployment rate in 2020, reaching 42%.
- d) The Government is failing to create new jobs, with the failed Kickstart Scheme having thus far placed just 16,500 people in new roles out of a target of 250,000.
- e) Failing to support employment threatens the UK's economic recovery and takes away peoples' opportunities.
- f) Small businesses have suffered during the pandemic, taking on more than £104 billion in debt to stay afloat.
- g) The pandemic has damaged the UK's town centres and high streets, taking a toll on entrepreneurship opportunities, local services, local employment opportunities and face-to-face contact for those experiencing loneliness.
- h) Small businesses are in a rent-arrears crisis, with unpaid commercial rent estimated at £6 billion, affecting the hospitality and retail sectors the worst.
- i) The Government has threatened a wave of small business closures and job losses, by refusing to accompany the month-long continuation of trading restrictions with an extension of the full furlough scheme and the business rates holiday.

- j) The Federation of Small Businesses has warned that at least 250,000 businesses could close by the end of the year, while the number of companies in financial distress has risen at the fastest pace in seven years.
- k) Compounding the struggles of small business in the pandemic is the Government's terrible EU trade deal, which has led to a 25% drop in trade with Europe compared to 2019, and a staff shortage crisis that has brought many businesses to their knees.
- l) The Government has ignored the three million people excluded from all Covid-19 support schemes.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitments to:

- A. Develop a long-term economic strategy, setting out how the UK will invest in new industries, jobs and training, that will create a fairer, greener, more regionally balanced economy after the pandemic.
- B. Establish dedicated support schemes for the worst-affected sectors, such as hospitality, tourism, charities and the creative industries.
- C. Ensure that a large proportion of new jobs created are green jobs, encouraging innovation in industry to adapt to a green economy, carry out an audit of the skills which will be required, and ensure those who are unemployed due to Covid-19 are helped to reskill to fill them.
- D. Expand higher vocational training such as foundation degrees, Higher National Diplomas, Higher National Certificates and Higher Apprenticeships, including by transforming the broken Apprenticeship Levy into a wider 'Skills and Training Levy'.
- E. Fix the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme by extending it to cover the self-employed people who are currently excluded.
- F. The closest possible alignment between the UK and the EU towards customs union, single market and freedom of movement, including minimising tariff and non-tariff trade barriers and the non-lowering of environmental, food and animal welfare standards.
- G. Conference recognises the crucial role local government can play in supporting businesses in their area during the pandemic and helping them re-build such as the 294 businesses saved from closure by the City of York's micro-grant scheme in 2020. Conference calls on central government to ensure local councils to have a leading role in Local Enterprise Partnerships as part of their work in supporting local economies.

Conference further calls on the Government to:

1. Extend the fully government-backed version of the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme, and the Self-Employed Income Support Scheme, at least until the end of 2021.
2. Provide financial assistance to small businesses that experienced loss of revenue due to Coronavirus restrictions on their trading capacity or ability to stay open.
3. Give all small businesses a cash injection and empower them to create new jobs, by quadrupling the annual Employment Allowance to £16,000 for two years, allowing them to pay zero employers' National Insurance Contributions on their first five employees – and consult on whether to increase the Employment Allowance long-term.
4. Avert a wave of insolvencies and job losses by implementing innovative debt restructuring solutions for viable small businesses struggling due to coronavirus.
5. Maintain the 5% reduced rate of VAT for hospitality and tourism until the end of the 2021–22 financial year.
6. Give struggling businesses in the retail, hospitality and live events sectors relief on their deferred VAT payments, so that cash is available as working capital as they open back up.
7. Fix the broken Kickstart scheme and develop a strategy to tackle unemployment among young people from a black and ethnic minority background.
8. Support small businesses struggling to trade with Europe by:
 - a) Doing more to listen to their concerns and seek technical solutions.
 - b) Significantly increasing the £20 million SME Brexit Support Fund and broadening its eligibility criteria.
 - c) Ensuring that all information SMEs need on UK-EU trade is readily available in a single platform.
 - d) Appointing a new Minister for SME Trade, tasked with implementing the above measures and boosting small business trade.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion updated and developed economic policy, specifically dealing with how to recover from the economic impact of COVID-19 on small businesses and jobs.

It built on previous policy in the policy motion Supporting Business, Workers and the Self-Employed during the COVID-19 Pandemic (March 2021), the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019) and policy paper 133, Good Jobs, Better Businesses, Stronger Communities: Proposals for a new economy that really works for everyone (2018).

Amendments: Conference passed one amendment

The amendment added paragraph G.

Conference passed the amendment by 246 to 10.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 290 to 5.

Building Communities

Conference notes that:

1. House prices in the UK continue to rise relative to average incomes.
2. Rent or mortgage payments are the largest living cost that most households in the UK face.
3. 788,000 households in England were living in overcrowded conditions from 2016-2019.
4. 17% of households in England live in a home that lacks modern facilities, has no effective insulation or heating, or is in a state of disrepair.
5. Only 14% of UK towns are currently considered affordable for key workers such as nurses, doctors and teachers.
6. Polling undertaken by Shelter revealed that 48% of people were supportive of more housing being built in their local areas, with 30% opposed.

Conference believes that:

1. The UK is currently experiencing a housing crisis, and this crisis is impacting people's freedom to start a family, live a healthy and dignified life when they get old, and is having an adverse effect on social mobility.
2. The proposed Conservative planning reforms run roughshod over local communities and are not the right solution to the housing crisis.
3. There is a desperate need for an alternative, liberal approach to providing more housing.
4. Everybody deserves the right to a secure roof over their head that they can afford, therefore tackling this issue is a moral imperative.
5. The key to solving the housing crisis is providing more affordable good quality housing.
6. The most effective way to achieve house building is with the consent and active involvement of our local communities.
7. New homes should be well designed, of good quality and contribute to a sense of pride in the local area.
8. Providing homes for the next generation is essential in order to create sustainable communities, with thriving shops, schools and public services.

Conference calls for:

1. The Liberal Democrats to advocate for more house building UK wide by:
 - a. Committing to a national target of 380,000 new homes per year.
 - b. Ensuring that at least 150,000 of these homes are available for social rent.
2. Local authorities to take the lead on house building by:

- a. Reforming the 1961 Land Compensation Act to give local authorities the power to acquire landbanked land from housing developers at its 'current use value', in order to be used to meet the community's need for housing.
 - b. Increasing local authority compulsory purchase powers.
 - c. Identifying areas for development in consultation with the local community, then acquiring this land and planning all necessary infrastructure including roads, utilities and green spaces.
 - d. Only once all the infrastructure is planned, to allow developers or housing associations to bid for plots and to start building.
3. More land to be freed up for housing by:
- a. Reaffirming our party's commitment to a Land Value Tax collected by local authorities as a replacement for Business Rates, to disincentivize land banking by developers.
 - b. Introducing penalties for developers who fail to develop land that has been given full planning permission.
 - c. Introducing a condition that any plots sold as set out above in 2 d) must be built upon on schedule, and if the developers fail to do this after a certain amount of time, then they will become open to bids from other developers who can start building immediately.
4. New house building to be combined with our desire to tackle the climate emergency by:
- a. A net-zero whole-life carbon condition to be imposed on all new development.
 - b. Requiring all new developments to be insulated to modern safe and efficient standards with adequate ventilation and shade to prevent urban heat stress in heatwaves.
 - c. Encouraging development plans to include green space within walking distance, as well as solar panels and electric car charging points where possible.
 - d. Reaffirming our party's commitment to establish a Green Investment Bank, in order to retrofit millions of existing homes.

Applicability: England only; except 1. (lines 36–40), which is Federal (except that Scottish and Welsh Liberal Democrats set their own specific targets for housebuilding).

Background briefing

This motion updated and developed housing and planning policy.

It built on previous policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019), policy paper 136, A Fairer Share for All (2019), policy paper 129, A

Rural Future: Time to Act (2018), and policy paper 130, Power for People and Communities (2018).

Amendments: Conference passed one amendment and rejected one amendment

The rejected amendment would have deleted line 1a 1b and replaced it with a local approach to housing targets and a percentage target for social housing.

Conference rejected the amendment 177 to 199.

The passed amendment added line 2b, 3b and expanded line 4b to include with adequate ventilation and shade to prevent urban heat stress in heatwaves

Conference passed the amendment by 299 to 48.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 343 to 38.

Children in Care and Care Leavers

Conference notes that:

- A. 99,000 children are considered children in care in the UK.
- B. Care leavers only have a pathway plan from the age of 16 to 21.
- C. 16-year-olds who become homeless or estranged cannot easily find support.
- D. One in four young care leavers have had to sofa surf, 14% of young care leavers have slept rough, 40% of care leavers are unable to pay the required deposit for housing, and 57% of care leavers feel unsafe in the area they originally lived in.
- E. The average child in care enters care at age 14, which is a crucial point academically; young people leaving care are less likely to be involved in education, training, or employment and are more vulnerable to social exclusion in later life.
- F. Children in care are less likely to achieve their academic potential. Only 12% of care leavers enter higher education by the age of twp.
- G. Care leavers have sometimes lived in up to 20 foster placements and/or care homes.
- H. Care leavers often rely on universal credit as their main source of income.
- I. Children in care and care leavers have higher rates of mental health issues, and are more susceptible to trauma, addiction, dependency issues, depression, and anxiety.

Conference believes that:

- I. All children deserve full support in reaching their potential, no matter their circumstances.
- II. Children in care deserve equal access to education and support; care leavers starting at the age of 16 could be inhibiting their ability to partake in post-16 education.
- III. Care leavers are vulnerable young adults who need the support of both their local authority and government.
- IV. Care leavers need more support than the average young adult, in terms of both health and finances, as they often do not have the support of family.

Conference resolves that:

- 1. All care leavers should have access to support in the form of advisors or mentors up until the age of 25.
- 2. Moving children in care should only happen when necessary; care leavers should have support in transferring between local authorities if they wish, including communication between the two and agreed funding.

3. The Government should increase the Care Leaver Bursary from the current £1,000 to £2,000.
4. All 16-year-olds should be allowed the opportunity to stay in care until the age of 25. In particular, 16 and 17-year-olds whose family relationship deteriorates should have the full support of their local authority, equal to what they would have had at 15.
5. Children in care should be supported with exam resits and revision support by both local authorities and schools.
6. Children in care and care leavers should be given access to special meetings to encourage them to explore their future and given full information on apprenticeships, sixth forms, colleges, universities, etc. with no bias of pathways provided.
7. Children in care should be offered tutoring and mentoring from the age of 13 provided by local authorities and schools.
8. More care leavers should be encouraged to go to university, with support from universities through widening access and taking into consideration alternative qualifications and life experiences when making offers.
9. A pledge of the level of support that they will provide to the children in their care should be mandated for all local authorities; the pledge should be legally enforced, with penalties.

Applicability: England only

Background briefing

This motion updated and developed policy for children in care and care leavers.

It built on previous policy in the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019) and the policy motion Tackling Child Abuse (September 2014).

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion 160 to 7.

Democracy and Public Debate

Vote to refer back: Conference voted to refer the motion back 150 to 111.

Dignity, Care and Choice at the End of Life

Conference believes that:

- I. People with a terminal illness deserve to live and die with as much dignity and control as possible.
- II. It is vital that high-quality palliative care is available to anyone who needs it.
- III. Carers looking after a loved one who is terminally ill deserve more support.
- IV. It is wrong that the current law not only robs people who are terminally ill of dignity and choice at the end of their lives, but also criminalises family members who support their loved one's final wish.

Conference notes that:

- a) An estimated 300 terminally ill people in England end their lives each year, and, in 2019, more than 50 people from the UK travelled to Switzerland for an assisted death at an average cost of £10,000 each.
- b) Laws have been passed to give terminally ill people the option of assisted dying in many other parts of the world, including Canada, New Zealand, ten US states and three Australian states.
- c) Polling by Populus in 2019 found that 84% of people – including 85% of people with a disability – support changing the law to give terminally ill adults the option of assisted dying.
- c) A British Medical Association survey in 2020 found that 50% of doctors personally support changing the law on prescribing drugs for eligible patients to self-administer to end their own life, while only 39% oppose it.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitments to:

1. Champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals, and respect their right to freedom of conscience.
2. Provide more choice at the end of life, and move towards free end-of-life social care, whether people spend their last days at home or in a hospice.
3. Support unpaid carers, including by guaranteeing a right to respite care, raising Carer's Allowance, and making it easier to juggle paid work with caring responsibilities.

Conference further reaffirms its support for legislation providing for medical assistance to die to be available to patients in particular circumstances, subject to rigorous safeguards to prevent abuse.

Conference welcomes the Assisted Dying Bill introduced by Baroness Meacher in the House of Lords, which would legalise assisted dying as a choice for terminally ill, mentally competent adults in England and Wales, as well as Liam McArthur's plans for a Members Bill in the Scottish Parliament to do the same in Scotland.

Conference endorses the safeguards set out in the Assisted Dying Bill to:

- A. Restrict it to terminally ill people who have six months or less to live and have made and signed a declaration that they have a voluntary, clear, settled and informed wish to end their life.
- B. Require two independent doctors to confirm that the person is terminally ill, has the capacity to make the decision, and has reached it voluntarily, on an informed basis and without coercion or duress.
- C. Require an application to be made to and approved by the High Court.
- D. Include a mandatory waiting period to give the person time to reflect on their decision.
- E. Require the person to self-administer the medicine to end their life, and prohibit anyone else from administering it to them.
- F. Enshrine the right of anyone to refuse to participate in assisted dying if they have a conscientious objection.

Conference calls on the Government to make time available in this parliamentary session for both Houses to fully consider the Assisted Dying Bill.

Conference further believes that Liberal Democrat parliamentarians should have a free vote on the Bill.

Applicability: England and Wales.

Background briefing

This motion updated policy on assisted dying.

This built on existing policy as set out in policy motion Medically Assisted Dying (September 2012).

Vote to suspend standing orders: Conference voted to hold a debate to suspend standing orders. The vote to suspend standing orders was rejected as it failed to meet the two thirds majority required.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion 279 to 63.

Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

Conference notes that:

- i) Sexual violence, sexual harassment, and domestic abuse remain endemic in our society:
 - a) In 2019/20, 4.9 million women were victims of sexual assault in England and Wales, according to the Office for National Statistics (ONS).
 - b) A third of 16–18-year-old girls report experiencing unwanted sexual touching at school, according to End Violence Against Women.

