

# Don't let Trump's America become Farage's Britain

What kind of country do we want to be?

That's the question facing the British people right now. And it was the question at the heart of my speech to our conference in Bournemouth.

With Labour and the Conservatives both having let people down and failed to deliver the change our country needs, it comes down to us or Nigel Farage. Two visions for the future that couldn't be more different.

**We know what kind of country Farage wants: we just have to look across to Trump's America.**

Where there's no NHS. Where gun laws are rolled back. Where social media barons poison young minds with impunity.

Where the government tramples over our basic rights and freedoms. Where racism and misogyny get the tacit support of people in power. Where everything is in a constant state of chaos.

**That is Trump's America. We mustn't let it become Farage's Britain.**



Our vision of the future – the one we've been discussing and debating at conference this week – is so much brighter.

The kind of country we want to be is one where everyone's rights are protected and respected. Where we take care seriously, and fix our NHS. Where we tackle climate change and protect our natural environment.

A country with a thriving economy and opportunity for everyone. Where everyone has real power in their hands, and the powerful are held properly to account. And a country that stands up for our values on the world stage.

**That is our United Kingdom. The country we love.**



And when it comes to the battle between those two visions, I am confident our vision can win. Because it is rooted in the values most people share: decency, tolerance and respect for both individual freedom and the rule of law.

We have had a joyous conference, celebrating so much recent success for our party. I hope you enjoyed it as much as I did!

But with your support, your energy and your hard work, I know the best is yet to come...

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**Read Ed's Full Speech:**

What a time we've had here in Bournemouth. Lots of lively debates – on so many important topics. And somehow we've managed to get through it all without bringing someone up onto the stage to argue that it was Covid vaccines that caused cancer in the Royal Family.

See, Nigel? It can be done!

Friends, when we were last here in Bournemouth – two years ago – I challenged us to get more Liberal Democrats elected to Parliament. And you rose to that challenge. Thank you.

I said we needed to get the Conservatives out of Number 10. And you got that job done too. And now our new team of 72 MPs are getting their jobs done, for their constituents. 72 brilliant community champions, fighting for their local hospitals and schools, local businesses and their local environment too. Paying back the trust of voters, by working hard for their communities every day.

But look at the job our new team is doing in Parliament too. Look at the big changes we have won in the last year alone:

Stronger protections for survivors of domestic abuse. Better support for family carers. A Sunshine Bill, to put solar panels on every new home. Making sure every child living in poverty gets a healthy lunch at school – for free. So much progress – and none of it happens without Liberal Democrats in Parliament. An amazing record of achievement already. And we're planning much more.

We followed up last year's historic national success with this year's set of fantastic local election victories. Gaining more councillors for the seventh year in a row – our best ever winning streak. Winning majorities in Cambridgeshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire – so we now control more councils than the Conservatives. Winning more council seats than either Labour or the Conservatives, for the first time ever in our party's history.

Incredible results. Historic results. Thanks to you all.

Conference, the last few years have been the most successful our party has ever had... So far.

Because friends, let me tell you this: In the immortal words of Frank Sinatra, the best is yet to come!

And yes, friends, I will keep doing it My Way. So get the bungee harness ready... Because my ambition – for our party, our values, our ideas – has no ceiling. And our ambition for our country has no ceiling either.

With the threat that Reform now poses to our country and our democracy – friends, we have a moral responsibility to aim high. And we have a historic opportunity to win big – as the only party now representing the views and values of Britain's decent silent majority.

So let me tell you – in confidence – our secret first target for the next

general election. Our first target is to win more seats than the Conservatives, for the first time since Herbert Henry Asquith in 1910. Now we have even more ambitious targets than that – but let's start with the Tories. For when it comes to the Conservative Party – you might have thought the scale of their defeat would have forced a bit of... introspection?

Maybe they'd... apologise? Show a hint of contrition. Self-awareness?

But no.

Tory ministers who cheered Liz Truss's budget – now complain about the state of the economy they left. Tory ministers who stopped processing asylum claims and caused the enormous backlog – now make videos complaining about it and protesting outside the asylum hotels they opened.

The Conservative Party today is like a herd of bulls – going back into the china shop with a camera crew, pointing at all the broken china everywhere – and decrying the state of china shops in “woke, liberal” Britain.

The Conservative Party: No shame. No remorse. No wonder the country is saying: No thanks.

Conference, I've lost count of the people who've told me they voted Conservative all their lives, but now they've switched to the Liberal Democrats. And not just because they feel so badly let down by their old party. But because they see their values reflected best in our party.

So my message to millions of former Conservative voters – millions of One Nation conservatives who reject the divisive politics of Badenoch and Farage – my message to you is this:

Come and talk to us. About our ideas to grow the economy. Cut crime. Defend our nation. Come and join us. To oppose this failing Labour Government and offer our great country real change. Come, Conservative friends. Help us save our country. Come and win with us.

But friends, I'm going to let you in on another secret about our plans for the next election. And friends, this is not to leave this hall... We won't only be targeting seats held by the Conservatives. I said before the election, that just getting the Conservatives out of power wouldn't be enough.

We were all worried – weren't we? – that Labour wouldn't be nearly ambitious enough to make the big changes our country needs. I really hoped Labour would prove us wrong. But they haven't. They've no vision for our country's future. No plan to really change things.

Conference, don't just take it from me. That's what Labour MPs and Labour members are saying about their own government. After being failed and neglected for so long, the country needed leadership. Clarity. Vision. It needed the Government to succeed. To turn things around. To just be better. Instead, they've lurched from mistake to mistake. From U-turn to U-turn. Crisis to crisis.

And look at who Labour have hurt along the way: Pensioners. Farmers. Carers. Disabled people. Small businesses.

Every day, Labour is looking more and more like Continuity Sunak. And our country is still crying out for change. And as every day goes by it gets clearer – the two old parties can't deliver that change. Neither of those old parties can win back people's trust. Neither of them will win the battle of ideas for the future of our country.

So it comes down to us. Or Nigel Farage.

Liberal Democrat change – true to British values. Transforming our economy, our public services and our politics. The real change people crave. Or Farage's change. Change away from the country we love. Change towards Trump's America.

Just imagine – if you can bear it...

Imagine living in the Trump-inspired country Farage wants us to become. Where there's no NHS, so patients are hit with crippling insurance bills. Or denied healthcare altogether. That is Trump's America. Don't let it become Farage's Britain.

Where we pay Putin for expensive fossil fuels and destroy our beautiful countryside with fracking – while climate change rages on. That is Trump's America. Don't let it become Farage's Britain.

Where gun laws are rolled back, so schools have to teach our children what to do in case of a mass shooting. Trump's America. Don't let it become Farage's Britain.

Where social media barons are free to poison young minds with impunity. Trump's America. Don't let it become Farage's Britain.

Where the government tramples on our basic rights and freedoms, unconstrained by the European Convention on Human Rights. Where Andrew Tate – Andrew Tate – is held up as an example to young men. Where racism and misogyny get the tacit support of people in power. Where everything is in a constant state of chaos.

That is Trump's America. Don't let it become Farage's Britain.

Instead of the real change Liberal Democrats have always championed – the change our country desperately needs – Farage is picking off groups of people, one by one. If you've got a mental health problem, Farage says you're probably making it up. Even as suicides have risen to a 25-year high. If your child is disabled or has special needs, Farage says it's been wrongly diagnosed. Even as parents struggle against the crisis in SEND. But of course, it's on immigration where he claims to offer the change people want.

So let's look at Farage's record on immigration.

Who was it who campaigned to rip up twenty-seven return agreements, where in



the EU, the United Kingdom could legally and fairly return people who had no right to be here? Yes it was Boris and the Conservatives – but it was also Nigel Farage.

He caused this crisis, and he should apologise.

