

Conference Report
Autumn 2026

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Policy Motions

A Fair Shot: Reforming Recruitment

Conference notes with concern that:

A. Over 1 million young people aged 16–24 are not in education, employment or training.
B. The Milburn Review found that “entry-level roles have become less plentiful and more demanding. Recruitment has become more remote, more automated and less human”.
C. Research conducted by University College London showed that disadvantaged and ethnic minority graduates have lower job offer rates, with huge disparities at both the initial application stage and online test stage.
D. The Information Commissioner's Office has found that employers were using “solely automated systems without meaningful human involvement” when making hiring decisions and concluded that there is a need for greater transparency and improved safeguards.
E. There is a disability employment gap of roughly 29.4 percentage points, meaning approximately 5 million working-age disabled people are not currently employed.
F. There is evidence that unconscious bias in hiring processes can disadvantage women and those with names suggesting that they are from an ethnic minority.

Conference believes that:

i) Fair hiring practices are essential for ensuring equality of opportunity.
ii) Job applicants deserve honesty and openness regarding both the roles that they apply for and the hiring process used, including any automation used.
iii) The use of automation does not remove human accountability for decisions taken.
iv) Employers should be free to choose whom to hire within fair, lawful and transparent recruitment processes.

Conference therefore calls on the Government to:

1. Develop a Fair Recruitment Code for externally advertised job vacancies, in consultation with ACAS, regulators, industry bodies, employers, recruiters, trade unions, job boards and youth and disability organisations.
2. Ensure the code provides for name-blind recruitment and sets standards for transparency regarding:
    a) Job adverts, including stating minimum pay and vacancy status.
    b) The use of recruitment tests and automation, including stating what is assessed, and their role in decision-making.
    c) Notification of outcome, including a requirement to notify all applicants of the status of their application by a specified date.

    d) The use and remuneration of applicant work when used commercially or operationally.
    e) Stage-level equality monitoring, limited to large volume recruiters.
3. Promote the widespread adoption of the code, requiring its adoption by government departments, agencies and other government-funded employers, producing code compliant templates and working with job boards, recruiter platforms and industry bodies to embed the code's standards through sector agreements.
4. Create a single online service which directs complaints regarding code breaches to the appropriate advice body or regulator.
5. Review the code annually and introduce targeted legal requirements and necessary enforcement measures where any standard is widely unmet.
6. Introduce 'Adjustment Passports' to record the adjustments, modifications and equipment a disabled person has received, and ensure that Access to Work support and equipment stays with the person if they change jobs.
7. Implement a targeted strategy to support disabled people into work, with a Jobs Guarantee for unemployed disabled people and specialist disability employment support.

Applicability: Federal

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies on business and fair hiring processes. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, and policy motion *Backing Hospitality for Growth and Jobs* (2025).

Britain's Wildfire Crisis

Conference notes with alarm:

A. The Met Office confirmed that Summer 2026 was the UK's hottest on record, with five widespread heatwaves, 40 days of temperatures above 30°C and the most wildfires ever recorded.
B. England and Wales each recorded their driest July on record in 2026.
C. Fire and rescue services attended 458 wildfires in England and Wales in July, the highest in any month on record.
D. The wildfire at Dunwich Heath devastated 90% of its nationally important ancient heathland, burning underground seedbanks vital for regrowth, whilst 19 houses in Stourbridge were destroyed in August, with major incidents elsewhere destroying homes and forcing evacuations.
E. Recent analysis by Ordnance Survey found that 1.8 million homes in Britain are exposed to increasing risk from wildfires which are no longer confined to remote areas.
F. The Climate Change Committee's May 2026 Report, 'A Well Adapted UK', warns that by 2050, the number of high fire risk days could double compared to the late-20th-century average and the wildfire season will extend into late summer and early autumn.
G. The Government is belatedly convening a wildfire summit but has failed to publish a Wildfire Action Plan for England despite repeated warnings from fire and rescue services about escalating risk.

Conference thanks firefighters, control-room staff, land managers, volunteers, armed forces personnel and communities who responded to this summer's fires and heatwaves with extraordinary dedication and selflessness.

Conference believes that:

i) Climate change is making the hot, dry conditions in which severe wildfires spread, more frequent and intense, and that this summer's disasters are a direct consequence of decades of inadequate climate action.
ii) Emergency responses, long-term adaptation and rapid reductions in greenhouse gases are all necessary and that we must reject any false choice between them.
iii) One-off emergency measures must be replaced with sustained investment in prevention, resilience and a just transition.
iv) Nature-based solutions including peatland restoration, rewetting and sustainable land management are essential tools for reducing wildfire risk.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to net zero by 2050 and to a comprehensive UK climate resilience and adaptation strategy.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Publish and fund a Wildfire Action Plan for England by spring 2027, with clear, measurable targets.
2. Establish permanent, nationally deployable specialist wildfire capability with common training and modern equipment including off-road vehicles, drones, water carriers and high-volume pumps, along with aerial support as necessary.
3. Require fire and rescue authorities in high-risk areas to maintain multi-agency wildfire plans which take account of access routes, water sources, vulnerable communities and evacuation arrangements.
4. Increase the farming budget by £1 billion and develop a wildfire prevention plan to allow for evidence-based land management and nature-based solutions, such as peatland restoration, rewetting, farm reservoirs, grazing, removal of excess vegetation and firebreaks.
5. Develop a wildfire danger-rating system along with proportionate temporary restrictions when risk is very high or extreme, such as on the use and sale of disposable barbecues and the use of fireworks.

Applicability: England

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies on wildfires and emergency services.

Defending Democracy (Democracy Policy Paper)

Conference believes that democracy in Britain is under threat from:

i) Foreign states and billionaires who seek to use money – including untraceable cryptocurrencies – and media interference to unduly influence British politicians and British elections.
ii) The rapid rise of new technologies which makes it easier for misinformation from malign actors to spread fear and confusion, stirring up racial hatred and moral panic, and which amplifies grievance narratives that leave people vulnerable to radicalisation.
iii) An historic low in public trust in British politics, compounded by a First-Past-the-Post voting system for general elections and the further centralisation of power in Westminster.

Conference notes that these threats are evident in the results of the latest British Social Attitudes Survey (February 2026) and in the independent findings of the recent Rycroft Review.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

A. Introduce proportional representation by the Single Transferable Vote for electing Westminster MPs and local councillors in England.
B. Expand the franchise to 16- and 17-year olds.
C. Introduce measures such as automatic voter registration and removal of the need for ID that make it easier for people to vote.
D. Reform the House of Lords with a proper democratic mandate.
E. Introduce a codified constitution.
F. Strengthen local government.
G. A Federal UK.

Conference resolves to address the threats to democracy by tackling undue influence head on, and by building the resilience of individual citizens and communities, giving people the power to make informed choices about their own lives and to see their choices fairly reflected in the actions of government at all levels.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 165, *Defending Democracy*, and in particular welcomes its proposals to:

1. Tackle undue influence by foreign states by:
    a) Assigning clear responsibility at ministerial and Senior Civil Service levels for combatting foreign political interference, with resources commensurate to the challenge this poses to UK democracy.
    b) Prohibiting anyone who has served as a political appointee in the central government of a foreign state from donating to UK political parties for a period of ten years.

    c) Conducting a stand-alone review into the extent of US interference in British politics, including the extent to which known British extremists are being actively supported by the White House.
    d) Requiring candidates for national elected office to declare any past or current income or significant gifts from any government on the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme enhanced tier list or from any person or organisation connected to that government.
2. Tackle the undue influence of big money in politics by:
    a) Introducing a total year-round cap on political spending by political parties.
    b) Introducing a donation cap on individual donations, and an annual donation cap on individuals, regardless of their country of residence, including for gifts to politicians.
    c) Introducing national spending limits for the regulated period of local elections, to close a potential loophole.
    d) Working towards radical real-time transparency for political advertising, donations and spending, including an easily searchable public database of all online political adverts.
    e) Improving the regulation of lobbying by including inhouse activities and non-VAT registered firms, bringing transparency information about lobbying together in one place, and increasing the sanctions for breaches of lobbying rules, as recommended by the Ethics and Integrity Commission's report, Lobbying, Business Appointment Rules and Disclosure.
3. Strengthening the enforcement of electoral law, including by:
    a) Protecting and strengthening the independence of the Electoral Commission, following Conservative attempts to undermine it.
    b) Setting up a dedicated national policing unit within the National Crime Agency, specifically dedicated to tackling corruption and criminal behaviour within Westminster and Whitehall, including criminal breaches of electoral law.
    c) Ensuring that the sentencing associated with each criminal offence in electoral law matches the seriousness of the offence.
    d) Implementing the advice of the Electoral Commission and the Rycroft Review by consolidating election law, replacing the current fragmented, complex and fragile provisions with a modern, robust and clear version.
4. Urgently convene a Constitutional Convention to enshrine fundamental shared British values, rights and freedoms in a new codified constitution; this will act as the first line of defence against the multiple threats Britain faces to its democracy
5. Promoting a vigorous local democratic culture as the bedrock for a healthy democracy by:
    a) Ending the top-down reorganisation of councils and the imposition of elected mayors on communities which do not want them.
    b) Devolving more fiscal and economic power to local authorities.
    c) Supporting the presence of community, town and parish councils.

6. Strengthening resilience to the spread of misinformation and hatred in all forms of media by:
    a) Commissioning a second Leveson-type review of media regulation, covering new media in addition to traditional broadcast and print media, recognising that the media scene has evolved significantly since the original Leveson Inquiry reported in 2012.
    b) Introducing lifelong learning for all citizens about the digital public sphere and how to navigate it.
    c) Funding local journalism and independent fact-checkers with a share of a levy on very large social media platforms; and making it easier for these organisations to gain charitable status.
7. Promoting informed citizenship and countering radicalisation by:
    a) Strengthening citizenship education in primary and secondary schools, with a greater focus on political and media literacy; and elevating the academic status of the Citizenship GCSE.
    b) Increasing the public funding available to civil society organisations which can play a role in citizenship education, including political media literacy; this should include the creation of a long-term, ringfenced Community Democratic Resilience Fund to support youth services, training for educators and parents and local democratic participation initiatives.
    c) Conducting a full overhaul of Prevent, including the delivery of a new counter-radicalisation programme – a community-led engagement strategy focused on minimising exposure to pathways towards violent extremism and to meet the challenges of today's threats.
    d) Ensuring that counter-radicalisation approaches also uphold protections for academic freedom, journalistic activity and legitimate political dissent, including upholding the right to protest.
    e) Imposing a duty on social media and other tech companies to have 'Community Safety Teams', underpinned by minimum quality standards, to tackle extremism, hate, misinformation and other harmful content.

Conference additionally calls for the introduction of the 'Clacton Clause' to relevant electoral legislation, under which Members of Parliament would be forbidden from standing in a by-election they have triggered if they are under investigation by parliamentary authorities or a statutory body.

Conference notes that:

A. The Electoral Commission's 2019 post-election research found that 72% of people said it was important to know who produced the political information they see online, yet only 29% said they were able to find out.
B. There is currently no UK legislation requiring AI-generated content – including AI-generated political campaign material – to be labelled.

Conference calls on the Government to improve transparency around the technology, data and methods used in online political campaigning, by introducing legislation that:

i) Requires anyone paid or otherwise financially incentivised to produce, endorse or amplify political content – including through 'clipping' and influencer networks – to disclose the payment or incentive and its source on the content itself, whether or not the content is distributed through a platform's advertising system.
ii) Requires AI-generated or synthetically altered political content to be clearly labelled.Requires AI-generated or synthetically altered political content to be clearly labelled.

Applicability: Applicability: Federal except for 5. a) and 7. a) which are England only.

Background briefing: This motion and the accompanying policy paper developed new policies on the foreign interference, undue influence, ethical standards, and democratic participation. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, policy paper 145, *Democracy and Public Debate*, and policy motions *Fair Votes Now* (2024), and *Restore Standards in Public Life* (2023).

Feeding Britain: A Food Security Emergency

Conference notes that:

A. In the past decade, the UK has experienced the highest food price inflation in 40 years.
B. The proportion of food-secure households has fallen from 92 per cent in 2020 to 90 per cent in 2023, meaning that hundreds of thousands of families can no longer reliably put food on the table.
C. The UK sources food from domestic production and trade at a roughly 60:40 ratio, leaving it dangerously exposed to global shocks.
D. Extreme weather events continue to have a significant effect on domestic production, hitting arable crops, fruit and vegetables hardest.
E. Conflict in the Middle East has driven up oil, gas and fertiliser costs, with those increases rippling through the entire supply chain until they land on the weekly shop.
F. The Food and Drink Federation expects food inflation to reach at least 9 per cent by the end of the year.
G. No income group meets dietary recommendations, with the poorest 10 per cent eating on average 42 per cent less fruit and vegetables than recommended, compared to the richest, who eat 13 per cent less.
H. Holiday hunger is a growing crisis for children dependent on free school meals, who receive no equivalent support during school holidays, leaving many vulnerable young people without reliable access to nutritious food.
I. Disruptions to the food supply chain can arise from a range of risks such as extreme weather events, cyber attacks, global conflicts or pandemics.

Conference further notes that:

I) In England, the agricultural budget was frozen at £2.4 billion between 2019 and 2024, while farm input costs rose by 44 per cent over the same period.
II) Straw costs more than doubled, while the costs of electricity, fertiliser, animal feed and motor fuels all rose between 38 per cent and 50 per cent, and interest rates on loans and overdrafts increased by 600 per cent.
III) Under the Conservatives, farm payments fell by 20 per cent in real terms since 2015, equivalent to the loss of £722 million in public funding for farmers, and the government consistently underspent even its frozen budget.
IV) Labour has now cut the farming budget in England by a further £100 million a year.
V) 90 per cent of the population want to see more food produced in the UK.
VI) Children cannot learn when they are hungry, and food security for young people must be treated as an educational and public health priority alongside a national security one.
VII) Local food procurement for schools strengthens the connection between communities and the farms and growers in their area, cuts food miles, and ensures children benefit from fresh, seasonal produce.

Conference believes that:

a) In an unstable world, Britain must become far more self–sufficient, especially when it comes to food.
b) The failure of both Conservative and Labour governments has been to create a false equivalence between nature and farming, as if we must choose between them.
c) It is outrageous that England is the only country in Europe whose farm payments scheme does not explicitly support food security.
d) UK production of some of the most nourishing foods, such as beans, fruits and vegetables, is stalling because it no longer offers a viable livelihood for farmers.
e) Liberal Democrats believe that caring for nature and producing food go hand in hand, and that a properly funded farming sector is essential to both.
f) Long-term food security requires farming practices that actively improve soil quality and enhance the natural environment.
g) Farmers and land managers are the stewards of the countryside, and if they are not properly supported there will be no one to restore the natural environment and halt declining biodiversity.
h) The quality of locally produced food is higher and it is more nutritious; it also provides investment in the community.

Conference calls for:

1. A Good Food Bill for England to be introduced by the Government, setting binding targets on food security to support sustainable domestic food production in harmony with the environment.
2. Support for the production of alternative proteins, allowing for reduced dependence on imports, particularly of low-quality meat.
3. A £1 billion increase in the farming budget to support farmers.
4. The UK Government to agree with the devolved administrations a UK-wide food-security target for the UK to produce at least 75 per cent of its own food by 2035, with targets around locally produced food.
5. A new seasonal agricultural workers scheme with guaranteed minimum standards to ensure that harvests are not lost to labour shortages, decided on an annual basis.
6. A public procurement requirement for schools, hospitals and government canteens in England to source a minimum percentage of food from the UK.
7. A ban on the practice of shrinkflation, requiring clear labelling when product sizes are reduced without a proportional price reduction.
8. Enhanced payments for Environmental Land Management Schemes to support nature-friendly farming and protect long-term food security.
9. Support for farms to protect the environment by permanently reopening applications for the Sustainable Farming Incentive and pledging not to close it again.
10. A statutory requirement for the government to publish an annual food security audit, with accountability to Parliament.

11. Implementation of Local Food Plans where local authorities in England assess food accessibility within their areas, integrating supply chains and economic growth strategies to address whether all citizens can access nutritious meals.
12. Recognition of the vital role of local authorities in tackling food poverty, including through the delivery and coordination of free school meals, holiday food provision and other local programmes supporting children and families experiencing food insecurity, and ensuring that councils have the resources necessary to deliver these services effectively.
13. Protection of existing school food voucher programmes from cuts or closure, recognising the safety net they provide for families already facing food insecurity.
14. Support for local authorities to develop Local Food Plans for schools, mapping local supply chains and connecting schools with nearby producers of fruit, vegetables and other fresh foods, prioritising seasonal and low food-mile produce.
15. Comprehensive preparations for major disruptions to food supply chains, including national contingency planning for major supply disruptions, better coordination between government, retailers and food producers, establishing regional distribution centres and giving local authorities powers and resources to develop local emergency stockpiles and emergency strategies.
16. Local Food Plans to liaise with local NHS services to ensure those with allergies or food related disabilities or illnesses such as diabetes are supported to receive the food they require.

Applicability: England except for 3., 4., 6., and 9. which are Federal.

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies on agriculture and rural affairs. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, and policy paper 154, *Food and Farming* (2023).

Fixing Family Courts

Conference notes that:

i) Private law proceedings, which are between parents or family members about child arrangements, were reviewed by the 2020 Harm Panel, but many of its 72 recommendations remain unimplemented.
ii) The Family Court Reporting and Reform Mechanism (FCRRM) pilot, in 2024, found that the structural problems identified by the Harm Panel – pro-contact culture, adversarialism, lack of resources, and siloed working – remain widespread.
iii) FCRRM data also indicated that domestic abuse is present in 73 per cent of hearings and identified in 87 per cent of case file reviews.
iv) In July 2026, the Government introduced new rules requiring expert witnesses in children's court cases to be regulated.
v) Lack of legal aid and provider shortages mean at least one party is unrepresented in around 81% of private law cases.
vi) The 'Child Focused Courts' model, currently operating in 10 court areas across England and Wales ahead of a planned national rollout, has been described by the President of the Family Division as "far more successful than even its most ardent supporters would have anticipated."
vii) In March 2026, the Government announced plans to remove the presumption of parental involvement through the Courts and Tribunals Bill.