- ii) The pandemic has made the situation worse:
 - a) The ONS report into Domestic abuse during the pandemic in November 2020 found increased demand for victim services and indicators that severity of abuse has increased.
 - b) Plan International UK found that since lockdown began, 1 in 5 girls aged 14–21 experienced public sexual harassment.
 - c) By 2030, 2 million more girls are now at risk of undergoing Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) due to the pandemic according to Plan International.

- iii) The justice system is failing many victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence:
 - a) Out of 139,000 rapes estimated by the ONS in the year ending March 2020, only 58,845 were reported to police. Of those, just 2.4% ended in convictions.
 - b) Three in four domestic abuse cases in England and Wales end without charge, according to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services.

- iv) Those from minority backgrounds experience domestic abuse disproportionately:
 - a) ONS figures for 2019 show that disabled women were more than twice as likely to experience domestic abuse than non-disabled women.
 - b) LGBT+ people are significantly more likely to experience domestic abuse, with 13 per cent of bisexual women facing intimate partner abuse in 2019/20, according to Stonewall.
 - c) In 2019, 60 per cent of UK police forces admitted referring victims of crime to the Home Office for immigration purposes, harming migrant women.

- v) The Domestic Abuse Act 2021, whilst very welcome, still contains policy gaps, including failure to provide equal protection for migrant women.

- vi) The funding for domestic abuse services in the 2021 Budget falls short of the figure that Women's Aid says is needed by over £200 million per year.

- vii) The UK has failed to ratify the Istanbul Convention, a treaty creating a global framework for protecting women from violence.

Conference believes that:

- I. Everyone, regardless of identity, has the right to live a life free from fear and violence.
- II. The Conservative Government is failing to properly tackle continuing violence against women and girls in our society.
- III. Investing in raising awareness, education, and policies aimed at prevention is vital and prevents greater costs long-term.
- IV. An intersectional approach to violence against women and girls is imperative to provide high level care and support to the most vulnerable victims.
- V. Disclosures of abuse must be made easier and always taken seriously by authorities who offer a trauma-informed response.
- VI. Ending violence against women and girls must be a top priority for all levels of government.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitments to:

- A. Improve and reform the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum, including age-appropriate education on consent from primary school.
- B. Expand the number of refuge and rape crisis centres, including specialist provision.
- C. Give Local Authorities the duty and funding to provide appropriate accommodation and support for survivors of abuse
- D. Recognise misogyny as a hate crime.

Conference calls on the Government to:

- 1. Increase efforts to prevent and detect violence against women and girls by:
 - a) Funding an NHS-style public awareness campaign, including on long-lasting trauma impacts.
 - b) Consulting education leaders and the specialist violence against women and girls sector, to take immediate action on sexual harassment in school.
 - c) Implementing guidance to include awareness of public sexual harassment and its consequences in the national curriculum.
 - d) Upskilling all school staff via training to ensure confidence in correctly and sensitively handling disclosures of a sexual or abusive nature.

- e) Introducing a duty on public authorities to ensure all frontline staff are trained to detect and respond appropriately to domestic abuse.
 - f) Improving cross-government coordination of policies and services for separating families across England and Wales.
 - g) Establishing a plan to tackle the social recovery of vulnerable and at-risk women and girls following the pandemic.
 - h) Ensuring the child's safety and needs are put first when decisions are made as to the appropriate level of contact with an abusive parent.
2. Improve outcomes for victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse by:
- a) Ensuring migrant women have equal access to protection from abuse.
 - b) Introducing training and guidance for organisations on making their services more trans inclusive.
 - c) Offering a long-term funding model for specialist services, including specialist BAME and LGBT+ services, so they can plan strategically and fully focus on providing support.
 - d) Introducing mandatory training for police and the Crown Prosecution Service in understanding the impact of trauma on victims.
 - e) Improving access to independent legal support for victims, including those with no recourse to public funds.
 - f) Introducing mandatory awareness training for local authority Children's Services staff to enable them to appropriately examine and record allegations of domestic abuse which may present as parental conflict.
 - g) Ensuring appropriate support is available for those who do not flee from their abuser.
3. Strengthen the justice system to properly deal with sexual violence and domestic abuse by:
- a) Urgently increasing funding to reduce Criminal and Family court backlogs.
 - b) Extending protections of 16 and 17-year-olds by expanding the definition of 'position of trust', to include all adults who work/volunteer with under-18s.
 - c) Legislating to make public sexual harassment a criminal offence.
 - d) Legislating to make the promotion of Female Genital Mutilation/Cutting (FGM/C) a hate crime.
4. Establish the UK as a leader in domestic and global efforts to end violence against women and girls by:
- a) Ratifying the Istanbul Convention as soon as possible.

- b) Setting up an independent commission on 'Ending Violence Against Women and Girls' for ongoing, sustainable accountability and progress in domestic and global efforts.

Applicability: England and Wales; except A., B. and C. (lines 61–67), 1. b) and c) (lines 74–78) and 1. e) (lines 82–84), which are England only.

Background briefing

This motion updated and developed crime and justice policy with regards to violence against women and girls.

This built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019) and policy motion Continuing the fight for gender equality (September 2019).

Amendments: Conference passed one amendment.

The amendment added line 1h and 2f and 2e, concerning children and their relations with abusive parents.

Conference passed the amendment by 250 to 3.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 260 to 2.

International Trade and the DIT

Conference notes that:

- a) The UK has completed 23 EU replacement 'rollover' trade negotiations since leaving the EU, with a further 13 with temporary arrangements, and with three still under negotiation, many details of which remain unpublished in full.
- b) The UK has currently negotiated only one new trade agreement which is not a replacement EU agreement, with Australia, and is also reportedly attempting to negotiate similar 'new' deals with New Zealand, USA, GCC, Canada and India.

Conference believes that:

- i) The British Government's desperate need to hurriedly 'chalk up' trade deals, has led to a weak negotiating effort, in part facilitated by unsuitable constitutional limitations on Parliament's ability to withhold consent from disadvantageous treaty terms, which thus largely eliminate the UK trade negotiators' fear of treaties being voted down in Parliament if terms are disadvantageous.
- ii) The government is giving away sensible human rights and anti-conflict conditions in trade agreements and apparently happy to lower public standards dangerously for imports, without achieving significant concessions in return.
- iii) The current exodus of international expertise and assets from the UK and the City of London represents a further neglect of the economy, with lost tax receipts and reductions of domestic income.

Conference expresses grave concerns at:

- a) The apparent willingness of the UK government to permit private corporations to sue for any losses incurred as a result of UK policy changes, in trade agreements, via investor-state dispute settlement (ISDS) systems.
- b) Reports that major concessions are being agreed or offered by the UK government via side agreements which are not made public in a timely way.
- c) That the Conservative government has failed to guarantee British standards on animal welfare and environmental protection in trade deals, placing British farmers at risk.

Conference calls for:

1. Extension of full parliamentary sovereignty to trade agreements, such that the old so-called Ponsonby Rule on scrutiny and the later CraG process in both Houses, end in a parliamentary vote, without which any trade agreement cannot receive Royal Assent.

2. Full and timely transparency in both interim and final trade deals which have been agreed, including timely publication of any side agreements or significant MoUs, so that there can be proper parliamentary scrutiny.
3. Transparent public consultation on proposed trade deals, throughout the process, including with representatives of small and medium-sized businesses, and including reports to Parliament at each stage.
4. A set of minimum standards for benchmarking future trade agreements; to include human rights, conflict and oppression, environmental, labour and safety standards, where they can be negotiated, based on a UK Trade and Human Rights Policy, and a Trade and Development Policy; as a UK successor to the Cotonou agreement.
5. A multilateral judicial process instead of ISDS, where precedent and case law transparently play a central part, and where disputes are resolved openly in a proper manner; rather than via the government's preferred secretive 'smoke filled room' approach.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion updated trade and European policy.

This built on existing policy as set out in the policy motion The EU–UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the Future of the UK–EU Relationship (March 2021) and the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019).

Amendments: Conference passed one amendment.

The amendment added references to animal welfare, farming and agriculture to line c, section 4 and section 6.

Conference passed the amendment by 153 to 7.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 174 to 6.

Keeping People Safe from Frauds and Scams

Conference notes with grave concern that each year, around 3.5 million people across England and Wales are victims of fraud.

Conference further notes that:

- i) Fraud is the most prevalent type of crime, accounting for more than a third of all crimes, but is not getting the focus it deserves from the Government.
- ii) UK Finance estimates that £1.26 billion was lost to financial fraud and scams in 2020, while a further £1.6 billion in fraud was prevented by banks and card companies.
- iii) Most fraud happens online. Losses to criminals using stolen card details – usually obtained through hacks or other data breaches – to buy things online have doubled since 2013, to around £380 million in 2020. Internet banking fraud has also risen dramatically in recent years, with the number of cases more than doubling from 2019 to 2020, as more and more people are managing their finances online.
- iv) Criminals are also increasingly defrauding people through ‘authorised push payment’ scams, where they trick their victims into transferring money to them. This includes getting people to pay in advance for goods or services that they never receive, taking their money for fake ‘investments’, pretending to be police officers or bank staff, and using fake profiles to form a ‘relationship’ with their victim to manipulate them into sending money.
- v) Criminals have exploited the Covid pandemic to dramatically increase certain types of fraud, with the number of online shopping cases reported to Action Fraud up 44% in the year to April 2021, and the number of romance scams up 15%.
- vi) In May 2019, the banking industry adopted a voluntary code for dealing with authorised push payment fraud, including the principle that banks should reimburse victims unless they are at fault. However, of the £312 million of losses assessed under code as of the end of 2020, just £147 million (47%) was reimbursed.
- vii) A lack of resources for the police prevents most fraud being investigated properly: only 3% of fraud offences reported in 2019–20 were disseminated to police forces for investigation, and only around 1 in 200 victims see their perpetrator convicted.
- viii) In 2018, the House of Commons Home Affairs Committee concluded that Action Fraud, the centralised reporting centre for fraud victims, “has irretrievably lost the confidence of the public, and reasonable expectations from victims are not being met”.

- ix) In 2020, Google was paid £572,814 by the Financial Conduct Authority to host adverts warning people about fraud, while also taking money from criminals to host fraudulent ads.

Conference believes that:

- a) Fraud is an appalling crime that particularly preys on vulnerable people. It can cause severe financial hardship, as well as enormous distress and fear.
- b) Far too many criminals are getting away with fraud, and far too many victims are being left without justice or redress.
- c) A far stronger response is needed from the Government, police, regulators, internet companies and banks, working together to prevent fraud, support victims and catch the perpetrators.
- d) Local branch closures have forced many people to use online banking, and banks must therefore do more to keep them safe from the risks it presents.
- e) Everyone should be helped and empowered to avoid frauds and scams, but the onus should not be on individuals to prevent them, nor should people be blamed for falling victim to them.

Conference recognises that local government is a key partner in working with the police and central government to raise public awareness of fraud and scams and to ensure close liaison and adequate funding for councils to play a full role in supporting local communities in tackling fraudsters.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to create a new Online Crime Agency to effectively tackle illegal content and activity online, including fraud.

Conference calls on the Government to tackle fraud and scams aggressively, including by:

1. Naming and shaming the banks with the worst records on preventing fraud and reimbursing victims, to help consumers make an informed choice and drive improvements across the industry.
2. Setting minimum standards for all banks on preventing fraud, and requiring them to report to government on their performance.
3. Replacing the voluntary industry code on authorised push payments with a mandatory, statutory code, including an obligation to reimburse victims unless there is clear evidence that they are at fault.
4. Explicitly including a duty on social media companies and search engines to prevent fraud in the forthcoming Online Safety Bill, including a requirement to ensure that any adverts for financial services they host are from genuine, regulated firms.

5. Establishing a national real-time warning system for scams, where individuals can check and report suspicious activity.
6. Launching a high-profile public awareness campaign to help people spot, avoid and report frauds and scams.

Applicability: Federal; except vii) & viii) (lines 32–39) and Conference reaffirms... (lines 58–60), which are England and Wales.

Background briefing

This motion updated existing crime and justice policy.

It built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019).

Amendments: Conference passed one amendment.

The amendment added a line recognising the importance of local government in tackling fraud.

Conference passed the amendment by 195 to 5.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 220 to 4.

Party Strategy: Our Road to Success

Conference condemns the failure of the Conservative government in Westminster which, through incompetence and indifference, has caused the death of tens of thousands of COVID victims unnecessarily, deliberately sought to create deep divisions in society on issues of culture, emboldened those who seek to break up the United Kingdom, pursued a deliberate approach of bypassing Parliament on key decisions, and further damaged the integrity of our democracy by facilitating cronyism and evading accountability.

Conference abhors the rise of nationalism, whether British, English, Scottish or Welsh.

Conference re-affirms that the Liberal Democrats' purpose is to ensure every individual has control of their own lives, and for society to enable them in that aim, balancing liberty, equality and community, and ensuring no-one is enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.

To achieve this, Conference re-asserts the central importance of having a clear strategy for success in the term of this Parliament, and then following it, as required by the party's constitution, and as further reinforced by the Thornhill Review of the 2019 General Election campaign.

Conference therefore agrees the following federal strategy for the Liberal Democrats:

1. Our aims are to:
 - a) Secure the election of as many Liberal Democrats as possible, to promote and deliver our vision of society.
 - b) Support the party organisations in Scotland, Wales and England in maximising their success in their parliamentary, regional and local elections.
 - c) Secure the election of as many MPs as possible to Parliament in Westminster.
 - d) Remove from power a Conservative government that is failing the country.
 - e) Deliver a strategy for success which is in keeping with core party values, such as environmentalism and equality.

2. We will achieve these aims most effectively by:
 - a) Developing a compelling and distinctive political narrative about the power of a vote for the Liberal Democrats, with wide emotional as well as rational appeal to the electorate as a whole.
 - b) Maintaining a rigorous focus on a set of realistic objectives for winning seats, and the specific campaigning building blocks needed to do so.