And look at this hypocrite's big announcement on deportation last month. Look at what his plan really means... Sending men, women and children who have fled the Taliban back to Afghanistan to be murdered by them. And even paying the Taliban to do it. That isn't patriotic. That isn't British. That isn't who we are.

And that's why it's so frustrating – so infuriating – that Farage gets such an easy ride from the media. As he lies and divides, the BBC and others give Farage so much time and attention. But they never hold him to account for all the damage he has already done. The damage of Brexit. Farage was Brexit's champion. The damage of Donald Trump. Farage campaigned for him. All the damage of Boris Johnson and Liz Truss. Farage backed them both.

So much that is broken in our country today is broken thanks to Nigel Farage.

And now he wants to break it even more. Unless we stop him.

This will not be easy. The forces of darkness are working together – across the whole world. We all saw another agent of chaos last weekend. Elon Musk. Inciting far-right violence on our streets.

Just like all those revolutionary leaders throughout history, bravely issuing his call to arms – by video link, from an undisclosed location thousands of miles away .

Conference, he's certainly no craven coward, is he?

But we know why Elon Musk is so keen to meddle in our democracy, don't we? It's not because he cares about the British people. It's not about our rights and our freedoms. It's all about Musk's ego. His power. And his wealth. He rails against the Online Safety Act. But not because he cares about free speech.

It's because Musk wants to run his social media platform without safeguards – without taking any responsibility for the terrible harm it is causing – especially to our children. After Musk took over and slashed the platform's child-safety teams, X has become a much more dangerous place for children. The promotion of self-harm. Of grooming. Of sexual exploitation. All happening on Elon Musk's watch.

No wonder he wants to get rid of the laws to tackle it.

And Nigel Farage says we should give Musk what he wants. A Wild West on social media, that only benefits Musk and his ilk – while our children suffer. I say no. The UK must stand up to Elon Musk, and properly enforce our laws so he can't get away with inflicting harm on our kids. Holding the

powerful to account – no matter how powerful they are.

It's what Liberals are all about. Friends, we are engaged in a fight for the future. One that comes down to the most fundamental questions of all:

What kind of country we are. And what kind of country we want to become.

For the British people, there is a real choice right now. Between the traditional values that have made the United Kingdom great – and dark forces that have threatened our country before. When a country faces so many big challenges on so many different fronts, there are two ways it can respond. One is to set our sights lower. Become smaller, meaner. Give in to the worst in us. Close ourselves off. Turn inwards. Hark back to a simpler time. Talk about all the things we can't do.

Trump's America. Don't let it become Farage's Britain.

Reform's vision of the future is not one befitting our great United Kingdom. The other path – the better path – is to do what Britain has always done when confronted by such big challenges in the past. Rise to them together. With guts, determination and hope. You see, I start from a deeply optimistic view of our country.

When I travel the UK and meet people from all backgrounds and all walks of life – working hard, raising families, helping others, playing by the rules – it fills me with pride to be British. And hope for the future. There's a question Nigel Farage is fond of asking. He likes to ask "Whose side are you on?" Well we know the answer, don't we? Nigel Farage is on the side of Elon Musk, Vladimir Putin and Donald Trump.

Liberal Democrats are on the side of the British people.

Because unlike Farage, I actually love Britain. I'm proud of our country. There's no doubt that a lot needs fixing. Crumbling hospitals and schools. Anaemic economic growth. The sewage in our rivers. Crime and anti-social behaviour. Dangerous Channel crossings. Deep inequalities that limit opportunity for young people. The housing crisis. The nature crisis. The climate crisis. The prison crisis. The cost-of-living crisis. All the challenges we've been discussing and debating here this weekend.

But we shouldn't lose sight of the many incredible strengths this United Kingdom has going for it. The best farmers, carmakers and universities in the world. The place Hollywood comes to make Barbie, Spider-Man and Mission Impossible. The land of the Lionesses and the home of Formula One. Windermere and Loch Ness. Male Voice Choirs and Hogmanay. County shows and school fairs. Fish and chips. Village greens and cricket pavilions. And let me tell you – the best rollercoasters and waterslides on the planet.

