

Liberal Democrats launch manifesto to change Britain's future

The Liberal Democrats will launch their manifesto for a brighter future on Wednesday. Change Britain's Future is a plan for a fairer Britain where people are decent to each other, with good schools and hospitals, a clean environment and an innovative economy.

Nothing is more important to our children's future than Brexit. A bad Brexit deal, with Britain outside the single market, will wreck the future for our children, our economy and our schools and hospitals. That's why at the heart of the manifesto is a commitment to give the people the final say on the Brexit deal in a referendum.

In advance of the publication of their manifesto, the Liberal Democrats are unveiling a raft of policies to give our children and young people a brighter future. These include:

- Helping people buy their first home for the same cost as renting, with a new model of 'Rent to Own' homes
- Restoring housing benefit for young people
- Creating a discounted bus pass for 16-21 year olds, giving a 66% discount
- Introducing votes at 16 for elections and referendums across the UK

As well as:

- Investing almost £7bn in our schools and colleges
- Doubling the number of businesses that take apprenticeships
- Tripling the early years pupil premium
- Extending free school meals to all primary school students

Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron said: "Imagine a brighter future. You don't have to accept Theresa May and Nigel Farage's extreme version of Brexit that will wreck the future for you, your family, your schools and hospitals.

"In the biggest fight for the future of our country in a generation, Jeremy Corbyn's Labour has let you down by voting with Theresa May on Brexit – not against her.

"The Liberal Democrats want you to have a choice over your future. You should have your say on the Brexit deal in a referendum. And if you don't like the deal you should be able to reject it and choose to remain in Europe.

"We want to give all our children a brighter future in a fairer Britain where people are decent to each other, with good schools and hospitals, a clean environment and an innovative economy. Not Theresa May's cold, mean-spirited Britain.

"A vote for the Liberal Democrats can change Britain's future."

Labour's NHS pledge is pie in the sky.

This week Labour pledged an additional £37 billion of NHS funding, which sounds to me, as Shadow Health Secretary, like poorly-thought-out, pie in the sky policy.

You can't solve the crisis in our NHS and social care services by simply imposing more top-down targets on staff and plucking numbers out of thin air.

The Liberal Democrats are the only party with a fully costed plan to deliver £6bn more per year for the NHS and social care by putting a penny on income tax.

We are the only party that are prepared to be honest with the public that giving the NHS and social care the funding they need will mean us all chipping in a little more.

A group of 26 leading health experts, including the former chief executive of the NHS David Nicholson, have all backed our plans on the NHS in a letter to the Observer today.

To add your voice to theirs and back our plan to save the NHS and social care:

We will honour Britain's commitment to international development

As part of the coalition, the Lib Dems managed to secure 0.7% of Britain's gross national income for international development. It was one of our final acts in government, and it's one we're most proud of.

Since then, 0.7% has been a legal requirement, which has prevented the Conservatives and UKIP from stopping these vital funds getting to the world's most vulnerable people.

Now, in the face of yet more callous opposition from the government, who are attempting to reduce the funding – the Lib Dems are making a stand.

The British people don't have to settle for Theresa May's cold, mean-spirited Britain.

Today, we have vowed to protect our 0.7% legacy and ensure that the UK

continues to alleviate poverty across the world, helping to build a more secure and stable international community.

Why? Because UK aid prevents unimaginable suffering. It allows girls to stay in school, stops babies from dying from preventable illnesses, and ensures that farmers can sell their crops at a fair price.

And because a healthier, safer and more stable world is better for Britain. We should all be proud of our outward-looking, modern, progressive record as a global leader in international development.

If you want to fight for Britain's legacy and protect the 0.7% pledge, support us today:

[I've told Britain's property developers: if you won't build houses, the Lib Dems will](#)

The Conservative government has given developers a carte blanche to play the property market at the expense of our citizens. And now the country's in crisis.

Not enough homes. Properties sitting empty. Exorbitant prices. The market is closed and exclusive: a fat cats' game. That's not good for people and it's not good for business.

Today the Lib Dems are laying down the law to developers: **unless you build the homes that Britain needs, we will.**

We're tired of the commercially unsound and short-sighted greed of developers, who buy up local authority land and sit on it until it appreciates. We're tired of absent foreign investors, who's attractive up-front cash is a false economy – contributing nothing to the improvement of the surrounding public realm.

The Lib Dems are taking decisive action on the housing crisis.

As a modern, pro-business party, we think commercial sense and social justice go hand in hand. That's why we've put a progressive housing package at the heart of our new manifesto. It will include: building 300,000 homes a year by the end of the next parliament and giving local councils the power to charge absentee landlords up to 200% council tax on empty homes.

Why prioritise housing?

Making sure that the housing market is both profitable and socially

beneficial is just pure good sense. But I also have personal reasons for standing behind this issue. As a teenager, I was inspired to get into politics by watching *Cathy Come Home* – a heartbreaking film about a couple who were made homeless – and I joined the housing charity Shelter as a result.

As an MP, I've seen first-hand the misery caused not having a proper home. For many people in the next generation, it is virtually impossible to get on the housing ladder. I think they deserve a helping hand.

If you want a government who will fight for everyone's basic human need for shelter, who has the commercial clout to unpack the property monopolies which hold the market in a vice, then add your name here and say you're voting to change Britain's future on Thursday 8th June:

[The unregulated cannabis market is harming our young people. Something must be done.](#)

The Liberal Democrats plan to break the grip of criminal gangs and protect young people by introducing a legal, regulated market for cannabis.

Why are we doing this?

Because the current approach to cannabis has been a catastrophic failure.

Unregulated cannabis is freely available and widely used, generating significant mental and psychical health problems – especially for young people – who are being harmed by increasingly potent products.

And because organised criminals are making huge profits at the expense of people's health, in an illegal industry with no age checks, and no controls on quality or strength. The UK cannabis economy is worth an estimated £7bn a year. We could put that money to better use.

Every British government so far has passed the buck of responsibility for this problem, thereby giving total control to the illegal rings who benefit from it. This is irresponsible and dangerous.

It's time for an honest and pragmatic response. Only the Lib Dems can do this.

We propose a series of strict regulations, such as limiting sales of cannabis to over-18s, making cannabis safer by limiting its psychoactive chemical content, and taxing all cannabis sales (generating up to £1bn for investment

in drug education and treatment).

How do we know it will work?

We've rigorously consulted a panel of experts, including senior police officers, drugs policy analysts and public health experts. They considered evidence from countries who've successfully legalised cannabis.

When a country as eminently sensible as Canada has come to the conclusion that regulation is better than prohibition, you know that the tide has turned. The question is now how to regulate responsibly and effectively. We can do it.

If you believe Britain's young people deserve a sensible, progressive policy on cannabis, support us today: