

# Policy Book

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## **Health & Social Care**

## Mental Health Provision

Conference notes:

- A. 1 in 4 will experience mental health difficulty in the course of a year.
- B. Despite funding for mental health services increasing, those experiencing mental health problems continue to suffer unacceptable discrimination in terms of access to services and treatment.
- C. That the current treatment of mental ill health is ineffective, and results in high readmission rates.
- D. Poor mental health severely impacts upon educational attainment, and poor mental health at a young age can result in increased risk of acute infections, illness, increased self-harming behaviours, suicidal ideation, and suicide.
- E. The work of the Liberal Democrats in Coalition Government in England has resulted in new access and waiting time standards to be introduced in 2015, age appropriate and effective co-ordination between services, and support for employers and employees in ensuring provisions to support individuals with mental health difficulties, ensuring an active working lifestyle.
- F. Students at Universities are often left without the support and mental health care they need.

Conference believes that:

- i. There currently exists an inequity in treatment between patients with physical health needs and those with mental health needs.
- ii. There is a shortage of psychological therapists, which results in the common use of drugs to treat mental ill health; as a result, the notion of patient choice does not in effect extend to mental health services.
- iii. Support for employees in returning to work and students returning to education should become the norm with employers and education

providers. Mental health training and provision should first start in the workplace and educational institution.

- iv. The stigma and discrimination of poor mental health often has a negative impact as great as that of the illness itself.
- v. That Health and Wellbeing Boards should publish readmission statistics, to help inform trends that currently exist in the patient discharging system.
- vi. That waiting times for mental health treatment should be the same as all other treatment.
- vii. Universities are communities and as such they have a responsibility to the mental health of their students.

Conference calls upon:

1. Young Liberals to call on the Liberal Democrats to deliver a mental health strategy to radically improve treatment and access to mental health services, including tackling waiting times across the UK through a rigorous review of all Health and Wellbeing Board provision.
2. Young Liberals to call on the Liberal Democrats to outline a national framework to ensure continuity of treatment for young people transitioning from adolescent to adult services, including a streamlined information sharing system between providers.
3. Young Liberals to call on the Liberal Democrats to develop a strategy for the provision of mental health services in local communities, and development of a programme for rolling out mental health support in the workplace, similar to that used to monitor physical health such as blood cholesterol, weight, and blood sugar levels.
4. Young Liberals to call on the Liberal Democrats to ensure provision of extra capacity in mental health intensive care and forensic units to divert people in need of treatment away from prison and to assist those already in prison.
5. Young Liberals calls upon the Liberal Democrats to ensure provision capacity and understanding at all levels of society in order to ensure those with mental health needs are not automatically punished in the traditional



manner without due regard or appropriate treatment for their mental health issues, with specific regard to those with PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder).

6. Young Liberals calls upon Universities UK to implement mental health standards across all universities in the UK, ensuring on campus mental health professionals, adequate mental health emergency training for all student facing non-teaching staff members, and general mental health training for tutors.

*Passed: Winter 2019*

*Lapses: Winter 2024*

## Free Contraception for All

Conference notes:

- A. The Government's continuing underfunding of the NHS.
- B. The recent announcement of an increase in prescription charges as of April.
- C. Many people rely on free contraceptive from family planning clinics and GPs.
- D. The Government's recent proposals to put all free contraception into prescription.

Conference believes:

- i. Free contraception should be available to all regardless of age, sex, and income.
- ii. The removal of free contraception will increase the transmission of sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV.
- iii. The removal of free contraception will also increase the number of unwanted pregnancies,

Conference resolves:

- 1. To draw this matter to the attention of the student community.
- 2. To promote the campaign through the STAR network and Free Radical.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*



## HIV and Rights

Conference notes that:

- A. HIV disease (infection with HIV with or without symptoms) is a world-wide epidemic affecting every country.
- B. HIV disease is not contagious. Casual contact presents no risk of infection.

Conference believes that:

- i. All governments and all national health organisations should treat HIV disease positively and rigorously as a chronic, manageable condition. Ensuring access and availability of treatment must be part of the social and moral obligation of governments to their citizens.

Conference demands:

- I. An international charter of rights to acknowledge and preserve the humanity of people with HIV disease. The Charter must include:
  - a. Anti-discrimination legislation protecting the jobs, housing, and access to services to people with HIV disease.
  - b. The right to active involvement in the affected communities of people with HIV in decision-making that may affect them.
  - c. Access to anonymous and absolutely confidential HIV antibody testing. Pre- and post-test counselling must be available.

- d. The right to medically appropriate housing.
  - e. No restriction on the international movement and/or immigration of people with the HIV disease.
  - f. Full recognition of lesbian and gay relationships.
  - g. No mandatory testing under any circumstances.
  - h. No quarantine under any circumstances.
  - i. Special attention to the unique needs and problems of intravenous drug users, including the provision of clean needles on demand.
  - j. Special attention to the unique needs and problems of prisoners with HIV disease and guarantees that they receive the same standard of care and treatment as the general population, including the provision of free condoms.
  - k. The provision of reasonable accommodation in services and facilities for disabled people.
- II. Criteria for the approval of drugs and treatment should be standardised on an international basis so as to facilitate world-wide access to new drugs and treatment.
- III. International education programmes outlining comprehensive sex education, supportive of all sexual orientations in culturally-sensitive ways and describing safer sex and needle practices, and other means of preventing HIV transmission must be made available, recognising and combating the unequal social position of women in many countries which may affect their access to such information.

Conference instructs the Executive:

1. To produce a leaflet based on this motion.
2. To submit this motion in an appropriate format to the Federal Conference of the Liberal Democrats.

3. To publicise this motion widely, using as many different forms of media as possible.
4. To write to ACT-UP branches in the UK to inform them of our stance, subscribe to their newsletter, and ask to be kept informed of their activities.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Abortion (Northern Ireland)

Conference notes:

- A. That women in Northern Ireland have no automatic right to an abortion.
- B. This includes women who have been raped, victims of incest, and women whose baby has been diagnosed as profoundly disabled or will not live at birth.
- C. Women in England, Scotland, and Wales are entitled to a legal, safe abortion on the NHS and have been for the last 40 years.
- D. Women from Northern Ireland who do not feel that they can continue their pregnancy have to travel to the rest of the United Kingdom, where they organise and pay for their own abortion. This option is only available to those women who are able to raise the money to pay for their procedure within the legal time limits, as well as the costs of their travel and accommodation, which can add up to thousands of pounds.

Conference believes:

- i. That all women have a right to exercise control, freedom, and choice in their sexual and productive lives.
- ii. That every woman has a right to choose to have an abortion, and that access to abortion services should be free and fair to all who choose to use them.
- iii. No woman should be forced to carry on a pregnancy against their will.
- iv. No woman's health or life should be put at risk by unsafe abortion practices.

- v. No woman's life or health should be put at risk as a consequence of being denied medical treatment when faced with an unplanned pregnancy.
- vi. No woman should be deterred from seeking medical care for fear of being reported to the police by medical professionals who suspect unlawful behaviour.
- vii. All women in Northern Ireland should have the right to abortion services based on need, rather than personal conscience and religion.

Conference resolves:

1. To support the Family Planning Association's campaign, "Time for Change".
2. To take a motion to Federal Conference in Birmingham calling on the Federal Party to support the campaign.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*



## Voluntary Euthanasia and Assisted Suicide

Conference notes:

- A. That polling has repeatedly found widespread public support for the principle of voluntary euthanasia.
- B. The right to religious freedom and individual conscience enshrined in the preamble to the Constitution of the Liberal Democrats and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- C. The current unwillingness of the legal system to enforce the current law regarding assisted suicide.

Conference believes:

- i. That, as a point of principle, the individual should have power over their own life, including power over the manner of their death if they so wish.
- ii. That the participation of any and all parties in the process of euthanasia must be wholly voluntary.
- iii. That the role of the state in the regulation of decisions leading to death should be protecting the vulnerable, not enforcing any specific group's moral code.
- iv. That the current law is not only an abuse of personal liberty but also fails to protect vulnerable persons.

Conference resolves:

1. That the law should be amended so as to allow voluntary euthanasia and medical assisted suicide.
2. That the amending legislation should contain safeguards that would protect the principle that all parties should be consenting, at a minimum:
  - a. That all parties are kept fully informed of their rights and the course of action that is to be followed at all times.
  - b. That there is no element of coercion by or of any party involved, including medical staff.
  - c. That the patient is mentally competent to make such a decision and has been made fully aware of all their options, for example palliative care.
3. In cases of dispute the presumption shall be of a lack of consent.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Equal Rights for Mental Health Patients

Conference notes that:

- A. In May 2017, the Prime Minister described the 1983 Mental Health Act as “outdated”, “discriminatory”, and “unfit for purpose”, and promised to repeal it and replace it with new legislation. In June 2017, the Queen’s Speech promised to “reform mental health legislation”.
- B. Current UK law treats physical and mental health differently. Physical health patients cannot be forcibly treated unless they lack capacity to make that decision, and they can make “advanced decisions” to refuse treatment, as defined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005. However mental health patients do not have these rights: under the 1983 Act, they can be forcibly detained and treated even if they have capacity to make that decision for themselves, and even if they’ve made an advance decision to refuse treatment.
- C. If a person has a “mental disorder” (which includes Asperger’s Syndrome and learning disabilities), they can be forcibly detained and treated, but people without one can’t be, even under the exact same circumstances. In some cases, having a childhood diagnosis of Asperger’s has allowed people to be forcibly detained for months, while they could not have been detained at all without the diagnosis.
- D. Mind, a mental health charity, has argued that detaining people based on disability is discriminatory, and in breach of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They have called for replacing the “mental disorder” test with a “mental capacity” test, as defined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005, so that mental health and physical health are treated equally, and people with disabilities or “mental disorders” are not discriminated against.

Conference believes that:

- i. Mental health patients should have the same rights as physical health patients.
- ii. Everyone has the right to control their own life. A person should never be forced to receive treatment, unless they do not have the capacity to make that decision.
- iii. Detaining people on the basis of disability or “mental disorder”, rather than capacity, is discriminatory, contributes to stigma, and discourages people from being open about their mental health.

Conference calls on the Government to reform the Mental Health Act to ensure that:

1. The “mental disorder test for involuntary detention and treatment is replaced with a “mental capacity” test, so that a person cannot be involuntarily detained or treated unless they lack capacity, as defined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005.
2. Advanced decisions, as defined in the Mental Capacity Act 2005, can be applied to mental health conditions, including an advance decision to refuse detention and/or treatment.

Conference reiterates its call for the Government to ensure that mental health services are fully funded, so that people can be given care without unnecessarily having to be detained.

Conference calls on the Young Liberals to campaign to achieve these objectives.

*Passed: Summer 2017*

*Lapses: Summer 2022*

## Freedom of Choice on Abortion

Conference notes that:

- A. The 1967 Abortion Act was introduced by David Steel, a Liberal MP, and gave women in England, Wales, and Scotland access to safe and legal abortion for the first time.
- B. Under the Act, induced abortion is a crime, with exceptions. A person receiving or providing an abortion is committing a criminal offence unless two doctors agree that the abortion is necessary for specified reasons. In 2012, the Home Officer issued a letter to abortion providers reminding them that they must fully comply with the Act.
- C. The British Pregnancy Advisory Service, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists have all called for abortion to be removed from criminal law and to be regulated in the same way as other aspects of healthcare.
- D. A 2015 study by Aston University found that the presence of anti-abortion activists outside abortion clinics damaged the mental health of clinic users. In November 2017, the Home Officer began a review into whether new police powers were needed to prevent harassment outside clinics.

Conference believes that:

- i. The 1967 Act was a great Liberal accomplishment for its time, but is now severely outdated and does not reflect social and medical changes over the last 50 years.

- ii. Everyone has the right to control their own body. A person who chooses to end their pregnancy should not be criminalised for doing so, and should not require permission from others.
- iii. Everyone has the right to peaceful protest, but not to intimidate people seeking treatment.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Removing abortion from criminal law throughout the United Kingdom and enforce abortion regulations through medical regulation, in the same way as other aspects of healthcare.
2. For abortions before 24 weeks of gestation, remove the requirement for two doctors' assent that the abortion is necessary for specified reasons and allow a person to receive such an abortion in the same way as any other medical procedure. For abortions after 24 weeks of gestation, enforce existing restrictions through medical regulation.
3. Ensure that abortion service users are able to access NHS counselling services to help them through their decisions if the service user requests it.
4. Introduce legislation to create protest-free zones outside abortion clinics and pregnancy advice services.

*Passed: Winter 2018*

*Lapses: Winter 2023*

## **Digital, Culture, Media, & Sport**

## Save the BBC – Safeguarding the Future of the British Broadcasting Corporation

Conference notes that the future of the BBC in its present form is highly uncertain at the moment as:

- i. The BBC has been facing funding shortfall for several years now, which looks set to worsen over the current Parliament.
- ii. The BBC is at risk of increased government supervision over its choice of programme content.
- iii. There have been proposals from the commercial media sector and the current Culture Secretary, John Whittingdale MP, to reduce the size and remit of the BBC.

Conference believes the BBC is a world-class, independent media institution that must be protected and safeguarded. The BBC not only provides high quality television, news, and radio services at a relatively low cost, but it is also an important media export and major contributor to Britain's international "soft power".

Conference calls for Young Liberals and for the wider Liberal Democrat Party to support the "Save the BBC" campaign.

Conference also calls on the Government to:

1. Retain the BBC in its present form – BBC Television and Radio, BBC News Online, and BBC iPlayer.



2. Protect the BBC from interference from both the government and the commercial media sector.
3. Secure medium- and long-term public funding for the BBC by exploring all funding options, from retention of the license fee to alternative streams of non-commercial revenue from the public sector or from users of the BBC.

*Passed: Summer 2015*

*Lapses: Summer 2020*

## Digital Britain

Conference notes:

- A. The Report “Digital Britain”, released in full on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009 by Lord Carter, minister for communications, technology and broadcasting.
- B. That “Digital Britain” sectors account for nearly 10% GDP<sup>1</sup>.
- C. The increasing efforts of the music industry to combat piracy with projects such as Spotify.
- D. Music sales have fallen dramatically – by 50% from 1999 to 2004 for example<sup>2</sup>.
- E. Digital Right Management (DRM) has annoyed many purchasers of legitimate electronic files.
- F. The current term of Copyright for Sound Recordings is 50 years.
- G. 66% of young people do not see illegally downloading free music as morally objectionable<sup>3</sup>.
- H. The software industry is rapidly changing and demands a high level of flexibility.
- I. That there remains some ambiguity over software copyright, and that some software becomes dormant but is still protected by copyright.
- J. The introduction of the 15a classification in Irish cinemas.

Conference believes that:

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<sup>1</sup> As reported on BBC website, 16<sup>th</sup> June 2009

<sup>2</sup> As reported by IFPI

<sup>3</sup> As reported by the BBC

- i. The report "Digital Britain" lays out some of the necessary steps in modernising this country and preparing the economy for a more technology-oriented world.
- ii. Access to broadband should become a right, not a privilege, and therefore needs funding and planning for universal access.
- iii. The money raised by the 50p Landline Tax is highly unlikely to raise sufficient revenue for nationwide access to broadband, particularly in rural areas.
- iv. Internet piracy represents a threat to many creative arts industries, particularly music and film.
- v. The threat of disconnecting piracy offenders is, however, excessive.
- vi. The current copyright time frame for sound recordings should not be modified.
- vii. Switching off analogue radio services by 2015 is a necessity, but one which must be carefully carried out to ensure that support is available for those people who struggle to switch, particularly for financial reasons.
- viii. The proposals on the age rating of video games do not tackle the fundamental problem that they are subjective and unnecessarily proscriptive.

Conference therefore proposes:

- a. A more effective approach to internet piracy would be a government instituted scheme of fines, perhaps linked to a proportion of the monetary value of the illegal goods, up to a maximum amount. This must be linked with the removal of DRM from legitimately purchased goods to provide people with the flexibility they deserve.

- b. To strongly oppose disconnection as a disproportionate punishment and to seek to ensure that civil suits no longer result in damages greater than the fines imposed.
- c. However, where there is reasonable doubt as to the offender on a particular network, or where children may be involved, steps must be taken to ensure that innocent people are not fined, and that children understand fully the nature of piracy.
- d. Children of secondary school age should therefore be educated on and debate the issues surrounding and the legal aspects of piracy as part of the citizenship curriculum.
- e. Further areas of funding need to be found to make the roll-out of universal broadband credible.
- f. That an internet speed promise of 2Mbps must be matched by careful observation to ensure this is achieved. Many broadband companies offered very fast speeds but subsequently found themselves unable to deliver on these promises at any but the quietest times.
- g. To reject the EU proposals that would increase the term of copyright for sound recording to 99 years plus the life of the artist. The length of copyright for motion pictures should be lowered to 50 years, and software be placed at 25.
- h. Software which has been copyrighted and used for commercial purposes but is no longer used on an active commercial basis be exempted from copyright provision.
- i. That 15a and possibly even 18a be considered as viable age ratings for films shown in licensed cinemas. Both of these require the young person to be older than the previous category, i.e. for a 15a you must be at least 12, and for an 18a you must be at least 15.
- j. That a more effective method of age ratings for video games would be to enforce the PEGI ratings (currently advisory), and not require restricted games to have two separate ratings.

- k. That while labelling of films is under review, we should push for epilepsy warnings on DVD boxes and film trailers, if appropriate to the content.

Conference therefore resolves that:

1. These proposals be submitted to any relevant consultation on the report
2. These proposals be submitted to Liberal Democrat Spring 2010 Conference for consideration by the Federal Party

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Pornography in the Internet Age

Conference notes:

- A. That most pornographic material is no longer solely for heterosexual men but encompasses a much wider audience.
- B. The proliferation of pornography in line with the growth of the World Wide Web and proliferation of adult content broadcast channels in line with increased consumer demand.
- C. The recent minor relaxation in censorship of magazines, films, and television programmes regarding acceptable sexual content.
- D. The Government's white paper "A New Future for Communications", and it's calls for changes to the film classification system, with responsibility for video classification being taken from the British Board of Film Classification and handed to OFCOM.
- E. Events in the past few months which have led to increased censorship on the web; with companies such as eBay and Yahoo introducing blanket bans.
- F. The abnormalities and contradictions that currently exist within UK law on pornography.
- G. That the content of much of the pornography in the United Kingdom is influenced by our current indecency laws. Laws that have recently been ruled as unfair by the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR).
- H. That R rated films can only be distributed on video and sold in licensed sex shops.