So much to celebrate about our country.

But above all, our strength lies in the British people and our shared British values. We are a nation that believes in tolerance, decency, and respect for both individual freedom and the rule of law.

That is our United Kingdom.

And that is why I am so confident that, together, we can get things back on track. Because the crises we face... These are not the failings of the British people. These are the failings of governments – Labour, Conservative and SNP. And we know that there are no failings of British governments that cannot be put right by the talents of the British people – as long as they have the power and the freedom to make it happen – and the powerful vested interests are held to account.

And friends, if we are to win this fight for British values – we need to show that the change Liberal Democrats want is the change the British people want. That starts with the economy. We must show – we can show – that only Liberal Democrat change will fire up our economy again. We have to get our economy growing strongly – for so many reasons. To end the cost-of-living crisis and boost people's living standards. To create good jobs and real opportunities for people in every part of the United Kingdom. To generate the revenues we need for the National Health Service and our other public services – and raise the money we need for our national defence too.

But another benefit of strengthening the British economy is that it would strengthen our hand in dealing with Trump. And here again, only we Liberal Democrats have set out plans for the economy that are both transformational and achievable. Plans to rebuild our relationship with Europe, tearing down the Conservatives' trade barriers with a new Customs Union – boosting trade and putting us back on the path to the Single Market.

Conference – there is no serious strategy for restoring economic growth that doesn't involve rebuilding Britain's relationship with Europe. And beyond Europe, we have set out plans to form a new economic Coalition of the Willing to stand up to Trump's tariffs – not only with our European neighbours, but Commonwealth allies like Canada and other like-minded nations across the globe. To take control of our own economic destiny, instead of waiting anxiously for the next rambling Trump press conference. And then there's our plan to cut energy bills in half by 2035 – making sure everyone feels the benefits of the cheapest forms of electricity: wind and sun. Helping families, pensioners and businesses with energy bills out of control due to gas prices and failed Tory energy policies.

Big, bold Liberal Democrat ideas to cut the cost of living and grow our economy. To build a country with opportunity for all. The kind of country we want to be. And there's something else.

Something that crystallised for me in something Emily said during the election campaign last year, when we were talking about the future we hoped for our son John. Emily said: "What you've got to have is a caring community, a caring society. That's our best hope for the future." A caring society. A caring country. That's the kind of country we want to be. A country that properly values care – and properly values carers too.

This is personal for me, as you know. But it's something our party has always fought for.



Last month, our Liberal Democrat family mourned the loss of the wonderful Annette Brooke here in Dorset.

And it's been striking to hear the word so many people most associate with Annette: "caring". In Parliament, Annette campaigned on behalf of blind children and young carers. And after Parliament, she set up a support group and put on tea dances for people with dementia and their carers. We miss Annette deeply. She understood the value of care, and so do we all.

That's why we have been standing up for family carers – including those hit by the appalling Carer's Allowance scandal. Tens of thousands of carers, hounded by the DWP and even threatened with prosecution. All because the system simply isn't fit for purpose. So we took their fight to Parliament. I raised it directly with the Prime Minister. We forced a vote on it. And, with the Guardian newspaper, we secured an independent review.

But it's not over. When that review concludes – and I hope it's soon – that will be the moment for the Government to finally overhaul the way we support family carers. Not just to make some tweaks and tinker around the edges. But put in place a system that actually reflects the reality of life as a carer. A system that makes it easier to juggle work with caring responsibilities.

This is the moment for real change for carers. To build a more caring country. And we will press ministers to seize it.

And Conference, we want to be a caring country that honours the ideals of the NHS. Not just in words, not just in theory, but in practice. High-quality healthcare, free at the point of use and – crucially – accessible to everyone, wherever and whenever they need it. Whether that's the mum, trying to find an NHS dentist for her daughter. The pensioner, trying to get an appointment to see his GP. The teenager, dialling 999 because dad's had a heart attack. Or the family whose world has just been turned upside down by a cancer diagnosis.