- c) Demonstrating electoral success at all levels and in all parts of the country.
 - d) Standing a candidate at every seat in England, Scotland and Wales at the next General Election, with any decision not to stand having to be ratified by local members, subject to any rules applied by State Parties. This will not apply to the seat of the Speaker.
3. Our top priorities to help us fight and win elections will be:
- a) Continuing to research, develop and communicate a compelling liberal narrative with emotional appeal, which engages the electorate most effectively with our vision for a country which is fairer, greener and more caring.
 - b) Optimising our support for campaigning excellence, through:
 - i) Investing in information technology and data.
 - ii) Further developing an outstanding network of campaigns staff and campaigners right across the Party.
 - iii) Building capacity in local parties and elsewhere.
 - iv) Providing an extensive range of training, tools and materials.
 - v) Ensuring elections at all levels reinforce one another as effectively as possible.
 - vi) Becoming more evidence-led, by testing what works.
 - vii) Recognising the central importance of the quality and commitment of our candidates to our chances of electoral success and the need for a structured and holistic programme to identify, train, mentor and support them to lead winning teams and win political office.
4. Taking our efforts to promote diversity to a higher level by implementing the Thornhill and Alderdice recommendations , so that:
- a) We reflect all parts of society, at all levels and in all parts of our party.
 - b) Our efforts actively to encourage participation from under-represented groups break through to a higher level by making race and ethnic minorities top priority, putting resources into a national campaign to encourage and assist local parties to:
 - i) reach out to local ethnic minority communities;
 - ii) include these communities in canvassing targets during elections;
 - iii) establish their key concerns and campaign on them; and
 - iv) recruit ethnic minority members;

thereby gaining ethnic minority support, members and votes and making our party better reflect the diversity of the society we wish to represent.

- ci) All members and voters feel they have the opportunity to play a full role in the party.
5. Ensuring our members and registered supporters have an excellent experience of the party, including opportunities to:
 - a) Develop and promote their own personal political priorities, locally and nationally, stand for election both to public bodies, and for roles within the party.
 - b) Use and develop their skills.
 - c) Work with others who share their interests, in party bodies and other groupings.
 - d) Gain satisfaction from achieving their political aims, and from working with others who share the same objectives.
 6. Further developing our 'one party' approach and culture through which all members, staff, bodies and organisations which are part of the Liberal Democrat family respect each other, and focus their efforts on working together to achieve our shared objectives of political success.
 7. Expedite progress on measuring, reducing and offsetting carbon emissions that arise from party operations towards the aim of eventually operating at net zero emissions.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion updated existing party strategy policy.

This built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019) and policy motion Ambitious for our Country, Ambitious for our Party: Liberal Democrat Party Strategy (March 2019).

Motion refer back

Conference voted to hold a debate on a motion for a reference back on the proposed motion. Conference then rejected the motion to refer back by 216 to 177.

Amendments: Conference passed four amendments.

The first amendment added a reference to the Thornhill report in section 4 and called for a prioritisation of ethnic minorities in national campaigns.

Conference passed the amendment by 423 to 26.

The second amendment added 3b vii recognising the importance of candidate training and support.

Conference passed the amendment by 442 to 23.

The third amendment added 2d which called for candidates to stand in every constituency at Westminster with the exception of the speaker.

Conference passed the amendment by 276 to 212.

The fourth amendment added 1e and section 7, giving greater prominence to the environment.

Conference passed the amendment by 391 to 45.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 424 to 47.

Protecting Patients' Health Data – Creating a Health Data Charter and Sovereign Health Data Trust

Conference believes that:

- I. Data collection and sharing are important and have been instrumental in advancing medical capabilities and improving population health.
- II. Individuals have the right to understand how and why their health data is being used.
- III. Understanding and transparency is key to public trust and confidence in data sharing initiatives.
- IV. The wealth of data held by the NHS should be used for the benefit of the health service and improving people's health only.
- V. Health data should never be shared for marketing or insurance purposes.

Conference calls for the creation of a Health Data Charter that will:

- i) Set out the fundamental principles and responsibilities for assessing whether a data sharing partnership is in the interest of the public and the NHS.
- ii) Aim to ensure trust in the Government's handling of health data, by laying out stringent principles that will help protect people's privacy and their data from exploitation.
- iii) Lay out ways to retain and protect the value of the nation's health data.

Conference further calls for the creation of a Sovereign Health Data Trust that will:

- a) Comprise a diverse, independent and balanced board of experts, clinicians and patient representatives and will be responsible for overseeing the implementation and observance of the Charter.
- b) Have continuous oversight of all health data and will not only have the power to grant access but also the power to recall or restrict an organisation's access if it has reason to believe that the data is not being used for public or patient benefit.
- c) Be designed in such a way as to render it interoperable with the European Health Data Space in technical and in semantic terms, including through the promotion of Findable, Accessible, Interoperable and Reusable (FAIR) data principles within the NHS.

Conference endorses the Liberal Democrats' proposed Health Data Charter as follows:

1. Access to health data must be for public and patient benefit – this benefit will be defined by the Sovereign Health Data Trust with input from external experts and

the public; the Trust will also determine whether an organisation can access the data for such purposes and can rescind access at any time.

2. No data shall be shared with an organisation without complete transparency – all health data contracts entered into by a public body must be published publicly and in a timely manner, as should detailed minutes for all meetings, including meetings of the Sovereign Health Data Trust; details of the organisation requesting use of the data should also be published, such as its sources of funding, ownership and intentions.
3. All health data collection and sharing initiatives must be preceded by public consultation, involvement and awareness – public trust is key to any sharing of health data; this trust must be built through awareness and consultation with the public, ensuring a solid understanding of the benefits of sharing health data with external organisations and bodies.
4. The value of all health data must be retained by the NHS – people’s health data belongs to them and any value derived from it should be for everyone’s benefit; when data is used to develop new medicines or treatments, by research organisations or commercial enterprises, a share of the income generated should be invested back into the healthcare system and the NHS.
5. All health data must be held anonymously and accessed through a Trusted Research Environment – this Environment will be overseen by the Trust and will ensure that no data is handed over to an organisation indefinitely and therefore outside the governance of the Trust; it will also mean that personal data can be retrieved should a person wish to opt out at any time, and access granted to an external organisation withdrawn, should it be found they are not using the data as agreed.
6. Consent processes must include plain language terms, and formats accessible to disabled people and people with low literacy.

Applicability: England only.

Background briefing

This motion created new policy in regard to personal health data.

Amendments: Conference passed one amendment

The first amendment added line c and line 6.

Conference passed the amendment by 187 to 5.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 204 to 1.

Rebuilding our Cultural, Artistic and Educational Ties with Europe

Conference believes that Brexit has created significant barriers to the cultural, educational and artistic links which British citizens have enjoyed with their European neighbours and friends over decades, from programmes such as Creative Europe to the formative opportunities enjoyed by young people, ranging from the use of Interrail railway passes to the ability to travel to EU member states on school trips without needing a passport.

Conference notes that this will cause severe economic damage to arts and culture sectors, with negative impacts to the national and local economies, exacerbated by the government's domestic policies, which threaten to damage the UK's world-leading arts and culture sectors, including cutting funding for arts-based university courses, downgrading arts in the school curriculum and leaving creative industry businesses woefully under-supported during the coronavirus pandemic.

Conference condemns the creation of obstacles to musicians and actors performing in the EU, and to EU artists performing in the UK, as well as their staff, and welcomes the calls for paperwork-free travel from artists such as Elton John.

Conference further condemns the decision of the Government to leave the Erasmus Plus scheme; and notes with concern that the replacement Turing Scheme:

- I. Is less accessible and less well-funded than the Erasmus Plus scheme, excluding youth and adult education, and so fails to achieve its stated aim of 'levelling up'.
- II. Has no basis for reciprocity, unlike Erasmus Plus, and therefore restricts the ability of EU students to study at UK higher and further education institutions.
- III. Will risk further the shortage of modern foreign language teachers in UK schools and likely reduce the take-up of modern foreign languages in the long term.

Conference further notes that the Government's visa scheme for young people aged 18–30 (the Youth Mobility Scheme) is not currently applicable to EU/EEA member states.

Conference congratulates Kirsty Williams' efforts in Wales to establish an Erasmus-style scheme to fix the deficiencies of the Turing Scheme; and notes that the SNP has refused to support such a scheme, despite their vocal complaints about the UK's departure from Erasmus Plus.

Conference reaffirms:

- A. The Liberal Democrats' commitment, as set out in the Spring 2021 conference motion The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the Future of the UK-EU relationship, to:
 - i) Demonstrating the benefits to UK citizens and businesses of a much closer relationship compared to the government's inadequate measures.
 - ii) Recommending roadmaps for the UK to rejoin the Customs Union, Single Market and other EU agencies and programmes as appropriate.
 - iii) Maximising public support for eventual UK membership of the EU.

- B. The Liberal Democrats' support for a longer-term objective of UK membership of the EU, as set out in the September 2020 conference motion 'The UK and Europe'.

- C. The Liberal Democrats' commitment to free movement of people as part of a longer-term objective of UK membership of the EU and its institutions.

Conference therefore calls on the government to begin to restore the UK's cultural links with EU member states, by:

- 1. Rejoining the Erasmus Plus scheme.

- 2. Prior to any re-entry of Erasmus Plus, following the steps taken by Kirsty Williams to improve the Turing Scheme, including by:
 - a) Establishing reciprocal partnerships between UK and EU institutions.
 - b) Improving (and in some cases establishing) the ability of further and vocational education providers, as well as adult education, youth work settings and schools to access the scheme.
 - c) Ensuring that the same level of funding is provided for the Turing Scheme as would have been provided by the UK for Erasmus Plus.

- 3. Establishing a European cultural fund, to ensure that young people can access modern foreign language teaching and cultural opportunities regardless of their backgrounds.

- 4. Extending the Youth Mobility Scheme to EEA member states on a reciprocal basis.

- 5. Improving access to the Youth Mobility Scheme by:
 - a) Increasing the number of visas available to meet demand.

- b) Abolishing the fees for these visas, including the Immigration Health Surcharge.
 - c) Promoting the scheme to UK citizens.
 - d) Increasing the age limit from 18 to 30 to 18 to 35.
 - e) Expanding the length of the visa from two to three years.
6. Negotiating passport- and visa-free school visits to EU member states, on a reciprocal basis.
 7. Simplifying visa arrangements for students attending bona fide language schools.
 8. Rejoining Creative Europe.
 9. Negotiating paperwork-free and cost-free travel and work short-term within the EU for UK artists and their support staff, equipment and hauliers, on a reciprocal basis.
 10. Encouraging town twinning, including cultural, artistic and educational exchanges, between towns in the UK and EU.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion updated existing European policy in regards to education.

It built on existing policy as set out in the policy motion The UK and Europe (September 2020).

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion 276 to 0.

Responding to the Crisis in Afghanistan

Conference notes:

- i) The Taliban takeover of almost all of Afghanistan by military force and without legitimacy from its people.
- ii) The deeply alarming expansion of extrajudicial killings and disappearances of government officials, journalists, and civil society activists, which is plunging the country into a state of terror.
- iii) The Taliban's disregard for human rights and persecution of marginalised groups, including women and girls; LGBT+ people; and religious, ethnic and cultural minority groups.
- iv) The greater levels of violence and abuse to which Afghan women and girls are subject to, and the risks of the deterioration of their basic human rights, eg. such as rights in education, work, healthcare, and basic civil liberties.
- v) The additional barriers, including but not limited to proving their identities, which are often faced by LGBT+ individuals seeking asylum in the UK.
- vi) The UK's responsibility to the Afghan people following twenty years' intervention in the country.
- vii) The UK Government's culpability for a situation which has resulted in millions of Afghans living in fear.
- viii) The betrayal of Afghan interpreters and many others who supported the UK's work in Afghanistan.
- ix) The moral negligence and abject complacency of UK Government ministers, in particular the Foreign Secretary, as the Taliban took territory across the country, resulting in thousands of those who supported us being left behind.
- x) The UK's derisory commitment of taking in just 5,000 Afghan refugees this year under the new settlement scheme.
- xi) The potential for international terrorist groups to re-use Afghanistan as a safe haven to plan, train and launch acts of terror.

Conference believes that:

- a) Standing up for human rights, oppressed minority groups, and those facing persecution is at the core of liberal values.
- b) It is essential that the international community speaks with one voice and works together on humanitarian crises and on the fight against human rights violations.
- c) The UK Government must honour its obligations to the Afghan people.

Conference therefore calls on the UK Government to:

1. Work with the international community and neighbouring countries on the provision of safe, legal passages for those who wish to leave Afghanistan.
2. Support Afghan refugees, providing humanitarian visas, speeding up the process of asylum claims, revisiting previously rejected asylum claims, and ensuring that Local Authorities receive sufficient funding for refugee settlement.
3. Implement the calls from the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants to scrap the “resettlement-only” plans in the Nationality and Borders Bill, grant immediate asylum to Afghan asylum-seekers already in the UK, release Afghan nationals unfairly held in immigration detention centres, and expand the family reunion route.
4. Prioritise vulnerable groups in refugee settlement, working with women’s organisations, LGBT+ organisations, and journalist agencies, acknowledging the barriers faced by Afghan women and girls, who are vulnerable to gender-based violence and often have caring responsibilities; the Afghan LGBT+ community, who have difficulty disclosing their identities; and others.
5. Increase Official Development Assistance to those in need in Afghanistan and the region as part of a reinstatement of the 0.7% GNI international development target, and put pressure on the Taliban to ensure that aid workers who are women can continue their work.
6. Support local and international gender-based violence services to ensure that Afghan women and girls - whether they have been able to flee Afghanistan or not v- receive help and support.
7. Expand the Armed Forces Covenant to include Afghan soldiers and interpreters who have worked with British forces in Afghanistan.
8. Take urgent action to stop terrorism from spreading its roots in Afghanistan once again, including by proscribing the Islamic State Khorasan Province (ISKP) and convening a European Security Summit to respond to the crisis in Afghanistan.
9. Launch an urgent, immediate public inquiry into the Government’s intervention in Afghanistan throughout 2001 to 2021.
10. Use all diplomatic means to support regional security and good governance in Afghanistan.
11. Consider offering any relevant and appropriate diplomatic and military resources for any United Nations or other multilateral efforts to provide humanitarian relief in Afghanistan, including the potential use of peacekeepers.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion created new foreign, international development and refugee policy, in response to the US withdrawal from Afghanistan and the Taliban’s takeover of the country.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 267 to 4.