Conference further notes that:

I) Public law proceedings, brought by local authorities over child protection concerns, have not been the subject of a recent comprehensive review comparable to private law.
II) The 26-week statutory timetable for public law cases has never been consistently met since its introduction in 2014.
III) Around 32 per cent of public law cases have at least one hearing cancelled before it takes place, contributing to delays and wasted resources.
IV) Legal representation is also an issue in public law cases, with over a quarter of parties unrepresented in some areas of England and Wales due to provider capacity constraints.

Conference believes that:

A. The previous Conservative Government's mismanagement of the justice system caused delays in family courts to spiral, letting down children and their families.
B. Under the current Labour Government, private law proceedings continue to under-recognise domestic abuse and coercive control, with serious consequences.
C. Meaningful reform of both private and public law requires full implementation of expert recommendations, improved access to data on system performance and proper resourcing of the family justice system and legal aid.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Improve private law proceedings by:
    a) Completing the national rollout of Child Focused Courts across England and Wales by the end of this Parliament.
    b) Commissioning an independent review of the implementation of the Harm Panel's 72 recommendations.
    c) Working with the Judiciary to ensure family judiciary, magistrates, Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) officers and experts in private law proceedings have specialist training in domestic abuse.
    d) Establishing a statutory regulator for therapists.
2. Address data gaps across private and public law proceedings by:
    a) Rolling out the FCRRM for private law proceedings.
    b) Commissioning the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education, with His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service, Cafcass, local authorities and the judiciary, to develop a joined-up data strategy to improve family court data collection.
    c) Establishing an anonymisation unit to support with the publication of anonymised family court judgements.
3. Expand legal aid eligibility and address legal aid deserts in family law, including by:
    a) Reviewing and uprating annually the legal aid means test threshold for victims of domestic abuse, and disregarding joint assets where there is evidence of economic coercion.
    b) Extending the December 2025 legal aid fee increases for housing and immigration cases to family law.
4. Ensure that the Family Justice Board's upcoming Family Justice Strategy addresses inefficiencies and regional capacity constraints, is focused on delivering welfare outcomes for children and their families, and contains a timeline for implementation with clear milestones and mandatory progress reporting to allow effective scrutiny.

Applicability: England and Wales

Background briefing: This motion developed new policy on public and private law proceedings.

Getting the Nation Walking, Wheeling and Cycling

Conference notes that:

i) That enabling more people to walk, wheel and cycle short journeys eases congestion, improves local air quality and helps tackle the public health crisis driven by physical inactivity.
ii) Research by Active Travel England indicating that 5.3 million more people being regularly physically active could reduce annual sick days by 4.4 million, free up 1.7 million GP appointments, help millions of households save around £1,700 yearly, prevent 2,500 premature deaths and boost the economy by £115 billion.
iii) That active travel improves public health by integrating exercise into everyday routines, preventing serious conditions like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.
iv) That active travel lowers stress, boosts mental well-being, reduces road congestion, and cuts emissions to clean up local air quality.
v) That the 2025 Walking and Cycling Index, produced by the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, estimates that everyday active travel prevents almost 156,000 serious long-term health conditions across the UK each year – from hip fractures to dementia and depression – saving the NHS around £1.94 billion annually.
vi) That transport remains one of the largest sources of UK greenhouse gas emissions, and giving people easy, low carbon options for local journeys is essential to meeting the UK's climate commitments.
vii) That the potential for walking, wheeling, and cycling to assist in reducing congestion is illustrated by the fact that 59 per cent of car and van journeys are made for distances of five miles or under, according to the 2024/25 National Travel Survey.
viii) 83% of school trips of between two and under five miles are made by children aged 5–10 years old were by car according to the 2024/25 National Travel Survey.
ix) 22 per cent of parents whose children did not currently walk to school said safer roads would encourage their children to walk more, according to DfT National Survey 2024.
x) That the Department for Transport estimates that for every £1 invested in active travel, the government achieves around £4.30 in benefits.
xi) That despite these structural savings, active travel funding remains volatile, piecemeal and repeatedly exposed to central government budget cuts.
xii) Calls from 18 public health, environmental, and walking/ wheeling/cycling organisations for 10 per cent of the transport budget to be dedicated to walking, cycling, and wheeling investment.
xiii) According to Transport For All, only 20 per cent of disabled people feel they can easily access public spaces, walk, or wheel around their local areas. 77 per cent experience poor pavement surfaces, 65 per cent pavement clutter and 57 per cent pavement parking which forces them to go into the road or turn home.

Conference believes that:

a) Walking, wheeling and cycling should be safe and attractive choices for short everyday journeys.
b) Safe and continuous active travel networks are particularly important for young people and those who cannot access cars, while the proliferation of e-bikes is making longer active travel journeys feasible for more people.
c) Investment in active travel is not merely transport policy but a preventive intervention for public health, local economies and the environment.
d) Too many new housing developments still leave residents with little practical alternative to the car for everyday journeys, and better design from the outset can change that.
e) Children should be able to develop independence and confidence through walking, wheeling and cycling, and the design of local streets should enable children to travel safely and independently, including to school, where appropriate.
f) Active travel infrastructure must be designed to be accessible from the onset, not retrofitted as an afterthought.
g) A strategy for walking, wheeling and cycling that does not work for disabled people is not a national strategy, but a partial one.

Conference calls for:

1. The ring-fencing of 5 per cent of the Department for Transport's annual budget for active travel infrastructure for walking, wheeling and cycling, with a trajectory to achieve the increase from current spending percentages to 10 per cent to be developed when finances allow.
2. A national 'Greenways' program to create traffic-free walking, wheeling and cycling routes between villages and rural communities and nearby cities, towns, places of education and transport hubs, including by converting disused railways corridors which cannot be brought back into use, towpaths and other redundant infrastructure.
3. A programme to deliver continuous, physically segregated cycle routes where traffic speed or volume makes cycling alongside motorised vehicles unsafe, with priority given to routes used by young people to reach schools, colleges, towns and city centres and public transport hubs.
4. A reform of the National Planning Policy Framework to require continuous, high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure in all new housing developments from the outset.
5. A requirement that new developments connect to existing active travel networks and public transport hubs, as well as town and city centres where appropriate, so that residents always have genuine, convenient options for short trips.
6. Encouragement and funding to be made available for Mayoral Development Corporations to deliver active travel networks within, and pedestrianisation of, key cultural and commercial areas in cities, such as Soho or around Covent Garden, if desired.

7. Encouragement and funding for the wider rollout of ‘School Streets’ and ‘Cycle Streets’, designing streets that feel safe for active travel to schools, and for people walking and wheeling while keeping traffic flowing smoothly at low speeds, while ensuring consultation with children, parents, carers and schools, and with appropriate consideration given to accessibility and the needs of disabled children and parents.’
8. Calls for further government support for the Bikeability scheme, with specific focus on the environment in which children live, enabling them to confidently travel by bike whether they live in the city or the country.
9. Accessible design standards for all new walking, wheeling and cycling infrastructure including but not limited to dropped kerbs, tactile paving, adequate paving width and regular rest points with benches.
10. A requirement that disabled people’s organisations be formally consulted on the design of all active travel schemes receiving central government funding.

Applicability: England

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies on active travel. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, and policy motion *This Land is Our Land* (2025).

Introducing Anti-SLAPP Legislation

Conference notes that:

I) A SLAPP – or Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation – is an abusive legal threat aimed at stifling public participation and protected speech.
II) In the Foreign Policy Centre's 2020 survey the UK was by far the most frequent country of origin for legal threats received by journalists investigating financial crime and corruption.
III) The Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 introduced anti-SLAPP protections for reporting on economic crime.
IV) In April 2024, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers approved Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2, which establishes a set of minimum standards for Council of Europe member states, of which the UK is one, to tackle SLAPPs.
V) In May 2024, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA) renewed its warning against the use of SLAPPs and provided detailed guidance on when it would take regulatory action against solicitors and law firms.
VI) Currently there are no universal statutory protections to counter SLAPPs in UK law, meaning journalists, whistleblowers, campaigners and victims speaking out on matters of public interest unrelated to economic crime have no legal recourse.
VII) Cases that reach court are just the 'tip of the iceberg', with pre-court intimidation and the threat of costly legal proceedings producing a chilling effect on journalists, campaigners and others acting in the public interest.
VIII) The Labour Government has repeatedly committed to introducing anti-SLAPP legislation, but has so far failed to do so.

Conference believes that:

A. Equal access to justice for all is a fundamental right in any democratic society.
B. Nobody should be able to use vast sums of money to silence legitimate scrutiny or public interest reporting.
C. The current anti-SLAPP regime is too narrow and does not provide proper protection across all areas of public interest.
D. The Labour Government is failing to act with any urgency, despite the threat SLAPPs pose to a healthy democracy.
E. Strong protections against SLAPPs are essential to upholding Britain's long and proud history of media freedom, democratic accountability and the rule of law.
F. Effective anti-SLAPP legislation must distinguish between abusive litigation and legitimate claims in defamation, privacy and other areas of law.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Introduce comprehensive anti-SLAPP legislation covering all matters of public interest which would:
   a) Introduce a filter mechanism that empowers courts to swiftly dispose of SLAPPs.
   b) Extend early dismissal procedures and costs protection for defendants to all SLAPP cases, not just those involving economic crime.
   c) Empower courts to impose financial penalties on those who bring abusive SLAPP claims to deter future use and provide full compensation to those targeted.
2. Strengthen the regulatory powers of professional standards bodies and ensure robust enforcement against lawyers and law firms that engage in abusive SLAPP litigation.
3. Improve access to legal advice and support for journalists, whistleblowers, campaigners and others facing SLAPP threats.

Applicability: England and Wales.

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies on protected speech and access to justice. This motion also developed new policy on public and private law proceedings. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, and policy motion *Improving Access to Justice* (2025).

Liberal Democrats Mean Business

Conference believes that:

A. Business is Britain's engine of national prosperity: it creates good jobs, fosters thriving local areas, drives innovation and helps fund public services.
B. Business is also the vehicle enabling millions of people to create something new, make the most of their own skills and talents and build a new community.
C. The Liberal Democrats are the natural party of business, as the only truly internationalist, pro-enterprise and fiscally responsible political force, advocating for a mutually beneficial partnership between the public and private sector.
D. Liberals have always championed free trade, fair markets and dynamic enterprise, while enabling people to have a meaningful stake in the rewards of economic growth.
E. Given the appropriate regulatory framework, business can play a crucial role in delivering public goods, including tackling the climate and nature emergencies.
F. People who own and work in small and micro-businesses are workers too; many take a low or unreliable income, particularly when their business is in its early years or facing challenges often caused by global factors, while still carrying responsibility for their employees and the costs of keeping the business running, and their circumstances should be properly considered when employment, tax and benefits policies are developed.

Conference notes that:

i) Britain's businesses have been failed by Labour's two anti-growth budgets and years of Conservative Party mismanagement, culminating in the mini-Budget of 2022.
ii) The Labour Government has saddled businesses, especially high street SMEs, with an unfair jobs tax and damaging business rates hikes.
iii) Business is now threatened by Nigel Farage, who masterminded the shambolic Brexit deal and is more interested in cheering on Donald Trump's chaotic tariff wars and promoting the interests of his bitcoin billionaire backers than backing British families and firms.
iv) Barriers to accessing finance are forcing start-ups and scale-ups to go overseas to raise capital.
v) The UK's tax system was not built for a modern economy of software, intellectual property and intangible assets, and it holds back innovation and companies with potential for high growth.
vi) Tax compliance costs small businesses an estimated £25 billion a year, with the average firm losing 44 hours and £4,500 to form-filling.
vii) Youth unemployment is undermining a whole generation, while sectors that provide many people's first jobs, such as hospitality, are under mounting pressure.

viii) Labour's Employment Rights Act failed to strike the right balance, putting disproportionate burdens on businesses while introducing only limited improvements for workers.
ix) Liberal Democrats secured a six-month qualifying period for protection from unfair dismissal in the Employment Rights Act, a fair and balanced result for businesses and workers.
x) That the UK's green and net-zero economy, valued at £105 billion in Gross Value Added, is currently expanding at more than triple the growth rate of the wider UK economy and could deliver even faster growth and prosperity.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat commitments to:

a) Build an economy that works for everyone, including by broadening ownership and economic power through employee ownership, mutuals, co-operatives, community businesses, social enterprises, community interest companies and locally rooted finance.
b) Tackle the productivity crisis by encouraging businesses to invest in training, take up digital technologies and become more energy efficient.

Conference therefore resolves to back British business to get Britain growing again, end the cost-of-living crisis and raise people's living standards for the long term.

Conference further calls on the Government to:

1. Create a 'one-stop-shop' for businesses with government, by splitting the Treasury into a new Department for Growth and a Department for Public Expenditure; merging the current Department for Business and Trade into the new Department for Growth; and ensuring that businesses each have a single account manager, and that policies affecting business are aligned across departments.
2. Task the Department for Growth with producing a revised industrial strategy that places a higher priority on supporting zero-carbon, renewable and resource-efficient businesses, including through innovation support, public procurement policy, tax incentives and other measures.
3. Launch an ambitious drive to cut the bureaucratic burden on British businesses, especially SMEs, streamlining and consolidating regulation, providing better guidance and information through the Department for Growth 'one-stop-shop' – while safeguarding consumer protections, workers' rights and EU alignment.
4. Conduct a rolling impact assessment keeping track of the cumulative tax burden on small businesses, especially those with high staff and premises costs such as hospitality, retail accommodation and attractions.
5. Give higher consideration to the impact of government policy on the owners of small and micro-businesses by:
    a) Taking account of the cost and cash-flow impact of statutory employment obligations when assessing the burden on small businesses.

    b) Reviewing the support that is available to the small employers when long-term staff absence or other statutory employment costs put an otherwise viable business at risk.
    c) Reviewing how low-income owner-directors and self-employed people are treated under Universal Credit, so that policy reflects the income they actually receive rather than income they are assumed to have.
    d) Take into account when developing employment, tax and benefits policy that small business owners are not only employers but people who work in those businesses and depend on them for their own income.
6. Create clear incentives for businesses to recruit and train young people, including urgently reinstating a lower National Insurance Contributions rate for part-time workers, including young people.
7. Improve access to finance, including by raising the Venture Capital Trusts limit and Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme limit, which at £250,000 barely covers today's startup costs, so founders can grow in the UK, not overseas.
8. Back innovative scale-ups by extending full expensing to intangibles such as software and intellectual property, and draw from the Dutch and South African R&D pre-clearance systems in which claims are assessed upfront by scientists and engineers, not tax compliance teams.
9. Commit to championing competition and regulatory changes to tackle high energy prices affecting small businesses, including making energy contracts more transparent and expanding access to the Energy Ombudsman for all SMEs.
10. Give workers a stronger voice in designing companies' AI adoption policies, and in making the most of AI job augmentation, by championing employee representation on company boards for large and UK-listed companies.
11. Recognise the unique contribution of family businesses to long-term growth, noting their focus on long-term stewardship and community engagement, and ensure banks understand family governance models, so they can offer family firms the types of growth capital they need.
12. Replace the broken business rates system with a Commercial Landowner Levy, ensuring that high streets everywhere in the UK are protected; scrap the Labour Government's unfair changes to Agricultural and Business Property relief and introduce an active family farm test, so that no active family farm or business is unfairly penalised.

Applicability: Federal

Background briefing: This motion developed new policy on the economy and business. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, policy paper 162, *Revitalising Town Centres and High Streets* (2026), and policy motion *Backing Hospitality for Growth and Jobs* (2025).

Local Candidate Safety

Conference notes that:

A. The murders of Jo Cox MP, Sir David Amess MP, and former MP Anne Widdecombe; the manslaughter of Cllr Andrew Pennington and attempted murder of Nigel Jones MP.
B. That research shows a growing level of abuse and threats of violence towards both candidates in elections and elected officials at all levels.
C. A Local Government Association survey of councillors carried out last year as part of its 'Debate not Hate' campaign found that:
    i) 52 per cent of councillors replying reported that they have had untrue or misleading information about their political or personal conduct publicly published, with respondents warning of the "dangers to democracy".
    ii) 64 per cent said they had experienced abuse online, including on social media platforms, while 59 per cent said they had experienced in-person abuse.
D. That women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled people, and LGBTQ+ people are subject to disproportionately high levels of abuse, intimidation and threats.
E. That a 2026 *Local Government Chronicle* survey reported that 52 per cent of respondents said concern about online abuse affected decisions to whether to stand or re-stand.
F. That *The Guardian* reported on 7 May 2026 that parties had described abuse during the 2026 devolved and local election campaigns as the "worst year in memory".
G. The role of social media in enabling abuse, threats, harassment and misinformation to be directed at candidates and elected officials easily, repeatedly and at scale.
H. That in the 2025 LGA Debate Not Hate survey, one fifth of councillors replying said that they have had a threat of violence or death against themselves, this rose to one quarter if you included threats against someone close to them.

Conference further notes that:

I) The creation of Operation Bridger and Operation Ford to deal with violence and threats against, respectively, MPs and parliamentary candidates, and councillors and local candidates.
II) The effectiveness and responsiveness of police forces to threats and abuse under Operation Ford is highly variable from force to force.
III) Abuse and threats are not limited to elected representatives and candidates but can be directed towards, or involve, spouses, partners and children and staff.
IV) That Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects an individual's rights to hold and express opinions.