A caring country.

When we were here in Bournemouth two years ago, I told you about a man called Ian. An engineer. From Nottingham, like me. Who lost both his parents to cancer when he was young. Like me. Ian had been diagnosed with bowel cancer. A small stage-one tumor. Operable. But he was kept waiting four months before starting any treatment. His cancer progressed to stage four and spread to his liver. Inoperable. I said then that we owed Ian better than that. I said we would make cancer a top priority. And when we launched our manifesto last year, I got a lovely message from Ian. He told me how pleased he was that we had included a cast-iron guarantee for every cancer patient to start urgent treatment within two months. "Please keep pushing this", he wrote. And we have.

In March, I got another message – this time from Ian's best friend. To say Ian had sadly passed away.

Ian will never get to see the Ten-Year Cancer Plan that patients were

promised more than three and a half years ago. But I hope it will come very soon – and be as ambitious as today's cancer patients, and the patients of tomorrow, need it to be. Ian will never get to see whether our 62-day cancer guarantee gets written into law. But he asked me to keep pushing for it, and I promise you Ian – we will.

But I'm afraid the biggest threat to the fight against cancer isn't our government's timidity or delay – disappointing though that is. No. It's what's happening on the other side of the Atlantic. Because the United States is by far the world's biggest funder of cancer research – mostly through its National Cancer Institute. But since Donald Trump returned to the White House, he has cancelled hundreds of grants for cancer research projects. He's slashing billions of dollars from the National Cancer Institute's budget. He's even ordered a review of all grants for research involving supposedly "woke" keywords – including the word "women".

And last month, Trump's Health Secretary – Robert Kennedy Jr – cancelled half a billion dollars' worth of research into mRNA vaccines. He did it based on totally false conspiracy theories about these life-saving vaccines. The same type of vaccines that protected us from Covid just a few years ago.

Not only do we need these new vaccines in case of a future pandemic, but they have incredible potential for treating cancer too. They can be tailored to each person's particular cancer, allowing the body to attack cancer cells and stop them from spreading. It is hard to express the cruelty and stupidity of cutting off research into medicine that has the power to save so many lives. A decision – by the way – that was enthusiastically applauded by Farage's party at their conference.

Trump's America. Don't let it become Farage's Britain.

And Conference, I don't think we should let the Trump Administration hold back progress on tackling cancer like this. The UK should step up and say: if Trump won't back this research, we will. We'll boost funding for cancer research in the UK. We'll rebuild a National Cancer Research Institute after it was closed under the Conservatives, to coordinate research and drive it forward. We'll pass a Cancer Survival Research Act to ensure funding for research into the deadliest cancers. We'll invest in mRNA vaccines and explore their potential for treating cancer to the full. And to the cancer scientists in the US who have had their research stopped by Trump, let's say: come here, and finish it in the UK. We'll set up a dedicated fellowship scheme for you, and we won't let extortionate Home Office fees stand in your way.

The United Kingdom, stepping into the vacuum left by Trump's anti-science agenda. Especially after the dangerous nonsense he's peddling today, about paracetamol for pregnant women.

The United Kingdom, leading the world in the fight against cancer. And giving patients real hope, with the treatment they need.

Britain, delivering on the promise of the NHS. A caring country. A healthy

country. A great country. That is the kind of country we want to be.

So despite all the challenges, I have no doubt that together we can build a better future for our country – guided by our British values and our liberal principles. But if we are to change our great country for the better, we have to help change our world for the better too. Too many of the threats the UK faces are international ones. From Putin's Russia to climate change, from international crime gangs to foreign conflicts that cause chaos around the world and wash up on our shores. So the UK must stand tall on the world stage. Stand together with our allies. Stand as a force for good.

