

Four days left to vote for our next leader

There's just four days left to cast your ballot in the Liberal Democrat leadership election.

All ballots must be cast by 1pm on Monday 22nd July to count.

It's quick and easy to vote – all you need are your Unique Voting code – which has been emailed or posted to you – and this website:

<https://www.mi-vote.com/>

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Author:

Less than a week to have a say on our party's future

This time next week, Vince Cable will be the former leader of the Liberal Democrats.

Ballots close at 1pm on Monday 22nd July. That means you have six days to have your say on where our party goes next.

Later that day, either Ed Davey or Jo Swinson will be announced as our party's new leader. They're both fantastic candidates and either would make a fine leader for the Lib Dems going forward. **You can find out more about their plans for our party here:**

[Find out more](#)

Our new leader will inherit a much stronger party. We have nearly 800 more councillors, 15 new MEPs and we're surging in the polls. We have over 10,000 new members in the last 2 months alone – **it's a great time to be a Liberal Democrat.**

Bumped into our [@LibDems](#) leadership candidates [@joswinson](#) & [@EdwardJDavey](#) whilst at the BBC recording The Week In Westminster (here 22mins in <https://t.co/Lh420qJ8F2>). Our contest has been thoughtful, respectful and full of optimism – compare and contrast to the Tory shambles! pic.twitter.com/DR4cHs3t6J

– Chuka Umunna (@ChukaUmunna) [July 14, 2019](#)

That makes this leadership election important. Politics is in flux – with the way things are going you could well be electing our next Prime Minister. **It's important you have your say.**

Haven't had your vote yet? Get in contact – it's not too late to have your say. **Email us at elections@libdems.org.uk and we'll get you sorted out.**

Find out more about the Lib Dem leadership election

[Find out more](#)

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[Why I'm standing to be MP for Brecon and Radnorshire](#)

It's been equal parts incredible, exhausting and humbling to be at the centre of a massive Lib Dem parliamentary by-election.

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[What a whirlwind 2 months!](#)

After a time-warp 6 week campaign, an 18 hour polling day marathon and an incredible win on 26 May, the sixteen of us went to Brussels in June to take up our new positions as MEPs. You might have heard about the furore we caused!



The Liberal Democrat cohort are sworn in as MEPs. If you like our tshirts, you can get your own [here](#)

Between setting up offices in Brussels, Strasbourg and home constituencies, hiring staff, filling in forms and receiving hundreds of messages, we ran from meeting to meeting and started to home in on key policy targets.

For me, that meant fulfilling a lifetime passion for human rights work. In my previous life, I had volunteered for a number of charities and hosted refugees. But my day job did not allow me enough time to make a real impact. Being an MEP enables me to work with private organisations, governments and individuals from all over the world to drive an agenda of change. We have the power, and the responsibility to speak up for the weakest members of society – those who have been displaced, discriminated against or persecuted by their own governments. As Vice Chair of the Human Rights Committee, I am determined to fight for their rights.

I'm also delighted about what The Express have called the "Lib Dems EU Takeover" – our own Chris Davies and Lucy Nethsingha have both been elected committee chairs, of the Fisheries and Legal Affairs committees respectively.

Apart from committee work, there is so much else I want to do: a Young Visitors programme for UK apprentices, an arts competition for school children, and a series of documentaries about some of the many unknown EU-driven benefits to London citizens.

Of course, none of this possible if we leave the EU. Brexit hanging over us like a dark cloud, and the prospect of a sudden end to our dreams is tough. Surely, few others have a more pressing personal as well as political incentive to Stop Brexit than the sixteen of us. That's why we were elected, that's what we promised to do and with your help, we will do.

Best wishes from the Eurostar

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World Population Day

World Population Day is an opportunity to put reproductive rights and issues of gender equality firmly on the global agenda. **This year, period poverty must be front and centre of the conversation.**

If the UK Conservative government are serious about eradicating period poverty by 2030 then they must use this opportunity to ensure ending period poverty is in the minds of every single world leader. **The Conservative government have a duty to do all they can to end the injustice and stigma surrounding periods in the UK and across the globe.**

Established by the United Nation Development Programme in 1989, the internationally recognised day has helped to highlight the importance of population issues and amplify calls for reproductive health as a priority. **A key pillar of reproductive rights, menstrual hygiene impacts women and girl's access to education, and often has a big effect on their overall health.**

Around half of all women and girls across the world do not have access to safe sanitary products and the stigma and taboos surrounding periods persists globally.

Around half of all women and girls across the world do not have access to safe sanitary products and the stigma and taboos surrounding periods persists globally. The reality for many is that they are forced to use dirty rags, grass, plastic, or overuse a pad or tampon, due to a lack of access to sterilised sanitary products. The everyday reality and cost of periods is putting lives at risk and perpetuating inequality. So too is the cycle of misinformation and taboos that surrounds periods.

Just this year, a Nepali mother and her two children were found dead after the woman was banished to a "menstruation hut". In this heart-breaking instance, the cause of death was smoke inhalation as she lit a fire in a desperate attempt to keep her children warm, but there have also been cases of women dying from snake bites, and others being subject to criminal attacks. These unnecessary, shameful cases are as a direct result of a lack of education surrounding periods. Associating periods with bad luck or impurity is not uncommon in cultures across the world, with devastating consequences.

In the UK, a lack of understanding and education also leads to persistent stigma. Nearly half of those who get their period for the first time don't know what's happening to them and almost 60% report feeling embarrassed about their period. **A failure to provide effective education about menstrual health to those of all genders is keeping taboos alive and perpetuating inequalities.** Health issues including endometriosis often go undiagnosed because people aren't clued up on warning signs or symptoms.

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Providing sanitary products in hospitals and schools in England is a step in the right direction, but we should be leading on this issue. The Tories must pledge to roll our free products across other spaces too, including shelters, hostels, libraries, and leisure centres. The campaign to end period poverty globally by 2030 is crucial, but to do this we must protect our UK aid commitment and keep the issue on the global political agenda. **Today is a chance to do that.**

It is time to eradicate period poverty wherever it exists. This World Population Day the Conservative government must use their voice to break the silence surrounding periods and ensure they are taking the most effective steps possible to bring an end to period poverty. No one, no matter where they live, should lose out on an education or have their health and wellbeing put at risk because of their period. Eradicating period poverty will take funding, it will take education, and it will take unwavering commitment. **This World Population Day, I am calling on the Conservative government to use their influence and resources to help ensure the fight gets all three, at home and abroad.**

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