Conference believes that:

a) Abuse, threats and violence have a chilling impact on democracy – they stifle debate, discourage individual involvement in civic life and discourage people, in particular those most likely to face abuse, from standing or re-standing for elected office and leadership positions.
b) Threats and violence do not affect everyone in the same way. Disabled people and others may have additional needs which make it harder for them to get away from danger, call for help or keep themselves safe. Security arrangements should take account of this and be adapted to the needs of the individual where necessary.
c) Freedom of expression and debate is an essential part of a liberal society and there will always be the need to balance protecting elected officials and protecting everyone's right to freedom of speech.
d) There is a difference between robust debate and criticism, and even rudeness, on the one hand and threats, violence and repetitive abuse on the other.
e) Directing abuse at, or involving, the families and children of elected officials is always wrong;
f) The publication of elected officials' and candidates' home addresses is not necessary within a modern democratic society when there are multiple routes to communicate with elected representatives.
g) Social media companies have a duty to deal with illegal and threatening behaviour on their sites, which is not being fully met.

Conference resolves that:

1. The law should be amended so that no candidate is required, or given a default option, to publish their home address as part of the nomination process for any election, and so that home address forms are available only to those with a clear and legitimate statutory reason to view them.
2. Election agents should be able to use a party office, or other approved election correspondence address, as their legal office address where publication of their home address would create a personal safety or privacy risk.
3. Returning Officers should have a new duty to validate the home address statements of candidates in elections.
4. The Electoral Commission should produce a code of practice for election officials, drawing together all the necessary information related to the safety and security of candidates in local elections; Returning Officers should have a duty to share such information with candidates.
5. Hostility towards relatives and staff of elected officials and candidates should be a statutory aggravating factor in any offence committed and should lead to a disqualification order under the Elections Act 2022.
6. Police forces should be placed under a clear duty to implement Operation Ford consistently, ensuring that frontline officers understand the scheme, recording relevant incidents as Operation Ford incidents where appropriate, and reporting

annually on abuse, threats, harassment and violence against candidates and elected officials.

7. Operation Ford needs a large increase in funding if it is to be effective.
8. Guidance to police forces and prosecutors should make clear that repeated, targeted or escalating behaviour should be assessed cumulatively, rather than each incident being considered only in isolation.
9. The new unit within the National Crime Agency proposed in the Liberal Democrat policy paper 166, *Defending Democracy*, should include advising police forces on how to handle abuse, threats and violence against local elected officials, just as they already provide specialist advice for MPs, including considering the cumulative impact of abusive behaviour on individuals.
10. A UK-wide support service for local elected officials should be set up, jointly by the local government associations operating in the nations of the UK, to provide confidential advice and support, to fast-track the most serious cases to the relevant police force, and, in the most serious cases, to provide grants, funded by the Home Office, for home security, CCTV and personal panic alarms.
11. The national support service should make sure that security advice and risk assessments take account of disability and any other circumstances which may affect an individual's safety, with reasonable adjustments and additional security measures provided where needed.
12. Social media firms operating in the UK should have a statutory responsibility to tackle abuse against elected officials and be required to provide a support line, staffed by humans, for political parties' HQs and UK -wide support service to report the most serious cases of online abuse and harm to.

Applicability: England except for 5.,6.,7.,9.,10., and 11. which are Federal and 8. which is England and Wales.

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies on candidate safety and democratic participation. It built on policy paper 145, *Democracy and Public Debate* (2023) and policy paper 130 *Power for People and Communities* (2018).

Making Music Matter

Conference notes that:

a) The UK music industry remains one of the nation's most significant economic pillars, contributing £8 billion to the UK economy in gross value added, and employing more than 220,000 people in 2024.
b) The Government has undermined trust with the creative industries by stating a preferred 'opt-out' approach to AI content use, before dropping this position following sectoral pressure.
c) Artists are particularly concerned about the impact of AI on the industry, with 90 per cent in favour of protections to stop their work being used without permission or payment.
d) The voluntary uptake of the Grassroots Ticket Levy remains underwhelming, with only 28 per cent of large venues implementing the levy, with progress reportedly hampered by large ticket distribution organisations.
e) Europe-wide touring for British musicians has been severely disadvantaged by bureaucratic post-Brexit barriers, including costly visas, carnets and permits, and the Government has failed to achieve tangible progress for musicians as part of the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.
f) While the Government's curriculum review response has committed to ensuring children have access to a well-rounded creative education, funding for Music Hubs remains 19 per cent below 2011 levels in real terms.
g) UK Music has created the Local Music Action Charter to support local authorities to develop and strengthen music in their communities.
h) Evidence indicates that ethnic minority groups are underrepresented at later stages of music education and progression.
i) National data on participation and progression in music education are fragmented and inconsistent, making it difficult to assess disparities by underrepresented ethnic groups, particularly when this may overlap with socioeconomic characteristics.
j) Longitudinal data are lacking, with limited or no tracking of progression from outreach to sustained participation in lessons or ensembles for underrepresented ethnic groups.

Conference believes that:

I) The cultural and creative industries are a primary engine of long-term economic growth, local community rejuvenation and international soft power for the United Kingdom.
II) Human creativity must be protected, valued and fairly remunerated, and that technological innovation can and should support the artistic community.
III) The scraping of British creative content by foreign AI companies is fundamentally a question of sovereignty and trust.

IV) Grassroots music venues, which form the lifeblood of the UK's world-leading music ecosystem, are closing at an alarming rate due to rising development pressures and a lack of systemic financial support.
V) Every child, regardless of background or educational needs, has a fundamental right to a rich, high-quality creative education, including music.
VI) Local authorities have an important role to play in supporting local music ecosystems, including venues, education, skills, culture and the night-time economy.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat pledges to:

A. Reverse real-terms cuts to Music Hubs since 2011, with a 19 per cent increase in funding followed by a commitment to annual increases in line with inflation.
B. Impose a statutory large venue levy to fund grassroots venues, alongside a VAT cut for grassroots music venues.
C. Fully enforce the 'Agent of Change' principle by blocking developments nearby existing music venues that lack strict soundproofing, and applying it to all noise complaints against existing venues.

Conference calls on the Government to invest in music education by:

i) Reinstating Music PGCE bursaries to attract talented musicians into the classroom, with the aim of hiring an additional 1,000 music teachers.
ii) Redirecting the £25 million fund for new instruments into a national repairs and maintenance programme, and accelerating plans to introduce a musical instrument maintenance and repair technician apprenticeship.
iii) Providing music hubs with multi-year funding settlements directly from Department for Education budgets, and supporting local councils to offer both individual and group music tuition classes for reduced fees, supported by an Arts Pupil Premium of at least £90 million per year.
iv) Ensuring music and creative subjects are embedded into core accountability frameworks.
v) Guaranteeing access to music education for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Conference further calls on the government to improve equality, transparency and the evidence base in music by:

I) Establishing standardised national data collection on participation and progression in music education, with anonymised regional and Music Hub-level reporting published through a national dashboard.
II) Adding proportionate music participation data to the Department for Education School Census, enabling participation to be analysed alongside existing pupil characteristics including ethnicity and eligibility for free school meals.

III) Developing longitudinal analysis of progression from initial outreach and participation into sustained tuition, ensemble participation and further music education, with findings published in anonymised aggregate form.

Conference further calls on the Government to ensure a fair deal for musicians and creatives by:

a) Confirming that existing UK copyright law applies to content used to train AI models, and mandating transparency in AI training data, so that creators and rights-holders can identify when their work has been used, with clear routes of redress.
b) Establishing a clear and transparent opt-in licensing model with fair remuneration for musicians whose work is used to train AI systems, and committing to a review on directing revenue from licensing deals towards grassroots music artists and music education.
c) Supporting the development of creator collectives for independent musicians, enabling collective licensing negotiation at scale and ensuring fair market access for artists without major-label backing.
d) Introducing image, voice and personality rights, protecting musicians and performers from unauthorised deep-fakes and synthetic reproductions of their likeness, voice or performance.
e) Requiring music streaming platforms to clearly label AIgenerated content on their platforms.

Conference further calls on the Government to supercharge growth in the music and live events sector by:

1. Rejoining the European Single Market and Creative Europe, and entering into a customs union with the EU, to provide touring artists with expanded opportunities and frictionless travel for themselves and their instruments.
2. Expanding the UK Music Export Growth Scheme and putting it on a permanent statutory footing, supporting emerging artists to build international careers.
3. Establishing a network of cultural envoys, modelled on the existing UK Trade Envoys system, to champion British creative talent across the globe and secure reciprocal access for touring artists.
4. Championing equitable remuneration for streaming, ensuring that performers receive a fair share of streaming revenues alongside record labels.
5. Extending orchestral tax relief to choirs.

Conference further calls on local councils to write and adopt a Local Music Action Charter tailored to their area, including but not limited to:

A. Appointing a Local Music Champion and working with musicians, venues, promoters and community organisations to develop their local music ecosystem.
B. Embedding music into local plans recognising its role in supporting thriving town centres, the night-time economy and culture-led tourism.

C. Protecting and expanding grassroots music spaces, including by bringing empty or underused spaces into cultural use where practical.
D. Widening access to music and supporting community and grassroots music activity, particularly for young people and those from underrepresented or disadvantaged backgrounds.
E. Supporting local pathways into music and creative careers through Music Hubs, education providers, local employers and skills strategies.

Applicability: Federal except for A.-C. and i)–v), which are England only

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies on the UK music industry and AI content. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, policy paper 158, *Science, Innovation and Technology*, and policy motion *A Fair Deal for Musicians* (2024).

Mortality of Children in Temporary Accommodation

Conference notes that:

i) There are over 176,000 children living in temporary accommodation across England.
ii) Mould, damp, rodent infestations, disrepair and electrical faults characterise too much low-quality temporary accommodation, which is also often inaccessible to children with extra needs and which is actively harming the health and wellbeing of children.
iii) Families in Temporary Accommodation are being forced to share kitchen and/or bathroom facilities with single adults, placing children at risk from inappropriate behaviour, substance abuse and violence.
iv) The crisis has led to thousands of households being moved out of their local authority area away from support networks, detrimentally impacting children's lives, particularly when their schools and GPs change while they try to carry on with everyday life in an unfamiliar location away from their peers.
v) Women make up well over half of households living in temporary accommodation in England, with domestic abuse, a leading driver of homelessness.
vi) Homeless pregnant women are more likely to experience premature birth and stillbirth, and housing instability routinely disrupts access to continuous antenatal and postnatal care.
vii) Families often have less than 24 hours' notice of being required to move, whilst the Children's Commissioner found that the more moves a child experiences, the less likely they are to achieve at least five GCSEs.
viii) Since 2019, 104 children have died with temporary accommodation listed as a contributing factor to their death, 76 of whom were under the age of one, with deaths attributed to causes including lack of access to cots and Moses baskets, overcrowding, poverty and the chaos of homelessness.
ix) People from ethnic minority backgrounds are over-represented in the population of temporary accommodation.
x) Black-led households are disproportionately represented in temporary accommodation – 4 per cent of the general population but 21 per cent of households in temporary accommodation – and stay longer, with 18 per cent there over five years compared with 8 per cent of white-led households.
xi) Data by ethnicity for the population in temporary accommodation is not collected consistently or completely.
xii) Living in temporary accommodation violates some of the most basic rights of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to life, the right to play and the right to privacy.
xiii) A high proportion of Temporary Accommodation is within Permitted Development conversions of office, commercial and storage buildings with no requirements for outdoor or play space or even for any outward-facing window.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

a) Every child having the best possible start in life and incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child into UK law.
b) Exempting groups of homeless people, and those at risk of homelessness, from the Shared Accommodation Rate.
c) Building 150,000 social rent homes per year and to binding targets for affordable and social housing set by the local authority, which would be allowed to build its own social and affordable housing to meet its targets, using borrowing to do so.
d) Everyone, regardless of race or background, should have a stable, permanent home.
e) No woman should be made to feel unsafe in her own home or suffer preventable risks to her or her baby's health, whether that home is temporary or permanent.
f) Building 380,000 new homes per year, which will reduce the need for temporary accommodation by lowering private rents.

Conference therefore calls on the Government to:

1. Commit to ending child mortality where temporary accommodation is a contributing factor to death.
2. Ensure the essential needs of every child for education, health services and an adequate standard of living are met.
3. Ensure every child has their best interests taken into account when decisions are made about them or for them by public bodies, including a presumption of not removing them from their local area unless it is in their interests to do so.
4. Reduce the number of children living in temporary accommodation through the more ambitious Liberal Democrat target for building 150,000 social homes per year and by giving councils the power to end right-to-buy in their area.
5. Establish minimum standards for outdoor space and natural light for all new homes, including those created through permitted development orders, and take powers to require existing conversions to be remediated.
6. The national strategy to include specific, published targets for reducing the disproportionate representation of ethnic minority households in temporary accommodation, along with a clear methodology for how these targets will be achieved.
7. Population in Temporary Accommodation data to be recorded by ethnicity in a consistent and complete manner.
8. Require routine inspections of properties used as temporary accommodation, and provide cots or Moses baskets to all children under the age of two in temporary accommodation and to ensure no child is raised in accommodation without cooking facilities.
9. Introduce a duty on local authorities to carry out risk assessments for survivors of domestic and sexual abuse, pregnant women and new mothers and their babies to ensure they are provided safe, suitable housing that meets their needs.

10. Improved joint working between housing authorities and NHS maternity services, so that pregnant women in temporary accommodation are not lost to antenatal and postnatal care as a result of moves between placements.
11. End the mixing of single adults and families in accommodation with shared bathroom and/or kitchen facilities.

Applicability: England except for a) which is Federal.

Background briefing: This motion developed new policy on temporary accommodation and homelessness. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, and policy paper 155, *Tackling the Housing Crisis* (2023).

Patient-Centred, Accessible and Preventive: A Liberal Vision for Primary Health Care (Primary Healthcare Policy Paper)

Conference recognises that NHS primary healthcare services play a frontline role in treating patients and that their visible shortcomings are both a representation of the failings that exist throughout the entire system and a problem in and of themselves. Conference further recognises that NHS primary healthcare has a crucial role to play in the early identification and support for unpaid carers.

Conference notes that:

1. Primary care is where most patients first seek help and where early treatment prevents illness from escalating into a problem that adds to demands on hospitals.
2. General practices, dentists and pharmacies are the front door to the rest of the NHS and they collectively deliver 90 per cent of the interactions between the NHS and the public.
3. Health has been the second most important issue to voters over the past 15 years, behind only the economy.

Conference notes with anger that the Labour Government has utterly failed NHS primary healthcare services, and that since entering office ministers have chosen to make hospital waiting lists the political test of NHS recovery, while treating the front door of the health service without the same urgency, grip or guarantee of improvement.

Conference also notes the Government's commitment to developing neighbourhood health services and welcomes the opportunity to strengthen community-based care, improve outcomes and reduce health inequalities.

Conference further notes that the Labour Government's claim to be fixing 'the front door' of the NHS is both inaccurate and insulting, with nearly half the public delaying or avoiding contacting their GP about a health concern, 4.1 million GP appointments in October 2025 taking place more than 28 days after booking, and 41 per cent of patients not being offered a choice of appointment time, day or location, despite patient choice being strongly linked to satisfaction with care.

Conference deplores the fact that successive Conservative governments presided over a decade in which primary care became harder to access, more unequal, and less sustainable; under their mismanagement, general practice was left with fewer fully qualified general practitioners per patient, dentistry became out of reach for millions, community pharmacies closed in record numbers and the share of NHS spending going to primary care shrank even as demand rose.

Conference believes that a Liberal NHS primary care system should:

a) Transform formal rights into real freedoms by giving people the capability to be healthy, which is largely determined by the quality of the NHS primary care system.
b) Treat people as individuals with individual needs rather than as a number in a backlog that needs to be cleared, and recognise that health conditions do not just impact the person with the condition, but also family members and unpaid carers.
c) Respect the fact that quality means different things to different people, and that everyone would prioritise speed, continuity, face-to-face care, digital access, prevention, reassurance or a trusted long-term relationship differently.
d) Never wait for people to reach crisis point before becoming available, because a health service that waits until people are acutely ill fails to empower people to live a life of their choosing.
e) Ensure access to clinically appropriate continuing treatment depends only on clinical need, rather than where a patient lives or how their diagnosis was funded.

Conference also believes that neighbourhood health services should bring together primary care, community services, mental health services, social care, public health, housing and voluntary organisations around the needs of local populations, with a stronger emphasis on prevention, early intervention and supporting independence; neighbourhood health offers promising opportunities to support early diagnosis of cancer and other conditions, through better targeting of care to local populations and improved access to GP services and diagnostics; Primary Care and neighbourhood health services should also be in full alignment with public health action on smoking and smoking cessation services.

Conference calls for:

i) Strengthened place-based leadership and local/regional democratic accountability in Neighbourhood Health services.
ii) Funding arrangements that encourage collaboration and investment in prevention.
iii) Greater involvement of patients, service users, carers and local communities in designing neighbourhood health services.
iv) Neighbourhood-level approaches to reducing health inequalities.
v) More consistent delivery of neighbourhood health services across neighbourhoods.
vi) Embedding cancer care in the planning of neighbourhood health services.
vii) Investment in the primary care workforce, including measures to address GP shortages and regional disparities in GP-to-patient ratios, recognising the vital role of primary care in prevention, early diagnosis and timely referral.
viii) Sufficient support for primary care in the delivery of weight management services, including sufficient resources and capacity to manage any increased

workload and deliver robust follow-up and wraparound care, alongside the training necessary to manage weight-related patient care and treatment pathways.

Conference notes with concern that:

i) Only 26 per cent of Britons are satisfied with how the NHS runs.
ii) 53 per cent of Britons expect care to get worse in the next five years.
iii) Over a quarter of Britons think the NHS is inherently broken and cannot be improved.
iv) Unpaid carers consistently reported poorer experiences of general practices than non-carers, with this variation being particularly marked for young adult carers and for Asian and Asian British carers.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 166, PatientCentred, Accessible and Preventive: A Liberal Vision for Primary Health Care, and its flagship policies that would rapidly and reliably reverse this Labour Government's neglectful mismanagement of NHS primary healthcare services and restore the confidence of voters, including:

A. Giving patients more choice when booking general practice appointments, including the option to either have an appointment within a week at a time most convenient for them (or within 24 hours if urgent), or for a longer duration appointment with a healthcare professional with whom they already have a relationship.
B. Expanding the Pharmacy First model to include new services, and better integrate pharmacy into the NHS App.
C. End dental deserts including by removing the administrative barriers that are preventing qualified overseas dentists that are already living in England from entirely filling the 2,500 dentist vacancies, with appropriate safeguards and without impacting quality or safety.

Conference in particular endorses the paper's proposals to:

1. Empower patients by keeping online booking open 24/7 for non-urgent requests, maintaining non-digital routes, setting standards for usability and accessibility, strengthening patient choice, guaranteeing access to shared care wherever clinically appropriate and ending the GMC five-year rule for serious fitness-to practise concerns.
2. Get general practice, community and neighbourhood services, and hospitals working together under a patient centric model of primary and community care, including by:
    a) Better utilising spare 111 capacity to support GP receptions at peak times and create pathways for senior paramedics to join GP teams.
    b) Reforming the Carr-Hill formula so that funding more fairly reflects need.
    c) Requiring developers to ensure there are enough healthcare professionals when people move into new developments.

    d) Expanding support for low-income patients to access primary care.
    e) Establishing a national shared care protocol, with local NHS commissioners required to ensure that where a patient's GP practice does not provide shared care, access is arranged through another commissioned provider or an ICB-funded fallback service.
3. Put community pharmacy on a sustainable footing by properly rewarding an expanded Pharmacy First service, making it fairer for rural and coastal communities, allowing NHS App booking, improving medicines safety information and reviewing prescription charge exemptions.
4. Repair NHS dentistry by replacing the Units of Dental Activity contract with a prevention-focused model, guaranteeing urgent and emergency appointments, protecting check-ups for children and vulnerable groups, supporting supervised toothbrushing, and expanding dental recruitment and retention incentives in underserved areas, which would especially benefit ethnic minority communities.
5. Care for healthcare professionals as people themselves, by making general practice more sustainable and rewarding, freeing up GP time, supporting GPs to lead multidisciplinary teams, embedding clinical pharmacists and other qualified professionals safely, and creating routes for experienced paramedics to join GP teams.
6. Support community optometry and high street providers to deliver eye and ear care closer to home, including glaucoma monitoring, cataract pathways, urgent minor eye care, hearing aid fittings and minor ear infection treatment, reducing unnecessary GP and hospital appointments and helping people stay independent for longer.
7. Improve the identification, involvement and support for unpaid carers through primary care, including through reforms to the NHS GP Contract and ensuring that unpaid carers are proactively included within developing neighbourhood health models.

Conference additionally calls for a walk-in urgent dental centre or 'dental A&E' in every community to provide urgent dental care to anyone with unmet treatment needs seven days a week so that nobody goes without care.

Applicability: England

Background briefing: This motion and the accompanying policy paper developed policies on general practice, pharmacy, dentistry, and optometrics. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, policy paper 137, *Save the NHS and Social Care by Stopping Brexit*, and policy motion *Access to Dental Services* (2023).

Rebuilding Health Visiting and Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life

Conference notes that:

I) The first 1,001 days of a child's life are critical to lifelong physical health, mental health, educational attainment and life chances.

II) Health visitors provide a universal frontline public health service for babies, young children and families, playing a vital role in:
   a) Safeguarding children and preventing childhood accidents and unintentional injuries.
   b) Preventing unnecessary visits to Accident & Emergency (with babies under 12 months having the highest rate of A&E attendance).
   c) Supporting infant feeding.
   d) Identifying and supporting infant and early child mental health issues.
   e) Identifying developmental delay.
   f) Reducing health inequalities.
   g) Relieving pressure on GPs, hospitals and social care.
   h) Delivering childhood vaccinations for families facing barriers to access as part of a pilot to tackle reduced vaccination rates.

III) The Institute of Health Visiting's 2024 UK Survey Report, *From Disparity to Opportunity: The case for rebuilding health visiting*, found:
   a) Rising levels of poverty, perinatal mental illness and complex family needs.
   b) Major regional inequalities in access to support.
   c) Severe workforce shortages.
   d) Unsafe caseloads in many areas.
   e) Growing concern among practitioners about safeguarding risks.

IV) The number of health visitors in England has fallen dramatically since 2015, despite increasing demand for support.

V) There is a significant disparity in health visiting provision between England and the other nations of the UK.

VI) Government has prioritised childcare subsidies for working families, which have grown exponentially in recent years, while budgets for health visiting, healthy baby services and other early intervention services have fallen in real terms.

VII) Liberal Democrats have consistently championed prevention, early intervention, mental health support, tackling health inequalities and investment in community healthcare services.

VIII) Investing in early years support delivers substantial long term savings through reduced pressure on acute NHS services, children's social care, education support services and the criminal justice system.

IX) There are arguments that workforce planning should be sufficient to reduce or reverse the need for skill mix and the expectation is that health visitors do more than the statutory offer.

X) The DHSC 2026 Healthy Child Programme guidance on commissioning public health nursing services introduces new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the delivery of health visiting services (ages 0 to 5), which include, for example, additional non-face-to-face contacts that are not part of the statutory offer.

XI) The 2026 review into the completeness of ethnicity data for children in the Community Services Data Set stated that it is not sufficiently complete or consistent in its recording of ethnicity, and so it is not currently possible to publish data by ethnicity for public health outcomes in the Healthy Child Programme.
XII) A 2024 study showed that babies from ethnic minority backgrounds were less likely to get the 6-8 week health check, as were their mothers.

Conference believes that:

A. Every child deserves the best possible start in life, regardless of family income or postcode.
B. Prevention and early intervention are essential to improving public health and reducing long-term costs to public services.
C. A strong universal health visiting service is a cornerstone of an effective early years and prevention strategy.
D. Families should receive consistent, relationship-based support from qualified health visitors with manageable caseloads.
E. Persistent regional disparities in health visiting provision are unacceptable and contribute directly to widening inequalities.

Conference calls for:

1. A national strategy to rebuild the health visiting workforce, including:
   a) Expanded training places.
   b) Funding for further substantive posts.
   c) Funded return-to-practice schemes.
   d) Improved retention measures.
   e) Workforce planning based on population need, ensuring ongoing continued professional development and a quality-assured programme of training for the workforce.
2. The introduction of nationally recognised safe caseload guidance to protect both families and practitioners.
3. Increased and ring-fenced public health funding for local authorities to restore and strengthen universal health visiting services, and for the national rollout of the Healthy Babies programme.
4. A renewed commitment to the Healthy Child Programme, delivered as intended to the expected standards, ensuring that all families receive the full schedule of mandated reviews and evidence-based support.
5. Greater integration between health visiting, maternity services, mental health services, best start family hubs, early years education and children's social care.
6. The new KPIs should clarify that the practitioner undertaking the statutory offer visit should be a qualified health visitor, not other registered nurses or practitioners.
7. Targeted investment in areas of highest deprivation and the need to reduce inequalities in child health and development outcomes.

8. Enhanced access to specialist support through health visiting teams for:
    a) Perinatal mental health.
    b) Domestic abuse.
    c) Infant feeding.
    d) Speech and language and child development.
    e) Parent-infant relationship support.
    f) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, additional needs and neurodiversity.
    g) Homelessness and temporary accommodation.
    h) Families experiencing poverty.
    i) Expansion of the current pilot to allow all health visitors to provide childhood vaccinations at routine visits in underserved communities.
9. The collection and publication of robust national data on health visitor numbers, caseloads, outcomes and service access.
10. The collection and publication of robust national data on ethnicity of children to enable the CSDS to be used for public health outcomes in the Healthy Child Programme.
11. Recognition of health visiting as a key part of the Liberal Democrat commitment to shift healthcare towards prevention, community services and early intervention.

Conference further calls on Liberal Democrat parliamentarians to campaign for:

i) Cross-government action to reduce child poverty and improve family wellbeing.
ii) Long-term and increased investment in early years services as part of a preventive approach to healthcare and social policy.
iii) Better implementation of the 'Giving every child the best start in life' strategy by increasing overall funding, extinguishing the postcode lottery (only 75 areas currently get healthy babies funding) and urgently tackling the workforce strategies in health visiting.

Applicability: England

Background briefing: This motion developed new public health policies for babies, young children and families. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, and policy motion *Equitable and Improved Outcomes Throughout Pregnancy and the Neonatal Period* (2024).

Restoring our Waters: Britain's Water Company Crisis

Conference notes that:

I) The privatised water industry model has completely failed; water companies have accumulated £70 billion in debt and paid out £83 billion in inflation-adjusted dividends since privatisation - compared to just £236 billion spent on infrastructure over the same period.
II) Up to 20 per cent of an average customer's water bill now goes purely to servicing corporate debt, rising to 28 per cent for Thames Water customers.
III) An average of 3 billion litres of water is wasted every day in England and Wales due to leaky pipes, with Thames Water ranking as the worst offender with a three-year average of 592 million litres lost per day.
IV) Over 2.5 million households are currently in debt to their water company, highlighting a growing crisis of water poverty across the country.
V) Liberal Democrats have consistently led the charge for structural reform, having called since November 2022 for the replacement of Ofwat, a position vindicated by the Independent Water Commission's final report in July 2025.
VI) Water companies continue to discharge sewage at unknown volumes into rivers, lakes, and coastlines while simultaneously handing out massive executive bonuses and failing to invest in fixing crumbling infrastructure.
VII) Both Labour and the Conservatives refused to support any of the 44 amendments tabled by the Liberal Democrats to the Water (Special Measures) Bill, which covered pollution targets, executive bonus bans, volume monitoring and mutual ownership.
VIII) Failing water companies are currently negotiating restructuring deals with creditors at billpayers' expense, despite clearly meeting the insolvency and performance grounds, set out in legislation, which should trigger them being taken into an administration process.
IX) Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) also known as 'forever chemicals', have been found in all but one of tested UK rivers, harming nature and human health.
X) The country faces a growing water shortage crisis, highlighted by current supply restrictions, largely resulting from climate change, and factors including emerging technologies and population growth, with England predicted by the government to be short, by 2055, of 5 billion litres a day for public water supplies, and a further 1 billion litres for the wider economy.

Conference believes that:

A. Profit must never again be put before the environment, public health or billpayers.
B. It is essential that water companies operate on a stable financial footing, so that they can afford to invest in the things that matter – upgrading infrastructure, increasing capacity at sewage treatment works, cleaning up lakes, rivers and seas and improving customer service.

C. Ofwat is entirely unfit to hold failing monopolies to account, and the current regulatory framework must be fundamentally replaced, not just rebranded.
D. True environmental justice and long-term financial sustainability can only be achieved by moving away from shareholder-first structures towards a model that puts public benefit at its heart.
E. Mutually owned public benefit corporations owned by customers, professionally managed and free from the control of unaccountable investors represent the most credible alternative to the broken privatised model.
F. Under a mutual model, investment in renewing water assets would take priority over dividend payouts, offering the most direct route to ending the sewage crisis.
G. Water poverty is a serious and growing injustice, and no household should be unable to afford a basic necessity while water companies reward executives and service corporate debt.
H. Transparency and data accountability are essential for tackling pollution; without accurate volume monitoring of sewage spills, meaningful targets cannot be set and enforcement cannot follow.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Replace Ofwat urgently with a new, powerful Clean Water Authority with the statutory powers to end the sewage scandal, ban unjustified bonuses and hold water executives legally accountable (while allocating Ofwat powers in Wales to Natural Resources Wales).
2. Convert failing water companies into Mutually Owned Public Benefit Corporations that are professionally managed, jointly owned by customers, with all surpluses reinvested directly into the water system rather than paid out as dividends.
3. Require water companies to monitor and publish live volume data for sewage spills, not just the duration of the spill, to ensure that pollution can be accurately measured, transparently reported and effectively targeted.
4. Introduce a nation-wide single social tariff for water bills to guarantee that vulnerable households are protected from sky-rocketing costs.
5. Publish a clear policy setting out when the Environment Secretary will make an application to the High Court to place a failing water company into a SAR, as recommended by the Cunliffe Review.
6. Create an additional environmental trigger for Special Administration of water companies, transferring operations to a mutual benefit model where there is chronic or egregious environmental failure.
7. Establish an Environmental Improvement Objective so that the new regulator does not repeat Ofwat's failure to invest in nature and enforce environmental standards.
8. Pursue a four nations agreement to introduce a PFAS restriction to prevent the manufacture and release of 'forever chemicals', alongside a PFAS remediation fund requiring polluters to pay for cleaning up forever chemical pollution.

9. Develop urgently a comprehensive strategy to deal with predicted water supply shortages, including making full use of the latest developments in sustainable and cost-effective desalination technologies.

Applicability: England and Wales except for 8. which is Federal.

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies on the water industry. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, policy paper 156, *Tackling the Nature Crisis* (2025), policy paper 140, *Giving Consumers a Fairer Deal* (2021), and policy motions *The Clean Water Authority* (2024), *Are You Drinking What We're Drinking?* (2024), and *Ending Sewage Discharges* (2022).

Restoring Trans Rights

Conference notes with concern:

I) On 5 August 2026, the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC's) updated Code of Practice came into force, which:
   a) Bars trans people from facilities aligned with their lived gender and, in some cases, also those aligned with their assigned sex.
   b) Suggests 'policing' gender non-conforming people for how they look.
II) Between 2020 and 2025, recorded hate crimes against trans people increased by 50 per cent.
III) Support groups report increased harassment of gender nonconforming women in women's facilities.
IV) The Chair of the EHRC, Dr Mary-Ann Stephenson, was appointed by the Government against the advice of the Women and Equalities Committee and the Joint Committee on Human Rights.

Conference believes:

1. Trans women are women, trans men are men, and everyone deserves to live in safety and with dignity.
2. The rights of women and of trans people are not in competition; both are essential to a fair society.
3. The Code of Practice is discriminatory and unworkable, and places an undue burden on service providers.

Conference reaffirms its commitment to reforming the Gender Recognition Act to remove the requirement for medical reports, end the spousal veto, and recognise non-binary people in law.

Conference calls for:

1. Parliament to appoint a dedicated cross-party committee to review how the law should better protect trans people's rights, taking evidence from impacted groups, including trans people, and proposing amendments to legislation where necessary.
2. The EHRC to issue a new Code of Practice that is inclusive, workable and ensures everybody can safely access public facilities and providers are protected from legal risk.
3. The EHRC to monitor the impact of any Code of Practice it produces, and update it should evidence demonstrate that it is unworkable, harmful or discriminatory.
4. Future appointments of the EHRC Chair to be subject to a confirmatory vote by the Women and Equalities Committee.

Applicability: Federal

Background briefing: This motion updated and developed policy on LGBT+ rights and equalities. It built on existing policy proposals as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, and policy motion, *Free To Be Who You Are* (2025).

Securing the Future of Rural and Coastal Education

Conference notes that:

A. Research from the Education Policy Institute which found that a falling birthrate has created a drop in pupil demand that exposes up to 800 primary schools across England to potential closure by 2029.
B. 68 per cent of teacher trainees in more rural areas like Cornwall require family support during their traineeship, and 78 per cent of trainees require a car to get to placements.
C. Since the academic year 2014/15, teachers in small rural schools have left the profession or moved to schools in other areas at a higher rate than those in urban areas.
D. That the Government's removal of the Rural Services Delivery Grant has made it harder for local authorities to deliver rural services, including education.
E. Children in rural areas enjoy fewer enrichment activities, educational visits and work experience opportunities, and poor rural public transport is a key factor in reducing access to these crucial aspects of education.
F. That the Labour Government's rollout of the 'Coastal Challenge' is deeply limited in scope and, unlike the historic London Challenge upon which it is inspired, is entirely unsupported by dedicated funding.
G. Government data collection on coastal and rural schools remains inadequate to understanding the unique challenges of delivering a rural education.
H. The increasing pressure on school finances has led to a reduction of schools being used as community assets alongside their role in educating our young people. In rural areas the large travel areas between education centres, has meant that schools are frequently unavailable as a community resource for education and community activities outside school hours in the evenings or at weekends.

Conference believes that:

i) Every child, regardless of their postcode, deserves access to a world-class education and a thriving local school.
ii) Coastal and rural schools are the heartbeat of their communities, and supporting them is essential to ensuring the vibrant social fabric of smaller towns and villages.
iii) Existing funding mechanisms fail to recognise the realities of coastal and rural geographies, unfairly penalising small schools for unavoidable and structurally higher per-pupil delivery costs.
iv) Resolving the teacher retention crisis in isolated regions requires building sustainable local career pathways for local people and existing school support staff, rather than solely depending on graduate relocation schemes.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat pledges to:

A. Commit to conducting trials of mobile youth work teams, which either use existing local hubs or mobile facilities, as decided by the relevant local authority.
B. Increase school and college funding per pupil above the rate of inflation every year.

Conference calls on the Government to invest in coastal and rural schools by:

1. Conducting an immediate review of the Dedicated Schools Grant to ensure that the national funding formula fully reflects the higher per-pupil costs of educating pupils in coastal and rural areas.
2. Ensuring that any review recognises sparsity and rurality as distinct funding variables, and allows for local adjustments within local authorities where data is reliable and rollout is feasible.
3. Improving data coordination and collection between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affair and the Department for Education (DfE) on rural and coastal schools so that definitions of rural and urban are reflected in DfE data.
4. Enabling school leaders to plan ahead by ensuring they are sighted on DfE's funding strategy beyond annual funding settlements.
5. Piloting local 'Grow Your Own' talent pipelines through a teacher apprenticeship scheme specifically targeted at rural and coastal areas, and providing a dedicated, funded pathway for local teaching assistants and support staff to transition into fully qualified teachers.
6. Encouraging educators to work in coastal and rural settings by introducing a targeted teacher recruitment and retention incentive, including a stipulated financial bonus for educators who commit to teaching in the most rural schools for a set number of years.
7. Supporting local education authorities and multi-academy trusts who wish to lengthen the school day in order to deliver enrichment activities, and working with transport companies to ensure there are sufficient travel options near schools which elect to do so.
8. Establishing a Rural School Transport Guarantee, beginning with a reinstatement of a ring-fenced rurality payment to local authorities for maintaining specific bus routes used by schoolchildren, with the aim of equalising rural per capita bus funding on these specific routes when the public finances allow.
9. Launching the 'Rural and Coastal School Network' as a genuinely national scheme to drive up standards in underserved regions, fostering collaboration and sharing best practices across participating areas, with funding to back it up.
10. Implementing a 'presumption against closure' rule for good and outstanding rural and coastal schools, requiring local authorities or academies to produce a community impact assessment as part of the off-rolling process.
11. Creating dedicated teams within DfE which support schools with falling pupil rolls to utilise their spare space for commercial and community purposes; also making it a requirement that schools work with local authorities to facilitate after

school learning, sport and cultural activities and community engagement on school premises where these are the only large scale community or sports facilities available in a community.