As we have done proudly in solidarity with Ukraine, as they resist Putin's brutal war machine. No matter what Donald Trump does next, the United Kingdom's support for Ukraine must never waver. We must continue to defend our Ukrainian friends, defend our continent, and defend the fundamental values of democracy, liberty, human rights and the rule of law. All of which Putin is seeking to destroy.

Democracy, liberty, human rights and the rule of law. Our United Kingdom is at its best when it proudly champions these fundamental values. And that means taking action when they are being trampled over. As they are, undeniably, right now in Gaza.

Friends, I travelled to Israel and Palestine last year. I saw the devastation in a kibbutz raided by Hamas on October the seventh. I joined mourners at the site of the Nova music festival, grieving the loved ones brutally slain by terrorists. I spoke with the families of hostages who are still held captive, almost two years later. I completely share their condemnation of genocidal Hamas. I completely share their determination – their desperation – to get the hostages home. And I condemn – I utterly condemn – antisemitism in all its forms. Including here on our streets in the United Kingdom.

And let us also be clear: Nothing – nothing – can justify what the Netanyahu government is doing to innocent men, women and children in Gaza. We have all seen it. The baby boy – starving and skeletal – held tight in his mother's arms. The crowds of desperate people, rushing to get food. The bodies of children, killed as they queued for water. Children. A famine unfolding before our eyes. Conference, the actions of the Netanyahu government go well beyond self-defence. They are clear breaches of international law.

I think Omer Bartov – an Israeli historian and former IDF soldier – puts it simply but clearly: What Netanyahu's government is trying to do is – quote – “to make Gaza uninhabitable for its population.”

Now, there is a case on this before the International Court of Justice. And it is right that we as a party support that process and respect the role of the international courts in upholding and enforcing the Genocide Convention. But the court is unlikely to be able to give its judgment for another two years or more. And I cannot shake the words of two leading Israeli organisations – B'Tselem and Physicians for Human Rights-Israel. They said powerfully and plainly: “in these dark times it is especially important to call things by their name”.

Conference – they are right.

Respecting the role of the ICJ should not stop us from speaking the truth today. We must call it by its name, and we must condemn it unequivocally.

What is unfolding in Gaza is a genocide. And the United Kingdom must do all it can to make Netanyahu stop.

And when I criticise Prime Minister Netanyahu, I do it as a friend of Israel. Knowing that his Government's actions do not represent the Israeli people. I stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Israeli parents of hostages still held captive by Hamas. And who desperately want their government to change course. Like Itzik Horn, who I met when I was in Israel. And who last week called on Netanyahu to sit down with him and explain why his son Eitan is still rotting in a tunnel. Conference, I want to get Eitan home to his dad. I want to get all the hostages home.

This has to stop.

I am proud that the United Kingdom has finally recognised the independent state of Palestine. Something we have rightly led the charge on for almost a decade. But this is not the end. It must be the beginning. The moment that the UK finally steps up, and does everything we can to end this appalling cycle of bloodshed. To get the hostages home. To end the aid blockade. To build a viable Palestinian state, without Hamas. To secure a two-state solution. The lasting peace that both Israelis and Palestinians deserve.

Just imagine... The United Kingdom, leading again on the world stage. Standing up for our values, in the Middle East, in Europe and across the world. And here at home.

Our United Kingdom. Not Trump's America. Not Farage's Britain.

A country where everyone's rights are protected and respected.

Our United Kingdom. Not Trump's America. Not Farage's Britain.

A country where we take care seriously, and fix our NHS.

A country that tackles climate change and protects our natural environment.

A country with a thriving, dynamic economy – that rewards aspiration and gives everyone the chance to succeed.

Our United Kingdom. Not Trump's America. Not Farage's Britain.

A country where everyone has real power to make decisions about their own lives – and where the powerful are held properly to account.

That's our United Kingdom.

That's the country we want to be.

That is the change we want to make.

So Conference, this is not a time for caution or complacency. After the chaos and destruction of the Conservatives – amid the mistakes and disappointment of Labour – the failures and division of the SNP – and up against the dangers and lies of Reform – we are in a battle for the very future of our country.