Conference believed:

- i. That the consensual viewing of pornography that portrays all forms of sexuality involving consenting adults is acceptable in today's society.
- ii. That pornography portraying sexual acts with un-consenting adults, those illegal as outlined by law, or those involving persons under the age of consent is always unacceptable.
- iii. Pornography should be available to buy from safe, reliable sources, giving a 'fair deal' to all involved.
- iv. People should be given detailed information about the contents of programmes, videos, and movies so that they can make appropriate choices about what they watch.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. Relaxation of censorship laws so that all pornography depicting consensual sexual activity is available to adults over the age of 16 who wish to purchase it, and in so doing remove contradictions in the current laws surrounding pornography.
2. Revision of the R18 rating to R16, whilst maintaining the tight and responsible enforced licensing of sex shops.
3. Reductions in the cost of licensing a sex shop, discouraging people from buying less reliably sourced material over the internet; and moves towards future regulation and licensing of online sex shops.
4. Work with our European Union partners to initiate similar regulation of cross-border trade in pornographic material.
5. OFCOM also to be given powers to regulate all stages of the production of pornographic materials within the United Kingdom so as to ensure good working conditions and the protection of human rights. This would include ensuring fair pay and high standards of health and safety, that all contractual

arrangements are fair and freely entered into, that those involved have not in anyway been coerced, and the prevention of public nuisance.

6. The effects of ECHR rulings on UK indecency laws should be incorporated into law as soon as possible.
7. That all broadcasters be required to display standard information prior to a screening of a programme that may offend or distress or that contains sexually explicit material.
8. That provided they operate appropriate safeguards, digital or terrestrial television should be allowed to show material currently rated as R18 on a pay per view basis.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*



## **Business, Energy, & Industry**

## Towards a Radical Liberal Economic Policy: Mutuals, Co-operatives, and Worker Involvement in Industry

Conference notes the longstanding commitment of the Liberal Democrats and its predecessor parties to mutuals and co-operatives, and more broadly to the principle of worker involvement in industry.

Conference further notes:

- A. That many existing mutuals and partnerships, such as the John Lewis Partnership, have proved to be some of our most successful businesses; and that works councils in Germany have made a positive contribution to that country's economic success.
- B. That the number of companies affiliating to the EOA, the trade organisation for employee ownership, has doubled in the past year, reflecting the buoyancy of the sector in the UK.
- C. The work of Liberal Democrat ministers in government to encourage employee ownership, by introducing a £75m tax break and the part-mutualisation of the Royal Mail.
- D. The recent financial difficulties of the Co-Operative Group, and the troubling revelations concerning the inadequacy of its corporate governance.

Conference believes:

- i. That co-operatives and mutuals must play a central role in a diverse, successful economy, and that government has a role to play to encourage their development.
- ii. That it is a liberal principle that individuals should have as much control over their lives as possible, and that this extends to their roles as workers and consumers.
- iii. That employee ownership is a non-socialist and non-statist means of achieving a fairer and more equal distribution of wealth and power and is a

non-protectionist way of guarding against outsourcing and capital flight in a globalised economy.

- iv. Employee ownership can and should work alongside a strong and independent trade union movement; further, that employment rights are inalienable, and that George Osborne's 'rights for shares' proposals are contrary to the spirit of mutualism.

Conference Resolves:

1. HMG should increase tax reliefs for employee owned companies, possibly including negative rates of Capital Gains Tax and Inheritance Tax for shares deposited in an Employee Ownership Trust (EOT).
2. A statutory requirement should be introduced for every public listed company to have at least one non-voting representative for workers on its board, appointed by employees.
3. The Business Bank should lend preferentially to worthy SMEs where at least 25% of shares are held or are to be transferred to an EOT.
4. A Royal Commission on Mutuals and Co-operatives should be established, with a special mandate to investigate the governance of both sectors.
5. Public-sector mutuals should be introduced in sectors where this is practical and compatible with the public interest; and, where this is not feasible, the introduction of authentic worker representation at all levels.
6. Young Liberals and its members shall be actively involved in campaigning for a shift of power and capital into the hands of workers and consumers as part of the development of a distinctive, radical liberal economic policy.

*Passed: Winter 2019*

*Lapses: Winter 2024*

## Freedom for Nuclear Power

Conference notes:

- A. The weight of scientific evidence behind the link between rising global temperatures and the amount of atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub>.
- B. Nuclear power is a large-scale carbon neutral fuel.
- C. Current scientific evidence suggests that new IV Generation reactors are dramatically safer than previous models.
- D. 97% of nuclear waste from advanced reactors, given adequate facilities, can be reprocessed into nuclear fuel, leaving 3m<sup>3</sup> of high-grade nuclear waste per gigawatt-year.
- E. Raw nuclear fuel is easily and safely obtainable from 'secure' nations (such as Canada), and thus benefits from security of supply, unlike oil or natural gas.
- F. That renewable energy sources currently produce a small percentage of the UK's energy and that the Government's projected level of growth in this percentage is insufficient to replace fossil-fuel generated power in the foreseeable future.

Conference believes:

- i. The only realistic way Britain will generate 100% of its electricity through carbon-neutral means is by endorsing nuclear reactors for civil power generation.
- ii. That, in the long-term, renewable and fusion power should be the preferred methods of energy generation.
- iii. Given adequate reprocessing facilities, nuclear fission represents no significant threat to Britain's environment or national security.

- iv. Standardising any reactors built would significantly reduce constructional and running costs.
- v. The inadequate funds have been laid aside for research into viable nuclear fusion reactors.

Conference resolves:

1. Nuclear power stations should be exempt from the Climate Change Levy (2001) due to its carbon-neutrality.
2. That all Britain's 12 nuclear reactors designated for decommissioning should be replaced with IV Generation nuclear reactors.
3. That reprocessing facilities similar to Sellafield should be constructed to adequately handle and reprocess nuclear waste produced.
4. The remaining waste should be vitrified into borosilicate glass and stored in suitable facilities above ground for 50 years to allow the material to decay to reduce its activity, before being buried in suitable geological strata.
5. That adequate funding should be made available for research into viable nuclear fusion reactors.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Trade Unions

Conference notes:

- A. The possibility of other Unions disaffiliating from Labour in the near future as reported on the 7<sup>th</sup> February, before being ejected.
- B. That already, the first to be thrown out by Labour, the RMT, in the last few years reduced its contributions from £112,000 a year to just £12,500.
- C. That the government wants to invest some £10m of tax payers' money into the unions for modernisation.
- D. That some of our ideals are compatible.
- E. Our belief in equal rights for all and our existing policy on the national minimum wage and part time workers.
- F. Our existing commitment to end the inequality in the minimum wage for young workers.
- G. That with increasing student debt young people are having to work more at a younger age.
- H. Changes in the work force as a whole mean that people are changing jobs more often.
- I. That as part-time or trainee workers young people are more at risk of disciplinary action.
- J. That often they are the least able to defend themselves and thus the role of the trade unions.

Conference believes:

- i. That the Party should work more actively with the Unions, especially in light of our recent relations with them and Labour's decision to ignore one of their largest supporters.
- ii. That Union supporters should be given the opportunity to actively work, as a Union, with parties other than Labour.
- iii. That in some cases membership of a trade union can provide invaluable support in the unfortunate cases of disciplinary actions, etc.
- iv. That the trade unions also play a valuable role in protecting the rights of their members;
- v. That whilst we support the work of the Unions we cannot condone the use of public funds in the group which provides a large proportion of the funding for the same party which is in government.
- vi. That young people in work should be afforded all of the same rights and benefits experienced by older colleagues regardless of whether part time or full time.
- vii. That whilst this should all be encouraged, caution should be taken, as with any large group or donor, that we maintain our independence as Liberal Democrats.

Conference resolves:

1. That we encourage the Unions to actively move to disaffiliate from Labour, even if they do not face expulsion as was the case with the RMT.
2. That we support and encourage the work of the Liberal Democrats both with and within the trade unions.
3. That where it is relevant we encourage membership of unions to help protect the rights of individuals.

4. That as Young Liberals we work to engage working youths within the Unions in the same way that we currently work to encourage students through the NUS.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

### A Fair Deal for Pubs

Conference notes:

- A. The figures released on 22 July 2009 by the British Beer & Pub Association, showing a greatly-increased figure of 39 pubs closing each week in the United Kingdom, resulting in the loss of over 20,000 jobs in the last year.
- B. The Government announcement on 29 July 2009 of a consultation on revoking the Land Agreements Exclusion Order 2004, a measure blamed for allowing anti-competitive practices run by many large pub management companies (pubcos).
- C. The submission on 24 July 2009 by the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) of a consumer 'super-complaint' to require the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to fast-track consideration of anti-competitive practices in the UK pub market which are resulting in high prices in pubs, lower amenity, restricted choice, and pub closures.
- D. Pubcos resulted in a 1986 decision by the then Conservative government to limit the number of holdings which could be owned by breweries.
- E. Pubcos are mainly backed by venture capitalists which during the economic recession are less able to maintain funding for marginal establishments and are forced to close loss-making establishments or raise the rents on establishments.



- F. The number of pub premises available has increased for sale or lease since the beginning of the economic recession.
- G. A common practice by pubcos and breweries is the use of beer-ties in contracts, where some or all of the licensed intoxicating liquor sold are bought from the landlord, this is also known as tied-tenancy.
- H. 84% of rural villagers believe the local pub to be as essential as the local post office for community relations and the continuation of village life.
- I. The CAMRA campaign to support microbreweries and the Local Ale campaign for locally sourced Real Ale and Bitter.
- J. The formation of the new Independent Pub Confederation on 14 October 2009.
- K. The increased availability of non-alcoholic versions of beers and ales available in pubs and notes the continued improvement in quality and taste.

Conference deplores:

- i. The market dominance of the largest pubcos and the way some of them, along with some large breweries, have skewed the tied system so hugely in favour of the property-owning company and against the small business operators actually operating the business.
- ii. The manner in which the tied-tenancy mode, in particular the “beer tie” is being operated by the large pubcos, specifically the manner in which the pubcos secure huge discounts from breweries but fail to pass these on to the lease holders.
- iii. Restrictive covenants which prevent future purchasers from using the building as a public house depriving a community of a valuable resource.
- iv. The restrictive levels of rent which often restrict the ability of tenants to earn a living from the operation of the premises often imposed as a

penalty on success, by increasing charges proportionally based on turnover.

- v. The lack of access and the barriers to market entry for smaller and more local breweries, including microbreweries restricting customer choice.
- vi. The weak position of pubs in current planning law being classified as any other business with not provision for their status as community facilities.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. A limit of 2000 as the number of pubs owned by a pubco, the same maximum applied to breweries in 1986.
2. The number of pubs owned by a pubcos not be geographically concentrated preventing local and regional monopolies. This shall be regulated by new powers for the OFT and Competition Commission.
3. Tenants to be offered the opportunity to choose between a tied-tenancy and a rental tenancy by seeing the two proposals, including figures, side-by-side.
4. Action to be taken to give publicans choice to avoid the inflated prices that pubcos can charge for their product to tied-tenants, by legal protection to be able to buy supplies free of tie.
5. The support of microbreweries and the Local Ale campaign.
6. The continued increase in the number of non-alcoholic lines of beer and ale available and the continued improvement of quality and taste.
7. A mandatory statutory code of practice that creates transparency, a register of rental values, and an agreed form of profits-based valuation that takes account of the real costs incurred by tenants.
8. The use of restrictive covenants, that prevent pubs being sold prohibiting their future use as pubs, to be outlawed immediately.

9. Existing lease holders to be given the right to buy the freehold of their pub if the owner puts the premises up for sale, at a value to be determined by an independent mediator.
10. A separate planning use class for rural pubs to be created, with planning guidance recognising the role of rural pubs as community facilities and requiring planning permission for demolition of a rural pub.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## In Defence of the Gig Economy

Conference notes:

- A. The skittish attitude many have towards technologies and the effects they have on work.
- B. Most Uber drivers (5 to 1) do not want to be classified as employees.

Conference believes:

- i. The Autonomy and flexibility provided by this kind of employment is valuable to these industries and the people who work in them.
- ii. Under most definitions of liberalism, a system which facilitates people having autonomy over their own lives is a good thing.

Conference resolves for Young Liberals to be enthusiastically in support of the “gig economy” and new start up companies which allow for more flexibility for both consumers and workers.

*Passed: Summer 2017*

*Lapses: Summer 2022*

## No to Unpaid Internships, Yes to Real Opportunities

Conference notes that:

- A. The 1998 National Minimum wage Act requires that interns legally defined as “workers” must be paid the minimum wage, but there are loopholes that allow interns not to be classed as “workers” even if they effectively are.
- B. In January 2018:
  - a. The Sutton Trust, a social mobility charity, estimated that over 40% of internships carried out by young people were unpaid. It is estimated that, even with travel costs paid, the minimum living cost of an intern was over £1000/month in London and over £800/month in Manchester.
  - b. The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Social Mobility warned that the existence of unpaid internships was a contributing factor to the dominance of young people from wealthy backgrounds in high-paying professions.
  - c. Both of these groups, plus the Social Mobility Commission and other social mobility experts, have called for unpaid internships over four weeks long to be banned. Yougov polls have shown that 70% of the public support this measure, as do 2/3 of businesses, with only 1/8 of businesses opposed.

Conference believes that:

- i. While some individuals with access to savings may benefit from unpaid internships, this is at the expense of the majority without access to such

savings, and prevents the latter from having a fair chance to compete for work.

- ii. The goals of unpaid internships can be achieved through fairer means, such as paid internships, apprenticeships, and work experience lasting for four weeks or less.

Conference calls for:

1. All interns on internships lasting for more than four weeks to be legally classed as “workers”, so that they are entitled to the national minimum wage.
2. All internships to be publicly advertised, not given on the basis of individual connections.
3. The Liberal Democrats not to offer any unpaid internships and work experience lasting for four weeks or less instead.

*Passed: Winter 2018*

*Lapses: Winter 2023*

# Education

## Extending Sex and Relationship Education

Conference notes:

- A. Sex education is compulsory from the age of 11 onwards.
- B. Under the current policy only reproduction, sexuality, and sexual health must be covered.
- C. Parents have the right to withdraw their child from any part of sex and relationship education (SRE) – apart from those covered by the national curriculum for science.
- D. The 2013 Ofsted report assessing PSHE and SRE to be “not yet good enough”.
- E. The Government’s SRE Guidance has not been updated since July 2000 (although a more recent supplementary guide has been provided).
- F. The exemptions granted to free schools, academies, and faith schools with potential to cause harm.
- G. The House of Commons vote against the Clause 20 amendment to the Children and Families Bill June 2013.

Conference believes:

- i. Children and young people have a right to a good quality education, as set out in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- ii. PSHE and SRE are core aspects of this and should be included.
- iii. The curriculum on sex education should cover the following in addition to the current policy:



- a) Consent – defined as a clear and unpressurised yes rather than the absence of a no – including issues surrounding alcohol and drugs.
- b) Sexuality, gender identity, and orientation.
- c) Healthy relationships
- d) Raise awareness of safe sex practices other than PIV.
- iv. Students questioning their sexuality should be able to do so safely and without facing prejudice – especially from those in roles of responsibility. Therefore any SRE should be inclusive of LGBT+ individuals.
- v. The needs of students and young people who have been victims of sexual offences should be considered. There must be a clear and well publicised policy dealing with providing SRE in a way that keeps survivors safe (which may include allowing them to leave the class).
- vi. Students safety must be a priority, so no-one should be put in a situation where they have to out themselves as LGBT+ or as a victim of sexual assault.

Conference calls for:

1. Young Liberals to support motions at conference further improvements to PSHE and SRE education to include consent and LGBT+ issues.
2. Young Liberals to support cross party campaigns that share the beliefs outlined in this motion regarding PSHE and SRE.
3. Young Liberals to lobby Liberal Democrat MPs and peers to support or amend relevant legislation.
4. Young Liberals to encourage the creation of funds allowing schools to invite expert speakers into schools (such as those from THT, Brook, Marie Stopes, and EACH) to ensure young people are not hampered by a lack of knowledge in teaching staff of SRE issues.

*Passed: Summer 2015*

*Lapses: Summer 2020*

## Tuition Fees

Conference notes:

- A. Previous Young Liberals policy on funding for higher education.
- B. The increase in tuition fees brought in by the Coalition Government.
- C. The loss of support for the Liberal Democrats after breaking “the pledge”.
- D. The increase in students from poorer backgrounds now attending university in England since 2010 has been far greater than has been the case in Scotland.
- E. Scottish students attending university in Scotland, who do not pay fees, repay more if they come from a poor family than if they come from a wealthy family because of the system of maintenance loans.
- F. Scottish students attending university in Scotland, who take the full maintenance loan, repay more than an English student attending an English university if they earn a yearly average of less than £25,800 over the repayment period.

Conference believes:

- i. Liberal Democrats need a coherent new approach to higher education funding.
- ii. Access to higher education should be based on ability to learn, not ability to pay.
- iii. Tuition paid for entirely from general taxation is effectively a giveaway to the middle class.
- iv. As the primary beneficiaries of higher education are graduates, they should directly shoulder some of the financial burden.

- v. The tuition fee structure implemented in the Coalition made it easier for those from low income families to access university than the previous fee structure.
- vi. The scrapping of maintenance grants in favour of loans by the Conservative Government was a regressive step.
- vii. Maintenance costs are a much greater barrier to learning than tuition fees, and grants for maintenance costs should be reinstated and increased from their previous levels.
- viii. Another alternative to fees, the so-called “graduate tax”, is impractical as it cannot be levied on graduates who leave the country.