Towards a Fair Global Corporation Tax System

Conference celebrates the historic agreement at the G7, championed by the Biden administration, to create an international corporation tax system, aiming to tackle tax avoidance by large multinationals.

Conference believes that:

- i) The G7 agreement is a long overdue step towards making the international economy fairer and ensuring that some of the largest and most profitable corporations in the world pay their fair share of tax.
- ii) The agreement's benefits can be maximised through improvements that will address certain weaknesses.
- iii) Business tax shouldn't be punitive or stifle innovation, but large profitable corporations operating in the UK should pay their fair share of tax.
- iv) Multinational corporations and tech giants should contribute to the economic rebuilding from Coronavirus.
- v) Businesses of the future should be better constituted to contribute to the good of society both in the UK and around the world, as well as being better regulated and effectively taxed.

Conference notes that:

- I. Under 'pillar one' of the agreement, all multinational companies making profit margins over 10% will have 20% of their global profits beyond that threshold reallocated on the basis of where their customers are, to be taxed in those countries at the local corporation tax rate.
- II. Under 'pillar two', multinationals must pay a minimum corporation tax of 15%, and if the rate in a jurisdiction is less than 15%, then the difference between the effective rate in that jurisdiction and 15% will be taxed in the country where the company is headquartered.
- III. As part of the deal, the UK Government agreed to withdraw the Digital Services Tax (DST), which is levied at 2% of the revenues of search engines, social media services and online marketplaces operating in the UK.
- IV. The G7 deal is subject to further negotiations via the G20, and ratification by national legislatures.

Conference notes with concern that:

- A. The UK Government failed to back the Biden administration's original proposal for a global minimum rate of 21%, instead pushing for it to be lowered to 15% – despite having raised UK corporation tax to 25% (effective in 2023).

- B. According to the think tank IPPR, the UK exchequer would have gained an additional £6.8 billion a year under a minimum rate of 21%.
- C. The UK Government has not published an analysis of how much it expects to raise from this proposed system, and hasn't disclosed when it will withdraw the DST.
- D. The UK Government pressed for big banks to be exempt from the agreement, and seeks to create eight tax-free freeports in England.
- E. Analysis suggests that the replacement of the DST with the current version of 'pillar one' in the UK will result in a combined tax cut of £232.5 million for Amazon, Facebook, Google and eBay.
- F. Experts have warned that if UK Corporation tax payments count towards liabilities under 'pillar one', Amazon, Facebook, Google and eBay will not see any significant change in their corporation tax bill in the UK.
- G. Unless the deal is improved, Amazon could be exempt from paying tax in the UK under 'pillar one', as its overall profit margin does not exceed 10%.
- H. The proposed minimum rate of 15% is significantly lower than the average OECD rate of 23.5% and similar to the corporation tax rates of Lichtenstein (12.5%), Ireland (12.5%) and Switzerland (14%).
- I. According to Oxfam, the 15% minimum rate fails to benefit the finances of developing countries, as they will continue to face unfair competition from tax havens.
- J. The UK Government failed to implement a Windfall Tax to recoup some of the record profits large corporations and tech giants enjoyed due to public health restrictions.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat commitments to:

- a) Ensure that all businesses operating in the UK pay tax in the UK on those operations, restricting the ability of multinationals to unfairly shift profits out of the UK to low tax jurisdictions.
- b) A business tax system that encourages investment, with simplified capital allowances, an increase in the Annual Investment Allowance ensuring that businesses obtain tax relief for productive investment, and higher Writing Down Allowances to encourage more investment by the largest businesses.
- c) Introducing a General Anti-Avoidance Rule, setting a target for HM Revenue and Customs to reduce the tax gap and investing in more staff to enable them to meet it.

Conference further calls on the Government to:

- 1. Back President Biden's proposal for a global minimum rate of corporation tax at 21%, and persuade other countries to do the same.

2. Listen to developing countries' concerns and ensure that they will benefit from the new system.
3. Work for the broadest possible adoption of these measures via the G20, the OECD and other international organisations.
4. Resist international pressure to remove the DST before the new system is fully operational.
5. Ensure that the implementation of 'pillar one' in the UK does not lead to a tax cut for some of largest and most profitable tech companies in the world such as Amazon, Facebook, Google and eBay.
6. Ensure that profitable subsidiaries of large business groups pay tax in their own right as necessary, so that tech giants such as Amazon aren't exempt from new rules due to the 10% profit-margin threshold.
7. Ensure that current UK Corporation Tax payments don't count towards liabilities arising under 'pillar one', which would lead to a tax break for large multinationals.
8. Publish its official financial analysis setting out the agreement's expected impact on the UK Exchequer.
9. Develop a strategy to boost UK startups and growth-stage companies that create high-skill, high-wage jobs, with a particular focus on companies that can help tackle the climate emergency, for example cooperatives, mutual, and social enterprises.
10. Publish a report analysing the effect on the UK Exchequer and on competition of a Windfall Tax on the super-profits of large corporations that benefited from public health restrictions during the pandemic.

Applicability: Federal.

Background Briefing

This motion updated and developed economic policy, specifically the UK government's response to US President Biden's global minimum corporation tax plan.

It built on previous policy in the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019) and policy motion Business Tax Reform: Fair for Business and Fair for Society (September 2019).

Amendments: Conference passed one amendment

The amendment added paragraph G.

Conference passed the amendment by 179 to 15.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 207 to 11.

Towards a Lasting Peace in Israel and Palestine

Conference believes wholeheartedly in the universal liberal principles of human rights, democracy, international law, and the self-determination of peoples.

Conference welcomes the role of Yair Lapid, leader of Liberal International partner Yesh Atid, in the formation of the new Israeli government and hopes that this moment of change may offer the chance of a fresh approach to the peace process.

Conference deeply regrets the deaths of Palestinian and Israeli civilians in the escalation in May 2021, unequivocally condemns all acts of indiscriminate violence, noting that there is no excuse for the targeting of civilians, especially children, and notes that the escalation was caused by long-term underlying tensions which must be addressed if a lasting peace rather than a short-term truce is to be achieved.

Conference notes the deteriorating human rights situation in Israel and Palestine as detailed in reports, notably those published by B'Tselem and Human Rights Watch detailing transgressions by the Israeli government.

Conference condemns all human rights abuses committed by Hamas in Gaza and the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank, as outlined in reports including notably the 2018 Human Rights Watch publication *Two Authorities, One Way, Zero Dissent*.

Conference regrets that Hamas's attitude to the conflict, including its rhetoric, its incitement and its refusal to recognise the state of Israel, is itself a significant barrier to peace.

Conference further regrets the position of the UK Prime Minister when he opposed the ICC investigation into alleged crimes committed in Palestine, noting that the ICC has jurisdiction given that Palestine, like the UK, is a signatory to the Rome Statute.

Conference affirms that given the 54 year old Israeli occupation and that, under international law, occupation is meant to be temporary, the ongoing Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory is illegal under international law.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrats' commitment to:

- A. A two-state solution in which Israel and Palestine both exist with secure boundaries based on the 1967 lines with two capitals in Jerusalem recognised in international law with normal relations (including diplomatic, security and trade relations) between them and with their neighbours.

- B. The right of Israel and Palestine to territorial integrity under international law, and that any peace negotiations must allow the possibility of negotiations on fair and equal land swaps if replacing existing boundaries, namely the pre-1967 lines.
- C. Condemnation of all threats and acts of violence and unlawful use of force such as war crimes and crimes against humanity, or extra-judicial killing, whoever the perpetrators may be.
- D. The belief that any such threats and acts of violence or force will only make a just settlement more difficult to achieve.
- E. Immediate recognition of Palestine as a sovereign independent state by the UK Government based on the 1967 lines.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

1. Work with the international community to facilitate a new peace process and set out a route map to lasting peace including confidence-building measures, especially by working with our EU partners and seeking to use any UK influence with President Biden.
2. Urge those states and actors in the region which have not yet recognised the State of Israel to do so, as Egypt did in 1979 and as the Palestine Liberation Organization did in 1988.
3. Express its regret that Palestinian elections were cancelled and engage with the international community to press that the Palestinian Authority reschedules free and fair democratic elections as soon as possible and that the Israeli government permits free and full campaigning and voting, notably in East Jerusalem.
4. Press for the Palestinian Authority to enshrine 'crimes against humanity' in Palestinian law and to strengthen the independence of their judiciary.
5. Apply pressure on the Palestinian Authority and Hamas, where appropriate, to halt persecution of or discrimination against marginalised groups, including the LGBT+ community and women, civil society organisations and democratic opposition.
6. Call on the Israeli and Palestinian authorities to do more to stop incitement and hate speech in their media, their respective curricula and in political discourse.
7. Recognise the tensions among civilians both between and within Israel and Palestine and accordingly increase funding for the region, including by:

- a) Actively supporting humanitarian and civil society efforts within Israel and Palestine to promote peace, including the creation of an international fund for peace, such as the fund proposed by the Alliance for Middle East Peace whose purpose is to create a climate for peace in which the existing status quo, incitement and the language of hatred are seen as unacceptable.
 - b) Providing increased support for UNRWA.
8. Respect the right of the ICC or any other neutral internationally recognised body to investigate possible international crimes in Israel and Palestine according to their mandates and remits, and hold those responsible to account where there are breaches of international law.
 9. Urge continued adherence to the status quo agreement on the holy sites in Jerusalem.
 10. Declare that illegal Israeli settlements represent a de facto annexation of Palestinian territory and that such settlements are a major but not sole factor in making the search for a lasting peace ever more difficult to achieve.
 11. Ensure that trade is used as a tool for peace and shared prosperity in all nations by:
 - a) Promoting trade links with Israel and Palestine and increasing cooperation especially in science, technology and medicine.
 - b) Ensuring that the UK Government's approach to international trade promotes human rights and adheres to the international rule of law and protects the interests of British businesses trading legitimately with Palestinian businesses in the occupied territories.
 - c) Acknowledging that illegal settlements represent a breach of international law, and that any UK trade which bolsters such activity is sustaining this breach, by legislating to cease trade with illegal settlements, unless and until a negotiated peace settlement is reached.
 - d) Engaging with the UN database on companies operating in the illegal settlements, including supplying information and requesting regular publication of reports from the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights.
 - e) Publishing an assessment of the impact of UK business dealings and the role of UK-linked supply chains in sustaining the illegal settlements.
 - f) Ensuring that there is equality of treatment for Israelis and Palestinians in the rules for visa free travel to the UK.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion updated foreign policy in response to the recent formation of a new Israeli government.

It built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019), policy motion The Centenary of the Balfour Declaration (2017) and policy motion A Holistic Pathway to Peace in the Middle East (September 2014).

Amendments: Conference passed two amendments.

The first amendment added to 11b a reference to protecting British business interests in Palestine and 11f regarding visa free travel.

Conference passed the amendment by 262 to 17.

The second amendment added line 11d, calling for a cessation of trade with illegal settlements in Palestine.

Conference passed the amendment by 206 to 64.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 271 to 14.

Tackling the Climate Emergency: Proposals for Carbon Pricing (Carbon Pricing Policy Paper)

Conference recognises the accelerating urgency of the need to tackle the climate crisis, and the failure of the Conservative government to put in place proposals to meet the UK's net zero target.

Conference recalls that in 2019 conference endorsed policy paper 139, *Tackling the Climate Emergency*, which set out a comprehensive programme of emissions reductions, including a sharp cut, to 25 per cent of baseline, over ten years, mainly from the power and heating sectors, followed by a more gradual reduction from those most sectors more difficult to address.

Conference also recognises that the paper did not contain detailed proposals for the use of carbon pricing to reduce emissions, and accordingly endorses policy paper 139A, *Tackling the Climate Emergency: Proposals for Carbon Pricing*, as a supplementary set of proposals to accompany those in policy paper 139.

Conference believes that increasing the cost of using fossil fuels through carbon taxes, emissions trading schemes or other pricing instruments must play an important part in decarbonising the British economy as fast as possible, but that there are dangers in applying too blunt an approach.

Conference therefore endorses the following principles on which the paper's proposals rest:

- A. Carbon pricing policies which help deliver a just transition, which shares the burdens of decarbonisation equitably.
- B. Carbon pricing policies to be used to target the biggest polluters and those activities where emissions can most swiftly be reduced, in a way that is fair to individuals and businesses.
- C. Support and incentives to be offered to smaller emitters, such as households, to reduce emissions before applying carbon pricing to their energy bills.
- D. Carbon pricing instruments to be combined with other approaches, including regulation, information and subsidy, in order to lead to better and faster outcomes than when used in isolation.
- E. The UK to collaborate closely with the EU, cooperating in carbon pricing policies to maximise impact and minimise problems for business trading across the border.

Conference welcomes the paper's detailed proposals to:

1. Accelerate the decarbonisation of power and industry (alongside our existing proposals to support the development of renewable power and zero-carbon industrial processes) by:
 - a) Raising the price of allowances in the UK Emissions Trading System (ETS) by reducing their number and increasing the auction reserve price, thereby strengthening the incentives for large emitters to cut emissions.
 - b) Extending emissions trading to cover suppliers of fossil fuels currently outside the ETS.
 - c) Linking the UK ETS to the EU ETS, creating a larger market for trading allowances and thereby improving its effectiveness.
 - d) Introducing, in collaboration with the EU, a carbon border adjustment mechanism for high-emission products such as metals or chemicals, protecting UK businesses from competition from imports not facing similar costs.
 - e) Simplifying the existing system of energy taxes by abolishing the Carbon Support Price and the Climate Change Levy, which will be no longer needed once the UK ETS is more effective.

2. Accelerate the decarbonisation of housing (alongside our existing proposals to provide free home insulation to low-income home-owners, introduce a zero-carbon standard for new buildings and require landlords to raise the energy rating of their properties) by:
 - a) Widening the list of energy and emissions-saving products enjoying the 5 per cent rate of VAT, and extending this lower rate to all household solar PV and battery systems.
 - b) Allowing owners to offset spending on insulation, low-carbon heat sources, EV charging points and climate adaptation measures against their income tax bills.
 - c) Graduating Stamp Duty Land Tax by the energy rating of the property being sold, and offering refunds to house purchasers if they improve the rating within one year of purchase.
 - d) Working with mortgage providers to encourage them to support energy-saving and zero-carbon measures, including requiring them to report their lending for climate-related home investments, and requiring buyers and mortgage providers to be made aware of the extent to which the property falls below the target energy rating.
 - e) Protecting households from sudden price increases by delaying by ten years the extension of emissions trading to suppliers of fossil fuels to homes.
 - f) Keeping electricity bills stable by transferring some levy funding for renewables from electricity to gas bills and to general taxation.