And it's not a battle we can afford to lose.

So if you believe in a Britain that stands proud for its values – at home and abroad. If you believe in a Britain of growth and opportunity. Fairness and prosperity. If you believe in a Britain that cares.

[Join us.](#)

If you are fed up with the two old parties letting you down. If you are scared of the rise of racism and extremism. If you believe in decency, tolerance and the rule of law.

[Join us.](#)

Because we believe in the British people. We love our country. And together, we can change it for good.

Thank you.

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## [Defending Women's Rights Across the Globe](#)

Women's rights worldwide are under increasing attack. The rise of authoritarianism, combined with the retreat of the UK and US from global leadership – especially through deep cuts to development funding – is rolling back hard-won progress.

Access to education, sexual health services, and protection from violence are all being undermined. This is not just a crisis for women and girls; it is a crisis for justice, equality, and global stability.

Yet both Labour and the Conservatives have weakened the UK's ability to make a positive difference. Their dramatic cuts to the Official Development Assistance budget have slashed resources for vital programmes supporting women's rights.

**Liberal Democrats believe the Government must urgently recommit to championing gender equality worldwide.** To do this, we must develop a roadmap

for restoring the UK's aid spending to 0.7% of gross national income and ensure at least 20% of that is dedicated to gender equality initiatives.

**Today, our members have passed new policy which sets out a plan to defend women's rights across the globe:**

- Champion **women's economic empowerment** by recognising unpaid care work, promoting equal economic rights, and supporting women's access to finance and resources.
- Hold **social media companies to account** for misogyny online by pressuring them to improve content moderation and fix algorithms that promote harmful gendered content.
- Promote **women's political participation**, using diplomatic influence and working to remove barriers like online harassment and lack of access to campaign funding.
- Lead globally in **ending violence against women and girls**, increasing ODA spending on prevention and survivor support.

Read our new policy in full

**These reforms are critical.**

They will restore the UK's role as a global defender of women's rights, tackle online misogyny, empower women economically and politically, and help end violence that affects millions.

We cannot allow progress to be rolled back or abandoned. The UK must step up and act boldly on the world stage.

Women's rights are being eroded – and defending them must be a top priority.

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**[Towards a Ceasefire and Political](#)**



# Resolution in Sudan

Two years of brutal civil war have turned Sudan into one of the world's worst humanitarian catastrophes. Over 30 million Sudanese people urgently need humanitarian aid – more than half the population. Yet, despite this scale of suffering, Sudan has received far too little attention here in the UK.

The conflict has shattered communities, forced millions from their homes, and exposed countless civilians to violence, including horrific war crimes. Children have been disproportionately affected, with many denied access to education, healthcare, and safety.

Meanwhile, UK governments have failed to meet the moment. Like the Conservatives before them, Labour has cut international aid budgets. Even where funding for Sudan has been 'ringfenced', it is under severe threat. This damaging retreat from global leadership undermines the UK's ability to help resolve the crisis.

As Liberal Democrats, we believe the UK must lead urgent international action to push for a ceasefire and a lasting political resolution in Sudan – and to provide real support for civilians caught in the conflict.

**Today, members have passed new policy calling on the Government to:**

- Lead efforts to establish a **Sudan-wide arms embargo** to stop the flow of weapons fueling the war.
- Build international consensus to **resist legitimising warring parties** and ensure that those responsible for war crimes are held to account.
- Reverse its cut to the **UK's aid budget**, and outline a clear timeline for returning to 0.7% of GNI.

Provide targeted support for **Sudanese children**, who have suffered disproportionately and need urgent access to education, healthcare, and trauma-informed services.

Read our new policy in full

**These steps are vital – they could save millions of lives and bring hope for a peaceful future in Sudan.**

The UK must reclaim its role as a global leader in humanitarian action and conflict resolution.

We must stand with the Sudanese people, demand justice, and work tirelessly

to end this conflict once and for all.