Conference therefore resolves to:

1. Repeal previous Young Liberals policy motions calling for higher education to be paid for entirely from general taxation and replace with support for some form of tuition fees.
2. Call on the UK government to reinstate, and increase from their previous levels, means-tested grants to fund maintenance costs for poorer students.
3. Work with Scottish Young Liberals and Rhyddfrydwyr Ifanc Cymru to promote fair access to higher education across the United Kingdom.

*Passed: Winter 2016*

*Lapses: Winter 2021*

## National Union of Students

Conference notes that NUS is the largest body representing students in higher and further education in the UK.

Conference believes:

- A. That politics within the NUS has long been exclusive, deeply factional, inflexible, and often illiberal and thus alienates many of its members.
- B. That making NUS more effective is vital to increasing the influence students have in British politics.
- C. That Young Liberals members – and Young Liberals itself – have a valuable role in working to make NUS more open, plural, inclusive, campaign-oriented, transparent, and democratic.

Conference resolves:

- i. To campaign with NUS and Student Unions where their aims and policies are in keeping with those of Young Liberals.
- ii. To urge student members and branches to be active within their Unions.
- iii. To encourage Young Liberals members to stand for NUS committees at all levels and attend NUS Conference.
- iv. To support the NUS Liberation Campaigns in their fight against oppression, discrimination, and prejudice.
- v. To campaign for Young Liberals policies to be adopted by the NUS.
- vi. To advocate membership of, and involvement in, Young Liberals and NUS as an effective way of campaigning on issues of interest to students,

including education funding, student welfare, and fighting discrimination in society.

Conference further resolves that to achieve these aims, the objects of the Young Liberals organisation within NUS shall be:

1. To incrementally increase the number of official Liberal Democrat candidates on NUS Committees at all levels and to campaign vigorously, each year, to elect a Young Liberals member to the NEC.
2. To maximise the number of student members attending NUS Conference as delegates of their Students' Unions and to keep these student members updated with details of candidates and Young Liberals activity.
3. To raise Young Liberals and the Liberal Democrats' profile within NUS, particularly at NUS Conference, but balancing this effort with the negative effects that can come from being seen as 'just another faction'.
4. To campaign to get Young Liberals policy passed and acted upon within NUS at all levels.
5. That Young Liberals should work to ensure maximum participation of all students at all levels of NUS, with particular attention to further education students.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Nationalisation of Exam Boards

Conference notes:

- A. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES), and is governed by a board appointed by Secretary of State for Education. QCA maintains and develops the National Curriculum, assessments, and has overall responsibility for regulating the public examination system.
- B. The National Assessment Agency (NAA) is a subsidiary of the QCA and is now directly in charge of public examinations.
- C. All major examination boards enjoy charitable status, and do not come under the control of the QCA, NAA, nor the DfES.
- D. Exam Boards charge schools and colleges varying fees for providing examinations and marking.
- E. The recent history of various 'gaffes' by the exam boards.
- F. QCA consultation with a selection of teachers revealed a desire for 'a body publicly taking responsibility for the conduct and performance of the exam boards'.

Conference believes:

- i. It is an important goal for schools to offer a broad, challenging, and balanced education, providing opportunities for students to enjoy all aspects of the curriculum: academic, physical, and vocational.
- ii. This goal is undermined by the effects of the current system of competition between exam boards:

- a. Exam boards only provide exams in subjects which are commercially viable.
  - b. The current educational climate means exam results are crucially important to schools, therefore they choose what they perceive to be the easiest exam syllabus, and exam boards try to create the easiest possible syllabuses.
  - c. Competition between exam boards could therefore be responsible for allegations about 'dumbing-down'.
- iii. The Government should have indirect control of an essential accessory to the education system – the exam system.
  - iv. In particular, since the Government wishes all final year secondary students to take compulsory exams, and is trying to increase the popularity of vocational subjects, it should indirectly decide the content, implementation, and marking procedures for these exams.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. In the interests of simplicity and clarity, financial efficiency, control over educational standards, and an enhanced ability to achieve its aims, the Government should take indirect Control of providing examinations, by empowering, and compelling the QCA or NAA to set its own syllabuses.
2. The QCA/NAA to determine how many different syllabuses to offer per subject, taking account of the demand, justifying themselves to the Secretary of State for Education if necessary.
3. State educational institutions to be obliged to use the new syllabuses provided by the QCA/NAA.
4. The QCA/NAA to determine an appropriate fee to charge, for each examination taken. It would be up to each educational institution to decide whether or not to pass this fee onto the candidate.



5. State educational institutions too continue to receive funding for exam fees, under the existing model.
6. The QCA to stop its existing function of accrediting and regulating the standard of qualifications offered by the existing exam boards.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## School Attendance

Conference notes:

- A. Government proposals announced in the Queen's Speech on truancy, the power to prosecute parents of truant children.
- B. Over 1 billion hours of teaching were missed during 2002/2003 by children in England alone.
- C. The current Government has set targets for reduction of unauthorised absences including ('truancy').
- D. Studies highlighting that many schools consider parentally condoned absence to be a more widespread problem than truancy.
- E. Research indicating a link between poverty and poor school attendance.
- F. Recent Government moves to impose fines upon parents for holiday absences.
- G. National and international research that parental prosecution, benefit sanctions, and truancy sweeps have statistically insignificant impacts upon school attendance levels.

Conference believes:

- i. That a good education for all is a cornerstone of a functioning liberal democracy.
- ii. That poor school attendance reduces a child's chances of receiving a good education.
- iii. That the casual link between attendance and attainment runs in both directions.

- iv. That many children in the UK have been lost without trace from school rolls.
- v. The current government's moves to promote parental prosecutions for non-attendance has led to some Education Welfare Services moving away from crucial work dealing with the welfare of children.
- vi. The setting of targets to reduce exclusions can lead to a rise in tolerated absence of 'backdoor exclusions'.
- vii. That setting targets for 'truancy' can lead to a rise in authorised absence.
- viii. The police service and courts have more important work to do than deal with absent children.
- ix. That prosecuting or fining parents for their child's absence is often a costly and ineffective means of improving a child's attendance.

Conference therefore resolves:

1. To focus on all absence from school as opposed to just unauthorised absence or other manipulable statistics.
2. To promote greater co-operation between Local Education Authorities and other agencies dealing with young people to ensure no child becomes 'lost' from school rolls.
3. To provide more support for children returning to school after periods of absence in order to break the cycle of non-attendance.
4. To promote greater use of an alternative and more relevant curriculum for those children with little interest in or use for 'academic' subjects.
5. To end reliance upon truancy sweeps and replace them with systems of targeted first day contact with absent children and their parents.
6. To end reliance upon parental prosecution for non-attendance in all but the most extreme cases and use the funds saved to invest in welfare support for absent children.

7. To abolish fines for term time holidays and work with the travel industry to reduce the cost of non-term time holidays for parents of school age children.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## USS Enterprise: Let Lecturers Live Long and Prosper (Response to Proposed UCU Strikes)

Conference notes that:

- A. The Universities Superannuation Scheme (USS) is one of the largest principal private pension schemes for higher education institutions in the UK, with about 190,000 staff in 92 institutions.
- B. A Defined Benefit scheme gives its participants a guaranteed retirement income, while a Defined Contribution scheme gives its participants an uncertain retirement income that depends on investment returns.
- C. In 2017, Universities UK (UUK) evaluated the USS and found that it was in deficit, describing the current system as unsustainable and unaffordable, and adding that “failure to act appropriately at this valuation could lead to further future crises.”
- D. As a result of this valuation, UUK proposed to change future USS benefits from Defined Benefit to Defined Contribution to make USS more affordable and sustainable.
- E. The University and Colleges Union (UCU) dispute the UUK valuation of USS as overly conservative. UCU have conducted actuarial analysis that predicts that, under UUK’s proposals, past and future staff members’ pensions will be cut by up to 40%.
- F. UCU have held a strike ballot in which 88% of UCU members voted to strike, with the ballot reaching the legally required 50% turnout threshold in 61 universities.
- G. UCU have announced that, if a deal cannot be reached, 14 days of strike action will occur in those 61 universities, starting with a two-day walkout on 22 and 23 February.

Conference believes that:

- i. Employees are entitled to protect their interests through unionisation, and when those interests are under threat, through the means of strikes.
- ii. The USS must be kept sustainable but doing so by alienating huge numbers of academic staff will lead to low morale, staff leaving the profession, and greater long-term costs than the savings made.
- iii. UCU has limited leverage over UUK and has been forced to strike as a result of UUK's lack of co-operation.
- iv. University students will suffer due to the proposed strike, missing the teaching for which they have paid, and potentially harming their grades.
- v. Universities, and members of UUK, will feel limited effects of the proposed strikes, as they've already been paid, by both students and public funds, for providing tuition.
- vi. Universities, not students, should feel the impact of staff strikes, so that UCU has leverage in negotiations.

Conference calls for:

1. UUK to reopen USS negotiations with UCU immediately and ensure that academic staff receive a fair pension plan.
2. Universities to be fined, and made to pay reimbursements to their students, when lectures are cancelled due to strikes.
3. Universities to ensure that, if lectures are cancelled due to strikes, students' grades do not suffer as a result.

*Passed: Winter 2018*

*Lapses: Winter 2023*



## **Environment, Food, & Rural Affairs**



## Animal Welfare

Conference notes:

- A. That in 2000 (the last year statistics were available for) over 2.71 million experiments were performed on animals in the United Kingdom.
- B. Recent developments in alternatives to animal testing, including the announcement in March 2002 that Xgene Corporation had succeeded in developing novel skin development technology.
- C. The to key European Union (animal protection measures – the ban on the import of furs from countries using leghold traps and the prohibition on the marketing of cosmetics tested on animals – have been unravelled as a result of fears by the EU that they could not survive World Trade Organisation (WTO) challenges.
- D. In 2000 a Medical Research Council (MRC)/MORI poll found that 58% of those questioned supported the statement that animal experimentation for medical research purposes should only be conducted for life threatening diseases.

Conference welcomes the vote by the European Parliament on April 10 2001 to ban the sale of all cosmetics tested on animals within five years and the announcement made on the launch of a consultation to review out-dated laws in animal welfare.

Conference believes:

- i. That animal suffering, except where a significant benefit to human kind is sufficiently likely to justify it, is totally unacceptable.

- ii. That basic scientific research, on invertebrates meets this standard and should continue.
- iii. That circuses and zoos cannot sufficiently recreate natural environments for their animals.
- iv. That the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) rules must be reformed to allow the European Union (and other WTO members) to introduce trade-related measures which are genuinely aimed at securing improved standards of animal welfare.

Conference expresses its concern for the welfare of all animals, in whatever environment they may be and calls for:

1. The compulsory publication of all results from experiments on vertebrates (to prevent unnecessary repetition of testing).
2. The Government to offer support, and incentives, for research into alternatives to animal testing.
3. A ban on the use of wild animals in circuses and regulation to govern the use of domestic animals.
4. An immediate end to the use of animals in the development and testing of household goods, tobacco, and weapons tests.
5. An end to all tests on animals once a suitable scientific alternative to animal testing has been found.
6. Animal welfare considerations to be a valid factor within the rules of the World Trade Organisation.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Pollinators

### Conference notes:

1. The decline in the bee population is of high concern to the British public.
2. The previous Coalition Government's National Pollinator Strategy.
3. The European Union bans relating to neonicotinoid pesticides.

### Conference welcomes:

- a. The commitment in the 2015 Liberal Democrat manifesto to "bring forward a package of measures to protect bees and other pollinators, including legal protection for bumblebee nests."
- b. The pledge by Devon County Council to protect bees from harmful pesticides on council land.
- c. Pesticide restrictions which are becoming more commonplace in urban areas around the world – such as Paris, Seattle, and Tokyo.

### Conference believes:

- I. Bees and other pollinators are essential to the conservation of our ecosystems and reversing their decline is of utmost importance.
- II. The National Pollinator Strategy is insufficient for reversing the decline in pollinator populations.
- III. The Weeds Act 1959 and Ragwort Control Act 2003 are damaging to natural ecosystems and damage biodiversity.

- IV. Due to the rich biodiversity of the country, different areas are likely to face different challenges in tackling pollinator decline.

Conference resolves for Young Liberals to:

- i. Call on the Government to continue with the National Pollinator Strategy, with an additional commitment to the pledges made in the 2015 Liberal Democrat manifesto.
- ii. Call for a full, thorough assessment of the environmental risks posed by neonicotinoid and other pesticides, with particular focus on the effect on pollinator populations and activity.
- iii. Call for a repeal of The Weeds Act 1959 and Ragwort Control Act 2003.
- iv. Call upon local authorities to develop their own pollinator action plans to match the needs of the local area.
- v. Support the proposal of a Nature & Wellbeing Act as set out by The Wildlife Trusts, RSPB, and other partner organisations.
- vi. Transpose all relevant ecological EU directives and legislation into UK law.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## **Exiting the European Union**

## Response to the European Union Referendum

Conference notes:

- A. The United Kingdom European Union Referendum of June 2016 resulted in a victory for the Leave campaign.
- B. That Norway, Switzerland, and Iceland are all members of the Schengen Area and, besides from Switzerland the European Free Trade Area, but not members of the European Union.
- C. That if article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty is used, this will mean the United Kingdom will leave the European Union in 2 years.

Conference believes that:

- i. If Article 50 is used, the Liberal Democrats should aim to advance a liberal vision of Britain's future outside of the European Union.
- ii. Through continued membership of the European Free Trade Area and by joining the Schengen Area, Britain can continue to get considerable benefits from free trade and free movement of people, whilst maintaining a close relationship with its European neighbours.

Conference resolves:

1. If Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty is triggered by the British government, to call on the Government to continue Britain's membership of the European Free Trade Area.

2. If Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty is triggered by the British government, to call on the Government to work towards the goal of Britain joining the Schengen Area in a capacity similar to Iceland, Norway, or Switzerland.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Britain Stronger in Europe: Take Back Control

Conference notes:

- A. The Schuman Declaration of 1950, and its aim to ensure that “war between France and Germany becomes not merely unthinkable, but materially impossible.”
- B. The Treaty on European Union of 1992, which states, “The Union shall offer its citizens an area of freedom, security, and justice without internal frontiers, in which the free movement of persons is ensured in conjunction with appropriate measures with respect to external border controls, asylum, immigration, and the prevention and combating of crime.”
- C. The record of the Liberal Democrats and of the Liberal Youth as consistent advocates of European cooperation and of the European Union.
- D. The result of the referendum held on 23 June 2016, in which 51.9% of voters voted to leave the European Union.
- E. That polling indicates that young people are overwhelmingly in favour of Britain’s continued membership of the European Union.
- F. Calls for a second referendum on Scottish Independence.
- G. The subsequent downgrading of Britain’s credit rating by S&P and Fitch, and the negative warning from Moody’s.
- H. The sharp decline in the value of sterling following the results.
- I. Reports of a sharp rise in hate crimes against EU citizens and others following the results.
- J. Tim Farron’s announcement that the Liberal Democrats will fight for the next General Election on a platform of support for Britain’s renewed membership of the European Union.
- K. The surge in Liberal Democrat recruitment following the party’s stance being announced.
- L. Calls from some for a second referendum on Scottish Independence.



Conference believes:

- i. That the European Union has helped secure an unprecedented period of peace in Europe.
- ii. That Britain's membership of the European Union has been of immense benefit to people of all ages, but especially to young people and students.
- iii. That the Erasmus scheme in particular, illustrates that the value of the European Union to young people extends far beyond economics.
- iv. That the adverse economic consequences of departure from the European Union for young people and others will be severe.
- v. That Britain's departure from the European Union will disproportionately harm young people.
- vi. That withdrawal from the European Union is a serious setback for the liberal values of internationalism and openness.
- vii. That there is a danger that withdrawal from the European Union will result in economic isolation and protectionism.

Conference further believes:

- I. That liberals have a duty to advance the values of openness and internationalism in politics.
- II. That that duty requires that we advocate for the free movement of goods, of services, and of people.
- III. That the European Union offers the best hope of achieving those aims, both within Europe and in the world at large.

IV. That Britain's departure from the European Union against the wishes of young people will increase already unacceptable intergenerational injustice in Britain.

V. That the referendum result nevertheless represents a democratic mandate that must be respected unless a fresh democratic mandate is obtained to reverse it.

VI. That in the interim liberals should support efforts to retain as many as possible of the benefits of European Union membership, including (but not limited to) free trade and free movement.

Conference therefore resolves:

1. To reaffirm the commitment of Liberal Youth to Britain's membership of the European Union.
2. To support the declaration by Tim Farron that the Liberal Democrats will fight the next general election on a platform of support for membership of the European Union.
3. To call upon the Executive to run a campaign on Britain's membership of the European Union as the priority campaign for Freshers 2016.
4. To reaffirm the commitment of the Liberal Youth to an active international presence, both through bilateral cooperation and through LYMEC and IFLRY.
5. To call upon Liberal Youth Scotland to clarify their position on a second Scottish Independence Referendum, and to support their stance, whilst expressing the hope that Scotland would vote to remain in the United Kingdom.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*



# **International Trade**

## Global Free Trade and Tariff Wars

Conference notes that:

- A. There has been significant public concern of late over the British Steel industry as Tata Steel has decided to shut down its British operations. This includes the closure of their main plant in Port Talbot, which will lead to roughly 4,300 job losses.
- B. The mass production of steel in China has led to falling prices, which has made steel production in this country unprofitable. British steelmakers also suffer from other difficulties, such as high energy costs and climate change levies, which make them less competitive than their counterparts around the world.
- C. Many of the options being considered involve protecting British steel and artificially extending the life of the steel industry using government intervention through tariffs or nationalisation.
- D. The British steel industry is economically unviable and it does not appear that it will be able to produce steel at a competitive cost now or at any point in the near future.

Conference believes that:

- i. Free trade is a core liberal principle and the Liberal tradition of support for free trade dates back to the repealing of the Corn Laws.
- ii. Responding to fluctuations in the global market with tariffs erodes the principle of free trade and is this contrary to a core liberal principle.

- iii. Any imposition of tariffs on Chinese steel is likely to lead to a tariff war which would inevitably lead to escalations in economic disputes, fraying diplomatic relations and result in a less liberal global exchange of goods.
- iv. It is far more effective in the long run to assist in the creation of strong industries than to subsidise unprofitable, unsustainable ones.
- v. In order to mitigate the unfortunate consequences of the closure of Tata Steel, the state should assist workers displaced from financially unviable industries to retrain and find work in other sectors.