3. Accelerate the decarbonisation of transport (alongside our existing proposals to end the sale of new fossil fuel cars and small vans by 2030, promote cycling and walking, and invest in public transport) by:
 - a) Reinstating the indexation of road fuel duty, graduating VED by fuel efficiency and increasing rates for fossil fuel vehicles overall, reducing company car tax for electric vehicles and increasing it for fossil fuel vehicles.
 - b) Replacing the limited electric vehicle purchase grant with a 5 per cent VAT rate (up to a ceiling), to be phased out as the market expands, and introducing a zero-emission-vehicle mandate for manufacturers.
 - c) Limit the growth in demand for flights by ensuring that no net increase in airport runways across the UK takes place and banning flights where direct rail transport is available for the same journey, up to 2.5 hours, unless planes are alternative-fuelled.
 - d) Limit demand for flying by reforming Air Passenger Duty to target the most frequent flyers, and introducing VAT on first-class and business travel.
 - e) Introducing a charge on airlines for each take-off, and on flights by private jets.
 - f) Collaborating with the EU in extending the UK ETS to non-EEA flights and in placing a specific excise tax on airline fuel.
 - g) Including shipping emissions in the UK ETS.

4. Put in place further measures to:
 - a) Prioritise climate change mitigation in agricultural support systems, including measures to increase soil carbon, tree planting and woodland creation.
 - b) Work with farmers and manufacturers to support the development of zero-emissions technologies for agricultural machinery, after which red diesel can be included in the UK ETS.
 - c) Require a full climate impact assessment of proposed UK free trade agreements to be made public before the agreements are finalised.
 - d) Provide incentives for negative emissions strategies, including technological and nature-based solutions.
 - e) Boost confidence and stimulate private sector investment by introducing a government-supported Green Finance Guarantee Scheme to offer lenders the assurances they need to provide meaningful funding for renewable energy generation, energy efficiency and green infrastructure.

Applicability: Federal; except 2. c) (lines 64–66) which is England and Wales.

Background briefing

This motion updated climate change policy, specifically introducing carbon pricing through measures such as emissions trading and a frequent flyer levy.

It built on previous policy in the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019), the policy motion Tackling the Climate Emergency (2019), and policy paper 109, Green Growth and Green Jobs (2013).

Separate votes: Conference held a separate vote to delete lines 3d and e, which was rejected by 265 to 50.

Amendments: Conference passed one amendment

The first amendment added paragraph 4e on green finance.

Conference passed the amendment by 307 to 18.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 363 to 16.

The Climate Change Conference and the UK Government

Conference notes that the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (CoP26), which will take place in Glasgow in October / November 2021, chaired by the UK government, will offer the first chance since the Paris Agreement was negotiated in 2015 to review the emissions reduction targets countries have set themselves under the terms of that agreement.

Conference notes with concern that countries' levels of ambition so far fall far short of what is required to achieve the targets set out in the Paris Agreement.

Conference further notes that although carbon dioxide emissions fell during 2020 (as a result mainly of the Coronavirus lockdowns reducing transport use), this is likely only to be a temporary reduction.

Conference recognises the need for the UK government to adopt a more proactive role, as chair of the conference, in encouraging countries to adopt more ambitious targets, but that it lacks the credibility to do this because of Conservative ministers' comprehensive failures to support policies that will achieve the UK's own net zero target, including failing to set out a strategy for meeting net zero and, among other decisions, cutting overseas aid from 0.7% to 0.5% of GNP and scrapping the Green Homes Grant scheme and putting nothing in its place to support home insulation.

Conference recognises the need for the UK government to adopt a proactive role in highlighting the importance of local government in achieving net zero across the world. Globally, the Local Governments and Municipal Authorities (LGMA) constituency have called for COP26 to be recognised as the 'Multilevel Action COP' in acknowledgment of the fact that more than half of the emissions cuts needed rely on people and businesses taking up low-carbon solutions – decisions that are made at a local and individual level.

Conference welcomes the leadership shown by other governments, notably the Biden Administration in the US, in persuading major economies to adopt more ambitious targets and in increasing climate finance, and applauds the fact that 127 countries have now announced net zero targets by mid-century at the latest.

Conference therefore calls on the UK government, as chair of CoP26, to:

- a) Press all governments to raise their short-term targets for emissions reductions, and to adopt net zero targets, in line with the commitments they made under the Paris Agreement.
- b) Propose the inclusion of a dedicated chapter for local governments in the official agreement reached at COP26, recognising the importance of subnational actors

- in co-designing and delivering climate action and seeking to ensure that local government is politically and financially empowered to meet that ambition.
- c) Ensure that developed countries fulfil their pledge to deliver at least \$100 billion per year to help developing countries decarbonise their economies and protect against climate impacts.
 - d) Foster the formation of coalitions of like-minded countries to advance specific emission-cutting goals, such as phasing out coal or protecting forests.
 - e) Reach agreement on an international framework to protect poor nations against climate change impacts and compensate them for damages.
 - f) Develop mechanisms to shift investment from fossil fuel use into clean energy, including by aiming to reach international agreement on:
 - i) Banning new listings of, and bond issuances for, fossil fuel companies producing, processing or distributing coal, oil or gas whose primary purpose is for energy or transport.
 - ii) Requiring such firms already listed to produce within two years coherent plans to reach net zero in line with the IEA's Net Zero Emissions by 2050 Scenario (NZE, 1.5°C) that notes no new investment is needed in any new coal, oil and gas, anywhere, as from now.
 - iii) Requiring fossil fuel company boards and their bankers to report on when they will cease investment in new fossil fuels, and for this to be put to an annual vote of shareholders and by introducing such measures in the UK.

Conference also calls on the UK government to take steps urgently to increase its credibility and effectiveness as chair of the conference by:

1. Announcing a comprehensive strategy to meet the UK's own net zero target, including in particular urgent action to reduce emissions from buildings, industry, aviation, surface transport and agriculture, food and land use, and also a wide-ranging strategy for adaptation to climate impacts.
2. Committing to empower local governments and municipal authorities through a shared fiscal and policy framework between central and local government to meet net zero targets and climate adaptation priorities.
3. Working together as closely as possible with the UK's neighbours in the EU, including adopting joint targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions and cooperating in policy frameworks such as emissions trading schemes and border carbon adjustment mechanisms, thereby increasing the UK's weight in the international negotiations.

Applicability: Federal

Background briefing

This motion updated energy and environmental policy, as well as creating new policy specifically responding to the CoP26 conference.

It built on previous policy in the General Election Manifesto Stop Brexit and Build a Brighter Future (2019) and policy paper 139, Tackling the Climate Emergency (2019).

Amendments: Conference passed two amendments

The first amendment added lines i, ii and iii.

Conference passed the amendment by 242 to 12.

The second amendment added a new paragraph highlighting the need for the UK government to adopt a proactive role in highlighting the importance of local government in achieving net zero.

Conference passed the second amendment 268 to 5.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 295 to 3.

The Uyghur Genocide

Conference notes that:

- A. There have been eyewitness reports and footage of the widespread human rights violations against Uyghurs by the People's Republic of China in the province of Xinjiang.
- B. These violations include forced sterilisation, torture, restrictions on childrens' names, destruction of religious sites, forced separation of families, and detainment in re-education camps.
- C. The most recent figures from Adrian Zenz, senior fellow in China studies at the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, suggest that over 1.5 million Uyghurs have been forcibly detained in internment camps, with a further half a million children indefinitely separated from their parents in re-education 'schools'.
- D. Disturbing accounts of the aforementioned re-education camps have been released by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists in the China Cables.
- E. The Sanctions and anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 includes gross human rights violations as grounds for imposing sanctions on a person or an entity.
- F. In July 2020, the UK government introduced Magnitsky-style sanctions under this legislation on specific nationals of Russia, Saudi Arabia, and Myanmar as well as on two organisations involved with North Korean gulags.
- G. The Liberal Democrats have a proud history of supporting the rights of oppressed minority groups around the world.

Conference notes with great concern the recent atrocities committed in Xinjiang, namely:

- a) The systemic use of forced sterilisation, forced abortion and involuntary admission of intrauterine devices on Uyghur women by the Chinese state in order to lower the birth rate in the Uyghur population.
- b) The harrowing testimonies of interned Uyghurs recently published in a report by Amnesty International which documents that:
 - i) Detained Uyghurs are physically punished if they speak a language other than Mandarin.
 - ii) Physical and non-physical torture is used against detained Uyghurs.
 - iii) All detained Uyghurs are subject to non-stop surveillance, depriving them of any privacy.
 - iv) Uyghurs outside of re-education camps are subject to intense surveillance, with the use of facial recognition, the collection of biometric data and invasive interviews by government officials.

Conference welcomes:

- I. The work of Alistair Carmichael MP, as Co-Chair of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Uyghurs, calling for:
 - A. Recognition of the actions taken against the Uyghurs as a genocide.
 - B. Sanctions in response to the persecution of Uyghurs.
- II. Votes taken in Parliament to declare that China is committing a genocide against the Uyghurs.
- III. Layla Moran MP, Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs, explicitly calling actions of the Chinese government in Xinjiang a genocide.

Conference believes that:

- i) The Chinese government's actions in Xinjiang constitute a genocide, based on the description of genocide as laid out in Article 6 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.
- ii) The deliberate, systemic persecution of, and violence against, the Uyghur population of China well surpasses the definition of gross human rights violations and thus meets the standard for imposing sanctions on persons or entities under the Sanctions and anti-Money Laundering Act 2018.
- iii) The UK Government has a moral duty to take actions to oppose human rights abuses.

Conference therefore calls on both the UK Government and the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party to be explicit in their condemnation of the actions of the Chinese state as being that of a genocide.

Conference further calls on the UK Government to:

1. Introduce Magnitsky-style sanctions on persons and entities involved with the persecution of Uyghurs under the Sanctions and anti-Money Laundering Act 2018.
2. Call upon the Chinese government to cease the systemic mass incarceration of the Uyghurs.
3. Grant asylum to Uyghurs fleeing persecution.
4. Call for the reunification of all families where children have been forcibly entered in re-education camps.

5. Boycott the 2022 Olympics in Beijing, unless and until the Chinese government ceases its crimes against humanity in Xinjiang.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion created new policy in response to the Chinese government's policies towards its Uyghur population.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion 301 to 2.

Solving the Supply Chain Crisis

Conference notes with concern:

- i) The empty shelves in supermarkets and shortages reported in a range of other sectors, which are predominantly the result of Brexit and government incompetence.
- ii) That councils have warned of the impact on services such as refuse collections.
- iii) The likely increase in food prices resulting from the increase in wages and other costs required to attract new workers, and from the additional disruption when new checks on the supply chain of EU imports are introduced.
- iv) That these price rises will hit those worst off the hardest, at a time when the Government plans to remove the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift.
- v) The lack of qualified staff in many sectors of the economy, such as the road haulage business, logistics companies, and the food-processing industry.
- vi) The costs, bureaucracy and inflexibility of the Conservative Government's "skilled worker" visa system.
- vii) The return of many EU citizens to their home countries due to Brexit and the pandemic and the difficulty of recruiting from the EU with loss of free movement.
- viii) The calls by farmers for seasonal support in the harvest season.
- ix) The effect that the supply chain crisis is having and is forecast to have on the post-Covid economic recovery.
- x) The announcement of a retirement scheme for farmers, without any guarantees that new entrants will replace them.
- xi) The phasing out of existing farm payments without the new Environmental Land Management scheme (ELM) being ready until 2028.
- xii) That the Conservative government's potential trade deal with Australia, which is likely to establish a precedent for further trade agreements, fails to guarantee British standards, including on animal welfare, food safety and environmental protection.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitments to:

- a) A long-term economic strategy, including investment in jobs and training.
- b) Make the £20 per week Universal Credit uplift permanent.
- c) Free movement of people as part of a longer-term objective of UK membership of the EU, as set out in the September 2020 conference motion 'The UK and Europe'.
- d) Support for farmers by broadening the remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator and supporting them with access to markets.

- e) Introduce a National Food Strategy, including the use of public procurement policy, to promote the production and consumption of healthy, sustainable and affordable food and cut down on food waste.

Conference calls for the UK Government to:

1. Abandon the plan to scrap the Universal Credit uplift at the end of September 2021.
2. Engage with local authorities to help address the impact on local services.
3. Scrap the arbitrary salary threshold for work visas, which prevents British businesses from recruiting the workers they need.
4. End the arbitrary categorisation of workers into “skilled” and “unskilled” for visa purposes.
5. Abandon their divisive rhetoric on immigration and scrap the Nationality and Borders Bill.
6. Increase training places for shortage occupations, such as HGV drivers, and invest in HGV test facilities.
7. End the phase out of current farm payments until the new ELMs scheme is ready.
8. Encourage new entrants to farming by promoting the sector as a career choice, increasing funding to agricultural colleges and reviewing the Kickstart scheme with a view to expanding access to the scheme among under 25s.
9. Commission a review by the Migration Advisory Committee on the impact of ending free movement on the food and farming sector.
10. Ensure that any future trade deals are signed off by Parliament.
11. Protect British farmers by ensuring that imported food in trade deals meets UK standards of animal welfare and environmental protection.
12. Strengthen the role of the Trade and Agriculture commission, to allow it to review the impact of international trade deals before Parliament approves it.
13. Within the provisions of the Trade and Cooperation Agreement, agree a veterinary agreement with the EU.
14. Enshrine alignment with EU SPS standards in legislation.

Applicability: Federal; except d) & e) (lines 41–46), and 6., 7. & 8. (lines 58–65), which are England only.

Background Briefing

This motion updated trade and European policy in response to the supply chain crisis.

It built on existing policy as set out in the policy motion The EU–UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the Future of the UK–EU Relationship (March 2021).

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 287 to 3.