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*Image: Gregório Cunha/UNMISS*

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## [A New Hope for the Space Industry](#)

Space is no longer the stuff of science fiction. It is a vital part of our economy, our security, and our daily lives. From satellite navigation to weather forecasting, from communications to climate monitoring, the space sector underpins industries worth billions and shapes how we live and work.

The UK has world-class talent, research, and potential. Figures like Tim Peake have inspired a generation, sparking enthusiasm for science and technology in schools and universities across the country. Our spaceports in Scotland and Cornwall, alongside hubs like Harwell in Oxfordshire, show the breadth of UK ambition.

But while our potential is vast, our progress is at risk.

The US, China, Russia, and European partners are pressing ahead, investing heavily in space capabilities. Meanwhile, the UK's 2021 National Space Strategy is already out of date, leaving us in danger of falling behind. Without a clearer plan, we risk not only losing global leadership but also missing out on the jobs, innovation, and investment that flow from this fast-growing sector.

Liberal Democrats believe space should be a cornerstone of the UK's future – an industry that drives growth, secures our independence, and inspires the next generation.

**Today, our members have passed new policy to put the UK space sector back on track:**

- **Renew the National Space Strategy**, focusing on attracting international investment, fostering growth, and ensuring people-centred, efficient regulation.
- **Review and support UK spaceports and hubs** to cement our place as a global space hub.
- **Designate space as a strategic industry** under the National Wealth Fund, opening the door for productive investment in:

- A UK satellite navigation system to ensure resilience after Brexit.
- Cutting-edge technologies including quantum communications, satellites, advanced materials, optical infrastructure, and computing.

**Champion diversity and inclusion in the space workforce**, with schemes to support underrepresented groups, including women, ethnic minorities, and people with disabilities.

Read our new policy in full

The UK space industry already brings in nearly £19 billion a year and employs over 50,000 people. But revenues are slipping, with income falling slightly since 2021, and global competitors racing ahead.

Without urgent action, we risk seeing opportunities and investment go elsewhere.

A renewed space strategy would provide the direction and smart investment to unlock the sector's potential. By supporting spaceports, championing innovation, and making sure the industry is open to everyone, the UK can once again be at the forefront of one of the most exciting frontiers of science and technology.

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## **Building a Fair Asylum System**

The UK asylum system is in crisis – and people fleeing war and persecution are paying the price.

For years, the Conservatives trashed the system, letting backlogs spiral out of control and leaving thousands of vulnerable people stuck in expensive hotels. Now, rather than fixing the mess, Labour has doubled down with counterproductive measures like the immediate suspension of family reunion pathways and reducing the move-on period for new refugees.

This is dividing communities, costing billions, and undermining the UK's

proud history of offering sanctuary to those in need.

As liberals, we believe in compassion, fairness and efficiency. That means ending the chaos, restoring dignity, and building an asylum system that works for everyone.

Today, members passed a new Liberal Democrat policy to do this by:

- **Ending the use of asylum hotels by clearing the backlog**, speeding up application decisions, and allowing people with valid claims to work, integrate and contribute while swiftly returning those who do not have a right to remain.
- **Lifting the ban on employment for asylum seekers** who have waited more than three months for a decision.
- **Restoring family reunion pathways** so refugees can rebuild their lives with their loved ones.
- **Tackling dangerous crossings** at their source by stepping up cross-border cooperation and giving the UK a leadership role in Europol to take on the criminal gangs.
- **Reaffirming the UK's commitment to the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)** and rejecting any attempt to undermine the rights and protections it guarantees.

Read our new policy in full

Protests over asylum hotels have already put police forces under 'chronic pressure'. Refugees are left in limbo, unable to work and forced into poverty. Families are kept apart. And meanwhile, the toxic rhetoric of Reform and the Conservatives is dragging politics further away from compassion and common sense.

The UK has a proud tradition of standing up for those fleeing oppression – Liberal Democrats will make sure we live up to it.

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