Conference resolves to:

1. Oppose the implementation of tariffs which would distort the market and to continue to support free trade.
2. Encourage the Liberal Democrats to oppose the imposition of tariffs on Chinese steel.
3. Advocate investment in extensive training programmes for those affected by the closure of the steel plants and the decline of other industries, in Port Talbot and elsewhere.
4. Lobby the Federal Party to encourage the creation of more sustainable industries through investment in associated transport and infrastructure, especially in regions affected by closures.

*Passed: Winter 2016*

*Lapses: Winter 2021*

# **Transport**

## Public Transport

Conference notes:

- A. That Liberal Youth Conference in Cambridge held a consultative session on public transport policy in November 2003.
- B. The paper 'Young People and Public Transport' was the product of this discussion.

Conference calls for more reliable public transport through:

- a. The establishment of a Sustainable Transport Authority to regulate bus and train services to create a better integrated, more reliable, and safer transport system.
- b. Improved information to be provided through a National Public Transport Information System and electronic timetables at bus stops.
- c. Greater powers to be given to local authorities to improve local public transport including renegotiations with private bus companies.
- d. The creation of a Rural Transport Regeneration Fund to improve access to public transport.

Conference calls for fairer fares through:

- i. Giving local authorities a greater say over bus fares by reforming contracts between bus providers and councils.
- ii. Encouraging the use of ID travelcards recognised by more than one transport provider and regulated by the local authority.



- iii. Providing funds to extend off peak travel on buses to those with disabilities and introduce reduced fares for students.
- iv. Provide funds for local authorities to subsidise rural services and night buses where necessary.
- v. Encourage the use of innovative ticket distribution systems such as availability of bus tickets in bars and clubs.

Conference calls for safer public transport through:

- I. Creating and providing funding for 'Home Zones' and 'Quiet Zones' where pedestrians and cyclists have legal priority, and cars are limited to very low speeds.
- II. Guaranteeing funding for local transport packages including safe routes to schools, traffic calming, and cycle and bus lanes, paid for from car parking charges, traffic fines, and urban road pricing.
- III. Encouraging use of bus conductors on services in cities, providing a speedier, safer, and cleaner bus services.
- IV. Require local authorities with responsibility for school transport to have a 'Travel to School' officer.
- V. Requiring schools to have safe routes to school policy and plans which will be distributed to parents.
- VI. Encourage replacement of old brick bus shelters with glass shelters and ensure that they are placed in the most visible areas where possible.

Conference calls for making transport to school easier through:

1. Encouraging development and take up of low cost solutions such as 'walking buses'.

2. Provided funding for local authorities to pilot new schemes such as American style 'Yellow School Buses'.
3. Where dedicated school buses exist, encourage teachers to make use of them, improving behaviour of pupils on buses.

Conference further calls for:

- A. Making complaints procedures more open and accessible by ensuring that complaints numbers and emails are printed on tickets, timetables, and at shelters and ensuring that complaints procedures are as simple as possible.
- B. Setting locally determined targets for train and bus operators to reduce number of complaints received for unclean buses/trains.
- C. Encouraging young people to drive less polluting cars by reducing car tax on the least polluting and most fuel-efficient cars and motorcycles, abolishing it all together for some. We would increase the tax differential between normal and low-sulphur diesel.
- D. The fuel duty rebates for bus operators to those running the most environmentally friendly vehicles, particularly those using alternative fuels.
- E. Promote car share schemes through local authorities along the lines of shareajourney.com, with taxi replacements if lift can't make it.
- F. Public authorities to include 'bike allowance' in expenses schemes for claimable journeys made by bicycle and encourage employers to do the same.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## **Work & Pensions**

## Supporting Disadvantaged Young People

Conference notes that following the election of a Conservative majority in the General Election the following policies have been announced by the government:

1. A national “living wage” for those aged over 25.
2. The removal of housing benefit for young adults aged 21 and under.
3. Significant cuts to tax credits, including on those below the age of the new “living wage”.
4. The removal of maintenance grants from students from low income backgrounds.
5. A “youth obligation” that those aged between 18-21 must be earning or learning.

Conference also notes that these policies have been implemented in an already challenging context for young adults with:

- a. Youth unemployment currently at 13.7%, more than double the UK average of 5.5%.
- b. The highest rates of adults living in poverty being in the 16-19 (33.6%) and 20-24 (29.3%) age groups based on the most recent published figures (2012/2013) and that these figures were rising.
- c. Research by KPMG showing that first time buyers need on average a salary of £40,553 to get on the housing ladder, leading to what has been known as “Generation Rent”.
- d. Student maintenance support having fallen significantly in real terms over the last parliament.

Conference believes that young people are in need of more, not less, support and that these outrageous measures will be deeply damaging to both the opportunities and outcomes for young people.

Specifically, Conference believes that:

- i. The Government should instead be investing in creating opportunities for young people so they may fulfil their potential and contribute to our economy and society.
- ii. High youth unemployment and the economic challenges the country faces are not the fault of young adults and measures which single out unemployed young adults as being more responsible for their situation are unfair.
- iii. Cuts to tax credits without the new “Living Wage” to mitigate the impact will add to hardship for under 25s, especially young parents.
- iv. High levels of student debt and lack of financial maintenance support can have a deterring effect on attendance of higher education by disadvantaged young people.
- v. Removal of housing benefit for under 21s combined with high rents will both prevent many young people from leaving home inhibiting their start in adult life and will be devastating on those young people who do not have a family supporting them.
- vi. While the previous government made significant ground tackling pensioner poverty, there has been an insufficient emphasis on poverty for young people and that this needs to change.

Conference therefore calls upon Young Liberals and the Liberal Democrat Party to oppose these measures by the Conservative government and argue for alternative solutions that improve the support to disadvantaged young people.

*Passed: Summer 2015*

*Lapses: Summer 2020*

## A Liberal Welfare State

Conference notes:

1. The UK budget approved on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2016 and its contents – especially the initial, but subsequently withdrawn, proposals to cut Personal Independence Payments (PIP) for disabled people.
2. That cuts of around £30 a week to Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), which is paid to those found too sick or disabled to work, are still planned to go ahead.
3. That the Conservative Party manifesto at the 2015 general election included a pledge to cut £12 billion from the working age welfare budget.
4. The Liberal Reforms and the Beveridge Report which laid the foundations for the British welfare state.
5. That the party's Federal Policy Committee has set up a Social Security working group to produce a policy paper on working age welfare which will be debated at autumn federal conference.
6. That the Liberal Democrats have supported a Citizens Income policy in the past.
7. The concept of a Negative Income Tax and its advocacy both by Milton Friedman and by Liberal MP Juliet Rhys-Williams (as an alternative recommendation for the Beveridge Report).

Conference believes that:

- A. The test of a civilised society is the social safety net provided to its citizens and that the UK is failing this test.

- B. The welfare state is under existential threat from the Conservative government.
- C. The test of a welfare system is its ability to protect individuals from levels of poverty that deprive them of their liberty and of the opportunity to fulfil their potential.
- D. A radical, Liberal alternative model for a welfare state is needed and that Liberal Youth should lead the way in developing this alternative.
- E. It is immoral to have a welfare system, such as the current model, where those who do not comply with certain conditions can have support withdrawn to such an extent that they do not have the basic means to live.
- F. A new model for the welfare system should draw on the concepts of Citizens Income and Negative Income Tax and focus on providing a minimum safety net and standard of living for all citizens on the basis of their need.
- G. An increase in taxation may be necessary in order to fund an adequate social safety net.

Conference calls for:

- I. Liberal Democrats and Young Liberals to oppose the Conservative cuts to working age welfare spending.
- II. The creation of a New Social Contract and a new model for the welfare state to replace all current child and working age benefits and tax credits (excluding disability, carer, and sickness benefits) with a new, single entitlement whose features include:
  - a) The use of the existing Universal Credit infrastructure for administration in order to allow a single registration process and linkage with real time information on individuals' earnings.



- b) A core concept based on Negative Income Tax where by a household is entitled to a weekly payment which is equivalent to the minimum needed for a basic standard of living and which is reduced by a fixed amount in the pound for every pound they earn.
  - c) Variation in the entitlement depending on household composition such as with a fixed amount per adult and per child in a household as well as an amount to account for housing costs in the area the household is located in.
  - d) Universal enrolment for all citizens into the new system upon adulthood in order to ensure that all individuals receive a direct and visible financial benefit from the social safety net regardless of their income level.
  - e) An absence of sanctions or other punishments for failure to behave in a certain way, instead favouring positive incentives to encourage desirable behaviour.
  - f) The repurposing of Job Centre Plus as an organisation into one dedicated to providing career support and assistance in order to help individuals move into employment and/or better paid work.
- III. The replacement of disability, carer, and sickness benefits with a single payment, based on need, to cover the additional costs caused by disability or sickness.
  - IV. Taxation reform, including the abolition of personal tax allowances, to help fund the new social safety net.
  - V. Young Liberals to advocate the principles and details of such a policy within the Liberal Democrats as a whole and to push for their inclusion in the party's social security policy.
  - VI. The Young Liberals Executive to make a formal submission to the party's Social Security Working Group which advocated the principles of this motion.

*Passed: Winter 2016*

*Lapses: Winter 2021*

## Living Wage

### Conference Initially Notes:

- A. It is more expensive to live, work, and study in certain places than others; for example, the difference between studying in the South and the North-East is huge, but the support available to all is the same.
- B. A “regional top-up” is available in London to support the high cost of living but that no other such arrangements suited to local conditions apply in other parts of the country such as Oxford or Bristol.
- C. The operations of Living Wage units in Manchester and London, performing similar reviews to the National Low Pay Commission on a local level and supporting an opt-in scheme for local businesses to pledge a wage that enables those to live fairly and free from poverty.
- D. That the Liberal Democrats supported arrangements like this for a National Minimum Wage (NMW) scheme after the 1992 recession and reaffirmed the basic principle of a devolved NMW in the 2003 paper Setting Business Free.
- E. That the Liberal Democrats proposed a minimum income standard for all – youth and students, pensioners to postmen – in the 2001 manifesto Freedom, Justice, Honesty and continue to see it as a long-term goal.
- F. The excellent support for young people in the party’s 2010 Youth policy paper

### Conference initially believes:

- a. If it can realistically be decided how much more London deserves, and if Living Wage units in London and Manchester can determine how much support every person should get based on living costs, then it is feasible to

devolve the levels of student support and the NMW across the country on a council-by-council basis.

- b. That in the Low Pay Commission's 1998 initial report, the "substantial variation within individual regions" in respect to living costs could be addressed by a devolved minimum wage.
- c. That in the same report, a lower "Development Rate" for under 21's was recommended on the express understanding the government and employers would work to implement effective strategies for training and education opportunities; and that this no longer happens for a number of reasons.

Conference subsequently notes:

- i. The National Union of Students continue to support the Government's position on student finance while accepting the Government's position on student finance while accepting that drop-out rates are dramatically rising, salaries to pay off debts are falling, and that students are too much time working in part-time jobs when they are full-time students.
- ii. That devolving the minimum wage would necessarily mean a lower 'absolute floor' at a federal level.

Conference subsequently believes:

- I. That the present system of providing students finance is fundamentally flawed.
- II. That adequately funded students benefit the economy in all sorts of ways, from relieving burden on their parents and family to stimulating demand

- in their place of study, and in being able to entre ladder systems such as the housing market without a significance debt burden.
- III. That student debt cannot be counted as a reliable source for future government income and is fiscally irresponsible for all parties.
  - IV. That the present system of the national minimum wage is not working for young people and fails in its key aim to move people, from welfare or dependency, into working.
  - V. That the benefits to individuals and communities across the country from a minimum wage that is more responsive to needs and costs would outweigh the concerns of a lower federal rate.
  - VI. That student finance and the NMW can and must be reformed into working.

Conference resolves to work towards ambitiously liberal reforms of how student maintenance grants are allocated, and to provide young people with the support needed to succeed in life, by the following proposals:

1. To take into account local factors and costs when allocating student maintenance, revised on a yearly basis.
2. Consequently, advocating the return of administering student finance back to local authorities, and avoiding centralised incompetence from dealings with Student Finance Direct and its successors.
3. Ensure equality in living conditions by making sure students receive living 'wages' based on these local factors, enough to pay for their bills without needing to resort to commercial debt or loan sharks.
4. Recommend that the model and practices behind the valuation of living costs in Manchester and London be piloted in several other conurbations, with a view to extending it into rural areas, towns, and cities across the country.

5. Recommend that the National Minimum Wage is frozen for two years while local areas gather sufficient information to implement these methods and train their staff.
6. Encourage students to take an active role in their welfare by creating regional bargaining structures involving councils, students' unions, and participatory budgeting.
7. Continue the existing campaign to equalise the National Minimum Wage for 16-21 year olds and look into decentralising it along the same lines as the above maintenance proposals.
8. Recommend that as this policy is aimed at reducing welfare dependency that money is diverted from the overall welfare budget to pay for some of the costs of setting these schemes up, again liaising with the Living Wage units in London and Manchester for best practice.
9. Recommend that an independent commission looking at seeing these arrangements as a holistic whole for young people and students be set up, to work in conjunction with the Low pay Commission.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## A Higher Minimum Wage for Hours that are Not Guaranteed in a Contract

Conference notes:

- A. The results from the November 2016 survey of business indicated that there were 1.7 million contracts that did not guarantee a minimum number of hours. This represented 6% of all employment contracts.
- B. Unemployment and employment rates have returned to pre-recession levels.
- C. However, the proportion of people in part time employment because they could not find a full time job (12.8%) and the proportion of people in a temporary job because they could not find a permanent one (28.5%) have not recovered from recession levels.

Conference believes;

- i. Contracts that do not guarantee hours can be very useful for people with commitments who want to be able to turn down hours i.e. students and elderly people.
- ii. That the ban on exclusivity clauses in zero hour contracts is a good thing.
- iii. However, contracts that have no guaranteed hours offer no job security and make financial planning extremely difficult for the workers who rely on them as their only source of income.
- iv. Employers should choose between having cheap labour and the flexibility of a contract with no guaranteed hours. We should incentivise employers to guarantee hours to workers that want them.

Conference calls for:

1. Non-contracted hours to have a higher minimum wage set by an independent body.
2. The Young Liberals to oppose moves to restrict the availability of zero hours contracts.

*Passed: Summer 2017*

*Lapses: Summer 2022*



## Inequalities for Young People in the Workplace and Welfare System

Conference notes with concern:

- A. That young people under the age of 25 are not entitled to the National Living Wage.
- B. That the minimum wage paid to those aged between 21 and 24, between 18 and 21 and 18 and under is, respectively, 45p, £1.93 and £3.63 less than the National Living Wage (£7.83 per hour).
- C. That age discrimination is occurring in workplaces due to the tiered inequality of the minimum wage.
- D. That young people are required to meet additional conditions to obtain the same benefits as older individuals.
- E. That the current education system is failing to prepare students for the modern workplace and this is disincentivizing employers from hiring young people.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- a. The preamble of the Federal Party's Constitution in which the following lines can be found: *"we reject all prejudice and discrimination based upon race, colour, religion, age, disability, sex or sexual orientation and oppose all forms of entrenched privilege and inequality"*.
- b. Equality in the workplace.
- c. Article 6.3 of the 2017 manifesto, namely: *"Help young people in need by reversing cuts to housing benefit for 18-21-year-olds and increase the rates of Jobseeker's Allowance and Universal Credit for those aged 18-24 at the same rate as minimum wages"*.

- d. The Curriculum for Life in all UK schools, as stated in article 3.5 of the 2017 manifesto.
- e. Ensuring everyone has access to the “best education” and “introducing housing benefits for 18-21 -year-olds, as stated in the 2017 *Young People’s Manifesto*.

Conference calls for:

- I. The minimum wage system to be equalised by removing the minimum age at which the National Living Wage applies and all workers in the UK, regardless of age, to be paid according to the Living Wage in their area.
- II. A report to be commissioned into young peoples' benefits eligibility across the welfare system.
- III. A commitment to workplace skills and work experience to be included in the party’s ongoing pledge for a Curriculum for Life in UK schools.

And calls on the Federal Policy Committee to:

- 1. Develop more policies aimed at ensuring the concerns of young people are not ignored by the political establishment and provide national leadership on the issues facing young people in the UK.

*Passed: Summer 2018*

*Lapses: Summer 2023*

## Universal Credit

Conference notes:

- A. Universal Credit is a benefit system intended to streamline six existing legacy benefits.
- B. The negative effects of the poor implementation of Universal Credit.
- C. The negative impact particularly on students, owing to student incomes being designated as unearned income in the calculation of Universal Credit and so being deducted pound for pound.
- D. The detrimental impacts this could have on students from disadvantaged backgrounds and on UK universities.

Conference reaffirms the Young Liberal commitment to:

- i. Adequately supporting mature students to enable them to study.
- ii. Ensure disabled students receive the support they need in order to fully partake in their studies.
- iii. Our commitment to our more efficient benefit system that is fit for purpose and ensures everybody can afford a decent standard of living.

Conference calls on the Government to:

- I. Restore funding to Universal Credit to pre-2015 levels.
- II. Revise the calculation of Universal Credit to designate Student Maintenance Loans as earned income.
- III. Revisit the transition between Employment and Support Allowance and Universal Credit to ensure that students with disabilities can receive earlier work capability assessments so as to not disqualify them from funding they are eligible for.

Conference calls for the Liberal Democrats and Young Liberals to:

1. Campaign on the basis of this motion and to press the Government to enact these changes.

*Passed: Winter 2019*

*Lapses: Winter 2024*

# Treasury

## Against Minimum Alcohol Pricing

Conference notes:

- A. Since 2004, Britain has experienced the most dramatic and sustained decline in alcohol consumption since the Second World War and is ranked near the middle of the European tables on average alcohol consumption.
- B. Low income households spend on average 42p per unit compared to 51p for households earning above £60,000, making MUP a policy which disproportionately impacts lower income households.