What Liberal Democrats Believe (Principles and Values Policy Paper)

Conference endorses policy paper 142, *What Liberal Democrats Believe*, as a concise expression of the Liberal Democrats' principles and values – its philosophy – which underpin the party's specific policy proposals.

Conference recognises the party's core values as:

1. Liberty: the right of individuals to make their own decisions about how they live their lives, as long as they do not cause harm to others; our aim is to empower and support individuals to pursue their dreams, to make the most of their talents and to live their lives as they wish.
2. Equality, without which true liberty cannot be realised, which requires an active state to: ensure that no one is held back by poverty, poor health, or discrimination, including on the basis of personal characteristics or beliefs; provide access to education or training, and other public services, including a welfare safety net; and guarantee that everyone enjoys equality before the law.
3. Democracy, through which every citizen is empowered to make their voice heard, without being dominated by entrenched interests or the power of money; checks and balances, so that those in power cannot abuse their positions for personal gain or political advantage; and a plurality of views, where no individual or organisation is deterred from speaking truth to power.
4. Human rights: providing, defending and promoting equal legal rights for everyone to pursue their lives according to their abilities, wishes and means, with no discrimination on the basis of religion or belief, gender, sexuality, age, ethnicity, disability, or minority status in their country of birth or permanent residency.
5. Community: support for a diverse range of organisations that enable individuals to join together in the pursuit of common goals or activities; and the decentralisation of political and economic power to local government and the nations and regions of the UK.
6. Internationalism: support for a fairer and more equal, tolerant and connected world and collaboration with the UK's neighbours – including, ultimately, rejoining the EU – in guaranteeing peace and security, tackling the climate and nature emergencies, standing up to corporate power and spreading prosperity around the world.
7. Environmentalism: acting at home and internationally to promote environmentally sustainable means of production and consumption and living in harmony with nature.

Conference, recognising that no single document can capture the rich diversity of the Liberal Democrat philosophy, encourages party members to discuss and debate this paper

and to produce their own statements of philosophy and to disseminate them within the party.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion updated and restated policy with regard to what the Liberal Democrats believe.

This updates the party's principles and values as set out in policy paper 50, It's About Freedom (2002)

Amendments: Conference passed one amendment

The amendment reworded and expanded line 2 and added in line 5 on human rights.

Conference passed the amendment by 354 to 26.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 298 to 15.

Constitutional Amendments

Empowering Liberal Democrat Values: for People and Planet

Conference recognises the occurrence, from time to time, of public and media questioning as to the values represented by the Liberal Democrats; whilst these are spelled out in some detail in the Preamble to the Constitution of the Party, conference believes that, as we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic to face the twin existential threats of climate change and loss of biodiversity, this would be a good time to review the Preamble and restate our priorities with greater clarity. Conference believes the key value statement relating to the environment currently languishes as the second sentence of the second paragraph of the Preamble and is known to be overlooked by commentators on Liberal Democrat values.

Conference believes that our Party's longevity of support for the primacy of the environment should be strengthened and clarified by the promotion of that sentence to become the second sentence of the first paragraph of the Preamble.

Conference therefore resolves to move from their current position the words: 'We believe that each generation is responsible for the fate of our planet and, by safeguarding the balance of nature and the environment, for the long-term continuity of life in all its forms', and insert them after the words: 'poverty, ignorance and conformity'. This section of the first paragraph of the Preamble would then read as follows:

The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity. We believe that each generation is responsible for the fate of our planet and, by safeguarding the balance of nature and the environment, for the long-term continuity of life in all its forms.

Conference also supports a further change which would reinforce the necessary updating of our approach to global sustainable economic development needed to ensure our environmental concern is made manifest with respect to the paradigm of 'Wellbeing', rather than adhering to the outdated focus on GDP as an economic measure of success.

Conference therefore further resolves to delete from the first sentence of the existing third paragraph the words: 'which encourages the necessary wealth creating processes, develops and uses the skills of the people and works', and insert in their place the words: 'which enables people to thrive in their communities, assessing progress by measuring people's wellbeing. Such an economy will encourage necessary wealth creating processes, develop and use the skills of the people and work'. This section of the third paragraph of the Preamble would then read as follows:

We will foster a strong and sustainable economy which enables people to thrive in their communities, assessing progress by measuring people's wellbeing. Such an economy will encourage necessary wealth creating processes, develop and use the skills of the people and work to the benefit of all, with a just distribution of the rewards of success.

Applicability: Federal.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 183 to 24.

Party Bodies Reform

Conference notes that:

- i. Following the Party Bodies Review Group report into the Specified Associated Organisations (SAOs) and Associated Organisations (AOs), and how both bodies interact and work together with the wider Party, a consultation process has taken place to determine what changes ought to be made.
- ii. That consultation has arrived at a set of constitutional recommendations to replace SAOs and AOs with a new category of 'Affiliated Organisations'.
- iii. The Federal Party should support any SAO/AO that wishes to become an 'Affiliated Organisation' and ought to make all best efforts to ensure a successful transition.

Conference resolves to amend the Constitution as follows:

- A. Remove the current Article 21 and insert a new Article 21:

Article 21: Affiliated Organisations

21.1 Any organisation of persons having a common interest which satisfies the following criteria:

- (a) It has a membership policy which conforms to the principles in Article 3.1 of the Federal Constitution;
- (b) Its objects are consistent with the fundamental values and objectives of the Party;
- (c) Its internal procedures conform with the democratic principles in Article 4.6 (c), (d) and (e); and
- (d) Its internal procedures conform to any rules created under Article 9.6 (b); may apply to the Federal Board or a State Party by the internal procedures of that State Party to become an Affiliated Organisation. The Federal Board, or relevant State Party, may confer such status by their procedures. A list of Affiliated Organisations currently recognised by the Federal Party will be maintained by the Federal People and Development Committee and published on the party's website. State Parties may make similar arrangements.

21.2 The Federal Board shall from time to time review the operation of Affiliated Organisations in the light of the principles and practices established by and pursuant to this Constitution and shall report to the Conference on such reviews.

21.3 Affiliated Organisations shall have the rights granted to them under the Constitution, and relevant rules made thereunder, of the body responsible for the granting of their Affiliated Organisation status. The rights of an Affiliated Organisation under this, or relevant State Party's, Constitution may be suspended by the Federal Board, or relevant State Party, in accordance with internal procedures, if:

- (a) It is not compliant with any statutory or regulatory provisions that are relevant to the party's activities, including the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act and the relevant data protection legislation;
- (b) It is not compliant with this, or its own, Constitution or the rules made thereunder; or
- (c) if events have taken place or are about to take place which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Affiliated Organisation or to the Party as a whole.

21.4 Before suspending the rights of an Affiliated Organisation, the Federal Board, or relevant State Party, shall draw the attention of the Affiliated Organisation to the grounds on which it is proposed to take this action, and shall give the Affiliated Organisation a reasonable time to answer any allegations and/or take any necessary corrective action. An Affiliated Organisation which is suspended under Article 21.3 may appeal from that decision as provided by Article 22 or, if an Affiliated Organisation of a State Party, via that State Party's appeals procedures.

21.5 The suspension of an Affiliated Organisation may be lifted if the Federal Board, or relevant State Party, is satisfied that corrective action has been taken. During the period of its suspension the powers and functions of the Affiliated Organisation and its organs shall be exercised subject to and in accordance with the directions of the Federal Board, or relevant State Party.

21.6 An Affiliated Organisation will have its status as an Affiliated Organisation revoked if one of the following sets of conditions are met:

i. Removal

- (a) The Federal Board, or the relevant State Party, has suspended the Affiliated Organisation; and
- (b) The Federal Board's intended removal of Affiliated Organisation status has been reported in the Federal Board's written report to Conference under Article 8.7 or the State Party's intention has been reported to its members by their own procedures;

or

ii. Resignation

- (a) The Affiliated Organisation, through its own procedures and notifying the Federal Board, or relevant State Party, has resigned its Affiliated status.

21.7 For the purposes of exercising the rights conferred on Affiliated

Organisations by this Constitution and rules made under it:

- (a) The Affiliated Organisation representing youth and students shall have the same rights as a Local Party;
- (b) ALDC shall have the same rights as an Affiliated Organisation; and
- (c) An organisation listed in the Annexe to this Constitution shall until 31st December 2022 continue to exercise the rights it previously enjoyed as a Specified Associated Organisation or an Associated Organisation, and be subject to the duties and obligations including but not limited to suspension and removal, as applied on August 1st 2021. This article shall not apply to any organisation that becomes an Affiliated Organisation.

21.8 The recognition by the Party of Affiliated Organisations shall not prejudice the independence of such organisations.

B. Delete the Annexe and insert a new Annexe:

1. Specified Associated Organisations

Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors and Campaigners (ALDC)

Association of Liberal Democrat Engineers and Scientists (ALDES)

Liberal Democrat Campaign for Racial Equality (LDCRE)

LGBT+ Liberal Democrats

Liberal Democrat Lawyers' Association (LDLA)

Liberal Democrat Women

Young Liberals

Parliamentary Candidates' Association (PCA)

Liberal Democrat Christian Forum (LDCF)

2. Associated Organisations

Association of Liberal Democrat Trades Unionists

Chinese Liberal Democrats

Green Liberal Democrats

Humanist & Secularist Liberal Democrats

Liberal Democrat Action for Land Taxation & Economic Reform

Liberal Democrat Disability Association

Liberal Democrat Education Association

Liberal Democrat European Group
Liberal Democrat Friends of Israel
Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine
Liberal Democrats for Electoral Reform
Liberal Democrats for Seekers of Sanctuary
Liberal International British Group

Consequently, conference resolves to further amend the Constitution as follows:

- a. *In Article 3.2 (b), delete 'a Specified Associated Organisation' and insert 'an Affiliated Organisation'.*
- b. *In Article 3.2 (d), delete 'Specified Associated Organisation or Associated Organisation' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation'.*
- c. *In Article 5.2, delete 'Specified Associated Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations'.*
- d. *In Article 7.5 (a), delete 'Associated Organisations, Specified Associated Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations'.*
- e. *In Article 7.5 (b), delete 'Associated Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations'.*
- f. *In Article 7.6, delete 'Specified Associated Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations'.*
- g. *In Article 9.2 (i) (g), delete 'Specified Associated Organisation' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation'.*
- h. *In Article 9.2 (ii) (e), delete 'ALDC' and insert 'the Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors (ALDC)'.*
- i. *In Article 9.6 (b), delete 'Associated Organisation and Specified Associated Organisation' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation'.*
- j. *In Article 12.5, delete 'SAOs' and insert 'As appropriate, Affiliated Organisations'.*
- k. *In Article 13.2 (i) (f), delete 'SAO representing councillors' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation representing Councillors'.*
- l. *In Article 14.2 (d), delete 'AOs and SAOs as set out in Article 21' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations'.*
- m. *In Article 14.3 (c), delete 'AOs and SAOs as set out in Article 21 and the Annexe to this Constitution' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations' and delete 'SAO which represents youth and/or students' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation which represents youth and/or students'.*
- n. *In Article 15.2 (d), delete 'SAO' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation'.*
- o. *In Article 18.2 (f), delete 'Specified Associated Organisation or Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation or Organisations'.*
- p. *In Article 18.5, delete 'Specified Associated' and insert 'Affiliated'.*
- q. *In Article 20.1, delete 'Specified Associated Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation or Organisations'.*

r. *In Article 22.3 (b), delete 'AO or SAO' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation'.*

Applicability: Federal

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 119 to 7.

Party Bodies Reform: Standing Order Amendment

Conference notes that, subject to the acceptance of the Party Bodies Reform constitutional amendment (F29), the conference standing orders will require updating in order to properly take account of the new status of Affiliated Organisation.

Conference resolves to amend the conference standing orders as follows:

1. In standing order 1.3 (b) delete 'Specified Associated Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations'.
2. In standing order 1.3 (d) delete 'Specified Associated Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations'.

Applicability: Federal.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 117 to 3.

Party Bodies Reform: Rules made under Article 9.6 of the Federal Constitution

Conference notes that, subject to the acceptance of the Party Bodies Reform constitutional amendment (F29), rules will need to be made under Article 9.6 of the Federal Constitution in order to properly take account of the new status of Affiliated Organisation.

Conference resolves to adopt new rules as follows:

- A. Each application for Affiliated Organisation status must:
1. Fulfil the conditions of the Party Constitution in Article 21.1 and those defined for local parties in Article 4.6 (C), (D) and (E);
 2. Have a membership of not less than 30 members of the Liberal Democrats from no fewer than two local parties;
 3. Have a membership policy which:
 - a. Unless specifically agreed by the Federal Board (“the Board”), is organised such that only party members and party members of sister parties¹ may:
 - i. hold the role of officer, including Chair, Secretary, Treasurer and Membership Officer;
 - ii. sit on Federal Party Committees;
 - iii. access party data;
 - iv. receive financial information, or sensitive political information; or
 - v. vote within the Affiliated Organisation.
 - b. Has, if the Affiliated Organisation chooses to admit non-party members, a specified separate status for those members which makes them subject to the Party Disciplinary Process² and eligible to be removed as a member of the Affiliated Organisation by that process. Non-party members of Affiliated Organisations shall otherwise be treated as if they were registered supporters of the party; and
 - c. Requires all Affiliated Organisation members to act in accordance with the Members’ Code of Conduct.

[¹ Sister parties for this purpose shall be defined as the members of ALDE (Alliance of Liberal and Democrats for Europe) and / or the Renew Europe Group and / or the members and associate organisations of Liberal International. The Federal Board reserves the right to exclude parties from this definition if it concludes doing so is in the interests of protecting the party’s reputation.]

[² Refusal to take part in the process will be deemed sufficient basis for someone being removed as a member of an Affiliated Organisation. An Affiliated Organisation which does not suspend such a member, or refuses to

comply with the requirements of the Complaints Process, will itself be subject to suspension or removal.]

