

# LIBERAL REFORM



## Spring Conference Briefing 2021

**Liberal Reform exists within the Liberal Democrats to promote personal liberty and a fair society supported by free, open and competitive markets as the foundation of the party's policy.**

We advocate a liberalism that draws upon the values of entrepreneurship, competition and innovation to deliver a society that empowers individuals through freedom and opportunity. Our vision of freedom is all encompassing, covering personal, political, economic and social liberties. As such, we seek to put the rights of individuals first, but recognise the importance of challenging concentrations of power where they develop, both within and beyond the state.

Join us at [liberalreform.org.uk/join-us](https://liberalreform.org.uk/join-us)

**We support this form of liberalism by:**

1. Developing and promoting it to Liberal Democrat members;
2. Reaching out to its wider support base to attract them to the Liberal Democrats and Liberal Reform; and
3. Working to make it central to Liberal Democrat policy.



## The Housing Crisis: What More Can the Lib Dems Do?



Join Tim Farron MP, Anna Sabine (Meeting Place Communications), Peter Taylor (Lib Dem Mayor of Watford) and Aria Babu (London YIMBY) to find out how the Lib Dems can lead the charge to end the housing crisis.

Fringe Event: Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> March, 13:00-14:15

While online Conferences have been successful and improved accessibility, we nonetheless look forward to future Conferences which will allow us to meet up with our fellow liberals face-to-face again, hopefully in a hybrid format.

Once things get back closer to normal, we hope the return of the face-to-face element, and the frank exchange of views that allows, will mean Conference motions with more bite than many of the well-meaning but ultimately uncontroversial motions on offer this weekend.

## FRIDAY

### **F4 Supporting Business, Workers and the Self-Employed during the COVID-19 Pandemic:**

Liberal Reform has consistently supported providing extra help to those who have been excluded from government assistance and urges members to support this motion together with the two amendments. Liberal Reform members Oliver Jones -Lyons & Fraser Coppin (Co-Chair) have submitted Amendment One, which proposes to Freeze Corporation Tax at 19% in order to support our SMEs and promote public and private investment. Now is not the right time for tax rises and austerity measures that will only stifle our recovery. Please vote for the amendment.

### **F6 Lifting Barriers to Work for Disabled People**

Liberal Reform supports this motion and makes particular note of our commitment to flexible working as a day one right. Freeing people from the 9-5 working day to something that better suits their needs is an ambition any liberal should champion.

## SATURDAY

### **F11 Giving Consumers a Fairer Deal**

Achieving greater benefit for consumers, especially through

increased choice and competition, is a key aspect of Liberal Reform's policy vision. It is therefore disappointing that this motion is rather weak; but we at least welcome that there are no overt calls to follow the Labour Party down the doomed road to nationalisation.

### **F13 Standing Up for Unpaid Carers**

Ed Davey has done well to champion the cause for our unsung heroes and has dedicated a lot of campaign time to this, and we look forward to seeing how it fits into an overall election-winning narrative.

### **F14 The COVID-19 Pandemic**

Restricting people's freedoms with lockdowns is something no liberal should feel comfortable with, but we recognise that although uncomfortable, it has at times over the past year been necessary. We welcome the objection to vaccine passports in this motion, which risk a severe limit on people's freedom for no fault other than being too young to have been offered a vaccine.

### **F17 The EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement and the Future of the UK-EU Relationship**

This motion is right to highlight the damage to free trade and foreign investment that the Government's Brexit deal has done. It is also right to re-iterate that the path to rejoining the EU is a long one that the Party should not seek to rush. Rejoining the single market in particular would be a positive first step.

### **F18 Acting on the Russia Report**

An overall worthy motion but, 5 years on, the Party must not be seen to be continually looking back on the 2016 EU Referendum result.

## SUNDAY

### **F21A A Pay Rise for NHS Staff**

NHS staff have contributed so much to our country over the past year, and in truth they have been

poorly supported by the Conservatives for long before that. They deserve a pay increase.

### **F21B Full Reopening of Schools**

Ensuring children's education is not further damaged by the pandemic must be a top priority, and this motion makes it so.

### **F21C Protecting the Right to Protest**

A very worthy motion, only highlighted by the events of the past week; we urge everyone to wholeheartedly support.

### **F22 Autism Support**

Liberal Reform supports this motion, the key to providing people with appropriate support is lifting barriers and making a diagnosis in the first place.

### **F23 International Development**

The commitment to spending 0.7% of GNI on overseas development was a key Coalition victory and it is only right that the Lib Dems continue to champion it.

### **F25 A Better Response to the Impact of COVID-19 on Education**

Liberal Reform think there is a lot of sensible material in this motion. While we think it is good for National Citizen Service money to move to local authorities, we are puzzled as to why this is just for 2020 & 2021 - we don't see why this shouldn't be made permanent.

### **F26 Accessibility in Education**

A good education system is at the heart of a liberal society. It is vital that everyone has equal access to it.

### **F27 Safe and Legal Routes to Save Lives**

The Conservatives' lack of compassion shown towards those fleeing persecution is galling, and the Party is right to call it out in the strongest of terms.