Conference believes that:

- i. Minimum alcohol pricing is a policy conceived to deal with a problem with very little evidence in support of its existence.
- ii. Students and young people, as well as low income household would be hit the hardest by MUP, and as such are limited in their choices as individuals as a consequence of such a policy's introduction.
- iii. MUP effectively takes money from low income households, students and young people, and gives it to the alcohol industry.
- iv. A liberal party ought to be concerned not only with whether evidence supports a particular policy, but whether a policy is respectful of an individual's liberty and choices so far as they are self-regarding.
- v. Individuals, not government, have the primary responsibility for health-related lifestyle choices.

Conference calls upon:

1. Young Liberals to oppose the introduction of the minimum pricing of alcohol.

*Passed: Summer 2015*

*Lapses: Summer 2020*

## Bank Shares

Conference notes:

- A. The policy, determined by Portman Capital and the Lib Dems' Treasury Parliamentary Committee, that would see shares in Government-owned banks distributed among citizens of the UK.
- B. That this policy has been backed by Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg.
- C. That the shares would be distributed to "all adults on the electoral roll".

Conference believes:

- i. That this policy is a positive way to repay the public for bailing out the banks.
- ii. That any such policy should include a way to distribute shares to young people, whose futures were gambled with when the banks were bailed out.
- iii. That any such policy should inherently take account of intergenerational fairness.

Conference resolves:

- 1. To lobby Liberal Democrat MPs to ensure that if this policy does become fully formulated, it includes intergenerational fairness at its core.
- 2. That no UK citizens are left out of this payback scheme.



*Passed: Summer 2016*

## Land Value Taxation

Conference notes:

- A. That the UK currently has no system for taxing land values.
- B. That since May 1997, house prices have almost trebled.
- C. That there is a long-standing Liberal tradition of support for Land Value Tax.
- D. That at the previous general election, the Liberal Democrats proposed replacing the council tax with local income tax.

Conference believes:

- i. That the introduction of a Land Value Tax would contribute to a more progressive tax system.
- ii. That a Land Value Tax would increase the supply of affordable housing.
- iii. That land is a fixed asset and that as a consequence a tax on it is hard to evade.
- iv. That a tax on land does not reduce incentives to work, save, or invest.
- v. That Liberal Democrat policy on local government finance at the last election was an area of weakness rather than strength.

Conference resolves:

1. To make it Young Liberal policy to support the financing of local government through a Land Value Tax rather than council tax or a local income tax.

2. That a member of the executive will write to the Liberal Democrat's Shadow Chancellor and Local Government spokesman expressing Young Liberals' support for land value taxation.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## No to Sugar Taxes, Yes to Meaningful Reform

Conference notes:

- A. That Liberal Democrat belief that none should be enslaved by poverty or ignorance.
- B. That the personal consumption tax on sugar will hit the poorest households the hardest.
- C. That the evidence that this will reduce childhood obesity rates is spurious at best.
- D. The reform of school dinners in the mid-2000s was utterly ineffective at slowing childhood obesity rates.
- E. That those hardest hit by consumption taxes are the poor.

Conference believes:

- i. That the National Health Service was set up in order to provide quality health care to all citizens and residents of the United Kingdom equally.
- ii. That the National Health Service is funded through personal taxation.
- iii. That levying a further charge on individuals based on their life choices violates the liberal principle of equality before the law as it introduces further conditions for individuals to access what should be an equally-available public service.
- iv. That the problems the NHS faces cannot be solved simply by adopting a nudge theory approach or throwing more money at it.
- v. That if we want to see real improvement in the provision of health care in the United Kingdom, we should propose structural reform, rather than

the collection of piecemeal additional funding through regressive consumption taxes.

Conference resolves to:

1. Oppose the implementation of the Sugar tax and call for its repeal.
2. Oppose all further personal consumption charges where the motivation is health service funding.
3. Call for meaningful, structural reform of the NHS, through straightforward and consistent forms of public funding.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## **Home Affairs**

## Policing in Football

Conference notes:

- A. Section 27 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 allows a police officer to require any football supporter they think is contributing or may contribute to alcohol-related disorder to leave the area they are in by a route potentially specified by the officer for a period not exceeding 48 hours. Anyone not complying can be subject to arrest.
- B. An example of this order being commenced occurred on November 15 2008, where 80 Stoke supporters were compulsorily detained in a pub and issued with a written notice under Section 27 of the Act, this was despite the landlord giving a police statement saying that the fans were orderly, not even singing and that they would be welcomed back into the pub.
- C. The Violent Crimes and Reduction Act has also allowed the creation of Category C football more widely known as 'bubble matches'.
- D. In these games, supporters of an away team are not allowed to travel on their personal preferred route. They must meet at a police-designated pick-up point, get on a coach which is monitored by police to ensure that they are not getting intoxicated before they arrive at the ground. After the game they are dropped off again at a police-designated point.
- E. From 2006-2014 there were over 50 matches put into this category.
- F. The Football Supporters Federation set up the Watching Football is Not a Crime campaign in reaction to the passing of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006.

Conference believes:

- i. That these restrictions are a severe infringement on the civil liberties of football supporters.
- ii. That in many cases the impositions of these restrictions were not justified and were decided without consultation with supporters.
- iii. That police should engage and co-operate with supporter groups over policing arrangements at football matches.
- iv. That Liberal Youth and the Liberal Democrats should always fight the infringement of an individual or group's civil liberties.

Conference resolves:

1. That Young Liberals should support the Watching Football is Not a Crime campaign.
2. That Section 27 of the Violent Crime Reduction Act 2006 should be abolished.
3. That dialogue and co-operation between the police and football supporter's groups should be encouraged.

*Passed: Winter 2016*

*Lapses: Winter 2021*



## No to No-Platform

Conference believes:

- A. Free speech is a fundamental liberal value at the heart of any healthy democracy.
- B. The ability to voice one's own opinion is at the core of any principled defence of civil, political, or personal freedom.
- C. Alongside this are the abilities to seek and receive whatever views and theories one wishes to hear.
- D. Without these three fundamental freedoms; to seek, receive, and voice our views, we cannot be considered free people, we cannot grow as individuals, and we remain entirely at the mercy of the status quo.

Conference notes with concern that:

- i. In recent years, the expansion of No-platform has prevented students from seeking out challenging viewpoints under the guise of providing them mental security, or the 'protection' from harmful viewpoints.
- ii. The claim that lecture halls fall under the category of 'domestic spaces' has been used to prevent controversial speakers from appearing on university campuses.
- iii. This behaviour has contributed to a nationwide erosion of support for free speech and has led to an approach where censorship and paternalism have replaced free and open dialogue.
- iv. Calls for mental 'security' have replaced calls for common decency, and yet serve the same purpose; to prevent the voicing of ideas and opinions that

are at odds with prevailing opinion, and to prevent open exchange across the country.

- v. No-Platforming is the presumption that an institution will not grant a public platform or audience to an individual or group on the basis of their political positions, or other views which may inform their political positions.

Conference further believes:

- I. The policing and censorship of 'harmful' views fundamentally contradicts the Liberal Democrats value that nobody should be enslaved by conformity.
- II. The closing of discussion and dialogue at the academy does nothing other than privilege the entrenched views in our society and prevents honest and principled enquiry and reform.
- III. As liberals, we should view this trend as an affront to the fundamental liberties to express oneself and to freely and earnestly seek out new information.
- IV. No person has the right to prevent anyone from hearing another speak.

Conference calls for:

- 1. Liberal Youth to adopt a formal No to No-Platform stance.
- 2. Liberal Democrat College and University societies to resist the implementation of blanket No-Platform policies at their institutions.
- 3. Liberal Youth to retain the right to dis-invite speakers from its own events, if there is a reasonable belief that the actions of these individuals may lead to the physical harm, harassment, or intimidation of attendees.

*Passed: Winter 2016*

*Lapses: Winter 2021*

## Asylum Seekers Right to Work

Conference notes:

- A. Asylum seekers who have been refused asylum but for some reason cannot be immediately returned to their country of origin, or those awaiting a hearing are not allowed to work to support themselves or their families.
- B. The European Convention on Human Rights says asylum seekers have the right to work.
- C. If asylum seekers receive just 75% of normal income support – around £40 a week, this is well below the poverty line (£58 per single adult with no dependents after housing has been deducted).
- D. The Still Human Still Here campaign is dedicated to highlighting the plight of tens of thousands of refused asylum seekers who are destitute in the UK. Supporters of the campaign believe that the denial of any means of subsistence to refused asylum seekers as a matter of government policy is both inhumane and ineffective.
- E. Still Human Still Here is a coalition of 43 charities.
- F. In the Liberal Democrat constitution, it states, “allow asylum seekers to work, saving taxpayers’ money and allowing them dignity earning their living instead of having to depend on hand-outs”.
- G. The British Red Cross had to assist more than 11,600 destitute asylum seekers in need of emergency assistance last year.

Conference believes:

- i. Removal of people's ability to support themselves, through work or benefits does little to encourage failed asylum seekers to leave voluntarily (Centre for Social Justice).
- ii. Forced destitution will not encourage people to leave voluntarily.
- iii. There is a backlog of 280,000 failed applications which could take 20 years to clear (Centre for Social Justice). The economy is suffering by these people being refused permission to work.
- iv. Without being able to work, asylum seekers are unable to adapt into the community and so they are being segregated against and it is fuelling discrimination.

Conference resolves:

1. To campaign to remind the Liberal Democrats of our manifesto promises.
2. To support the Still Human Still Here campaign.
3. To lobby our Ministers and MPs to support permission to work for asylum seekers left in limbo.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## International Students

Conference notes:

- A. The speech given to the House of Commons by Theresa May on 22 March 2011 which outlined proposals to reduce the number of student visas issued and to scrap the post study work visa.
- B. The Tier 1 post study work visa allows international university graduates to get up to two years work experience after completing their degree.
- C. The 2010 CBI Education and skills survey: businesses identified graduates' foreign language skills and international cultural awareness amongst the four skills with which they are least satisfied.
- D. The report by CentreForum that said moves to tighten the restrictions on overseas students will risk nearly 12,000 jobs in education and another 12,000 in the wider economy.
- E. That access to pre-degree level courses will be severely restricted for international students under the proposed changes.
- F. That in a survey run by the University of Manchester Students' Union and filled out by over 1000 international students, 71.3% said they wouldn't have chosen to study in the UK without the post study work visa, as the opportunity to gain experience and give back made the UK very attractive.
- G. International students are the group least likely to settle in the UK. Just 1% of migrants granted settlement in the UK in 2009 progressed directly from the study route.

Conference believes:

- i. International students provide universities with a large amount of revenue that will be increasingly important in light of on-going cuts to higher education.
- ii. International students are vital to the research capabilities of the United Kingdom,
- iii. The Tier 1 post study work visa improves the attractiveness of studying in the UK and that many businesses and charities also benefit from the international competencies and exposure of these graduates. Therefore, closing this route is disadvantageous to both the appeal of studying in the UK and global competitiveness of businesses all over the country.
- iv. That through exposure to different cultures we all gain cultural awareness and key competitive skills.
- v. That restricting the ability of students to bring dependents to the UK and the ability for the dependents to work will be detrimental to international mature students, as they would be forced to choose between studying in the UK and their family. Many also rely on income from a partner to cover household expenses.
- vi. That there is no conclusive evidence supporting the view that the post study work visa must be closed as it leads to large numbers of students permanently staying on in the UK. Nor is there any evidence of displacement of UK graduates.
- vii. The effect of these proposals would, overall be negative on the ability of the UK to compete globally for the best and brightest. While we welcome weeding out a base in the system, we believe these proposals are not effective in doing so. They would penalise legitimate students, reduce the attractiveness and ability of the UK to compete in the global market without necessarily reducing the risk of abuse in the system.

Conference resolves to call on the Government to:

1. Retain the option for international students to remain in the UK to work for up to two years after completion of their studies.
2. Continue to allow international students studying for a period of six months or more to bring with them their dependents to the UK.
3. Provide support to the Home Office in eradicating abuse of the current system by finding and closing “bogus colleges”.
4. Defend international students and encourage recruitment of the best and brightest from around the world to UK institutions.
5. Support regions in campaigns against identified “bogus colleges” using any methods thought fit to bring about their closure legally under the common & civil laws of the relevant jurisdiction, including picketing, letter-writing, and occupation.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*



## Legalisation of Cannabis

### Conference notes:

- A. That the “War on Drugs” and the policies employed to “fight the battle” are widely acknowledged to have failed to achieve their stated aims of the eradication of drug taking and addiction. Drug offences have tripled in the last 10 years threatening the working of the criminal justice system and the very legitimacy of the state.
- B. That Drug Tsar, Keith Halliwell, admitted that his anti-drugs strategy had ended its first year with a 13% rise in drug convictions in England and Wales.
- C. Each year around 1 in 10 people aged between 16 and 59 use drugs; the majority take cannabis and do so on a recreational basis; 2,000 addicts account for most of the £4 billion worth of drug related crime in Britain.
- D. That cannabis is an intoxicating drug and that driving while intoxicated is a danger to others.

### Conference welcomes:

- i. Mo Mowlam MP and Mathew Taylor MP’s recent admissions to using cannabis when they were younger.
- ii. The report of the Police Foundation Inquiry into drugs, which called for the downgrading of offences for individuals caught in possession of cannabis and other soft drugs.
- iii. The increasing realisation of those in authority that legalisation and regulation of drugs should be considered as a solution to the “War on Drugs”.

- iv. The proposed amendment to the Misuse of Drugs Act that would allow for the use of cannabis to alleviate pain under medical supervision.
- v. Recently sponsored Government research into using cannabis as a tool for alleviating pain, in similar ways that morphine is utilised.

Conference resolves:

1. In the short term:
  - a. To legalise the use, possession, and sale of cannabis, including the distribution of information, seed for home growing, and cannabis itself through government regulated centres.
  - b. To decriminalise the use and possession of LSD and ecstasy.
  - c. To target the resources of the Police and Customs & Excise on tackling the suppliers of more dangerous drugs.
2. In the medium term, to establish a Federal Commission to investigate all issues around the balance of harm cause by, and laws surrounding, recreational drugs.
3. To encourage and support research in the use of cannabis in the fight of diseases for example, MS and epilepsy.
4. To encourage schools and youth organisations to offer advice and guidance to young people concerning the misuse of drugs.
5. To tax cannabis at similar levels to the taxes on tobacco where cannabis is sold to be smoked, and a lower rate where cannabis is to be ingested in less harmful ways; to use part of the revenue raised through this taxation to alleviate the deprivation and social marginalisation that has led to disproportionate levels of drug addiction.
6. To call for the commissioning of research into the intoxicating effects of cannabis and the development of a simple test for the drug in the body

which can be administered by police officers. When this is complete, legislation akin to the drink-driving laws should be introduced.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Violent Crime (Attacks with Glass Bottles)

Conference notes:

- A. The figures released by the Home Office on 27 February 2010 showing, over 6500 citizens were the victims of attacks by glass.
- B. The Golding Family Campaign to ban glass in city pubs and clubs.

Conference further notes:

- i. The Labour Government has been totally negligent at letting so many youths and students be scarred for life.
- ii. The Conservative Party policy is inept on the issue and would do nothing on this issue.

Conference resolves:

- 1. Young Liberals to sign up and release a press release announcing the signing up to the Golding Campaign.
- 2. Demand all Liberal Democrats MPs to sign the Early Day Motion supporting the Golding Campaign.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Protecting the Right to a Private Life

Conference notes:

- A. The right to privacy is a non-negotiable condition and prerequisite for a fair and socially just society.
- B. The invasion of one's privacy is a harmful and damaging violation of the individual, and one that cannot be easily rectified.
- C. Any encroachment by the state on a citizen's privacy must have been approved by just and proper channels.
- D. The Investigatory Powers Bill does not meet these requirements, treats all citizens as potential criminals, and is a gross violation of individual liberty.
- E. This damaging power imbalance between the small individual and the large state sets a damaging precedent and paves the way for further erosion of the civil rights of the British public.
- F. Any handling of confidential personal information must be done so under the strictest of conditions, with access to it limited to those strictly involved in the investigation of crime, and strong penalties for those that deliberately mishandle this information or access it without clearance.
- G. That the rights to free speech and free association are dependent on the right to privacy, and the violation of privacy constitutes an act of mass censorship.

Conference believes:

- i. The mass data collection and surveillance of online data is a violation of our civil rights and goes against the principle of an open and free society.

- ii. The Liberal Democrat commitment that no one should be enslaved by conformity, and that this is not possible without the right to privacy.
- iii. That the safeguarding of individual privacy is the duty of the Liberal Democrats, as both the Conservative Party and the Labour Party have no interest in fighting the Investigatory Powers Bill.

Conference resolves:

1. To oppose the implementation of the Investigatory Powers Bill.
2. To promote methods of resistance of state surveillance, such as the use of encrypted communications.
3. To support all organisations that are willing to fight back against mass, unjustified data collection.
4. To call for the destruction of all data that has been collected as a result of the Investigatory Powers Bill.
5. To demand no individual had their communications monitored without a warrant or without reasonable suspicion that they are engaging in criminal activity.
6. To call for clear legislation setting out our digital civil rights, including the right to encrypt communications and to access the deep web.
7. To demand clear and accessible channels through which to hold state intelligence agencies to account for the spying on of everyday citizens.
8. To give individuals ownership of their own communications and metadata unless this is clearly waived through the terms of service of an online communications provider.
9. To penalise companies who provide foreign intelligence agencies with the confidential communications of British citizens.
10. To end all reciprocal agreements with friendly powers whereby one state's intelligence agencies monitor the civilians of another.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Prostitution

Conference notes:

- A. The rise in the illegal forced trafficking of women for the sex trade, and the atrocious conditions in which trafficked women are often kept.
- B. That a large amount of police time and resources are spent attempting to tackle prostitution.
- C. The success of Edinburgh's non-residential informal prostitution tolerance zone in reducing numbers of street prostitutes; reducing violence, exploitation, and drug abuse; and providing advice and assistance for prostitutes on health and safety issues, and on exiting the profession.
- D. The decision by Liverpool City Council in 2005 to make a formal request to the Government for an official tolerance zone.