4. Be able to demonstrate a commitment to equality of opportunity, including relevant party standards or codes, including the Members' Code of Conduct and any recommended membership standards approved by the Federal People and Development Committee (FPDC);
 5. Maintain full and accurate records of its transactions, including financial reports. Have in place the appropriate administrative procedures and records to ensure compliance with the provisions of any relevant party finance and data protection legislation and take all steps necessary to become/be a compliant accounting unit of the party. The Federal Party and State Parties reserve the right to deny access to services in cases of non-compliance and to impose the financial escalation policy as if the Affiliated Organisation were a local party;
 6. Provide annual reports on their activities to the Board, or relevant State Party, and comply with any reasonable requests for further reporting;
 7. Agree to be subject to the standard review procedure in Appendix II and the procedure for investigating Affiliated Organisation behaviour as set out in Appendix III; and
 8. Provide an explanation that satisfies the FPDC, or relevant State Party, as to why becoming an Affiliated Organisation, with all the attending regulatory and administrative burden, is in the best interests of the applicant and the party. This requirement shall not apply to the Young Liberals or the ALDC.
- B. In addition to the rights conferred by the Federal Constitution, an approved Affiliated Organisation will be entitled to:
1. Nominate a representative, who must be a party member, to policy working groups in circumstances where the remit of such a working group enters into the areas of interest of the organisation, subject to the final decision on composition of working groups remaining a matter for the FPC;
 2. A page on the Federal Party's website and/or a link to its own website (the precise format to be determined by the Chief Executive in consultation with appropriate staff). The Chief Executive must be satisfied that the content is in keeping with the party's aims and objectives, is factually accurate and does not defame or libel any individuals or organisations;
 3. Inclusion in any "new members pack" (the precise format to be determined by the Chief Executive in consultation with appropriate staff and with the organisation concerned);
 4. The ability to use the party's logo, subject to regulations, in its materials; and
 5. Be invited to take part in the Party Body Forum meeting and associated activities.

C. Process of Application to become a Federal Affiliated Organisation

1. Applications for Affiliated Organisation status at Federal level must be made in writing to the Federal Chief Executive ³.

Applications to State Parties shall be made using their own procedures.

Applications will be expected to include the following documentation:

- a. A copy of the organisation's constitution ⁴;
- b. Evidence that it meets the relevant membership requirement set out in A and, including a membership list ⁵;
- c. Written information detailing the applicant organisation's current capabilities in relation to A 5; and
- d. A formal request to HQ for the required assistance to help the applicant become fully compliant with A 4 and A 5 and for further instruction as to how, in practice, to comply with A 6, A 7 and A 8.

[³ Or, to the Federal Chief Executive via the Clerk to the Board.]

[⁴ A model constitution shall be published and from time to time updated by the FPDC, or relevant State Party per their internal procedures.]

[⁵ Groups of members are at liberty to form and create their own membership lists before becoming Affiliated Organisations, but will not have the rights, privileges or responsibilities of an Affiliated Organisation until they complete this process.]

2. If the Chief Executive, personally or via a delegated body, is satisfied with an application made per C 1, they shall direct Federal staff to work with the applicant to support it in meeting the requirements under A.
3. Subject to the Chief Executive being satisfied that the application is in order and on the advice of expert staff with respect to all requirements being met or being on course to be met, they shall ensure that the application is placed on an agenda for consideration by the FPDC at the earliest practical opportunity.
4. Once an application is provisionally accepted by the FPDC it shall gain the status of Candidate Affiliate (see Appendix I – Candidate Affiliates). If a Candidate Affiliate is an existing SAO or AO, it shall at this stage automatically become an Affiliated Organisation as long as it is able to meet the criteria set out in section A. Otherwise it shall automatically become an Affiliated Organisation as soon it does meet the criteria set out in section A.
5. The FPDC shall report, via the Board, on Candidate Affiliates in its report to the next following conference per Article 8.7 of the Federal Constitution. The report shall include the following details for each Candidate Affiliates:
 - a. The name of the Candidate Affiliate;
 - b. A single point of contact for those interested in learning more;

- c. A one-page summary, written by the Candidate Affiliate with wording approved by FPDC, setting out the reason for the Candidate Affiliate becoming an Affiliated Organisation.
6. Subject to the approval of conference, the Board shall confirm whether it wishes to grant the Candidate Affiliate (see Appendix I) the status of Affiliated Organisation at its next suitable meeting. The Board may decide to postpone this decision if the Candidate Affiliate is still in the process of making itself compliant with its legal, regulatory, and constitutional obligations.

Appendix I – Candidate Affiliates

Candidate Affiliates are organisations wishing to become Affiliated Organisations of the Liberal Democrats who have been considered and provisionally approved by the Board or relevant State Party.

Candidate Affiliate status ensures the party has sufficient time to engage with members, such as via conference, before confirming an applicant as an Affiliated Organisation. It also provides time for the applicant to ensure that any work required to become fully compliant with A 1–8 is completed before transition.

Candidate Affiliate status does not apply to any existing SAOs or AOs who fulfil the conditions set out in section A.

Appendix II – Review procedure

In addition to the annual reports of their activity, Affiliated Organisations will be required, at least once every five years, to take part in a formal review.

In conducting the review, the Board will establish a working group who will:

1. Request a written report from the current Executives of the Affiliated Organisations, proving continued compliance with the base requirements for being an Affiliated Organisation set out in section A;
2. Request an additional report from current Executives of Affiliated Organisations which shall include any feedback those Executives wish to provide the Board for the purposes of reviewing the current Affiliated Organisation arrangements.
3. Request a report from the Federal Staff responsible for regulatory and financial compliance summarising issues experienced by the Affiliated Organisations since the last review;
4. Interview Affiliated Organisation Chairs and other members of Affiliated Organisations as the working group deems appropriate, and meet with the Party Bodies Forum.

The working group shall allow Affiliated Organisations at least six weeks to respond to the review. The working group shall report back to the Board on its findings and make recommendations as to how improvements might be made, to the benefit of Affiliated Organisations and the Party. This report shall be publicised to the party membership.

Any Affiliated Organisation which does not take part in this review process will be considered to have resigned per Article 21.6 of the Federal Constitution.

Appendix III - Investigation procedure

When an investigation may be launched

The Board, or relevant State Party Executive, may resolve to investigate an Affiliated Organisation if a voting majority believe there is reasonable grounds to believe the Affiliated Organisation:

- a. Is not or has not been compliant with any statutory or regulatory provisions that are relevant to the party's activities, including the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act and the relevant data protection legislation;
- b. Is not or has not been compliant with this, or its own, Constitution or the rules made thereunder; or
- c. Is or is about to be responsible for events which are or may be seriously detrimental to the Affiliated Organisation or to the Party as a whole.

Non-compliance or obstruction with an investigation will be deemed to be a resignation of Affiliate Organisations status. The Board, and State Parties, reserve the right to launch an investigation without suspending the Affiliated Organisation.

Wherever possible, the Board or State Parties will aim to resolve any matter which may lead to, or require, an investigation informally before launching an investigation.

Anyone wishing to bring grounds for an investigation to the attention of the Board, or relevant State Party, should contact the Party Standards team (standards@libdems.org.uk) or relevant state standards team. Specific complaints against a member of the Party shall be addressed via Article 23 of the Federal Constitution.

Conduct of an investigation

Once the Board, or State Party, has resolved to conduct an investigation it shall appoint an investigator.

The investigator must not be a member of the Affiliated Organisation under investigation and will, unless it is not practical, generally be a member of the Board, or State Party Executive. The investigator:

- a. Must not vote in any decision-making process resulting from their investigation;
- b. Must be granted access to see any documents they request from the Affiliated Organisation;
- c. Must give the Affiliated Organisation an opportunity to mount a defence to any allegations that are made against it – except where doing so runs counter to the Party safeguarding policy or the principles of confidentiality laid out in the Party’s disciplinary system.

The Board, or State Party, will agree, in writing, a remit for the investigator on appointment. This remit need not be made available to the Affiliated Organisation, unless the Affiliated Organisation has been suspended. The remit shall include a timescale for the investigation but this may be extended. The investigator shall address all the points set in the remit but is not precluded from addressing additional points should they arise.

Interviews

In conducting any interviews, the investigator will take notes and give the interviewee the opportunity to agree the accuracy of those notes. Where there are points of disagreement, these should be supplied with the report, but the investigator should not change their notes unless they believe them to be inaccurate. All interviewees should be treated fairly and be given the opportunity to put the points they wish to make.

Report

The investigator shall deliver a report to the Board, or State Party, setting out what they have found, a response to each point in their remit and a recommendation for further action. The further action could be, but is not limited to:

- a. Proposing no further action;
- b. Requesting the Board, or State Party, work with the Affiliated Organisation to improve its workings;
- c. Suspension until corrective action is completed by the Affiliated Organisation;
- d. Removal of Affiliated Organisation status; or

- e. Referral of the Affiliated Organisation, or specific members of the Affiliated Organisation, to the Complaints Process, or if they are not members of the party, to the FPDC.

On receipt of the report, the Board, or State Party, shall determine what action to take. It is not obliged to accept the recommendations and can take other actions.

There is no obligation to make the full report available to the Affiliated Organisation. Content which might later form part of a disciplinary complaint, or any personal information not already in the public domain shall be kept confidential.

The Affiliated Organisation Executive shall, subject to the caveats above, receive notice of the recommendations in the report, the basis for those recommendations and, if the Affiliated Organisation specific direction of what action to take as necessary. The Affiliated Organisation may be required to report, at the Board or State Party's discretion, on progress on directed actions and, if the reporting or reported progress is deemed unsatisfactory, the Affiliated Organisation may face further sanctions.

Nothing in this process shall conflict with Article 21 of the Federal Constitution. Where criminal behaviour is suspected it must be reported to the police.

Appeals

An Affiliated Organisation which is suspended under Article 21.1 of the Federal Constitution or has its status as an Affiliated Organisation revoked under Article 21.6 may appeal from that decision as provided by Article 22 or, if an Affiliated Organisation of a State Party, via that State Party's appeals procedures.

Postscript

Affiliated Organisations are reminded that suspension of Affiliated Organisation status refers to the removal of their rights, privileges and responsibilities as affiliates of the Liberal Democrats. Affiliated Organisations wishing to continue their work, separately to the party, may do so as non-affiliated groups.

Applicability: Federal.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 110 to 6.

Party Bodies Reform: Leadership Election Regulations

Conference notes that, subject to the acceptance of the Party Bodies Reform constitutional amendment (F29), the Leadership Election Regulations will require updating in order to properly take account of the new status of Affiliated Organisation.

Conference resolves to amend the Leadership Election Regulations as follows:

1. In Regulation 6 (a) delete 'Specified Associated Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation or Organisations'.
2. In Regulation 7 delete 'SAOs, AOs' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations'.

Applicability: Federal.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 109 to 6.

Party Bodies Reform: Presidential Election Regulations

Conference notes that subject to the acceptance of the Party Bodies Reform constitutional amendment (F29), the Presidential Election Regulations will require updating in order to properly take account of the new status of Affiliated Organisation.

Conference resolves to amend the Presidential Election Regulations as follows:

1. In Regulation 6 (a) delete 'Specified Associated Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisation or Organisations' .
2. In Regulation 7 delete 'SAOs, AOs' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations'.

Applicability: Federal.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 109 to 6.

Party Bodies Reform: Committee Election Regulations

Conference notes that, subject to the acceptance of the Party Bodies Review constitutional amendment, the Committee Election Regulations will require updating in order to properly take account of the new status of Affiliated Organisation.

Conference resolves to amend the Committee Election Regulations as follows:

1. In Regulation 3 (d) delete 'Specified Associated Organisations' and insert 'Affiliated Organisations'.

Applicability: Federal.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 109 to 6.

Presidential Election Regulations

Conference ratifies the following changes to the Presidential Election regulations:

1. Delete the title and insert: 'PRESIDENT AND VICE PRESIDENT (RESPONSIBLE FOR WORKING WITH ETHNIC MINORITY COMMUNITIES) ELECTION REGULATIONS'.
2. In Regulation 2, insert 'se' and 's' to read: 'The electorate for the purposes of these elections shall ...'.
3. In Regulation 4 A, delete 'The timetable for the election' and insert 'The timetables for these elections'.
4. Delete Regulation 6 A and insert EITHER:

1. 'A candidate for the office of President or Vice President responsible for working with ethnic minority communities shall require the nomination of not less than 200 members in not less than 20 Local Parties (including, for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and/or students).'

OR:

2. 'A candidate for the office of President shall require the nomination of not less than 200 members in not less than 20 Local Parties (including, for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and/or students). A candidate for the office of Vice President responsible for working with ethnic minority communities shall require the nomination of any Local Party, any Regional Party, any State Party, any Specified Associated Organisations, or nominations may be submitted by any ten party members.'

5. Replace Regulation 10 with EITHER:

1. The Federal Board shall agree a spending limit for election expenses, not including travel or subsistence expenses, when setting the timetable for an election. The limit for President and Vice President may be different. No candidate, or their agent, shall exceed this limit in the production of publicity material and all other expenditures connected with the campaign. This shall include any expenditure (or the relevant proportion of any expenditure) incurred before an individual becomes a candidate if the property, services or facilities are used for the purposes of the candidate's election. All donations above £500 must comply with the provisions of Schedule 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.br/>

OR:

2. The Federal Board shall agree a spending limit for election expenses, not including travel or subsistence expenses, when setting the timetable for the

election for President. The limit for elections for Vice President shall be zero, not including travel or subsistence expenses. No candidate, or their agent, shall exceed this limit in the production of publicity material and all other expenditures connected with the campaign. This shall include any expenditure (or the relevant proportion of any expenditure) incurred before an individual becomes a candidate if the property, services or facilities are used for the purposes of the candidate's election. All donations above £500 must comply with the provisions of Schedule 7 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000.

6. If option e) ii) above on election expenses is selected: in Regulation 16, after 'each candidate' insert 'for President'.
7. In Regulation 21, delete 'Executive' and insert 'Board' in both instances.
8. In Regulation 21, delete 'the elections' and insert 'an election for President or Vice President'.

Applicability: Federal.

Amendments: Conference passed two amendments which were presented as options.

The first amendment set out the criteria for standing as a candidate for President or Vice President, options 1 and 2.

Conference voted for option 2 by 105 votes to 52.

The second amendment set out spending limits on President and Vice-President election campaigns, options ei and eii.

Conference voted for eii by 72 to 70.

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 163 to 11.

Updating the Constitution's Language on Equality and Inclusion

Conference resolves to amend the Constitution as follows.

In the Preamble to the Constitution:

- a) Replace 'race, colour, religion or belief, age, disability, sex or sexual orientation' with 'race, ethnicity, caste, heritage, class, religion or belief, age, disability, sex, gender or sexual orientation'.
- b) Replace 'women and men' with 'people'.