12. Piloting twinning initiatives between rural, coastal and urban schools, drawing on the expertise of rural and coastal schools to deliver outdoor education experiences for students from urban areas, and in return, enabling children from rural areas to enjoy the cultural opportunities available in urban areas with additional support to be provided for primary and secondary schools in rural and coastal areas, to cover the additional costs related to facilitating outdoor learning sessions in their local area and support the integration of outdoor learning within the wider curriculum.

Applicability: England

Background briefing: This motion developed new policy on education and regional disparities. It builton existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, and policy paper 128, *Every Child Empowered: Education for a Changing World* (2023).

Sovereignty in the Age of AI

Conference notes that:

a) The UK is a global powerhouse in the tech sector, and a world leader in artificial intelligence, with the third largest market in the world.
b) The UK's academic and research foundations are world leading, with the UK ranking first among all G7 countries for field-weighted citation impact in science and technology research.
c) That 71 per cent of UK businesses cite unclear rules as a barrier to adopting AI, and 57 per cent of the banking sector cite regulatory uncertainty as an investment barrier.
d) That 93 per cent of seed-funded startups fail to access follow-on funding in the UK, creating a severe scale-up funding gap.
e) That a stark AI skills divide is growing in schools, with state school teachers half as likely to receive formal AI training as private school teachers.
f) 55 per cent of central government organisations host over 60 per cent of their digital estate on clouds supplied by just two US-based providers, making critical digital infrastructure vulnerable.

Conference believes that:

I) Only a distinctly Liberal approach can empower people to seize the benefits of AI, balancing innovation with holding powerful big tech companies to account.
II) Britain has the talent, research base and skills to lead the world in responsible AI, and needs a government willing to back that ambition.
III) Deep public and business trust is the essential engine connecting technological adoption, regulatory certainty and long-term commercial investment.
IV) AI investment must be integrated directly into an industrial strategy to solve real problems across priority sectors like healthcare, energy and manufacturing.
V) Digital infrastructure expansion must be sustainable, strategic and purposefully planned to ensure that people benefit directly from investment in their communities.
VI) Education must focus on enduring, foundational skills like critical thinking and problem-solving, rather than merely tool-specific knowledge that transforms rapidly.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat pledges to:

A. Increase research budgets with inflation and move towards multi-year funding settlements, and commit to introducing a national and international science and technology strategy that raises R&D spending to 3.5 per cent of GDP.
B. Quintuple proof-of-concept funding to £200 million across five years.
C. Create a network of regional innovation centres across the UK, ensuring that every nation and major English region can support university-industry collaboration with state of-the-art research facilities.

D. Introduce government-backed seed funding loans for companies born from university research, and expand the definition of commercialisation so that university-derived SMEs and student startups are eligible.
E. Attract international talent by reforming visa processes to replace arbitrary salary thresholds with a flexible merit based system and allowing Masters and PhD students to found startups during their studies.

Conference calls on the UK Government to back British innovation and remove barriers to financing by:

i) Closing the scale-up gaps by reviewing the £250,000 Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme limit and creating a scientist-led upfront pre-clearance system for R&D tax reliefs.
ii) Prioritising world-leading British tech in public contracts and trialling a 30 per cent 'social value' requirement for the procurement of digital services.
iii) Integrating AI into industrial strategies under a new Department for Growth, and extending Treasury and OBR forecast horizons to assess long-term technological impacts and provide certainty to investors.
iv) Creating 'AI Sandbox' programmes in partnership with local authorities, where startups and local SMEs can test new AI service models in small-scale realistic settings.
v) Developing an AI Compute Foundations Strategy prioritising domestic strengths in low-power inference, chip design, and edge AI.

Conference also calls on the Government to build trust amongst the public through empowering individuals to use AI by:

a) Establishing a National People's Strategy which integrates AI skills into the curriculum, and continuing training throughout an individual's professional life with an AI training guarantee for adults.
b) Widening the scope of the AI Security Institute to include frontier AI systems whose capabilities pose material risk of national security harm, catastrophic harm, or significant harm to individuals or groups, including through unsafe or rights-infringing outcomes.
c) Securing international leadership by upholding the Council of Europe AI Framework Convention and using it to pioneer enforceable multilateral standards for democratic AI governance.

Conference further calls on the Government to ensure that communities can benefit from AI opportunities by:

1. Developing a comprehensive digital sovereignty strategy using strategic sovereign procurement policy to protect critical public functions from total foreign dependence.
2. Requiring all new AI infrastructure to meet community benefit standards, ensuring local populations directly gain from new developments through local

jobs, skills training and directing their waste heat to district heating networks or to generating electricity.

3. Ensuring that data centre development remains consistent with the UK's objective of achieving net zero emissions by 2050, including by commissioning independent demand assessments and establishing regional data clusters and AI Growth Zones, designed alongside industry and connected directly to target sectors.
4. Ensuring rural and remote communities can fully seize the opportunities of the AI age through a national commitment to roll out gigabit broadband to every home and business, while embedding access and upskilling hubs in local libraries and community centres.

Applicability: Federal, except for a) which is England only.

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies on artificial intelligence. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, and policy paper 158, *Science, Innovation & Technology* (2025).

Stopping Violence Against Women and Girls

Conference notes that:

A. Misogyny has evolved in the digital age, with the rise of the 'manosphere' and 'incel culture' spreading hateful ideologies linked to real-world violence.
B. Over one in ten women in England have experienced online violence, rising to 25 per cent among women aged 16–24 and 35 per cent among LGBT+ women.
C. Ethnic minority women are disproportionately targeted, with black women 84 per cent more likely than white women to be mentioned in abusive tweets.
D. A quarter of girls have been called degrading names online, and one in five have received unwanted images.
E. Nearly three-quarters of Generation Z have encountered misogynistic content online, with over half exposed at least weekly.
F. Generative AI has enabled the creation of non-consensual sexually explicit deepfakes and child sexual abuse material, including via tools such as X's chatbot Grok.
G. The worrying rise in covert filming of women and girls, with footage often shared online for profit and engagement – a trend further enabled by smartglasses – with one analysis finding 60% of covert point-of-view Instagram content contained behaviour amounting to harassment.

Conference further notes that:

I) Women and girls still experience disproportionately high levels of online abuse, stalking, intimate image abuse and technology-facilitated violence, despite the introduction of the Online Safety Act 2023, the Victims and Courts Bill 2026 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026.
II) Ofcom's *A Safer Life Online for Women and Girls* guidance, published in November 2025, sets out voluntary measures for platforms, with no review due before 2027.
III) The Government's Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) strategy, published in December 2025, includes commitments to tackle online harms by 2029.
IV) Seven in 10 women believe that current legislation is ineffective at tackling VAWG online.

Conference believes that:

A. Everyone, regardless of identity, has the right to live a life free from fear and violence.
B. VAWG is a national emergency and tackling it must be a priority at all levels of government.
C. Effective action on VAWG must recognise the distinct experiences of minority women.
D. The Labour Government, like its Conservative predecessors, is failing adequately to tackle online harms against women and girls.

E. The law must keep pace with emerging technologies and evolving forms of abuse to protect women and girls.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrats' commitment to tackling VAWG in all its forms.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Immediately bring into force all relevant sections of the Victims and Courts Bill 2026 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026.
2. Urgently review the Online Safety Act to ensure that Ofcom uses its enforcement powers earlier, as a first, not a last, resort to hold platforms to account.
3. Make Ofcom's guidance on VAWG an enforceable code of practice with real consequences for failure to comply.
4. Deliver all commitments on online harms in the VAWG Strategy without delay.
5. Require platforms to publish regular assessments of their role in facilitating misogynistic abuse and the steps taken to mitigate it.
6. Reinvest fines levied under the Online Safety Act into digital literacy, healthy relationships and online gender based violence prevention education.
7. Extend police charging powers for lower-level VAWG offences, including online stalking, technology-facilitated domestic abuse and harassment, to speed up charging decisions and reduce victim disengagement.
8. Tighten voyeurism laws to make clear that sexualised, covert filming (including using smartglasses) and posting footage online, sometimes for profit, is a criminal offence, and force platforms to take this content down immediately.
9. Introduce a statutory duty on manufacturers to equip smartglasses with a visible indicator when recording and make it a criminal offence to disable, obscure, remove, or otherwise tamper with that indicator, or to manufacture, supply, or advertise any product or service designed to do so.

Applicability: Federal except for 1. and 7. which are England and Wales

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies protecting women and girls from online abuse. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, and policy motion *Ending Violence Against Women and Girls* (2021).

Strength, Resilience and Partnership: Securing Britain and Defending Liberalism in Turbulent Times (International Security Policy Paper)

Conference is deeply concerned that the critical assumptions that have shaped the security policy of the United Kingdom since the end of the Cold War can no longer be taken for granted; a period of relative stability in international politics has given way to one of deep uncertainty, upheaval, and turbulent change caused by:

A. Russia's brutal and illegal invasion of Ukraine, wider disregard for international law, destabilising actions and threats to the security and democratic integrity of other states, which have undermined an already fragile postCold War European security settlement.
B. President Trump's dangerous and intentional disregard for the multilateral international order that his predecessors helped to shape, including his direct threats to the territorial integrity of the UK's close allies ,Canada and Denmark and his desire to 'punish' European allies over lack of support for his war with Iran, which has severely undermined decades of deep trust and interdependence between the US and the UK.
C. China's ambition to become the dominant global power through its control of critical minerals and technological advances, creating systemic vulnerabilities for Britain's national security, including through supply chain dependencies and risks to critical infrastructure.

Conference understands that the UK faces urgent and stark challenges driven by heightened great-power competition, rapid technological advances, climate change and the erosion of respect for long-standing democratic norms, international law and multilateral institutions.

Conference believes that it is therefore necessary to rethink how best to protect British national security interests and advance our Liberal values in this unfamiliar environment, and that the UK needs an international security policy that is both robust and adaptable to the broad range of circumstances that may emerge from the present upheaval.

Conference notes that on leaving office, the Conservatives left the armed forces in a parlous state and the UK's relations with the European Union deeply damaged.

Conference supports the analysis and aims of the recent Strategic Defence Review, but is deeply disappointed by the Government's lack of urgency and vigour in providing adequate funding and pursuing the necessary changes to national security policy.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 164, Strength, Resilience and Partnership: Securing Britain and Defending Liberalism in Turbulent Times, and in particular its policies to:

1. Strengthen UK defences by:
    a) Maintaining and deepening British support to Ukraine, including through continued financial, diplomatic and military support.
    b) Ensuring that the armed forces, to whom the Liberal Democrats remain hugely grateful for their dedication and sacrifice, are properly equipped and trained to deal with the challenges of a rapidly evolving defence and security environment, particularly those related to game-changing technological advances.
    c) Meeting the NATO spending target of 3.5 per cent of GDP on core defence requirements and a further 1.5 per cent on 'defence and security-related spending' by 2035, and reaching 3 per cent by 2030, recognising that this will require difficult fiscal choices.
    d) Kickstarting investment in the regeneration of the armed forces by raising £20 billion through the sale of defence bonds.
    e) Ensuring that additional resources for defence are not wasted by increasing transparency, scrutiny and accountability of the Ministry of Defence, including through new bodies such as a dedicated House of Commons Defence Public Accounts Committee.
    f) Conducting a full assessment of the degree to which UK military capabilities need in the medium-to-long term to be fully sovereign, developed and operated with allies or acquired internationally 'off-the-shelf'.
2. Work more closely with the UK's European allies towards these aims by negotiating a new Growth and Defence Partnership with the EU, which would include::
    a) Seeking to join the European Single Market, which would provide enhanced access to, and greater influence over, EU defence capability funding and development programmes.
    b) Agreeing a UK-EU customs union, removing 'rules of origins' barriers to trade and reducing red tape for British businesses.
    c) Supporting pooling, sharing and specialisation initiatives for military capabilities where appropriate to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of European defence spending.
    d) Proposing the creation of a European Security Council that would provide strategic leadership on defence industrial rationalisation and the joint development and operation of military capabilities, in order to better support the delivery of NATO's operational requirements.
    e) Securing the UK's access to the EU's Security Action for Europe (SAFE) programme, which would support British business and the UK's drive to rearm.
    f) Seeking UK involvement in EU military and civilian missions and deepening long-term EU–UK cooperation via diplomatic and military exchange programmes.

3. Build national resilience by:
    a) Establishing a new Civil Defence Office to coordinate and strengthen whole-of-society resilience.
    b) Creating a new Civil Volunteer Reserve to ensure that necessary skills can be made available to a national effort at short notice.
    c) Building whole-of-society resilience with a national conversation to raise public awareness of what is at stake.
    d) Ensuring that the UK meets its resilience commitments to NATO under Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty.
4. Defend the principle and practice of multilateralism by:
    a) Defending global institutions and norms which are critical to Britain's national security and prosperity.
    b) Working with Canada and other like-minded 'middle powers' to develop an effective cooperation mechanism as a counterweight to states seeking to undermine multilateralism and the international rules-based order.
    c) Prioritising and injecting greater urgency into efforts to strengthen or develop international agreements on new technologies, including autonomous weapons, and on risks relating to the use of space, and on effective global governance relating to AI that protects the safety and security of British citizens.
    d) Pushing polar and maritime security issues higher up domestic and international agendas.
    e) Tackling many of the root causes of instability and conflict by promoting global cooperation on development, including reversing the government's cuts in ODA and setting out a roadmap for the UK's return to the UN target of 0.7 per cent of GNI in ODA.
5. Meet the threat of Russia, by:
    a) Ramping up sanctions against the Kremlin, including by banning the provision of all UK maritime services for the export of Russian oil, gas and coal.
    b) Coordinating a Europe-wide ban on the provision of maritime services for the export of Russian fossil fuels.
    c) Expanding the Royal Navy's interception of Russian Shadow Fleet vessels operating illegally in or near British waters, seize and sell the oil being transported, and send the resulting funds to Ukraine to support its war effort.

Conference also recognises the critical importance to the UK's national security of fixing the perennial problem of recruitment and retention across our armed forces, and calls on the Government to bolster support for service personnel and veterans, including but not limited to:

l) Creating a statutory standard for Single Living Accommodation (SLA) which is equivalent to the Decent Homes Standard, and establishing a duty for all SLA to meet that standard.

II) Normalising the visible appreciation of Armed Forces' service across British sport and culture, including by working with sporting bodies on a 'Salute to Service' programme which would include more visual and public displays of appreciation for our service personnel.
III) Requiring that medical records should be provided to veterans no later than one month after leaving the military to ensure discharged personnel can register with civilian GPs and continue to receive the appropriate treatment.

Applicability: Federal

Background briefing: This motion and the accompanying policy paper developed new foreign policy. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, policy paper 157, *Liberal Values in a Dangerous World* (2024), policy motion *Trump and the Wider World* (2026), and policy motion *The UK's Response to Trump* (2025).

Supporting People to Age Well

Conference notes that:

I) More than one in ten people over 65 years in the community live with frailty, and frailty affects over half of adults in hospital or care home settings.
II) The number of people in the UK over the age of 85 is set to double by 2045.
III) People who have kept the same GP for more than 15 years had a 25 per cent lower chance of dying than those with a GP relationship lasting a year or less.
IV) For older people and those with long-term conditions having the same GP helps avoid hospital admissions, which saves the NHS money in the long term.
V) Where integrated cross-sector teams for older people's care have been introduced, such as in Surrey Downs, there has been a fall in elderly admissions, shorter hospital stays, significantly reduced social care costs and 50 per cent fewer nursing home admissions.
VI) A third of people over 65, and half of people over 80, fall at least once a year; falls are the most common cause of death from injury in the over-65s, accounting for more than 50 per cent of admissions to hospital caused by unintentional injury and costing the NHS £4.6 million per day and over 4 million bed-days.
VII) Older people are more likely to live with neurological conditions, from dementia to Parkinson's, impairing quality of life and increasing their reliance on NHS services.
VIII) There are 2.1 million unpaid carers over the age of 65, and 420,000 over the age of 80, navigating the difficulties of caring for a loved one whilst ageing themselves, with 23 per cent of carers over the age of 75 providing 50 or more hours of care each week.
IX) One in five unpaid carers of state pension age live in poverty, a figure that is 54% higher than for non-carers in the same age group.
X) The Better Care Fund is a key source of health and social care funding to support older people, including carers, yet there are significant variations in how local systems are using this funding to support these groups of people.
XI) According to a 2025 CQC survey of UK dementia care homes, key indicators of resident satisfaction include respect for individual backgrounds, integrity, independence and social needs. Good practice can be found in De Hogeweyk in the Netherlands, where residents live in small households and can use shared gardens, shops, restaurants and social facilities in a safe neighbourhood, with support adapted to their individual lifestyles and preferences. A similar approach, the Eden Alternative, was also piloted in the UK in Kingston upon Thames.