Conference believes:

- i. That licensing prostitution, and criminalizing unlicensed prostitution, would create an incentive against forced prostitution.
- ii. That prostitutes in countries where voluntary prostitution is tolerated and regulated are less likely to engage in unsafe practices such as unprotected sex, more likely to receive proper health attention, less likely to be kept forcibly in prostitution, and less likely to suffer physical abuse.

- iii. That legalising voluntary prostitution in the UK would thus lead to an improvement in the lives and working conditions of prostitutes.
- iv. That police resources would be better spent tackling forced prostitution, and trafficking in women for prostitution than on enforcing current prostitution laws.
- v. That though some object to prostitution on moral and religious grounds, liberal principle should uphold the right to such activities where the participants are consensual and do not cause harm to other people.

Conference therefore resolves:

1. To call for the legalisation of voluntary prostitution, male and female, with the following provisos:
  - a. Designated zones for street prostitutes/brothels.
  - b. Facilities to assist prostitutes with such issues as personal safety and drug addiction; and to facilitate exit routes.
  - c. Safeguards against people being forced into prostitution, for example as an alternative to losing job seeker's allowance.
  - d. New criminal offences of having sex with an unlicensed prostitute, being an unlicensed prostitute, and living off the earnings of unlicensed prostitutes.
  - e. Tougher penalties for those who force people into prostitution.
2. To call for greater resources to be devoted to tackling forced trafficking and prostitution, funded as far as possible by shifting current resources directed against voluntary prostitution.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*



## Reclaiming Our Liberty

Conference regrets that the previous Labour Government has done much damage to our civil liberties.

Conference notes:

- A. That Young Liberals have a strong record standing up for civil liberties.
- B. The European Court of Human Rights has rejected the British Government's final appeal over section 44 stop and search powers.

Conference believes:

- i. Our data must be protected.
- ii. That civil liberties are a right not a privilege.

Conference reaffirms the commitment in the Preamble to the Constitution to build a fair, free, and open society where people of all ages are freed from poverty, ignorance, and the obligation to conform.

Conference resolves:

1. Proposals for databanks including:
  - a. The reduction in use of the Prum Framework for all but the most serious crimes. The option of using this system should not be

predetermined. The abolition of the ONSET profiling database. Our children cannot and must not be profiled as potential offenders. We believe such profiling is socially destructive and may infringe the Human Rights Act. Probability is not the same as guilt. Removing the 500,000 innocent people from the National DNA Database, and removing the 39,000 under eighteens on said database for all but the most serious crimes.

- b. Scrap the Communications Database. The internet was not invented to be used against us.
  - c. Prevent the NHS Detailed Care Record. Too many people have too much access.
  - d. Abolish any form of National Identity Register.
  - e. Restricting the Audit Commission National Fraud Initiative as its use is a violation of the Data Protection Act.
  - f. Not replacing the ContactPoint database in any way, shape or form, and not bowing down to pressure to do so.
  - g. The Common Assessment Framework should be scrapped with immediate effect.
2. Proposals to strengthen young people's civil liberties, including:
- a. The abolition of Mosquito Devices, by not differentiating between criminals and other young people, these devices are discriminatory against young people in our society. It has also not been proven that they do not cause long term damage.
  - b. Ending the curfews police can impose on under sixteen-year olds after 9pm.
  - c. Preventing Connexions sharing personal data with Local Government Authorities and agencies and the Government.
  - d. Abolishing the national identity number given to children under plans from the children's green paper. This will prevent a database being built up about them and shared amongst authorities and agencies.

- e. Any Identification, Referral, and Tracking (IRT) systems should be abolished with immediate effect.
3. Proposals on policing and crime, including:
- a. Increased regulation on CCTV and especially 'smart CCTV' to prevent the current uncontrolled invasion into our privacy.
  - b. Standing in absolute opposition to Control Orders, guilt is a binary state, Control Orders force a grey area to emerge.
  - c. Having pre-charge detentions reduced dramatically to seven days, with the option for individual cases to be extended by a Judge in the event of exceptional circumstances.
  - d. Allowing peaceful protests.
  - e. Changing the legislation to ensure that membership of a non-violent political protest organisation is never a criminal offence.
  - f. Amending Section 44 to ensure the system cannot be abused any longer. There are dramatic failings in the current system and the potential for abuse is large.
  - g. Adjusting Antisocial Behaviour Order legislation to ensure only illegal activities are in breach of them; that children will not receive prison sentences for committing legal activities whilst under the Order.
  - h. Ensuring that this Government and any future Government of the United Kingdom is not complicit in the torture of suspects here or abroad. Where this is breached; individual complicit members of the Government and agencies will be held to full account in a court of law.
4. Proposals for extraditions, including :
- a. No fast-track extradition to any country.
  - b. No extradition without evidence which would stand in a British Court.
  - c. No extradition to countries/states who have been found complicit in torture.
  - d. No extradition to countries here a fair trial cannot be guaranteed.

Conference encourages Liberal Democrats in Governments to include all the above in the Freedom Bill.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Injustice Facing Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma Young People

(Broken into 4 subsections)

Conference believes:

- A. Gypsies, Travellers, and Roma (GTR) are subject to high levels of racial prejudice and face many inequalities in today's society.
- B. There is a chronic national shortage of authorised GTR sites, forcing many to live in unauthorised settlements.
- C. Evictions from unauthorised settlements lead to community tension and financial cost, which would be unnecessary if sufficient sites were provided.
- D. It is estimated that as little as one square mile of land would be sufficient to accommodate for all GTR that currently lack an authorised site.
- E. Sir Trevor Phillips of the Equality & Human Rights Commission described prejudice against GTR as "The last respectable form of racism."

Conference calls for:

- 1. Councils to have an enforced legal obligation to provide an adequate number of GTR sites.
- 2. Inclusion of GTR as a distinct ethnic group in equality monitoring surveys, to highlight discrimination, gain a clearer understanding of the number of GTR in the UK and their needs.

Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma Education

Conference believes:

- A. The education system is failing GTR young people.
- B. On average GTR young people have a 20% attendance rate in secondary education and only 12% achieve 5 or more GCSEs. They are also significantly less likely to be able to read and write.

Conference calls for:

- 1. A more effective system for accessing education while traveling, managing interrupted learning and outreach support.
- 2. Better transport links between GTR and schools.

Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma Health

Conference believes:

- A. Authorised GTR sites often pose serious health risks to those who live there. Many are located on contaminated land close to major roads, have poor sanitation, and/or limited access to clean water.
- B. GTR have limited access to the National Health Service, only 50% are registered with GPs.
- C. GTR have a significantly higher infant mortality and still birth rate (2.8 times the national average). This has been linked to site evictions during

pregnancy, hazardous environments, and lack of access to antenatal and postnatal care.

- D. 2/3 of health professionals cite racist attitudes of other health professionals as the primary to GTR access to health services. Studies have shown that some GPs simply refuse to register GTR at their practices.

Conference calls for:

1. A system of simple online transferable medical records, so those not settled in a single location can quickly and easily access medical care throughout the country.
2. The introduction of specialist health visitors as part of a dedicated outreach service, similar to the successful pilot scheme in Herefordshire.
3. Culture specific training for healthcare workers including an understanding of health beliefs of GTR families.
4. Councils have an enforced legal obligation to provide sites safe, sanitary and well-maintained sites.
5. A formal structure for liaising between health professionals, social services, and child protection.

Gypsy, Traveller, and Roma Criminal Justice

Conference believes:

- A. The Criminal Justice System is failing GTR young people, there are a disproportionate number of GTR in Young Offender Institutions.

- B. 18% of children in Secure Training Centres in Kent are GTR, despite making up less than 0.1% of the population. Within these centres, GTR are four times more likely to have their property stolen by young people.

Conference calls for:

1. The Criminal Justice System to record cases involving young GTR in order to specifically address their needs, particularly regarding education and resettlement.
2. A challenge to the institutional racial stereotyping of GTR within the police force and local authorities.

*Passed: Summer 2017*

*Lapses: Summer 2022*



## Protection for Undocumented Immigrants

Conference notes that:

- A. Police and emergency services are currently required to inform border security forces when they encounter an undocumented immigrant. In one recent case, a rape victim was arrested by immigration officers after reporting her rape to the police.
- B. This policy prevents undocumented immigrants from giving information to police or accessing emergency services without fear of detention and harms the ability of police to solve crimes.
- C. Undocumented immigrants are significantly more vulnerable to crime and poor welfare than the population as a whole.
- D. Both the Labour and Conservative parties have pursued and endorsed this policy despite the significant risks to human life and public safety that it entails.
- E. Local governments in the United States have adopted “Sanctuary City” policies, in which they do not share information with border security forces. Studies have shown these policies to have either a minimal or lowering effect on overall crime rates and to improve wellbeing amongst immigrant communities.

Conference believes that:

- i. As the Preamble to the Liberal Democrat constitution states, our responsibility for justice and liberty cannot be confined by national boundaries, including our own.

- ii. It is imperative for general public safety that all those reporting crime are provided with safe routes to do so.
- iii. The immigration status of an individual should not affect their right to be protected from crimes committed against them.
- iv. The UK has a duty of care to people living within its borders regardless of their legal status, including ensuring that they have access to medical, natal, and emergency services.

Conference calls for:

1. The Government to prevent general public services, such as the police and emergency services, from informing border security services when they encounter an undocumented immigrant who has not been convicted of a personal non-immigration related crime.
2. Local governments to adopt this policy, for services under their control, as far as possible within current legal frameworks.

*Passed: Winter 2018*

*Lapses: Winter 2023*

## Immigration in a Globalised World

Conference notes with concern:

- A. That the Immigration, Refugees and Identity Consultation Paper proposed to Spring Conference 2018 and Policy Paper 131 A Fair Deal for Everyone: Prosperity and Dignity in Migration that is due to be proposed at Autumn Conference 2018, have a large amount of worrying and problematic rhetoric and proposals.
- B. The premises which the consultation paper at times works on; for example it seems to imply that there is validity behind the idea of “legitimate concerns about immigration” and accepting anti-immigration rhetoric propagated by parties like UKIP.
- C. That while the consultation paper recognises the issues with the current Government’s “hostile environment” as a tool to tackle illegal immigration, the paper still works on and focuses too heavily on the premise that illegal immigration is a major issue that needs to be tackled.
- D. The Policy Paper has a number of worrying proposals, including supporting 28-day detention, and many of the good proposals, such as having an equivalent to the US Dream Act, could part of a stronger and more confident liberal approach to immigration.
- E. That the Party has, at times, including in past election manifestos, accepted anti-immigration rhetoric, concentrating heavily on dealing with illegal immigration and signifying it to be a much larger issue than it is, thus assisting the anti-immigration agenda.
- F. That anti-immigration rhetoric and policies can have dangerous and violent consequences within western societies, as seen currently in the United States.

Conference reaffirms:

- a. That our responsibility for justice and liberty cannot be confined by national boundaries.
- b. That we are committed to fight poverty, oppression, hunger, ignorance, disease and aggression wherever they occur and to promote the free movement of ideas, people, goods, and service.
- c. Our belief that students should be excluded from net immigration figures.

Conference believes:

- I. We must never compromise fundamental liberal principles and our commitment to free movement of people.
- II. We must always fight the anti-immigration agenda, putting forward the case for an open pro-immigration country as part of a Globalised world, regardless of how unpopular that agenda may be in the short term.
- III. While the introduction of a UK equivalent of the US Dream Act would be a good long term move, a one-off amnesty for illegal immigrants is also an important additional step and would help alleviate many of the issues around illegal immigration.
- IV. In addition to the pragmatic economic case for immigration, we should be putting forward a passionate cultural argument in favour of Britain being an open and tolerant country with open borders.
- V. That either as part of our continued membership in the European Union, or in any future relationship, we should continue to argue for unrestricted free movement as part of the four freedoms.
- VI. That regardless of the European Union, we should seek free movement with other countries, for example, extending the proposed CANZUK scheme to a

freedom of movement scheme for all Commonwealth countries, not just those which are rich and white.

- VII. That while the Policy Paper's proposal of "Detention as an Absolute Last Resort" and the closing of eight of the ten detention centres is a good first step to the deconstruction of the hostile environment, 28-day detention is still too high.
- VIII. While we must listen to those with unfounded concerns about the impact of immigration on public services, we must always speak out against racism and xenophobia.

Conference calls for:

- i. The policy of the "hostile environment" to be abandoned and its practical elements to be deconstructed, including the closure of most of the UK's immigration detention centres, the introduction of "detention as an absolute last resort", and the limitation of detention to as short a period as possible
- ii. Immigration targets to be abandoned and for there to not be an "upper limit" on immigration into Britain.
- iii. An amnesty for illegal immigrants currently resident in the United Kingdom.
- iv. The Liberal Democrats to always support and make the case for Britain's participation in European Union freedom of movement.
- v. The Liberal Democrats to support free movement of people with other countries, such as The Commonwealth.

Conference resolves to:

1. Only support the Immigration Paper due to be proposed to Autumn Conference 2018 if its final version sufficiently rejects anti-immigration premises and rhetoric, and deals with and supports the sorts of solutions called for in this motion.
2. Seek to amend the paper and accompanying motion to make it closer to Young Liberals policy.
3. Work with others in the party to that end, and try and achieve an outcome whereby the most pro-immigration report is passed.

*Passed: Summer 2018*

*Lapses: Summer 2023*

## **Defence**

## Renewal of Trident: Security in Insecure Times

Conference believes:

- A. The first duty of any government is to ensure the security of its citizens.
- B. The security of the United Kingdom against a variety of threats must be ensured through the use of a variety of means.
- C. The primary purpose of a nuclear deterrent is to prevent armed conflict with other nuclear armed states.

Conference notes:

- i. Britain's membership of NATO, and its target for all members to spend 2% of their GDP on defence means that if Trident were scrapped, the money currently allocated would have to be spent elsewhere in defence in order to meet the 2% target and could not be spent on other public services.
- ii. The annexation of Crimea, the war in Donbass, incursions into Baltic states, submarine incursions into Swedish waters, the probing of UK air defences by military aircraft, and the shooting down of flight MH17, all point to a Russian foreign policy that is a credible and immediate threat to British security, and to peace in Europe.
- iii. President Donald Trump will be a less reliable ally for the United Kingdom, and all of Europe, as evidenced by his statements on NATO and US allies.
- iv. Therefore, a credible nuclear deterrent is necessary to protect the security of the United Kingdom, and also as leverage in future arms talks.
- v. That a liberal foreign policy will include a robust response to all threats to the liberal world order, including Russian aggression.



Conference calls for:

1. Young Liberals to support like-for-like replacement of the UK's nuclear deterrent.
2. Young Liberals to lobby the federal party in support of this aim.

*Passed: Winter 2017*

*Lapses: Winter 2022*

## Defending Our Defence

Conference is concerned by:

- A. The serious shortfall in funding currently faced by Her Majesty's Armed Forces,  
which is having a direct impact on the ability of all branches of the Armed Forces to  
carry out their duties globally in an effective manner.
- B. The significant overstretch of the Armed Forces, especially in terms of  
manpower,  
equipment, and supplies relative to the tasks that they are dependent on to  
perform.
- C. Increasing global instability, particularly in the form of threats to the security  
of the  
United Kingdom and its allies from such actors as Russia, China, North Korea,  
and  
Daesh, and the nature of Armed Forces as a key element of part of a strong  
and  
effective deterrent.
- D. The Government's clear manifesto commitment to keep Britain's standing  
army  
above 80,000 personnel, and yet allowing the number to fall below this.
- E. The findings of the 2015-2016 Defence Select Committee Report - 'Shifting  
the  
goalposts? Defence expenditure and the 2% pledge' - which suggested that  
the MoD  
has only been meeting the 2% target by 'creative accounting': the  
incorporation of

items not previously included in defence spending (such as more than £1 billion in war pensions and MoD civilian pensions).

- F. The difficulties and challenges faced by the Ministry of Defence in seeking to adequately defend the United Kingdom against a rapidly changing environment of threats ranging from cyber-warfare to cross-border insurgencies which threaten infrastructure ranging from the phones in our pockets, the elections of our leaders, and the hospitals we rely on.
- G. The threat to the UK's amphibious warfare capabilities through the sale of HMS OCEAN, the Royal Navy's only dedicated helicopter carrier, to Brazil and the potential decommissioning of one of the two Albion-Class LPDs.
- H. The 'unprecedented' incident in December 2017 in which no major Royal Navy surface ships were deployed beyond home waters, with all six Type-45 Destroyers being alongside in Portsmouth, and only one Type-23 Frigate on duty.
- I. The concerns over the capability of the Royal Navy to adequately protect the new Queen Elizabeth class carriers with an ever shrinking surface fleet.

Conference acknowledges:

- I. The Liberal Democrats 2017 manifesto pledge to maintain the 2% GDP expenditure on defence.

- II. The importance of the UK's defensive capabilities in an increasingly volatile world, including the commitment made to aiding and defending our allies as a leading member of NATO, and the lack of leadership and willingness from the current US Administration.
- III. The concerns raised by the past and present professional heads of Her Majesty's Armed Forces, such as General Sir Nick Carter and Admiral Lord Alan West, about the current state and capabilities of the Armed Forces, and the necessity for increased defence spending.
- IV. The recommendations set out by the Defence Select Committee Report in 2016.
- V. The increasing demands of the widening field of modern warfare, particularly cyber warfare, on the MoD and intelligence services.
- VI. The bilateral Technical Arrangement between NATO and the EU in February 2016, that seeks to strengthen cooperation on cyber defence.
- VII. The outcome of the 2014 NATO Wales Summit, in which the Coalition Government reaffirmed to the 2% commitment and the Alliance agreed that the nations not meeting the 2% commitment at the time should "aim to move towards the 2% guideline within a decade".
- VIII. The importance of defence as Britain's international interests are challenged and changed in the upcoming uncertainty surrounding Brexit.
- IX. The commitment of the Liberal Democrats to respecting and abiding by the

judgement of industry experts as best possible.

- X. That the defence budget is now little more than two-thirds of what it was at the end of the Cold War (2.28% of GDP, down from 3.80% in 1990-1991).

