

your say. Liberal Democrats are the only party that believes in radical political reform to reinvent the way our country is run and put power back where it belongs: into the hands of people.

fair and local politics, protecting your freedom

Liberal Democrats are the only party that believes in radical political reform to reinvent the way our country is run and put power back where it belongs: into the hands of people. We want to see a fair and open political system, with power devolved to all the nations, communities and peoples of Britain.

As the expenses scandal showed, the political system is rotten. Hundreds of MPs have safe seats where they can ignore their constituents. Party funding rules mean big donors have huge influence. Power has been concentrated in Westminster and Whitehall by a succession of governments. And Britain's hard-won civil liberties have been eaten away.

Liberal Democrats will do things differently because we believe power should be in the hands of people, not politicians. We will give people a real say in who governs the country by **introducing fair votes**. We will **stop big donations** and **give people the power to sack corrupt MPs**. We will **increase the powers of the Scottish Parliament**. And we will introduce a **Freedom Bill** to restore the civil liberties that are so precious to the British character.

fairer politics

Liberal Democrats will transform politics. We want people to be empowered, knowing the chance to change things in their neighbourhood or in the country as a whole is in their hands.

Liberal Democrats will:

- Change politics and abolish safe seats by introducing a fair, more proportional voting system for MPs. Our preferred Single Transferable Vote system gives people the choice between candidates as well as parties. Under the new system, we will be able to reduce the number of MPs by 150.

- Give the right to vote from age 16.
- Introduce fixed-term parliaments to ensure that the Prime Minister of the day cannot change the date of an election to suit themselves.
- Strengthen the House of Commons to increase accountability. We will increase parliamentary scrutiny of the budget and of government appointments and give Parliament control over its own agenda so that all bills leaving the Commons have been fully debated.
- Replace the House of Lords with a fully-elected second chamber with considerably fewer members than the current House.
- Get better politics for less. Liberal Democrats would save this country nearly £2 billion by reforms that cut back waste in central government and the Houses of Parliament.
- Introduce a written constitution. We would give people the power to determine this constitution in a citizens' convention, subject to final approval in a referendum.
- Strengthen the Data Protection Act and the Office of the Information Commissioner, extending UK Freedom of Information legislation to private companies delivering monopoly public services such as Network Rail.

cleaner politics

There has been much talk of political reform from the other two parties, but nothing has happened. They have worked together to block reform, even voting against a proposal to give people the right to sack corrupt MPs. Dependent on money from the unions and big business, they have blocked changes to party

funding. And determined to protect the secrecy of the House of Commons, they had to be pushed into revealing the details of MPs' expenses in the first place. Only Liberal Democrats are able to break open this system and deliver real change.

We will:

- Give you the right to sack MPs who have broken the rules. We would introduce a 'recall' system so that constituents could force a by-election for any MP found responsible for serious wrongdoing. We are campaigning for this right of recall to be introduced to the European Parliament too.
- Get big money out of politics by capping donations at £10,000 and limiting spending throughout the electoral cycle.
- Require all MPs, Lords and parliamentary candidates to be resident, ordinarily resident and domiciled in Britain for tax.
- Curb improper influence of lobbyists by introducing a statutory register of lobbyists, changing the ministerial code so that ministers and officials are forbidden from meeting MPs on issues where the MP is paid to lobby, requiring companies to declare how much they spend on lobbying in their annual reports, and introducing a statutory register of interests for parliamentary candidates based on the current Register of Members' Interests.

a federal Britain

Liberal Democrats have always led arguments for decentralisation of political power within a federal Britain. While we welcome the progress that has been made, the job is still far from finished.



Devolution of power to Scotland – and Wales – has brought benefits to public services and politics across the whole of the UK, but we can go further. We believe there is an appetite for more transfer of powers and responsibilities to the Scottish Parliament, increasing accountability and bringing power closer to the people of Scotland.

The debate on strengthening the powers of the Scottish Parliament has been led by the Liberal Democrats' Steel Commission.

We are calling for a new, permanent Home Rule settlement, within a federal Britain, that will equip Scotland with the powers to build a fairer Scotland and a strong, sustainable economy. We want to see a radical transfer of fiscal and

policy powers to the Scottish Parliament within a strong UK framework.

We will:

- At the earliest opportunity, implement the recommendations of the Calman Commission to give significant new powers and responsibilities to the Scottish Parliament.
- Take up the Calman Commission's conclusion that the powers and responsibilities of the Parliament can be extended further still at a later stage.
- Bring forward a renewed and refreshed set of relations for the whole of the UK, introducing a proper federal system of shared governance and competence to manage relations between governments and ensure constructive partnership working.

Liberal Democrats believe the United Kingdom should be governed on federal principles. **In addition to the extended powers described for the Scottish Parliament we will:**

- Give the National Assembly for Wales primary legislative powers so that it becomes a true Welsh Parliament. We also support passing on a greater number of responsibilities to the National Assembly.
- Replace the current Barnett formula for allocating funds to the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments with a new needs-based formula, to be agreed by a Finance Commission of the Nations.
- Address the status of England within a federal Britain through a Constitutional Convention set up to draft a written constitution for the UK as a whole.

Tensions between Labour and the SNP have undermined the devolved settlement. This has led to unjustified and unnecessary financial disputes which have locked up money due to Scotland. We would restore control to Scotland of the reserves of Registers of Scotland. We will release the Scottish money paid to OFGEM under the Fossil Fuel Levy as a one-off payment in the 2011 budget and give control of future revenues to the Scottish Government. This will likely lead to an increase in resources for Scotland of around £250 million in 2011-12.

restoring your freedoms

Liberal Democrats believe it is an individual's right to live their life as they see fit, without discrimination, with personal privacy, with equal rights in front of the law.

Decades of Labour and Conservative rule have overthrown some of the basic principles of British justice and turned Britain into a surveillance state.

Liberal Democrats will protect and restore your freedom. We will:

- Introduce a Freedom Bill. We will regulate CCTV and stop unfair extradition to the US. We do not support children being fingerprinted at school without their parents' permission.
- Restore the right to protest near Parliament, reform the Public Order Act to safeguard non-violent protests and restrict the scope of injunctions and interdicts issued by vested interests.
- Protect free speech, investigative journalism and academic peer-reviewed publishing, including by requiring corporations to show damage and prove malice or recklessness in libel cases, and by providing a robust responsible journalism defence.

- Scrap intrusive Identity Cards and have more police instead, and also scrap plans for expensive, unnecessary new passports with additional biometric data.

- Halt the increase in unnecessary new offences with the creation of a 'stop unit' in the Cabinet Office. Every UK department in Whitehall would have to convince this small legal unit of the need for a new offence.

- End plans to store your email and internet records without good cause.

- Ensure everyone has the same protections under the law by protecting the Human Rights Act.

We believe the best way to combat terrorism is to prosecute terrorists, not give away hard-won British freedoms. **That is why we will:**

- Reach out to the communities most at risk of radicalisation to improve the relationships between them and the police and increase the flow of intelligence.

- Scrap control orders, which can use secret evidence to place people under house arrest.

- Reduce the maximum period of pre-charge detention to 14 days.

- Make it easier to prosecute terrorists by allowing intercept evidence in court and making greater use of post-charge questioning.