Conference believes that:

i) Supporting people to improve quality of life and maintain independence is better for them, and better for the NHS by reducing hospital admissions and procedures; by empowering individuals to improve their own health, creating

healthier environments, and funding communities to decide how to better their health, society will be stronger and better equipped to manage the challenges of an ageing population.

ii) Everyone who needs it deserves high-quality care and support to stay healthy in later life – that means fixing social care services and bringing forward measures that help people stay in better health for longer.

iii) Unpaid carers should not live in poverty because of a lack of financial support for carers in receipt of a state pension, when many find themselves providing increased levels of care.

iv) Improving health and care outcomes for older people, including carers needs to be considered a shared responsibility across health and social care services.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

A. Fix social care, including through sustained increases in funding for local authorities, which are the cornerstone of the social care system, a higher Carer's Minimum Wage and by better supporting family carers with guaranteed respite care and a dedicated carer support service in every hospital.
B. Give everyone 70+ and everyone with long-term health conditions access to a named GP
C. Tackle loneliness and isolation by refreshing the national strategy for loneliness, to be overseen by a dedicated Minister for Tackling Loneliness; and by expanding social prescribing and investing in relevant community projects.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Introduce a dedicated frailty service in every community which:
    a) Ensures those arriving at hospital are identified by frailty specialists who coordinate tailored care, with an emphasis on providing care at home.
    b) Ensures patients can discuss with frailty specialists the outcomes they want for their health, living standards and independence, with ongoing care reflecting these preferences.
    c) Works with local government, voluntary and state sectors, as well as with family carers, to provide high-quality tailored care in the community for patients with frailty or complex needs.
    d) Works in every nursing and residential home, bringing the NHS to residents and ensuring they have quality care, with an agreed care plan if they become very unwell.
    e) Ensures every frail patient and their carer has ongoing support from pharmacists, nurses and others for managing their health, including using medicines in the correct way.
2. Invest in a major expansion of step-down care and home-based reablement to ensure people are always guaranteed the timely intermediate care they need and are not trapped in hospital.
3. Prevent people needing to go to the hospital in the first place through regular health assessments for people with frailty or multiple conditions, overseen by a

named GP who would coordinate with paid and unpaid carers, community nurses, therapists, and pharmacists.

4. Equip GPs with the time and resources to ensure effective, tailored follow-up care following these assessments, including low-level interventions to improve quality of life and health outcomes such as free ear wax removal, switching a patient's incontinence supplies to reduce UTIs, or ongoing pharmacist check-ins for help with using the right medicine.
5. Expand the capacity for district nursing by creating alternative roles for people who retire from being paramedics; this would enable them to undertake home visits, urgent face-to-face assessments, post-discharge follow-ups, and support patients with complex or multiple conditions, working under the close supervision of GPs.
6. Implement the recommendations of the Neurology Alliance to ensure personalised care plans and care coordinators for everyone with neurological conditions such as dementia, Parkinson's and MS, and to cut emergency admissions for these conditions by a third.
7. Support Community Dental Services to ensure those who are housebound, live in a care home, or have additional health needs can access dental care.
8. Roll out active ageing programmes and trips and falls assessments for everyone over the age of 80 to prevent falls, avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and promote healthy ageing.
9. Deliver fracture liaison services to every part of the country within a year so that osteoporosis patients can get the treatment they need, preventing long-term issues and costs to the NHS.
10. Establish a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing to promote and protect the rights of older people, ensuring policy across government departments takes account of the challenges of an ageing population.
11. Set out measures to secure requirements for pooled funding across health and social care and improve accountability around how schemes such as the Better Care Fund are supporting older people, including carers.
12. Improve financial support for older unpaid carers including through reforming the rules around Carers Allowance eligibility for carers in receipt of a state pension.
13. Establish and independently evaluate pilots of community-integrated dementia care villages, such as the De Hogeweyk model in the Netherlands, providing small, domestic-scale homes in safe neighbourhoods where residents can exercise meaningful choice over daily life and move freely between shared gardens and community facilities.

Applicability: England

Background briefing: This motion developed new policies on frailty and healthcare for older people. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, policy paper 137, *Save the NHS and Social Care by Stopping Brexit*, and policy motion *Our Plan to Save the NHS* (2024).

Tackling Illegal E-Bikes and Dangerous Riding

Conference notes that:

i) Liberal Democrats champion cycling as a vital tool to improve public health, reduce toxic air pollution and relieve urban traffic congestion.
ii) The Liberal Democrats were the first UK political party to adopt the recommendations of the landmark 'Get Britain Cycling' report as official party policy.
iii) The UK's estimated full market size for e-bikes in 2025 was 149,000 units.
iv) While motor vehicles remain by far the greatest cause of death and injury on the roads, public concern is rising over the dangerous misuse of illegally modified or unregulated e-bikes on pavements and in pedestrianised zones.
v) In May 2024, changes to the law via the Criminal Justice Bill established that causing death or serious injury by dangerous or careless cycling is a criminal offence, carrying maximum penalties of up to 14 years in prison.
vi) A proliferation of unregulated, oversized, and illegal e-bikes capable of excessive speeds are posing risks to pedestrians, particularly the elderly, children and disabled individuals.
vii) These high-speed, illegal e-bikes are increasingly being weaponised by criminal gangs and used to facilitate anti-social behaviour.
viii) The current regulatory system for e-bikes is confusing, outdated, and seldom enforced, meaning that the unrestricted online sale of illegal modification kits and high-power bikes continues entirely unchecked.

Conference believes that:

a) Everyone has the right to feel safe on streets and pavements, and cyclists must recognise their clear duty of care towards pedestrians and other commuters.
b) Legal E-bikes offer significant benefits for widening participation in active travel – particularly for disabled people, older people and those with longer commutes or caring responsibilities – and safe, legal e-bike adoption should be encouraged.
c) Dangerous or criminal riders must not be above the law, and the reputational damage caused by illegal e-bikes risks undermining the broader public case for legal, green active travel.
d) The vast majority of delivery drivers, couriers, and everyday cyclists are law-abiding individuals trying to earn a living or travel sustainably, and they deserve protection from rampant e-bike theft.
e) Illegal e-bike use and dangerous riding are also a local community safety and antisocial behaviour issue, directly affecting residents and communities and requiring effective partnership working between local authorities, police forces and other relevant agencies.
f) Enforcement action by the police alone cannot solve this crisis; the government must aggressively tackle the supply chain and unrestricted online marketplaces that flood the streets with illegal vehicles.

g) Multi-million-pound courier and gig-economy platforms must take corporate responsibility for the safety, vehicle legality, and road conduct of the riders operating on their apps, including by ensuring that pay structures and work-allocation algorithms do not incentivise riders to exceed safe speeds or use illegal vehicles.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Implement strict restrictions or bans on the online sale and importation of illegal high-power e-bikes, untethered conversion kits, and oversized electric vehicles that breach standard Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle safety limits, and close the loophole permitting such vehicles to be marketed and sold under the pretence of off-road-only use when routinely ridden on public roads.
2. Overhaul the confusing existing legal framework to provide clear, updated definitions separating legal active travel from high-speed, unregistered light electric vehicles.
3. Provide police forces with updated training to confidently spot, intercept and confiscate illegally modified bikes, ensuring that dangerous cycling laws are robustly enforced.
4. Establish statutory liability standards for gig-economy delivery platforms, legally requiring them to verify that their riders utilise road-legal vehicles, hold valid insurance and comply with traffic laws.
5. Require delivery platforms to reform per-delivery pay structures so they do not incentivise riders to exceed safe speeds or use illegal vehicles, and to publish regular algorithmic safety assessments.
6. Work with industry to establish a government-backed e-bike safety kitemark, enabling landlords, transport operators, and insurers to distinguish legal, safe e-bikes from illegal machines to avoid unnecessary blanket restrictions on e-bikes.
7. Deliver a comprehensive nation-wide active travel strategy that invests in secure bike infrastructure to combat theft, alongside dedicated cycle paths between key transport links to keep pedestrians and legal cyclists safe.
8. Take steps to enforce compliance of e-bike and delivery drivers with the Highway Code.
9. Strengthen support for local authorities and Community Safety Partnerships to tackle the antisocial behaviour associated with illegal e-bikes and dangerous riding, including through improved information-sharing, joint enforcement activity, prevention and community engagement.

Applicability: Federal, except for 3 which is England and Wales, and 5. and 6. which are England only.

Background briefing: This motion created new policy on illegal e-bikes.

Tackling the Maternity Crisis

Conference notes that:

i) Maternal deaths in the UK are higher than at any point in the last decade.
ii) 65 per cent of maternity units are not safe to give birth in, according to the Care Quality Commission, and the Commission has stated that they are "concerned about the potential normalising of serious harm in maternity".
iii) Shortages of experienced staff, including specialist doctors and senior midwives, especially at night, has been repeatedly identified as a source of failure in maternity, including in landmark maternity investigations such as the Ockenden report into failings at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust.
iv) Maternity represents the largest share of clinical negligence payments, at £1.3 billion a year.
v) Reviews into maternity have come up with more than 700 recommendations in the past decade, but improvements have been limited.
vi) There have been repeated investigations into maternity services in recent years, often uncovering similar failings, including most recently the Nottingham, Leeds and Sussex investigations and the national Amos Review.

Conference believes that:

a) Britain should be the safest country in the world in which to have a baby.
b) Every maternity unit should meet 'good' or 'outstanding' standards of safety.
c) No woman should face injury or trauma due to unsafe healthcare.
d) There should be sufficient staff to ensure mothers benefit from the greatest possible safety and choice during pregnancy and labour.

Conference calls for:

I) Every maternity unit to be brought up to good levels of safety through:
    a) Consultant obstetricians to be present on every labour ward 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
    b) One-to-one midwifery care for every woman in labour.
II) A capital investment programme that:
    a) Brings every maternity and neonatal unit up to good condition; this should include renovation of the 42 per cent of units in need of major repair and immediately starting repairs in the 7 per cent of units that run a risk of imminent breakdown.
    b) Delivers new dedicated bereavement suites.
    c) Invests in high-quality equipment that reduces the rate of injury, including identifying and developing new tools such as air cuff alternatives to forceps.

Conference additionally calls for:

1. A national Maternity Commissioner to oversee improved standards of care.

2. Mandatory, regularly updated, salaried training each year that:
    a) Includes foetal monitoring and emergency procedures for all maternity staff.
    b) Includes 52 hours' salaried training time for midwives, as recommended by the Royal College of Midwives.
    c) Clearly communicates a shared understanding of safety, with focused training for those in leadership roles in building a culture of openness and speaking up.
3. A Director of Midwifery to be appointed in every maternity service, alongside an extra 300 consultant midwives across the country to help drive clinical excellence.
4. A restoration of Service Development Funding (£95 million), which the Labour Government cut, to support enhanced care for complex pregnancies, multiple births or bereavement care and support.
5. Guaranteed bereavement specialists and perinatal mental health specialists in every maternity service.
6. A dedicated neonatal workforce plan which ensures that neonatal teams are properly staffed in every hospital, including the right mix of specialists.
7. Better support during pregnancy including:
    a) Guaranteed access to preconception services and timely antenatal booking.
    b) Clear referral pathways to support personalised care by multidisciplinary teams from the earliest opportunity to support mothers' safety and preferences.
8. Review national standards and funding to ensure every mother has access to high-quality antenatal classes, regardless of postcode.
9. Disparities in maternity care, which particularly impacts black and Asian women, disabled women and women from deprived backgrounds, to be tackled, including through:
    a) Mandatory training on inequalities, including identifying specific risks, such as recognising jaundice or cyanosis in babies with darker skin tones.
    b) A cross-government target and strategy for eliminating maternal health disparities, backed by new investment in public health.
10. A systematic review of complaints processes in maternity and neonatal care to deliver new national standards, including on communication with patients, transparency and ease of registering a complaint.
11. Transparent national monitoring, with clear national benchmarks for success, for the hundreds of recommendations of the major reviews into maternity services in the UK.
12. All miscarriages to be recorded so that the issue is no longer hidden, national targets can be set, and the impact of interventions can be measured.
13. Support and referral including to NHS mental health support services to be made available after every miscarriage, not just after three.
14. The government to ensure that all pregnant women and people are given clear, evidence-based information about group B Strep (GBS), and that those who wish to know their GBS carriage status are able to access an appropriate GBS-specific test through the NHS, following an informed discussion with their healthcare professional, supporting informed choice and equitable access to care.

15. A review of approaches to post-natal care including staffing ratios and the impact on women who have given birth of 'rooming in' policies and limitations on birthing partner visitation.
16. An end to coverups of maternity scandals including through:
    a) Creating a standardised framework for coroners and medical examiners to formally refer suspected health system failings (including systemic issues) directly to the police, the CQC, the Department of Health and Social Care, and the HSSIB, with a duty on coroners to participate, and statutory whistleblowing protection for those making such referrals.
    b) A duty for members of ICB and NHS Trust boards to escalate any evidence of systemic medical malpractice to the CQC, the Department of Health and Social Care, and the HSSIB, under a standardised framework, alongside a collective duty on the board to formally refer the trust to regulators if staff raise concerns regarding malpractice; this would come alongside statutory whistleblowing protection for those making such referrals.
    c) A corresponding duty on senior leadership, including those currently not bound by GMC or NMC regulations, to escalate any concerns they have regarding safety or malpractice to the relevant board.

Applicability: England

Background briefing: This motion developed new policy on health outcomes and safety standards for new mothers and their babies. It built on existing policy as set out in policy motion *Equitable and Improved Outcomes Throughout Pregnancy and the Neonatal Period* (2024).

Trading With Our Allies, Standing Up to Trump

Conference notes with concern that:

a) On July 23rd, president Trump hit dozens of countries, including the UK, with new tariffs, after the Supreme Court ruled his previous 'liberation day' tariffs illegal.
b) The US Government has begun accepting refund applications from businesses around the world for the legally void tariffs they paid, with $100 billion already refunded.
c) On August 22nd, the Trump administration escalated its trade war against Canada, by applying 50 per cent tariffs on $20 billion of Canadian imports.
d) In August, the White House threatened the UK with 100 per cent tariffs over Britain's Digital Services Tax, levied on global tech giants, with the Burnham Government reportedly being "open to discussing US concerns".

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat commitments to championing free trade and expanding the UK's multilateral partnerships with counterparts whom Britain can rely on – particularly in Europe and the Commonwealth.

Conference therefore calls on the Government to:

1. Immediately drop its red lines on Europe and negotiate a new Growth and Defence Partnership with the EU, including joining the Single Market and a new Customs Union.
2. Offset Trump's latest tariffs in the short term, by urgently securing participation in the EU's 'Made in Europe' scheme, vital for our steel industry; concluding an SPS agreement for food and agricultural produce; and securing regulatory alignment in key areas, such as the mutual recognition of professional qualifications.
3. Stand shoulder to shoulder with Canada, commit to closer trade links with our Commonwealth allies and build an economic coalition of the willing to end Trump's trade war.
4. Launch a new initiative supporting eligible UK businesses in claiming US tariff refunds, including raising awareness and providing information and advice.
5. Defend British taxpayers against Trump by resisting US pressure to water down or scrap the Digital Services Tax.

Applicability: Federal

Background briefing: This motion updated and developed new policy. It built on existing policy as set out in the 2024 General Election Manifesto, *For a Fair Deal*, policy paper 164, S*trength, Resilience and Partnership: Securing Britain and Defending Liberalism in Turbulent Times*, policy paper 157, *Liberal Values in a Dangerous World* (2024), policy motion *Trump and the Wider World* (2026), and policy motion *The UK's Response to Trump* (2025).

Business Motion

Party Strategy – Turning Electoral Breakthrough into Lasting Liberal Strength

Conference welcomes the fact that Liberal Democrats have achieved historic electoral successes since the last party strategy in 2021: we secured the party's best ever general election result, becoming the largest Liberal force in the House of Commons in a hundred years; secured our longest ever winning streak, with net gains in eight consecutive rounds of local elections; more than doubled our representation at Holyrood, and consolidated our presence in the Senedd.

But Conference understands that historic results do not guarantee a historic future; our task now is to turn electoral breakthrough into lasting Liberal strength.

Conference acknowledges that:

I) This success is a testament to the dedication of our members, volunteers, candidates, elected representatives, peers, donors and staff.
II) Their commitment to community politics, listening to and empowering people and working tirelessly for the communities they serve, remains one of our greatest strengths.
III) The next stage requires us to match that local strength with a clearer national Liberal identity and a modern communications operation.

Conference also understands that there are many parts of the country where campaigners have worked with equal dedication but have not yet seen the results their efforts deserve – we recognise their commitment, and we are clear that building strength beyond our existing areas is essential to being a party for the whole of Britain.

Conference believes that our party is ambitious to go further still, and the party strategy, built with members, is one of the key instruments through which we will fuel those ambitions.

Conference notes that:

A. The Federal Board launched a party strategy consultation in 2025 with an initial consultative session, followed in 2026 by consultative workshops and a survey, together generating over 1,500 individual contributions to the party strategy process.
B. Across that evidence, members gave a clear message: the party must be even more confident in its Liberal identity, even clearer in its national message, even stronger in its organisation and even more disciplined in turning strategy into action.

Conference further notes the following findings from the party strategy consultation:

i) Members overwhelmingly anchor the party's purpose in championing Liberal values and individual freedom, fairness, equality and social justice, and representing, serving and listening to communities across the UK.
ii) Members define success primarily in terms of electoral growth and more seats, delivering real policy and societal outcomes, and achieving genuine power and influence in government at all levels, with that growth built from a stable base, particularly in local government.
iii) Members identify the party's greatest opportunities for a competitive advantage as developing a clear national narrative and distinctive messaging; demonstrating honesty, integrity and competence; and being a credible, Liberal alternative to populism and nationalism.
iv) Members believe that the party's greatest need is to communicate a clear identity through distinctive messaging, especially given the fast rise of Reform UK and the Green Party, and the resilience of Labour, the Conservatives, the SNP and Plaid Cymru.
v) Members believe that the party's electoral appeal should be firmly grounded in Liberalism; the problem is not our values, but our failure to communicate them clearly, practically and emotionally; well-communicated Liberalism is the strongest electoral offer available to us and to the country.
vi) Members believe that how we engage with other parties must start from our Liberal distinctiveness, be judged issue by issue, and proceed only from a position of strength, with clearly defined limits and full transparency with members, volunteers, elected representatives and peers; preserving our identity is non-negotiable – members overwhelmingly reject pre-election pacts, and believe that post-election local arrangements should remain a matter for local stakeholders, reflecting a core tenet of Liberalism, while stopping Reform UK, Restore, and the far right from being in power at any level.
vii) Members identify investment in communications, media and messaging, especially social and digital media capability, alongside investment in volunteers and grassroots capacity, as urgent strategic priorities rather than optional organisational improvements.