Conference calls for:

1. An emergency increase in defence spending of up to at least 2.5% of GDP to compensate with short fallings in personnel numbers and defence procurement.
2. That, in following the recommendations of Defence Select Committee Report, the UK Government and Ministry of Defence provide Parliament with clear and unambiguous details about the allocation of defence expenditure in order to allow Parliament to accurately and critically hold both the government and the MoD to account.
3. A hardline approach to cyber-warfare, including that foreign cyber attacks be treated as an armed attack on UK or allied national sovereignty, and that NATO Article 4 should be seriously considered an option in response to such foreign attacks.
4. The Liberal Democrats to produce an exhaustive policy paper - underpinned by a review into increased defence spending - lining out a clear strategy for military size, purpose, and defence procurement that will allow Her Majesty's Armed Forces to operate in an effective manner, and be able to carry out their duties globally with the necessary manpower, equipment, training and resources, all taking into

consideration the advice and opinions of defence experts and professionals.

*Passed: Summer 2018*

*Lapses: Summer 2023*

# Justice

## Criminal Records

Conference notes:

- A. Approximately 11 million people residing in the United Kingdom have a criminal record.
- B. Currently, no criminal record information is deleted, including crimes committed by those under 18.
- C. Criminal record information remains on both the DBS system and the PND.
- D. Criminal records can negatively affect job prospects, travel, the ability to adopt, and many other parts of civil life.
- E. More than a fifth of those claiming benefits for unemployment have a criminal record.
- F. That Liberty, a civil rights organisation, has called for a *“flexible system, which considers individual circumstances in cases involving old and minor convictions”*.
- G. The Lammy Review (2017) concluded *“the records disclosure regime hampers people with convictions from starting lives”* and recommended *“a system which involves looking favourably on those who committed crimes as children or young adults, and can demonstrate that they have changed since their conviction”*.

Conference believes:

- i. Rehabilitation should be central to any system of justice.
- ii. Continued retention of information hinders the process of rehabilitation.
- iii. Public interest in retention of criminal records must be balanced with the harm done to the individual by the existence and disclosure of such information.



- iv. Current policy of holding on to all information does significant harm to individuals whilst in the vast majority of cases providing no public benefit.
- v. That disclosure to potential employers of criminal records can be a serious barrier to social mobility and social justice.

Conference calls for:

1. An end to the blanket policy of retention of all criminal records.
2. No personal information or criminal record to be retained by the police following an absolute discharge.
3. All criminal cautions, conditional discharges, and associated personal information to be deleted from police databases after six years if no re-offence is committed.
4. The government to develop guidance for the length of retention of criminal records of sentenced crimes and crimes where re-offences have occurred.
5. Permanent retention of criminal records to only be permitted for serious crimes and matters of national security.
6. Length of retention of records for sentenced crimes to be determined by the judiciary at point of sentencing according to this governmental guidance.
7. A system of removal of records to be provided for all other dealings with the police, including previously tried crimes and alleged criminal activity not resulting in charge, with retention only permitted in cases where the police determine there is a public interest in holding the record.

*Passed: Summer 2018*

*Lapses: Summer 2023*

## **Housing, Communities, & Local Affairs**

## Fair Deal for Students and Young People: Houses of Multiple Occupation

Conference notes:

- A. That there are approximately 7.5 million FE and HE students in the UK.
- B. That HMOs are not solely occupied by students, many other sections of the community, such as young professionals, low income workers, migrant workers, and single people choose this type of accommodation.
- C. That the call of a minority of local parities for the Federal Liberal Democrat Party to support Labour's EDM on HMO's, and the actions of the Bristol local party have severely damaged the party's reputation amongst young people and students.
- D. The last NUS housing survey, which showed that 23% of students live with rats, 75% live with damp, and before the introduction of the Tenancy Deposit Scheme 33% experienced difficulties getting their deposit back. Burglary rates in some student areas are as high as 1 in 10 student properties.
- E. That residential areas with a high student population face many different challenges to other areas.
- F. That a high student population is often beneficial to the local economy and that students contribute a high number of volunteer hours nationally.
- G. That most Student Unions run schemes to promote community cohesion.
- H. The UUK Studentification report.
- I. EDM 1488 set down by Roberta Blackman-Woods,
  - a. "That this House supports moves to unify the definition of houses of multiple occupation; calls for the Government to bring forward proposals to amend the Housing Act 2004 so that all student properties are subject to licence and measures are introduced to control saturation in defined areas; urges local authorities to use the planning system to encourage the establishment of harmonious balanced communities throughout all areas of towns and cities; and

welcomes the establishment of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Balanced and Sustainable Communities as a forum of discussion for these issues.”

J. The 2004 Housing Act.

Conference resolves:

1. To deplore Labour’s EDM on HMOs.
2. To maintain the drive for better housing set in motion by the Housing Act 2004, and calls for stronger action, and greater resources to ensure that this legislation can be fully implemented.
3. To call for the enforcement of minimum legal standards on all HMOs including those which are not currently licensable.
4. To support the use of successful housing accreditation schemes as a voluntary means of improving standards.
5. To call for councils to be given improved resources to tackle problems of poor housing, and to resolve the issues of studentification.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Student Health and Housing

Conference notes:

- A. That there are a large number of unscrupulous landlords who are able to jeopardise students' lives both health-wise and financially.
- B. That one major problem is an unfair refusal to return deposits. This puts the onus on the student to sue the landlord thus incurring further cost.
- C. That some student unions in cities like Oxford, Leeds, and Belfast have joined with local Councils and housing rights groups to produce a Register of Landlords to ensure that students cannot be exploited.
- D. That some have introduced a central deposit-holding fund. If landlords wish to dock some of the deposit, they must convince the organisers of the fund (usually the Local Council) that it is for good reason, otherwise the money gets refunded to the tenant. This prevents landlords profiteering from students' deposit cash.

Conference further notes:

- i. That the Tory Government abolished free eye and dental checks, which has had a highly detrimental effect on student health. The Labour Government has done nothing to change this.
- ii. That the formula for calculating eligibility for free prescriptions is harsher than it was, ensuring that fewer students are eligible.

Conference resolves:

1. To support the creation of local landlord registers and the establishment, with local councils and housing rights groups, a deposit fund.
2. To re-affirm Young Liberals' commitment to the restoration of free eye and dental checks and encourage students to use HC1 forms.
3. To campaign for a relaxation of the rules on eligibility for free prescriptions and, in particular, abolish the ridiculous rule that loans count as income even if one is not taken.
4. To push for all multiple occupancy student accommodation, including University Halls of Residence, to be brought under existing legislation on HMOs.
5. To campaign for Government to release money in the form of grants to invest in Houses of Multiple Occupancy.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Liberal Future for Housing

### Conference notes:

- A. The importance of adequate housing for health and wellbeing.
- B. High house prices and high rents have become a serious problem for many people.
- C. The long-standing Liberal Democrat and Young Liberal commitment to radically increasing house building in order to tackle this problem.
- D. That living near green spaces is beneficial to residents' health and happiness, and that the positive effects of natural areas drop off sharply for people who live further away from them.
- E. That policies of urban containment, including green belts, constrain development and therefore put upward pressure on house prices.
- F. Existing Government schemes such as Help to Buy that focus on helping individuals to meet high prices, rather than lowering them.
- G. Proposals, including from minister Sajid Javid, to place greater emphasis on price-to-income ratios instead of population forecasts when determining the need for new housing.
- H. The risk that Brexit will affect the availability and price of raw materials and labour for the construction industry.

### Conference believes:

- i. That rising house prices have created a social crisis that demands urgent action.
- ii. That a substantial expansion in the supply of housing is required.

- iii. That although the social sector has an important role to play, the private sector will need to provide the majority of new houses.
- iv. That the increase in supply should be concentrated in the areas of greatest unmet demand, as indicated by the highest house prices.
- v. That the protection of green spaces within urban areas should be a higher priority than the protection of green belt land.
- vi. That schemes such as Help to Buy do not address the fundamental market dynamics that lead to high prices and rents, although they may help individuals in the short term.
- vii. That local authorities have a moral duty to ensure that the planning system does not entrench the housing crisis.
- viii. That young people should not be forced to leave their communities and support networks in order to find affordable housing.
- ix. That even those voters previously most reluctant to accept house building will increasingly see the consequences of the housing crisis for young people in their communities.
- x. That well-intentioned local campaigns have led to the Liberal Democrats becoming associated in many people's eyes with local opposition to house building and that this will increasingly harm the party's ability to engage the younger voters who should be its natural voter base.

Conference resolves:

1. To call for an end to policies of urban containment, including green belt designation.
2. To continue to support the protection of urban green spaces where this is of value to the community.



3. To call upon local Liberal Democrat campaigners and councillors across the country to encourage sustainable house building in their areas and to seek to resolve concerns where possible rather than oppose proposals outright.
4. To call upon local Liberal Democrat campaigners in areas with the highest price-to-income ratios to avoid campaigning against developments except in exceptional circumstances, to reflect the severity of the crisis locally.
5. To call for price-to-income ratios to be prioritised over population forecasts in the planning system.
6. To support action to increase the supply of social housing.
7. To call upon the Government to ensure that the outcome of Brexit negotiations does not adversely affect the construction industry's supply chains or workforce.

*Passed: Summer 2017*

*Lapses: Summer 2022*

## Towards Greener Homes for Britain

Conference is concerned by:

- A. The lack of provision for environmentally friendly practices in newly built homes in the United Kingdom.
- B. The lack of democratic accountability of property developers in the sustainability of their developments moving into the near future.
- C. The deficit in the ability of local authorities to encourage developers in their area to improve the environmental credentials of new developments.
- D. The lack of infrastructure provision for the government's planned banning of the sale of diesel and electric cars and vans by 2040.
- E. The failure to install sufficient facilities to enable enough environmentally-friendly choices for residents in developments such as 'eco-towns'.

Conference recognises the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- i. The value of community, and more specifically, the sustaining of communities in the United Kingdom as outlined in the preamble to the Liberal Democrat constitution.
- ii. Our 2017 manifesto commitment to slashing carbon emissions and to encourage small-scale and local authority renewable schemes.
- iii. The longstanding liberal tradition of localism and believing power to make decisions should be given to the people and local institutions.

Conference calls for:

1. The Government to undertake a reallocation of powers to local authorities to ensure that all new developments have some provisions as to enable sustainable practice. These include, but are not limited to, the use of electric vehicles or facilities for cycling.
2. Giving local authorities the right to install and operate facilities on new developments for revenue generation of an environmentally friendly nature. These include, but are not limited to, charging points for electric vehicles, and secure cycle storage. Revenue generation may refer to methods including advertising and usage fees.
3. The ability of local planning authorities to ensure that highways are adapted to have adequate measures to support sustainable transport options, where appropriate. This will allow for highways on new developments to provide publicly available facilities and services where they are needed. These include, but are not limited to, wider footways for the later installing of roadside electric charge points to serve on-street parking, whether through freestanding charge points or from existing street lighting facilities.
4. Liberal Democrat local administrations and groups to use to the fullest extent these provisions, upon their passing into law, in order to promote a greener and more sustainable solution to house Britain's future.
5. Every 25 parking spaces a business provides for its staff, at least 1 must have a charge point and be designated for electric vehicles.
6. Every 25 parking spaces a motorway service station provides, at least 1 must have a charge point and be designated for electric vehicles.

*Passed: Summer 2018*

*Lapses: Summer 2023*

## Towards Better Social Housing

Conference is concerned by:

- A. The stigma attached to social housing in the current environment.
- B. The clustering of social housing, resulting in communities being divided.
- C. The division of communities by clear contrasts between social and private market housing.

Conference recognises the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- I. The value of community, and the achievement that communities can reach together locally.
- II. Improving social housing and ensuring that there is enough provision so that nobody in the UK is forced to go without a home.
- III. The liberal belief in communities in which residents can be proud to live and be a part of.

Conference calls for:

- 1. An end to the practice of building social housing blocks which place social homes atop one another excessively, such as over 3 storeys.
- 2. The reversal of the aforementioned practice where possible for more accessible and less stigmatised alternatives.
- 3. Social housing on new developments to be built to an equal or better standard and woven into these developing communities rather than built to a lower quality and in groups of other social housing units.

4. The improvement of social housing provision by building significantly more social housing units and building them in a quality and style which fits with their communities and develops the character of their area.
5. The aesthetics of social housing to be more carefully considered in both design and construction stages in order to ensure that it does not carry with it the stigma associated with large blocks.

*Passed: Summer 2018*

*Lapses: Summer 2023*

## **Foreign & Commonwealth**

## Ukraine

### Conference notes:

- A. The Ukrainian revolution of February 2014 and the subsequent victory of pro-European Union (EU) parties and individuals in free and fair elections in that country, indicating the desire of the Ukrainian people to move into a closer relationship with the EU but not a desire for armed confrontation with Russia.
- B. Russia's invasion and subsequent annexation of Crimea through the use of armed force and a fraudulent referendum, in clear violation of international law.
- C. Ongoing support for armed groups in eastern Ukraine by Russia, through the provision of equipment, vehicles, and even indirect fire from over the international border into Ukrainian territory.
- D. The threat that the ongoing violence in eastern Ukraine poses to the lives of the people of that region, as well as the sovereignty and integrity of the Ukrainian state, and its ability to fulfil the wishes of its population for a closer alignment with the EU.
- E. Frequent provocative incursion into NATO airspace by Russian aircraft, as well as large-scale military exercises and concentrations by Russia along its common border with Ukraine.

### Conference believes:

- i. Relations between states must be founded on respect for basic norms of behaviour, including refraining "from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state" and settling

- “their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered”.
- ii. That the United Kingdom, as a permanent member of the UN Security Council, as a leading member of the EU, and as a major economic, military, and diplomatic power, has a responsibility to help ensure that these basic norms of behaviour are complied with by all states.
  - iii. Liberals, as internationalists, should be at the forefront of the argument for ensuring that all states respect not only each other, but also each other’s peoples and their expressed wishes through free and democratic institutions. An international society ordered through commonly agreed rules and institutions represents a far brighter world for humankind and Liberalism than one organised simply by the raw and destructive power of the mightiest actors.

Conference calls for:

1. Liberal Youth to lobby the Liberal Democrats to press for a firmer line in response to repeated Russian violations of international law, including (but not limited to) tougher sanctions aimed at individuals and companies close to the Putin Presidency, until such time as the Russian state withdraws from its occupation of Crimea, ceases all military involvement in the fighting in eastern Ukraine, and respects the wishes of the Ukrainian people with regards to the future of their country.
2. Liberal Youth to press the Liberal Democrats to affirm a commitment to NATO as the best defensive framework to respond to ongoing Russian aggression in Eastern Europe, and as the best institution to build common bonds to resist attempts by Russia to pry apart European states, and to separate Europe and the US on key issues confronting them.



3. Liberal Youth to build co-operation with similar groups in Ukraine, to nurture and grow the bonds of pan-European friendship that will help that country become a full member of the EU, through such bodies as IFLRY.
4. Liberal Youth to campaign to keep the plight of the people of eastern Ukraine and Crimea prominent in the public eye.

*Passed: Winter 2015*

*Lapses: Winter 2020*

## The Arab Spring

Conference welcomes:

- A. The recent popular movements in pursuit of liberal democracies in countries across the Middle East and North Africa, and the progress that has since been made in some of these countries towards democratisation and constitutional reform.
- B. The humanitarian assistance to the people of Libya as a result of UN Security Council resolution 1973.
- C. The joint statement signed by the Network of Arab Liberals, Liberal International, the European Liberal Democrats, and the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats in regard of supporting freedom, popular uprisings in the Arab World and strengthening fora and tools for future cooperation, signed on the 7<sup>th</sup> May 2011.
- D. The Federal Conference motion, Arab Awakening, including its recognition of young protesters, and the encouragement in the debate for Young Liberals to work with liberal youth organisations in these countries.

Conference recognises:

- a. In particular, the role played by young people and women in these popular movements.

Conference regrets:

- i. The past links between the government of the UK and regimes in the Middle East and North Africa.
- ii. The sale of arms to repressive regimes across the Middle East and North Africa by British arms traders, and the continued promotion of the British arms trade to transitional countries and governments.

Conference condemns:

I. Repression of human rights such as democracy, freedom of expression, freedom of association, and self-determination, wherever it may occur, and therefore condemns the violent repression of these rights in Bahrain, Syria, Libya, and Yemen.

Conference calls for:

1. Governments in the region to respect human rights and freedoms, and to respond peacefully to any further popular uprisings.
2. The international community to increase its support for democratic processes in countries in the area currently undergoing political and economic transition.
3. Co-operation with sister parties in the region, including the umbrella organisation for liberal youth in Africa, OALY-LEAD, to promote the inclusion of young people in the development of liberal democracies.
4. The \$20 billion promised to Egypt and Tunisia to be delivered under the Deauville partnership.
5. For a portion of this \$20 billion to be set aside for youth projects to encourage the involvement and participation of young people in the political

process, as well as the collaboration of those from different groups in society.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Tibet

Conference notes that:

- A. The People's Republic of China invaded the independent sovereign nation of Tibet in October 1950.
- B. Around 1-1.2 million Tibetans have died as a direct result of the occupation.
- C. Amongst others the fundamental freedoms of speech, expression, and worship have severely been curtailed by the occupiers despite the protection offered to the latter freedom under the 1982 Constitution of the People's Republic of China.
- D. The traditional nomadic Tibetan way of life is threatened by the occupiers through mineral extraction, de-forestation, and the large-scale settlement by Chinese colonists.

Conference believes:

- i. The People's Republic of China should withdraw its forces and civilian employees from Tibet and grant it recognition as an independent sovereign nation.
- ii. In the event of withdrawal China should not fund/train any groups whose aim it is to destabilize Tibet outside of the democratic process.
- iii. Any new Tibetan Government should legislate to produce a codified Bill of Rights to ensure; freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, freedom of worship, freedom of expression, and freedom of movement for both native Tibetans and any ethnic Chinese who should choose to remain in an independent Tibet.

- iv. The United Nations should review its decision taken on November 13<sup>th</sup> 1950, in which it rendered the Tibetan application to join the organisation as 'a communication from a non-governmental organisation.'