Throughout the Constitution:

1. Where the words 'he or she is' occur, replace with 'they are'.
2. Where the words 'his or her' occur, replace with 'their'.

Applicability: Federal

Amendments: Conference passed one amendment.

The amendment added 'heritage' after 'caste' in line a.

Conference passed the amendment by 173 to 14

Vote on motion as amended: Conference passed the motion as amended by 194 to 11.

Young Liberals Age Limit Change

Conference resolves to amend the Constitution as follows.

Delete clause 21.8 and replace with:

21.8 A member of an AO shall not be counted as a member or participate in exercising the rights of the AO under clauses 18.5 and 20.1 of this Constitution:

if such member is not a member of the Party; in the case of the Youth and/ or Student Organisation;

1. if such member has reached the age determined by that Organisation as to make them no longer eligible for full membership and is not a student;
2. if such member, having been originally enrolled by an AO, has elected to exercise the related constitutional rights through a Local Party; or
3. if such member, having been originally enrolled by a Local Party, has not elected to exercise the related constitutional rights through an AO: no person may exercise the related constitutional rights concurrently as a member of more than one AO or as a member of both an AO and a Local Party.

Applicability: Federal

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion by 151 to 5.

Business Motions

Membership Subscription and Federal Levy

Conference notes that:

1. The existing standard minimum membership rate of £12 has remained constant since 2010.
2. Had the standard minimum membership rate tracked the Consumer Price Index since 2010, instead of remaining static, it would now be in excess of £15.
3. The COVID pandemic has placed severe financial pressures on those on the lowest levels of income.
4. It is important to reward the loyalty of existing members so as to encourage membership retention.

Conference agrees to the following for 2022:

1. For existing members, to freeze the current membership rate of £12 (standard minimum).
2. For new members, to increase the standard minimum membership rate to £15 (new standard minimum).
3. To freeze the £6 minimum for those in receipt of or entitled to state benefits, and the £6 minimum for members paying via Young Liberals.
4. To introduce an annual grant of £5,000 for Young Liberals for use in improving the access to politics for young people. Funded by, an increase of the special introductory rate for new members, paying via Young Liberals in their first year of membership, to £3.
5. To freeze the membership rate of £72 (recommended).
6. That nothing in this motion shall prevent a State Party from setting via their internal procedures higher recommended or minimum subscription rates or from introducing additional concessionary rates.
7. That the Federal Levy remains at 55 per cent.

Applicability: Federal

Amendments: Conference rejected one amendment.

The amendment would have frozen the minimum membership fee and the recommended fee for current members, and increased the recommended membership fee to £80.

Conference rejected the amendment by 160 to 84.

Vote on motion: Conference passed the motion 197 to 49.

Report Questions and Answers

Federal Conference Committee Report

Question by Cllr Oliver Jones-Lyons

Given the FCC vote was “very tight”, why was there no wider consultation or a conference vote when deciding to get rid of name-blind submissions?

Answer by Nicholas da Costa

Internal update has been done but the vote was very tight. FCC will keep an eye on this over the next year to make sure it was the right decision.

Question by Cllr Oliver Jones-Lyons

The motions chosen aren't from normal members: 6 are FPC 8 are Parliamentarians, only 5 from ethnic minorities, will there be a wider consultation or perhaps a Conference vote?

Answer by Nicholas da Costa

We turned down many motions from the Federal Board, there weren't a huge number from ordinary members turned down. We support those who we turn down by offering advice so they can bring something to a future conference.

Question by Laurence Cox

FCC's process for motions is still opaque. Will you:

- 1) Publish all motions on receipt and allow Party members to express their support?
- 2) Publish the reasons for rejection of motions?
- 3) Roll over motions to the next conference where the only reason for rejection is lack of debating time?

Answer by Nicholas da Costa

We need to work on how we publish motions rejected and their reasons. Sometimes it's due to poorly written motions - we don't want to embarrass people. Need to work on how we publish and provide feedback.

We encourage those rejected to submit again in the future. Publishing on receipt is a good idea but we want to work on tweaking/helping motions to make them the best they can be.

Question by Laurence Cox

Internal members part of the website would be a good place to publish the motions and decisions to make it less public.

Answer by Nicholas da Costa

He will work with Conference and HQ to look into it.

Question by Suzanne Fletcher:

When the agenda is published could the PDF be sent out to those who ask for it? Some members have difficulty in following the weblinks

Answer by Nicholas da Costa

We want to make sure that the information is as accessible as possible; the challenge with emailing out the agenda (and other documents as attachments) is that these documents are too large for many email accounts and thus would be failed deliveries, and therefore it would be challenging to email them as attachments, rather than links to the documents themselves.

Federal Policy Committee Report

Question by Adam Robertson

How do the Federal Policy Committee propose to attract those who feel 'left behind' because of circumstances out of their control to vote for us, without coming across as 'noblesse oblige' towards them?

Answer by Lucy Nethsingha

Appropriate for policy committee and many areas of the party. We do more than just Conference to appeal to people across the party - we don't win votes by policy. It's about messaging and campaigning.

Kath Pinnock on cladding and Ed Davey across the country ensures we're speaking to groups who don't get enough attention in national politics.

Supplementary question by Adam Robertson

Those people in DE groups will go to the extreme left and extreme right, how can we not come across as patronising?

Answer by Lucy Nethsingha

Our policies are directed to those groups, we're more generous than other parties. It's not a problem with policy but how we campaign on those policies. We need to ensure we are heard.

Parliamentary Party Reports

Question from Adam Robertson

The lack of help for individuals who suffer from Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) to get a diagnosis then proper treatment is woefully inadequate, if not non-existent. Can the Parliamentary Party raise this in Parliament, because this needs to be fixed urgently before more people die from ARFID?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain

Literally read my lines - Put in WPQ on ARFID

Answer by Dick Newby

Will be in touch with Wendy too

Question from Adam Robertson

19,000 people have ARFID, one lady has a BMI of 13 and is too weak to walk. Is pushing for action on adults with eating disorders - will the Parliamentary Party agree to meet on this?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain

Happy to pick this up with you - will get in touch directly and determine best MP (Wera and Munira)

Question from Tracy Gallagher

What will our party do to stop the SNP from destroying our country - we are one nation?

Answer by Dick Newby

SNP refuse to sit in the Lords - very unionist Chamber. Not able to hold them to account directly

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain

In 2019, I was the only person to take a seat from the SNP - we are well placed to do that. May elections showed people will vote on constitutional lines - between SNP and pro-union party. We need proportional representation - Scots have a strong voice at Parly table as 4/12 of our MPs are Scottish - need to show them that devolution can be effective

Question from Julie Edmontach

Can there be further moves towards correcting DWP's miserable treatment of claimants - from the LDDA

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain

I am the DWP spokesperson but this problem spans everywhere. The Disability Green Paper needs to be questioned and Chloe Smith has started covering this - we will engage with her soon. Need to break down the experience of people at DWP - experiences in Scotland are better than in England. Want to treat people with dignity and respect (like in Scotland) - the safety net is insufficient

Federal Board Report

Question from Prue Bray

I like the disciplinary proposals, but the system still does not deal satisfactorily with complaints about councillors. Will you discuss this with local government representatives?

And

Question from Cllr Alan Connett

Why does the disciplinary system allow complaints about London Assembly members to be referred initially to their group but not allow the same for councillors?

And

Question from Cllr Joe Harris

How will you deal with the bad feeling about the disciplinary system because of its failure to understand or value council groups or council issues?

Answer by Dr Mark Pack

Thank you to Prue, Alan and Joe for raising this issue. As your questions point out, it is important that the party's own independent complaints process works sensibly alongside those of other organisations, including that of councils and council groups.

There are some decisions that only the party's own processes can make, such as whether to expel someone from the party, but the rules set out in the Board report rightly provide for items to be handled primarily where appropriate by the existing external processes that govern, for example, MPs or London Assembly members.

Local government isn't included in this at the moment for a couple of reasons:

First, when we consulted with local government organisations in preparing the changes to these rules, we got some feedback requesting the removal of reference to referring matters back to council groups from them, so that was done in good faith. But clearly from these questions and other feedback, there's more to discuss.

Second, many Lib Dem council groups use model standing orders which state that, where a matter relates to a question of whether behaviour could bring the party into disrepute (which is also the test in our complaints procedure) it should be referred for investigation by the party and internal group procedures should be suspended until the external review has been completed. So we didn't want to create a circularity in our rules by having the independent process refer something to a council group that then refers it back to the

independent process and so on. Conversations have already started with ALDC to see what we can do to align these rules and avoid any endless loops.

So, I've consulted with the chairs of the Disciplinary Subgroup and they have already been in discussions with our local government community on how to address these issues - and thank you Prue in particular for your part in those.

I'm glad to say that based on that the DSG co-chairs have told me they are happy to commit to recommending updated rules in order to address this issue.

And I will do my best to follow up on that too, so I hope we will have a positive outcome to report back on at conference next year.

Question from Adam Robertson

How is the Federal Party engaging with SocialMediaCheck.com regarding the issue of GDPR and Security regarding Social Media Checks on Prospective Parliamentary Candidates?

Answer by Dr Mark Pack

The party uses this firm as part of our due diligence checking so that, for example, if someone is wishing to stand in a Parliamentary election for us and has a track record of making anti-Semitic tweets, then this can be spotted and dealt appropriately in advance, rather than become something where the first thing the party knows about it is when a journalist rings up with questions in the middle of a campaign.

We carefully selected this supplier to ensure that we are using a reputable firm, which fully complies with legal protections over people's data such as GDPR and has appropriate levels of security. We've been working closely with them to address any teething issues as this new system gets up and running.

Their service also allows us to be restrictive in what is looked at, so that we can ensure we are combining necessary due diligence with our liberal values around people's privacy and freedom of speech.

Question from Adam Robertson

How do the Federal Board intend on tackling the lack of Disabled Candidates, especially at Parliamentary Level, when Scope are saying that 20% of the population is considered Disabled, and only 0.5% of MPs consider themselves as Disabled?

Answer by Dr Mark Pack

It's an important point that we need to continue our efforts to improve the diversity of our candidates and our elected public officials, both so that we are giving every member an equal opportunity to play their part in our party and also so that we better reflect the communities we seek to serve. We have had, and do have, some brilliant candidates and elected public officials who have disabilities, but we need to increase their numbers.

Our party has consistently supported the restoration of the government's access fund to provide help to candidates with disabilities for the extra costs they incur in running for election. There was promising news on this from the government over the summer.

We run an extensive range of training to support would-be candidates and I hope that the changes to how party bodies operate being debated at this conference will help with that, by strengthening the role of party bodies that work to improve diversity, and improving our diversity is a consistent priority of our federal party staff team.

I'm always very happy to hear suggestions on other steps we can take, and if anyone listening has some by all means drop me an email on president@libdems.org.uk.

Question from Cllr Oliver Jones-Lyons

Given the advent of the Maraphone, would the Federal Board consider a whole party effort to complete a membership census to improve member engagement?

Answer by Dr Mark Pack

This is an excellent idea, and indeed such an excellent idea that the Federal People Development Committee (FPDC) is already working on a series of phone calls to randomly selected members in order to better understand what is and isn't working with our general efforts at membership engagement. If anyone is happy to help with making those calls, please do let me know and I can put you in touch with the team.

The *Boost Guide* does contain details of how local parties can organise their own member engagement calls and the FPDC & membership team is always happy to help support local parties that want to do these to build engagement by forming local connections.

We also have a regular schedule of email surveys of party members, such as to gather important data on how we are doing at improving our ethnic diversity. If anyone gets one of these surveys or calls, I'd really encourage you to take part.

Question from Cllr Oliver Jones-Lyons

What progress, if any, has been made towards decarbonising party operations?

Answer by Dr Mark Pack

Our move to a smaller London office means lower energy bills, while the shift towards more home working by party staff and remote meetings for many committees has also cut down on carbon emissions from travel.

Initiatives such as the one by Halifax Liberal Democrats to plant trees to balance the paper used in Focus newsletters are a very welcome grassroots accompaniment to this and I encourage other local parties to think about taking similar measures.

Question from David Grace

The President agreed with my question at last conference but the party website remains unfit for members' use. There is no search facility and it is difficult to navigate. Will anything be done?

And

Question from Suzanne Fletcher

When will work on the party website be completed so that both public and party members can find up-to-date information that they need, with ease?

Answer by Dr Mark Pack

Improvements to the website's content have continued to be made since last conference, including the additional transparency around the work of the Federal Appeals Panel mentioned in its chair's report. However, we also need better technology behind the scenes to further improve the site and so are currently tendering for an alternative content management system. Decisions on this will require careful consultation and communication given the knock-on effects.

It's likely we'll move the existing site to an archive and start building up a simpler site to replace it. This helps improve search and helps make sure we get it right. This will be a continuing process rather than a one-off process that's complete when done.

In the meantime, the Join and Donate pages are being refreshed in the next few weeks.

Question from Suzanne Fletcher

When press releases are launched, can they be put onto the party website at same time so it is possible for links to them be used on social media?

Answer by Dr Mark Pack

Advice before from the party's press and digital teams has been that doing this is of very limited benefit given that, for example, press releases are not designed to be effective digital content in their own right. Therefore the previous conclusion has been that the

resources for doing this are better spent on directly producing digital content. However, I'm happy to ask them to consider the issue again in case the balance of factors has changed.

Question from Suzanne Fletcher

Will those developing the website ask for views on how it works from party members who haven't been part of its development before launching?

Answer by Dr Mark Pack

Yes. We'll test and iterate as we go.

Question from Suzanne Fletcher

When consultation was undertaken for the Thornhill Review some made detailed submission on phone banking. What is the latest progress on this and is there feedback?

Answer by Dr Mark Pack

The Thornhill Review published its findings based on the consultation it undertook and the Board continues to prioritise implementing its recommendations. We have used and developed phone banking capacity a lot during the pandemic. In the year since our last autumn federal conference, volunteers have made more than 500,000 phone contact attempts through phone banking, speaking to more than 180,000 people. Innovations such as the Maraphone formats have greatly helped with this and will continue to be developed.

Campaign for Gender Balance Report

There were no questions to this report.