Conference reaffirms that the Liberal Democrats' purpose is to build a Liberal society in which every individual has the freedom to live the life they choose, supported by strong public services, a fair economy and a democracy that genuinely works for everyone, ensuring that no one is enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.

Conference notes that, once agreed, the party strategy will be followed by detailed plans for its delivery.

Conference therefore agrees the following party strategy for the Liberal Democrats, rooted in confident Liberalism, disciplined campaigning, modern communications, reaching out to all communities in our country and a determination to win power to change lives:

1. Our aims are to:
    a) Secure the election of as many Liberal Democrats as possible at local, devolved and Westminster levels, so that we can exercise power, deliver Liberal policy outcomes and build a fairer, freer and more democratic Britain.
    b) Support party organisations in Scotland, Wales and England in maximising their success in Westminster, devolved and local elections to deliver on their respective manifestos.
    c) Become the largest party in local government in England, and one of the two largest parties in local government across the United Kingdom, by investing in year-round local campaigning, candidate development, council group support, regional capacity and the structures needed to fight new unitary and large-area elections effectively.
    d) Remove from power any local, devolved or Westminster government that threatens liberal democracy, and work towards a Britain in which the Liberal Democrats are a party of government; this includes stopping Reform UK, Restore, and other parties of the far right, as determined by the Federal Board, from being in power at any level, while building a positive Liberal alternative to the politics of nationalism, authoritarianism, grievance and division.
    e) Expand our electoral coalition beyond our current base at any given layer of government, with a particular focus on wards, divisions, constituencies and electoral regions in the North, Midlands, Wales and urban Britain.
    f) Build a diverse, dynamic, inclusive and modern party rooted in core Liberal values and with radical economic and social policies, better equipped to lead on local, national and international issues relevant to those living in cities and towns as well as those in suburban and rural Britain, and with reactivated campaigning, engagement and recruitment attractive to secondary school, sixth form, college and university students, apprentices and those not in employment, education and training and those underrepresented in decisions, politics and public life.
2. We will achieve these aims most effectively by:
    a) Developing a compelling, clear and distinctive national narrative, grounded in Liberal values, that has emotional as well as rational appeal, and that clearly and visibly differentiates the Liberal Democrats from other parties, particularly those with populist and nationalist tendencies; this narrative will form a key part of the pre-manifesto developed by the Federal Policy Committee, which will be debated by conference, and should underpin the party's continuing programme of policy development.

b) Resisting the politics of nationalism, authoritarianism, division and grievance, wherever they arise, and offering instead Liberal politics rooted in freedom, fairness, internationalism, hope and respect for every individual.
c) Challenging prejudice against, scapegoating of and attacks on minority groups directly whenever employed by far-right populist elements in our society, fully committing ourselves to defending the dignity and equal rights of those targeted, and refusing to allow such politics to be normalised and set the terms of political debate.
d) Maintaining a strong tradition of community politics and a ground game of relentless door-knocking and literature distribution, while recognising that building stronger national messaging alongside a professional social media and digital operation is no longer optional but essential to reaching new communities of voters.
e) Consolidating places where we are stronger, so that we can enhance our electoral sustainability, and so that volunteers from those 'fortresses' are more sustainably able to offer support to developing seats.
f) Working with Liberals across Europe and the world to defend pluralism, the rule of law, and the open, internationalist values on which Europe's future prosperity and security depend.

3. Our top priorities to help us fight and win elections – and win office – will be:
   a) Building a clear, simple and emotionally resonant national identity for the party, ensuring that voters and internal Liberal Democrat stakeholders feel confident answering the question of what the Liberal Democrats stand for, and that our message is consistent, repeatable and distinctive.
   b) Investing significantly in digital and social media capability, treating it as a strategic priority equivalent to our ground game, through:
      i) Building a significantly larger and more effective social media team at Liberal Democrat HQ.
      ii) Developing high-quality video content and a presence on platforms that better enable us to reach younger voters, transient populations and those who can be difficult to access through our traditional ground game.
      iii) Training and supporting local volunteers and candidates to use digital tools effectively, extending our ground game strengths into new channels.
   c) Renewing and strengthening our grassroots capacity, recognising members, volunteers, candidates and local parties as essential electoral infrastructure, by:
      i) Recruiting and retaining members, volunteers, candidates, donors and staff, especially from under-represented communities, and giving them a rewarding experience of the party beyond election periods.
      ii) Selecting candidates for elections at the earliest possible opportunity while recognising that early selection can create barriers to diversity and equity, and committing to develop, implement and monitor a plan to mitigate these disadvantages, ensure equitable access to opportunities to stand for election, and provide flexible routes into candidacy; and

ensuring that they have access to the training, mentoring and campaign support they need to succeed.

iii) Supporting the development of local parties with the resources, expertise, staff support and shared tools they need to grow.

iv) Investing in training that teaches first principles as well as practical tools, so that campaigners can adapt to a volatile, multi-party environment.

v) Prioritising a recruitment drive for younger members, volunteers and candidates, especially those from under-represented backgrounds, with clear paths into training, responsibility, decision making and public office.

vi) Removing unnecessary administrative barriers to action across the party, enabling members, volunteers, candidates, elected representatives, peers, donors and staff to deliver their part in fulfilling the party's objectives.

vii) Spotting and supporting local talent early, with active succession planning and team-building so that local parties do not become over-dependent on one or two key individuals.

viii) Recognising and addressing the abuse and intimidation faced by candidates and campaigners, including abuse based on sex, gender reassignment, sexuality, disability, race and including all other protected characteristics, and ensuring that appropriate support, advice and protection are available so that people from all backgrounds feel able to stand for public office and participate fully in political activity.

d) Taking our efforts to promote diversity to a higher level, with an ambition to reflect all parts of the society we seek to represent, at every level of the party and public office; this will involve Implementing the recommendations of the 2024 General Election Review on gender equality, racial equality, disability equality, LGBTQ+ equality, and the representation of young people.

e) Completing implementation of the diversity recommendations from the Thornhill and Alderdice Reviews, particularly those relating to racial equality and diversity.

f) Investing in socio-economic diversity, so that working-class Liberal Democrat talent can thrive at every level of the party.

g) Striving for gender parity among Liberal Democrats at every level of government with clear targets, measurable milestones and regular reporting to Federal Board on progress towards gender parity among candidates, elected representatives and other relevant areas of party representation.

h) Developing and in implementing a specific action plan to increase the number of women standing for and being selected for winnable and target seats.

i) Reaching out to under-represented communities, recognising that community politics must mean listening to, empowering and engaging with all communities, not only those we have been most successful at reaching to date.

j) Continuing to build a sustainable and diversified financial base for the party, with a fundraising narrative that appeals to existing and new party donors with a compelling, clear and distinctive national message.
k) Investing further in information technology, data, and campaign systems that are reliable, user-friendly and designed around the needs of campaigners, enabling better targeting, easier collaboration, stronger digital campaigning and more effective use of member and voter data.

Conference resolves that to support the delivery of these priorities, we will also:

A. Provide members and volunteers with an excellent experience of the party, recognising that a growing, motivated and diverse membership is essential to our electoral success, including by:
   i) Recognising that the experience of members and volunteers differs greatly depending on where they live, the strength and capacity of their local party, and the support available from regional, state and federal party bodies, and ensuring that parties receive the differing levels of support they need to improve that experience.
   ii) Providing opportunities for members to develop and promote Liberal political priorities locally and nationally.
   iii) Supporting members to stand for election to public bodies.
   iv) Providing high-quality training, mentoring and development opportunities to help members, volunteers and candidates build the skills needed to support the party's objectives.
   v) Supporting members to work with others who share their interests, including through party bodies, Affiliated Organisations and other groupings.
   vi) Reducing barriers to participating in internal roles, including participating in roles within the party, policy-making and Federal Conference.
   vii) Modernising the member experience, so that all are welcomed, valued, retained and offered meaningful opportunities to contribute beyond election periods.
   viii) Ensuring the complaints system is fair, proportionate, timely and confidential where appropriate, while maintaining the integrity and independence of individual processes.
B. Ensure that this strategy is implemented effectively by:
   i) Engaging members, volunteers, elected representatives, peers, donors and staff as partners in delivering this strategy, communicating trade-offs honestly and ensuring that ownership is shared at every level of the party.
   ii) Embedding the strategy across the party, through state, regional and local structures, and with parliamentarians, candidates and councillors, and using internal communications.
   iii) Reporting back to Federal Conference on progress against this strategy, including delivery against agreed measurable milestones, key areas of progress, areas where further action is required and any proposed changes to the strategy.

iv) Further developing our ‘one party’ approach and culture, so that every part of the Liberal Democrat family, including members, volunteers, candidates, councillors, parliamentarians, directly elected mayors, staff, state parties, regional parties, local parties, Affiliated Organisations and donors, works together to achieve our shared objectives.
v) Continuing to make progress on measuring, reducing and offsetting carbon emissions that arise from party operations, towards the aim of eventually operating at net zero emissions, and embedding sustainability in the way we run our party.

Applicability: Federal

Statement

Statement by Calum Miller MP, Foreign Affairs Spokesperson

Good morning, Conference.

May I begin by welcoming MK Aida Touma-Sliman to our Conference. It is very good to have her with us.

Aida has been one of the most persistent and courageous voices representing the Palestinian community in Israel. Thank you, Aida, for joining us this weekend.

And let me say that I hope our Jewish members and friends have observed a peaceful and meaningful Yom Kippur.

I know it is always challenging for our Jewish members that our Conference tends to fall around the time of this most important celebration, but I hope that they have indeed been able to mark the occasion appropriately.

Conference, this time last year we debated together the deepening crisis across Palestine and Israel.

We reflected then on how extremists were threatening the two-state solution and closing out the space for moderates committed to peace.

We called on Ministers to take action to keep alive the hope of a two-state solution.

What response did we receive from Starmer's Government?

A deafening silence.

Warm words, perhaps.

But a void of concrete action.

I lost track of the number of times that I – and many other Lib Dem MPs and Peers – called on the Government to act.

Starmer changed his Foreign Secretary, but the policy didn't change.

There was a climate of impunity towards those breaking the law and committing war crimes in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon.

And since we last met, the crisis across Palestine has deteriorated.

In the West Bank, the scourge of settler violence has worsened.

In Gaza, the air strikes killing and maiming Palestinians have continued.

While the terrorists of Hamas – whose despicable crimes on October 7th continue to traumatise so many Israeli people – have refused to disarm.

Conference, a two-state solution is the only political settlement that can deliver peace, justice, security and dignity for Israelis and Palestinians.

Yet its viability has never been so threatened as it is today.

It is because extremists in both societies still hold the whip hand.

Hamas and Hezbollah – both malign proxies of Iran – continue to call for the destruction of the state of Israel and to terrorise its citizens.

In Israel itself, Ministers like Smotrich and Ben-Gvir now daily encourage the forced displacement of Palestinians by violent settlers.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, meanwhile, seeks to destroy the possibility of a contiguous Palestinian state through the construction of the E1 settlement in the West Bank – something his predecessor Ehud Olmert has described as ethnic cleansing.

So, Conference, how are we in Britain to respond?

Liberal Democrats are clear. We are led by three principles – all of which we can hold and uphold at the same time.

First, we believe in the rights of the states of Israel and Palestine to exist.

Second, we must consistently oppose the scourges of anti-Jewish hatred and Islamophobia in our country.

And third, we must robustly criticise – and hold to account – the Netanyahu Government for its repeated breaches of international law.

Our history in the Middle East gives the United Kingdom a unique duty to work as a partner for peace.

And that is why, Conference, Liberal Democrats have called for a step-change in Britain's approach.

One which recognises the influence our country can bring to bear to hold the extremists to account.

Two weeks ago today, in the House of Commons, I saw what I hope will be the beginning of a step-change from our new Government.

The new Foreign Secretary announced a ban on the trade in goods and services with illegal Israeli settlements.

For years, Liberal Democrats have called on Ministers to take this step.

And Ed Miliband was right to describe the actions of illegal settlers – aided and abetted by Israeli Ministers and the IDF – as terrorists.

Our Government should not have tolerated for so long the involvement of British companies in funding, building and supporting illegal settlements.

Conference, as I listened to the Foreign Secretary's remarks, I couldn't help but reflect on the tireless campaigning of Liberal Democrats to drive that change.

Responding to my remarks, Ed Miliband rightly noted our party's "advocacy on this issue over a sustained period". He also singled out the advocacy of Layla Moran – the first British MP of Palestinian descent – over many years.

It is proof, yet again, that when Liberal Democrats speak with one voice – the Government is forced to sit up and listen.

But having finally secured this important step forward, Conference, we cannot allow complacency to set in.

The fact that it took Labour so long to deliver such a necessary change should alarm us all.

It must also motivate us to keep the pressure up on this Government.

Later today, the Prime Minister will be addressing the United Nations General Assembly.

At last year's UNGA, we were rightly focused on delivering recognition for the state of Palestine.

But with the Palestinian delegation denied entry to the United States by the Trump administration, today our focus must shift towards establishing the wider conditions for peace.

No sustainable peace can emerge while the humanitarian crises in the West Bank and Gaza only worsen.

Israeli restrictions on the supply of aid and materials into Gaza are only deepening the devastation faced by millions of Palestinians across that broken territory.

Britain needs to step up, together with our international allies, to deliver a clear plan for Hamas' disarming and disbanding and to maintain pressure on the Israeli Government to allow access.

Our Prime Minister should say that Israel must meet its humanitarian obligations, and he must work with international partners – starting today at the UN General Assembly – to ensure the reopening of aid routes into Gaza.

In his address to Conference last year, our Party Leader, Ed Davey, described what was happening in Gaza as a genocide.

That was the right thing to do, Conference.

Our Party could not stay silent in the face of the destruction of Gaza.

And it is now time for Andy Burnham to take forward what Keir Starmer never had the courage to do:

He must introduce a full ban on arms exports to Israel, sanction Benjamin Netanyahu for his war crimes, and make clear that the ICC arrest warrant would be exercised, should Netanyahu come to the UK.

Because, Conference, that is what setting red lines and enforcing them looks like.

That is what accountability looks like.

We also know that Hamas has tried ruthlessly to reassert control in Gaza.

That terror group has no future in any future Palestine.

Britain needs to step up – with our allies – to ensure their disarmament.

In the West Bank, the Government's settlement trade ban is an important first step.

But the ban must be more than a symbolic gesture. It must be rigorously enforced and monitored. No British company should be engaging with support for the illegal settlements.

And it must also form the basis of a wider transformation in our approach to the crisis.

Holding extremists on both sides accountable is critical.

But so too is taking action to empower and support the moderates on both sides.

That is why we need to take steps with those in both communities who wish to maintain the pathway towards a peaceful, just solution – and support them in their endeavours in Palestine and in Israel to ensure that remains open.

What does that look like in practice?

Politically, there are reforms that must take place in the Palestinian Authority – particularly with regard to freedom of expression and a crack down on corruption.

Those reforms will be essential if state-building is to be successful – ensuring that Palestinians can have hope for the future.

The Palestinian Authority must be open to being held to account – not just by international partners, but by its own people.

Our Government must insist that the planned elections this November proceed – and that they are fair, free and open – so that Palestinians can express their preferences for the Government to lead them in the future.

Conference, ensuring the viability of the two-state solution also means strengthening the Palestinian economy.

One of the greatest weapons we have against the forces of extremism is vibrant and growing communities.

Yet Palestine's economy remains hobbled and constricted by Israeli restrictions.

The withholding of clearance revenues; the threats to sever ties between Israeli and Palestinian banks; and the immense restrictions – often arbitrary and unpredictable – on the transport of goods across the West Bank are holding back Palestine's economic opportunities.

These practices must end. That is in the interests of both Palestinians and Israelis.

Andy Burnham should say so when he addresses the UN General Assembly later today.

In these past weeks, Conference, we've seen reaffirmed a truth we all know.

That when Liberal Democrats speak with one voice – articulating a clear, moral imperative – the Government sits up and listens.

So let us speak with one voice again, today.

And say to this Government: do what you know to be right.

Be steered by clear principles.

Hold the extremists on both sides of this conflict to account.

Back up words with actions to alleviate the humanitarian crises across Gaza and the West Bank.

Protect the viability of the two-state solution –

And empower the moderates on both sides of this conflict; those who recognise that as the only path to peace.

Thank you.

Report Questions and Answers

Federal Board

Q1: Mark Johnston

Further to his response given at York, will the President say when the new Federal Party Whistle-blower Scheme will be (i) posted on the party website, and (ii) communicated to party members?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

The new Whistleblowing Policy has been available on the website since the adverts for the Lead and Deputy roles in the new scheme have been available. At the time of writing (20th September), these roles are still open for applications, and interviews of candidates so far will be taking place after Conference.

Q2: Zoe Hollowood

On the Lib Dem website it states that the Campaign for Gender Balance (CGB) exists to develop and support women interested in standing for public office within the Liberal Democrats (e.g. through the use of specific training programmes). Does the Board recognise that in doing this the Campaign for Gender Balance is providing positive action measures as per the Equality Act 2010 section 158?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

A review launched by the Board will shortly be consulting on our approach to positive action measures across the party, seeking views from people with each protected characteristic to understand the barriers they face and how the party can best support them. The review and its outputs will be informed by legal advice.

Q3. Rebecca Jones

What steps they are taking to support a) target and b) non-target who are struggling with low amounts of volunteer activists.

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

The Federal Party provides training and guidance to seats about in-person recruitment, online advertising for recruitment, making volunteers feel welcome, and encouraging them to take up volunteering roles. But we know we need to do more.

Over the past two years the Federal Party has done several pilots at key political moments of direct mail and online advertising focused at recruiting members, including testing different website and payment flows.

The Federal Party has also recently started a programme of directly calling new members to welcome them to the party where seats are unable to do this themselves, and pointing them towards more active roles.

The experience of our party over many years is that the single best way to recruit people is to ask them in person, on the doorstep, to help. We have target pools in connect that parties can use to do this work.

As referenced in the party strategy, we will also focus on improving member experience for those in the party, so when we do get people to join, they get the best possible experience and wish to stay on.

Q4. Tony Vickers

Having lacked IT support for AOs since rule changes in 2021, will there be an extended 'grace period' for those needing it for full compliance?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

FPDC now has a sub-committee which is running the 5-yearly AO reviews and looking at improving support arrangements for AOs and prospective AOs.

Our 5-yearly review process includes a flexible period for existing AOs to work to full compliance, and FPDC's endorsement process for AOs often includes approval subject to conditions being met before formal approval at Conference.

For reference, the AO review process is detailed below:

I. If the AO is incompliant with any requirements further action should be taken aiming to return them to a compliant status within a set time frame.
    A. The timeframe will be determined by the Sub-Committee, in consultation with relevant federal party staff members, and will be tailored to the nature of the non-compliant issue that requires remedy.
    B. In the event they cannot be returned to a compliant status in that time frame, this should be referred to FPDC for consideration as to whether the AO should be derecognised, or the time frame extended.

Q5. Artie Khovanov

What concrete steps will we be taking to better reach urban voters in future election campaigns?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

The party strategy motion and consultation speaks to this concern – especially Victor Chamberlain's powerful amendment. We have a strong track record in many areas of both gains and representation. But it is clear that we need to improve campaign techniques in areas where there are high levels of voter churn, where people feel unsure about which constituency they belong to and the political situation in that constituency, and where it is difficult to reach voters with our traditional campaign techniques. Our investment and focus on improved digital output will go some way to addressing this, and we are encouraging urban teams to experiment with new campaign ideas and methods, and to share their findings widely across the party.

The party strategy motion is clear that the development of a clearer national narrative is a critical part of this.

The nature of our policy will have an impact on our ability to reach urban voters. Policy is a matter for Conference.

Q6. Katherine Howells

The Complaints Process report submitted to conference states (at page 55 of the reports document) that 5 party members have received 'training' as a sanction resulting from a complaint. Can the Federal Board confirm i) the process by which such training is arranged, including how the training provider is selected, ii) how many of the 5 members referred for training have received the training to date and iii) the wait times for each member from the complaints outcome to the training being delivered.

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

The current mechanisms for training to be provided by the DSG. We do not track the precise details of these numbers in management information. But we know that in several cases this has taken too long. As part of FASC's review into complaints, the Board will be looking at ways to improve this process. Options include the Federal Party staff team procuring training, encouraging panels to choose training requirements from a pre-approved list, and sanctions timing out if training has not been made available.

Q7. Simon Hughes

What are our targets for total party a)members, b)supporters and c)Young Liberals by September 2027, and the most effective ways to achieve this?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

FPDC have recently re-formed their membership sub-committee which will look at how we develop a plan that underpins our new Party Strategy, including targets for recruitment and retention of members and supporters.

Q8. John Grout

We had another success in the 2026 local elections, but there are too many areas where we are stuck or not on the map, such as Glasgow, Nottingham, and Carmarthenshire. How will our new strategy address these Lib Dem deserts?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

We have to make choices about where we put energy, effort and resource. There are genuine and real trade-offs here. For seats where we have less infrastructure, we provide training, guidance and templates, and the G8 grant process allows applications for people to bid for additional funding. Our history shows that the most effective way for places to win is either to pick a ward and win it, and expand out; or for neighbouring seats to help build infrastructure over time.

A clear focus of the new party strategy, passed at Autumn Conference, highlights the need for stronger national messaging to protect the work of our activists on the ground. We want to consolidate our fortresses whilst also expanding into areas where we haven't been as strong.

Q9. John Grout

Given a slew of high-profile out-of-court settlements and capitulations, is the CEO's strategy of not contesting court claims by those hostile to our party's aims and objectives being judged a success, and if so, by what metric?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

We judge our strategy on each legal case based on the merits of the party's defence, on advice from lawyers and within the financial delegation framework we have in place. The metric we judge this on is a balance of party reputation, financial value for money, and impact on future cases. We are confident that our approach represents the best route across these objectives, and our approach is reviewed by appropriate board committees at key points.

Q10. John Grout

Do you agree that all meaningful decision-making power in the Liberal Democrats should be concentrated in 66 Buckingham Gate, and if not, what steps is the Board/President taking to ensure that efforts to do so will fail?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

Decision making power is set out clearly in our constitution. We have made concerted efforts over the past eight years to make sure that the party works together as one

party to share decision making and funding in an aligned and shared way. This has been an important part of our electoral success.

Q11. John Grout

Do you feel there is a gap in the party's disciplinary processes when it comes to groups of members that are not incorporated as AOs? How can the process be improved to ensure that such groups, or their leaders where they are members, can be held accountable by the party for their actions?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

FASC is in the final stages of a review of our complaints process and is looking at this issue specifically, among other areas. We will report back on the findings of this review when it is complete.

Q12. Alisdair Calder McGregor

The Federal Board report claims that Spring Conference incurs losses; How is this affected by the breakdown of Conference Office resource allocations?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

Spring Conference makes a financial loss before any allocation of staff time is considered.

Q13. Alisdair Calder McGregor

What items are you including as "Conference Expenditures" for each Conference which a reasonable person may question if they are truly so?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

We use standard accounting practice and include inputs and variable costs for each conference in our usual budget reports. We do not add fixed costs, the costs of the Conference office or other staffing costs such as travel or expenses.

As part of our operational budget planning we also look carefully at the wider cost implications of Conference on capacity, as well as the non-financial benefits it brings in terms of policy development, social media and media coverage, and member motivation.

Q14. Alisdair Calder McGregor

What price does the Federal Board place on our Party Democracy?

Answer by Josh Babarinde MP

The Federal Board and all its members are firmly committed to the party’s constitution, particularly the preamble and its values.

Federal Conference Committee

Q1. John Grout

In recent years, Scottish Conference has trialled a 'Dragon's Den' style slot where miniature motions could be pitched in short sessions, to be drafted into full motions at subsequent Conferences. Are there proposals to trial this at an upcoming Federal Conference?

Answer by Cllr Nick da Costa

This is certainly something we can look at as a potential fringe event, and would need support from committee colleagues (I.e. FCC and FPC) to deliver.

Q2. Alisdair Calder McGregor

What proportion of Conference Office expenditure goes to each of Spring and Autumn Conferences?

Does the Conference Office provide non-Conference related support to other areas of the Party?

How is the expenditure on Spring, Autumn and non-Conference related expenditure accounted for in determining the net financial returns from Conferences?

Does the Conference Cmte's assessment of Conference finances align with that of the Federal Board, and if not in what way does this affect the figures?

Answer by Cllr Nick da Costa

I'll take these four questions together. Approximately one third of Conference Office expenditure relates to Spring Conference and two thirds to Autumn Conference.

Around 98% of the Office's activity is focused on delivering those two conferences. It also supports other Party activities, including general election events, manifesto launches, some media photo opportunities and fundraising events.

Each event has its own budget, set by the Federal Finance and Resources Committee. Non-conference expenditure is accounted for separately under the relevant non-conference budget, rather than being included in Conference's financial returns.

On alignment between FCC and the Federal Board, I attend Board meetings as Conference Chair, alongside four other FCC members. HQ works with the relevant committees to ensure that our assessments of Conference finances are aligned.

Federal International Relations Committee

Q1: John Grout

What do you think is the Liberal Democrats' biggest reputational risk amongst our international sister parties, and how can we address that?

Answer by David Chalmers
Well, one thing we learn in liberalism is that liberalism has different meanings in many different parts of the world. We always press our liberal and progressive values, but we also understand that for certain parties in certain parts of the world, promoting those values as loudly as we can may not be as easy. I can think of examples related to this particularly around LGBT rights. Some women in our sister party in Kenya alerted us to the fact that women in Kenya are being abused and murdered, and it was brought to our attention that our sister party basically dismissed these concerns.

A lot of the work we do is behind the scenes. We know that some of our European sister parties are flirting with governments that include the far right and that can be embarrassing for us. When this happens, we speak to them directly and let them know that we are watching. We've also introduced a mechanism into ALDE that gives us significantly stronger recourse against member parties whose actions fundamentally go against our liberal values. I try to ensure that we use our connections with those parties to help them and to make our concerns known.

Supplementary question: John Grout

What do you think is the greatest risk from our perspective that could reduce their view of us as an effective Liberal party?

Answer by David Chalmers
Our sister parties are inspired by our positions, including on human rights, standing up for individuals, and the environment. They look to us for leadership on these issues. We are very clear that we never tell people what to do. Instead, we are a positive example, and that naturally attracts them to come to us to ask for advice. For example, I recently provided guidance to our sister party in Kosovo on a range of issues, from local government development to ensuring that a local party has a constitution. I will also let you know that alongside sister parties in ALDE and Liberal International, there are also observer parties, which gives us an opportunity to work with parties to see how closely they align with our liberal values. If there are parties that we have worked with in that capacity that we feel are are not aligned with our values, then I speak up and make it known that we would not want them brought into our groups.

Federal Policy Committee Committee

Q1. Alisdair Calder McGregor

In your report you not that ""FPC has decided that it will require all of our working groups in future to take special account of issues of racial inequality and the needs of young people.""

Will FPC also commit to extending this to require all future working groups to take special account of the needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Trans People?

Answer by Cllr Dr Mohsin Khan

This takes into account the priorities expressed by Conference on the Leading the Way motion last year. It recognises, as have Federal reviews such as Alderdice and Thornhill, that we need to improve on centring ethnic minorities, as well as young people's, needs and concerns in our policies and messages, without of course ignoring other underrepresented groups. FPC continues to liaise heavily with LGBT+ Lib Dems. We also undertake an improved equalities impact assessment process with them and other LGBT+ stakeholders, and recognise the injustices being experienced nationally and internationally towards LGBT+ individuals and groups.

Parliamentary Party Reports

Q1: Tom Dainty

How will Parliamentarians ensure their work supports local parties and candidates as we approach the general election?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain MP
In the last Parliament we used our places as sitting MPs to speak up for candidates in constituencies where we were targeting – especially when people living in those areas were being let down by Conservative and SNP MPs.

Rest assured we'll be doing the same in this Parliament too. But one of the great advantages of having 71 members of the Parliamentary group rather than 15 is the collective impact we can have helping local parties and candidates across the UK. And it means 71 stories about what's worked, what's not, and that helps every single one of us improve how we campaign. So if you're a candidate – come and chat to us. Ask one of our MPs to speak at a dinner or come doorknocking for the day. We're Lib Dems - this is our bread and butter.

And as Chief Whip I have an important role – yes, ensuring that colleagues are doing their bit in Westminster to make Liberal Democrats the best opposition. But also helping coordinate colleagues and help signpost them to where best to campaign to.

Answer by Lord Purvis
We have again restarted the peers mentoring project, where peers are paired up with candidates in the Moving Forward Plus seats. This is a great use of the campaigning and election experience that our peers have. Certain skills and expertise have been specifically paired up, depending on the needs of the candidate and seat, and mentors provide a really useful channel of advice and support for candidates, slightly separate from the local party, which can be very useful. It is also a route in for local issues to be raised in Parliament which can be helpful for local campaigning. This mentoring scheme was a real success in the period of time up to the 2024 GE, and we are sure it will be just as successful this time.

Q2. Stamatis Mavroudi-Tayler

The Conservatives caused widespread regression in schools. How will you campaign for a more inclusive, holistic and fundamentally liberal approach to education?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain MP
I am cognisant of the fact that it wasn't just the Tories in England. As a Scottish MP, the SNP have ruined the education system and Scotland now trails behind England in PISA rankings for reading, maths and science – and I really fear for what the legacy of that will be.

In terms of Parliament, Education spokesperson Munira Wilson has campaigned hard to make sure that the upcoming SEND reforms are fair, and priorities families, not efficiencies. As part of that she has led the campaign to ensure that the Government doesn't strip rights away from families, and that we actually have the specialist capacity we need, so children with complex needs are not forced into mainstream schools that just simply aren't right for them.

Q3. Simon Hughes

Are all our MPs required to have constituency and Commons office phone numbers and emails published on all official and party websites, and messages collected daily?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain MP
MPs are not required to publish emails and phone numbers but I am of the view that it's good practice, and this is something that has been reiterated to colleagues. It is up to individual MPs to decide how to best run their offices and it is important they consider the security of themselves and their staff so personal contact information should not be made available.

Q4. Stamatis Mavroudi-Tayer

How will you stand up for an open Internet with a right to anonymity, in order to protect whistleblowing and journalistic freedom?

Answer by Lord Purvis
Susan Kramer is a longstanding campaigner on whistleblowing. She is currently working to strengthen protection for whistleblowing through the Public Office (Accountability) Bill – or the Hillsborough Law Bill, as it is often known. Susan's amendments would enshrine proper protection for those who seek to blow the whistle on public authorities and create a statutory Office of the Whistleblower.

Q5. Rebecca Jones

How does the parliamentary party intend to work with our diversity AOs, like Lib Dem Women, to support our parliamentarians in their work?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain MP
Victoria Collins is our diversity Vice President as well as being a member of our parliamentary party – we take it very seriously.

Our Women and Equalities Spokesperson, Marie Goldman, also works very closely with diversity AOs across her brief. Marie meets with them on a monthly basis so they can feed into her work in Parliament – that includes asking for their input on issues she should raise in the Chamber.

Likewise, when it comes to generating new policy to be passed at conference, Marie frequently collaborates with AOs on motions and amendments. On Monday,

Conference discussed F31 Stopping Violence Against Women and Girls in a Digital Age, which was the result of joint work between Marie and Lib Dem Women.

Q6. Simon Hughes

Are all views on abortion and end of life matters and gender critical beliefs protected as matters of conscience for all LD parliamentarians?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain MP
As Chief Whip, ensuring that the rights of Members of the Parliamentary Party are protected for conscience issues is a matter I take very seriously. We've just had free votes on the assisted dying bill, for example. Precedent is sometimes a very helpful guide – that's the approach I took when I made the vote on a generational smoking ban a free vote. But sometimes you get new or different issues arising – which is why you can never truly have an exhaustive list. There will be strongly held views on exactly where the threshold between what should be a conscience issue, and what should be whipped, lies. My door is always open to colleagues who have particular views, and I welcome the views of the party AOs too.

Q7. Zoe Hollowood

Would the Party like to change the Equality Act 2010 regarding the protected characteristics of sex and gender reassignment and if so what changes would it like to see?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain MP
In line with party policy passed at conference, we are calling on Parliament to appoint a joint committee of cross-party MPs and peers to conduct post-legislative scrutiny of relevant legislation to propose any amendments or new legislation it sees fit to ensure existing rights are protected.

Q8. Zoe Hollowood

As a Party that prides itself on evidenced-based decision-making, is the Party concerned that several gender clinics in the UK refused to cooperate with the Cass Review on the data linkage study? This data linkage study was aimed at collecting and analysing evidence about the medium term outcomes for different treatment pathways for those with gender dysphoria. Does the Party think it is important to conduct and complete this data linkage study?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain MP
It’s crucial we are led by robust evidence when it comes to health care provision. We have always supported the proper studies being done fairly and impartially to ensure the UK can deliver informed support and healthcare to those who need it.

Q9. Mark Johnston

Does the Parliamentary Party consider that Lib Dem-led local councils must act lawfully in fulfilment of their duties under the Equality Act and in particular, for the purposes of that act, must ensure that sex refers to biological sex? What are the electoral risks for the party at all levels of not doing so?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain MP
We're a party that believes in the rule of law. In this case, what councils are crying out for is clear, workable guidance that doesn't put anyone at risk of harm or discrimination. As a parliamentary party, our job is to press the government to give them that guidance.

Q10. Suzanne Fletcher

We have policy on stopping “small boats”, including pre-settlement scheme; using Humanitarian Visas; Reuniting unaccompanied children in Europe with family in UK. Could they be mentioned in future?

We have policy on Alternatives to Immigration Detention, saving money, being humane. Can they be used by the party?

Answer by Wendy Chamberlain MP
We have been clear that we urgently need a real, humane solution to put an end to dangerous Channel crossings. Instead of moving asylum seekers around the country and placing them in more costly accommodation, the Government should focus on getting a grip of the root cause of this crisis – the asylum backlog.

The Liberal Democrats are calling for the UK to enter the EU’s landmark new Migration and Asylum Pact, giving us sweeping powers to return asylum seekers arriving by small boat to the first EU country they entered. This is how we create an asylum system that is fair and effective for all – refugees, British taxpayers and local communities.

We should be proud of Britain’s history as a place of sanctuary for those fleeing persecution, and that must continue, but it needs to be safe and controlled for everyone – not via small boat crossings.

Vice President’s Report

Q1: Submitted by Artie Khovanov

Might we need to deprioritise candidates' localist credentials when making selections, in order to improve diversity, particularly in ethnicity and class?

Answer by Victoria Collins MP
What's important when you're standing as a candidate, whether it's a councillor or as a prospective parliamentary candidate, is that you care about that community and you want to advocate for that community. It's important that we make sure that candidates can stand wherever they can really thrive, where they can represent our party, and where they can represent a community, and that includes a new community they've moved into. I didn't grow up in the area where I'm representing and, as someone who is now in the community, I continue to work really hard for them. It is right that in our party our candidates are chosen by members, and those members need to know that they will stand up for their community.

What we are doing as a party is making sure that, if a candidate wants to stand in a constituency where they have less local credentials, they get the support to know that community and to stand up for that community. That support also includes financial support and campaign support, which the excellent Racial Diversity Campaign and Campaign for Gender Balance is providing. There's more that we are looking at to better support candidates from all backgrounds, but what's really important when you're standing as a candidate — whether you've grown up there or not — is that you care about that community. I think that is something fundamentally liberal that we must keep to.