Conference resolves to:

1. Write to all 55 Liberal Democratic MPs to urge both personal and Parliamentary support for the above statements and beliefs.
2. Write to the Chinese Ambassador to condemn his country's occupation of Tibet.
3. Actively encourage and support, wherever possible, the Free Tibet Campaign and other such Tibet oriented organisations who promote the peaceful attainment of an independent Tibet.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## **Political Reform**

## The Role of Church and State

Conference notes:

- A. That the legislative arm of the UK Government includes members of the Church of England.
- B. That this Church suffers from falling affiliation amongst the UK's population and fails to represent the ethnic and religious diversity of the people of the UK.
- C. That many countries around the world have constitutionally separated the role of churches from that of the state.
- D. The clauses relating to freedom of conscience in the UN's Declaration of Human Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) and the opt-outs obtained by the government for this Church on specific issues.
- E. That a liberal, democratic society cannot function properly without a widely accepted moral framework.

Conference believes:

- i. That the freedom of conscience is a fundamental human right and should be enshrined in the constitutional arrangements for the UK.
- ii. That the inclusion of religious organisations in government goes against the spirit of protecting its freedom.
- iii. That whilst most religions contribute towards generating and supporting a moral framework, this Church wields undue influence due to the existence of state sponsored religion.
- iv. That in creating a moral framework, members of all religions and none should be invited to contribute.



- v. Creating a moral framework should be achieved through the teaching and nurturing of basic moral standards in schools and communities.
- vi. That the opt-outs obtained for churches by the Government from specific provisions of the ECHR diminishes their authority as moral guardians.
- vii. That the piecemeal approach adopted by the present Government toward reform of the House of Lords does not serve the aim of separating the functions of churches and the state.
- viii. That disestablishment will give the Church freedom to flourish on a 'level playing field' with all other religions.

Conference calls for:

1. The existing representatives of the Church in the House of Lords to have their legislative rights removed.
2. All persons appointed or elected to the House of Lords, whether from a predominantly religious or secular background, should be on individual merit.
3. The separation of church and state to be an integral part of constitutional reform in the UK.
4. The Government to reconfirm their commitment to supporting a widely accepted moral framework through the teaching and nurturing of basic moral standards in schools and communities.
5. The full application of the ECHR, incorporated in the Human Rights Act 1999, to all places of religious worship in the UK.
6. The repeal of the 1701 Act of Settlement.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Voting System (Referendum)

Conference notes:

- B. There are currently many different types of voting systems used in the United Kingdom to elect representatives:
  - a. Northern Ireland Assembly: Single Transferable Vote
  - b. Welsh Assembly: Top-up lists
  - c. Mayor of London: Instant run-off final round preference voting
  - d. House of Commons: First Past the Post
  - e. European Parliament: Closed party lists
- C. The First Past the Post system is the only system currently used which does not give any degree of proportionality whereas all of the other voting systems give some degree of proportionality.
- D. The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Act 2011, allowing for a referendum on changing from First Past the Post to the Alternative Vote for House of Commons elections.
- E. The Alternative Vote is a fairer system requiring all MPs to gain at least 50% support to get elected.

Conference believes:

- i. The Fairer Votes referendum is the first step towards full proportional representation in the United Kingdom.
- ii. The British public are already familiar with the concept of proportional voting systems as they are regularly used in elections throughout the United Kingdom.

- iii. The opponents of Fairer Votes are either misguided ideologues wanting full proportional representation now of draconian dinosaurs protecting their own limited self-interest.

Conference resolves:

1. To support the Fairer Votes campaign in the referendum.
2. To campaign for further proportionality in elections to be introduced in the United Kingdom.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## The Monarchy

Conference notes:

- A. Previous policy laid out in the motion 'Towards A Democratic Head of State'.
- B. The aforementioned motion called for a referendum on the future of the United Kingdom's Head of State to be held as soon as practicable and for the Liberal Democrats to propose that 'Our Head of State be elected for a fixed term'.
- C. Currently there is a significant proportion of party members and supporters who favour the status quo in regards to our Head of State.
- D. That there is currently little demand for a referendum on the Head of State among the general public, in part due to the overwhelming support for the Monarchy.

Conference believes:

- i. That having a referendum on the future of our Head of State is something that may be necessary in the future to ensure the continued legitimacy of our Head of State.
- ii. Holding referendums when there is little demand for one and where the result is already almost certain is both wasteful and unnecessary.
- iii. The current lack of demand for such a referendum means that this should not be done as soon as is practicable, but rather when significant demand for it emerges from the general public.
- iv. When a referendum on the issue is called the Liberal Democrats should seek to ensure it is conducted in the fairest possible way in order to get the most accurate picture of the public's opinion possible.

- v. That, given the considerable diversity of opinion within the Liberal Democrats regarding the future of our Head of State, the Party should maintain a position of neutrality on the issue until a vote at Party Conference directs it to do otherwise.

Conference calls for:

1. A referendum to be held on the future of our Head of State only once there is sufficient demand for one from the public.
2. Said referendum to include, but not necessarily be limited to, options for maintenance of the status quo and switching to a democratic method of selecting the Head of State.
3. A system of preferential voting to be used if more than two options offered to the electorate to ensure the result represents the opinions of the public as accurately as possible.
4. The Liberal Democrats to take a position on the issue that reflects the opinions of the membership.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Increasing Voter Turnout

Conference notes:

- A. The lack of attention paid by recent governments to improve voter turnout. This is demonstrated as turnout for the 2015 General Election was lower than every election between 1922 and 1997.
- B. The particularly low voter turnout in the 2015 General Election among 18-24-year olds, who registered an estimated 43 percent turnout.
- C. The comparably low voter turnout by younger age groups in the EU Referendum contributing to an exit from the European Union, something an estimated 75% of 16-24-year olds voted against.
- D. The even lower turnout in local elections including the Welsh Assembly elections which registered a 44% turnout in 2016.
- E. Various schools, particularly academies, leave out political based lessons/modules from their timetables. Particularly between the ages of 14 and 16.

Conference believes that:

- i. Secondary schools need to have more education on politics and go further in engaging young people in politics and the importance of voting.
- ii. The process of registering to vote deters many potential voters.
- iii. An online system would result in greater turnout for the electorate as a whole, especially among younger voters and those outside the country at the time of an election.
- iv. Citizens, especially the young, should have the knowledge to make an informed decision at elections.

Conference reasserts the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- I. Lower the voting age to 16
- II. Provide fair outcomes for everyone in society, including the youth.

Conference calls for:

1. Our MP's, representatives within the House of Lords and education spokespeople to fight for increased compulsory education on politics within schools. This should include education on political processes, the ideologies of the main parties, structures of government and the inter-relationship between politics and matters of daily life such as the economy, the environment, security, and our place in the world.
2. A commitment to do all we can to press the government to automatically register everyone to vote who is eligible to do so.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## True Universal Suffrage: Votes for Prisoners

Conference notes that:

- A. The European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) ruled in 2005 that the UK's blanket ban on prisoner voting violates the principle of Universal Suffrage.
- B. The UK Government has proposed to extend the franchise to a small number of prisoners.
- C. Prisoners are affected by Government policy.
- D. Reductions in the Legal Aid budget in 2013 have led to a higher number of people appearing in court without official legal representation, as a result of which, the number of wrongly convicted people has increased.

Conference believes that:

- i. The right to participate in free and fair elections is absolute and is not conditional on the circumstances of the potential voter.
- ii. For the Government to remove its citizens' rights on the basis of what it considers their undesirability is a sign of an illiberal society.
- iii. A liberal democratic society cannot function properly without an engaged electorate regardless of their circumstances.
- iv. While the policy proposal by the government is a welcome step, it does not go nearly far enough.
- v. The full implementation of the 2005 ECHR ruling is long overdue.

Conference calls for:



1. All prisoners who would otherwise have the ability to cast a vote to be allowed to do so.
2. The reversal of the 2013 cuts to legal aid.

*Passed: Winter 2018*

*Lapses: Winter 2023*

## Languages in the House of Commons

Conference notes that:

- A. Article 2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of (...) language”, including participation in government, access to legal and public services.
- B. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (1992), signed and ratified by the British Government, provides protections for regional and minority language varieties in education, justice, administrative authorities and public services, media, cultural activities and facilities, economic, and social activities.
- C. The UK has a number of national, regional, and minority language varieties, including English, Welsh, Scots, Gaelic, Cornish, Shelta, Anglo-Romani, Irish Sign Language, Northern Ireland Sign Language, and British Sign Language.
- D. There are no de jure official languages of the UK, however English language varieties, spoken as a primary language by 95% of British people aged over 3, serve as the UK’s de facto official language.
- E. Regional and Minority Languages of the UK such as the Welsh and Scots languages have historically been regarded as inferior, their use suppressed and native speakers treated as second class citizens.
- F. The derogation of languages in the House of Commons means that full speeches and questions in the chamber may only be given in English or Norman French.
- G. Meetings of the Welsh Grand Committee and the Welsh Affairs Select Committee are now fully bilingual, whether in Wales or the Palace of Westminster, and real-time translation implemented at a marginal cost.
- H. The Liberal Democrats are committed to Federalisation of the United Kingdom.
- I. The Speaker of the House of Commons, while generally acting as a neutral arbiter, can and should take stances on certain constitutional and procedural issues in order to maintain important democratic and representative principles.

Conference believes that:

- i. The use of language policy as a proxy for sectarian politics as opposed to as a guarantor for an individual's rights provided in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights is deeply regrettable.
- ii. British Unionism should continue on the basis of mutual respect and consent between regions and nations, rather than English Imperialism, propagated through prescription of the English Language.
- iii. For the UK to truly function as a federal union of nations, all of its constituent countries, and their respective heritages, must be treated with equal respect at the UK wide level and the House of Commons must belong to them all equally.
- iv. Refusing to allow speeches and questions in the House of Commons Chamber to be given in Regional and Minority Languages of the UK sends the message that the U.K. parliament is primarily and English one and does not give equal respect to the constituent countries of the U.K.
- v. It is an important liberal principle for a parliament to be widely representative of the state it governs and that allowing the Regional and Minority Languages of the UK are to be spoken in the House of Commons chamber would mean better representation for those for whom it is a mother-tongue.
- vi. It is an important liberal principle for parliament and regional assemblies to be widely representative of the people it governs, including through linguistic access and representation.

Conference calls for:

1. The derogation of languages in the House of Commons to be amended so that Regional and Minority Languages of the UK are given equal status to English and their use for speeches and questions be allowed so long as the Speaker be notified sufficiently in advance.
2. A review panel to be commissioned by the House of Commons to discuss how this may be best achieved on a practical basis without compromising communication in the Chamber.
3. Liberal Democrat MPs to:
  - a. Publicly support the principles outlined in sections 1 and 2

- b. Lobby their colleagues in the House to do the same and work with them to achieve change on the issue
- c. Commit to the candidates' support for the principles laid out in sections 1 and 2 being a high priority in their considerations for future Speakers of the House of Commons.

*Passed: Winter 2019*

*Lapses: Winter 2024*

## **Liberal Democrats**

## Encouraging Female Participation

Conference notes:

- A. Currently only 125 of 650 MPs are women, equating to 19%, less than 1 in 5.
- B. There are only 7 female Liberal Democrat MPs.
- C. 5 out of 8 General Executive Members elected in the last Liberal Youth election were female.

Conference believes:

- i. The way to improve the number of female MPs is not by the Liberal Democrats introducing quotas or all female shortlists.
- ii. Young Liberals can play a vital role in getting more women to take up key positions within the party.
- iii. Women who wish to be involved in Liberal Democrat politics should be easily able to access training that will help develop their skills and careers from a young age.

Conference resolves:

1. The Young Liberals Executive will formulate training specifically designed for new female members.
2. The Young Liberals Executive will engage with Women Liberal Democrats, the Campaign for Gender Balance, and similar non-partisan organisations to encourage more female activists.

3. The Young Liberals Executive will vote against any proposals for all female shortlists, or the introduction of quotas, that may be put to future Liberal Democrat Federal Conferences, and will lobby against such policies.

*Passed: Summer 2016*

*Lapses: Summer 2021*

## Progressive Alliance

Conference notes:

- A. The rise of populism and the reorienting of the political spectrum as a divide between internationalism and populism.
- B. The Green Party's decision not to stand a candidate in the Richmond Park by-election.
- C. Calls for a 'progressive alliance' where parties such as the Labour Party, the Liberal Democrats, the Green Party, and the Women's Equality Party might coordinate in a General Election campaign in an attempt to increase the number of 'progressive' candidates elected.

Conference believes:

- i. Political parties should co-operate on individual issues where there is common ground, for example electoral reform, both in Parliament and in the media.
- ii. Only the Liberal Democrats are committed to the values of internationalism and liberalism.
- iii. An electoral alliance would lead to dilution of the Liberal Democrat message and fewer Liberal Democrat MPs winning office.
- iv. There are considerable policy differences between the Liberal Democrats and other so-called progressive parties.
- v. Labour under Jeremy Corbyn cannot be trusted to maintain policies that accord with the Liberal Democrats' values of openness and internationalism.

- vi. The Women's Equality Party's commitment to the Nordic Model of sex work regulation is fundamentally at odds with a liberal commitment to improve the lives of sex workers, not worsen them.
- vii. A number of the policies advocated by the Green Party would be destructive for the United Kingdom's economy, limiting growth, and worsening living standards for the British people.

Conference calls for:

1. The Young Liberals to oppose any resolution that would compel or incentivise Liberal Democrat candidates to step down en masse in favour of other political parties.
2. The Young Liberals to work with the youth wings of other parties where there is scope to advance shared aims and campaigns.

*Passed: Winter 2017*

*Lapses: Winter 2022*



## Adopting the IHRA Definition of Anti-Semitism

Conference notes:

- A. Throughout their long history, Jewish people have faced persecution and discrimination across the world because of their Jewish status.
- B. Largely due to its endemic presence in Jeremy Corbyn's Labour Party, antisemitism has recently come to the fore in British political discussion. One issue of particular importance has been the Labour Party's refusal to accept the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) working definition of antisemitism with all its examples.
- C. The IHRA definition of antisemitism is representative of the opinion of the mainstream Jewish community.
- D. Accepting the IHRA definition of antisemitism does not preclude the possibility of a robust critique of the policy of the current Israeli government.
- E. Despite the Liberal Democrats' commitment to welcoming people of all faiths and none, and our mission to stamp out racial and religious hatred wherever it is found, it does not appear that either the Liberal Democrats or the Young Liberals have yet officially adopted this definition and its examples.

Conference believes:

- i. Antisemitism is not welcome in the Liberal Democrat Party as a whole, or in the Young Liberals specifically. Both should be welcoming and safe spaces for Jewish people.
- ii. Because of the current political climate surrounding antisemitism, it is prudent for us to state clearly to members and observers our position thereon: we will not tolerate it.

iii. Adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism will help us to do this.

Conference resolves:

1. To adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism with all its examples.
2. To call upon the party to adopt the IHRA working definition of antisemitism with all its examples if it has not already done so. If it has already done so, conference resolves instead to call upon the party to make this fact more clearly available on its website.

*Passed: Summer 2018*

*Lapses: Summer 2023*

## **Miscellaneous**

## All-You-Can-Eat Policy Buffet

(Multipart policy paper covering a wide range of different topics.)

### Student Loans

Conference notes that graduate courses, don't have capped fees, with an LSE Economics Masters, for example, costing over £25,000, and that graduate students don't have access to the same loan system as undergraduate students.

Conference reaffirms its support for the Liberal Democrat policy of restoring means-tested maintenance grants and the Young Liberals policy of increasing them from their previous levels.

Conference further calls for:

1. The process of means-tested grants and loans to be reformed to take into account a wider range of factors, such as the parental household living costs, not just the parental household's unadjusted income.
2. Fees for graduate courses to be capped.
3. The loan system for graduate courses to be reformed so that the repayment threshold is kept in line with that of undergraduate loans, and so that maintenance loans can be accessed in the same way that they can for undergraduate courses.
4. A review into whether the inflation rate used to calculate loan interest should be changed from RPI to CPI, wage inflation, or another suitable measure.

5. Disabled Students' Allowances to include the option of an increased maintenance loan, to take into account the increased living cost of some disabilities.
6. A review into the way maintenance loans are paid, to consider changing it from a fixed lump sum system either to a monthly system, or to a system that is weighted to take into account the difference in costs that a student faces in each term.

## Education

Conference calls for schools to be required to offer their pupils the option of gender-neutral uniforms.

## Health

### Conference notes:

- A. The Liberal Democrat policy of legalising cannabis.
- B. The Young Liberals policy of reforming the 1983 Mental Health Act to prevent discrimination against individuals with "mental disorders" and extending the right to make advance decisions (which allow someone to decide what will happen to them if they lose the capacity to make decisions for themselves) to such individuals.
- C. That a person with a "mental disorder" who commits a serious crime can be placed under a Restriction Order, which restricts them to hospital for their whole life unless it's lifted by the Justice Security or a tribunal. This applies

even if the treating team consider them to be clinically safe, resulting in people being detained, rather than treated, for their whole lives.

Conference calls for:

1. The availability of all drugs for medical use and research to be decided solely by medical regulatory bodies on the basis of medical evidence, in the same way as any other form of treatment.
2. Advance decisions to be regularly renewed by the individual who makes them, with a formal assessment of capacity required on each renewal.
3. The Mental Health Act to be reformed so that Restriction Orders are not used unjustifiably to detain, rather than treat, patients. In particular, the Restriction Orders' underlying legal presumption for lifelong detention should be reviewed to ensure it is not unduly discriminatory against individuals with mental health conditions.

## Employment

Conference notes that only 16% of adults on the autistic spectrum are in full-time employment, and the Liberal Democrats' policies to address this, including improved provision in schools for giving disabled and/or neurodiverse individuals employment skills.

Conference calls on the Government to produce updated guidance for employers on how to implement the 2010 Equality Act in relation to those on the autistic spectrum, taking into account the developments in the understanding of the autistic spectrum that have occurred since 2010.

## General

Conference calls for the Parliamentary Registers of Members' Interests to be published in an accessible spreadsheet format, with interests displayed in a standardised format including the company registration number for each business listed.

*Passed: Winter 2018*

*Lapses: Winter 2023*