

# Our plan to fix the student finance system and support graduates

Right now, the student finance system simply isn't working.

Graduates are paying more, for longer, on terms that keep changing. Repayment thresholds have been frozen. Interest rules have been altered. The repayment period has been extended to 40 years for some borrowers. Successive governments have quietly moved the goalposts, and young people are left picking up the bill.

At a time when rents, mortgages and food bills are rising, graduates are being squeezed even harder.

That's not fair. And it's not sustainable.

## **We know trust has to be rebuilt**

The Liberal Democrats paid a heavy political price for making promises on tuition fees we couldn't keep. We've learned from that.

That's why we are not making unrealistic pledges. We are setting out a pragmatic, costed and achievable plan that would make a real difference to graduates now, while also fixing the system for the long term.

## **Our plan: Unfreeze repayment thresholds and put money back in your pocket**

We would urgently reform the system to reduce monthly repayments by reversing Labour's freeze on repayment thresholds.

For example:

- A graduate earning £35,000 would see their monthly repayments **cut in half within three years**.
- They would get an immediate boost of around £100 next year.
- Over the lifetime of their loan, lower earners could save up to £5,000.

We would achieve this by:

### **1. Ending the repayment threshold freeze**

Instead of freezing the salary level at which you start repaying, we would raise it in line with average earnings, so as wages rise, you keep more of

what you earn.

That's how the system was originally designed. It should never have been constantly undermined by successive Conservative and Labour governments who since 2015 have repeatedly frozen thresholds and changed the terms of people's loans, meaning graduates are left with soaring bills.

## **2. Stopping governments from constantly changing the rules**

Graduates should not wake up to find the government has changed the terms of their loan.

We would create an **independent watchdog** to oversee student loan repayment terms, including thresholds, interest rates and repayment conditions, so governments cannot keep moving the goalposts.

## **Rewarding public service**

We also want to recognise people who dedicate their careers to serving our communities.

Under our plans nurses, doctors, teachers, police officers and armed forces personnel could have part of their student loan written off after 10 years of public service.

This would help tackle the recruitment and retention crises in the NHS and schools, while rewarding those who commit to public service.

When experienced staff leave early, it costs taxpayers hundreds of thousands of pounds in training and agency costs. Retaining even a modest number of professionals would save some of this money and strengthen our public services.

## **Bringing back maintenance grants**

The Conservatives scrapped maintenance grants for the poorest students.

We would restore **£3,500 a year in maintenance grants** for disadvantaged students, so young people from lower-income backgrounds face fewer barriers to go into higher education and graduate with less debt.

## **Fixing the system for good**

Short-term changes aren't enough. The system needs long-term reform that lasts beyond one Parliament.

That's why we are calling for a **Royal Commission** to build a cross-party

consensus on a fairer, more stable student finance system, including looking at fairer interest rates and how to stop constant political interference.

## **A fairer deal for graduates**

The current system has drifted away from its original design and become more punitive over time.

Our plan would cut repayments, protect graduates from political meddling, reward public service and restore maintenance grants for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

We cannot undo the past. But we can learn from it, and act now to make things better.

This is a bold yet deliverable plan to ease the cost-of-living pressure on graduates today, while building a fairer system for tomorrow.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

---

## **[Get Britain Growing Again](#)**

**Liberal Democrat Treasury Spokesperson and Deputy Leader Daisy Cooper MP has today unveiled a radical plan to 'Get Britain Growing Again to end the cost of living crisis'.**

Liberal Democrat deputy leader said "we don't just need to get rid of this anti-growth Chancellor, we need to get rid of the anti-growth Treasury."

The new powerful Department for Growth would have a clear mandate to boost long-term prosperity and end the cost-of-living crisis. It would have responsibility for setting taxes, along with putting together a growth strategy, deciding on strategic national infrastructure projects and setting fiscal rules.

### **Read Daisy's speech in full**

We Liberal Democrats believe that we should talk up our country.

We are one of the world's leading economies. Our financial and professional services sectors make us a trade superpower. And we are uniquely placed in having the combined advantage of language, law and location.

We have strong institutions. Dynamic markets. Universal public services.

We have world-leading universities, creative industries, and life sciences. We are the third largest market for artificial intelligence. And we have awesome entrepreneurial people.

Our United Kingdom is an amazing country and has enormous potential.

But we can never take this for granted. And we must accept that we are stuck in a rut. Stuck in a doom loop of low economic growth. And that is a big problem.

Economic growth matters.

We need to Get Britain Growing Again to end the cost of living crisis.

We need to Get Britain Growing Again to rebuild our public services.

We need to Get Britain Growing Again to invest in the climate transition and create the well-paid climate jobs of the future.

If we don't Get Britain Growing Again then we're trapped: trapped paying more and more, but with less and less.

It's why everyone is working harder and harder. Paying more and more in tax. And getting less and less in return.

So Getting Britain Growing Again must be any government's number one goal.

Now, the Labour government says that its number one mission is growth.

But too many of its policies are anti-growth.

Even next month's Prime Minister Wes Streeting thinks there's "No growth strategy at all"

Labour has made lots of mistakes. But for me, one of the worst – is that they knew for months they would win the General Election, but they just weren't ready.

No plan. No vision. No change.

Instead, their government – like governments before them – reverted to 'Treasury brain'.

The Winter Fuel Payment fiasco. A short-term Treasury tax-grab driven by the desire for immediate bankable cuts.

The jobs tax. A short-term Treasury tax-grab with no regard for the crushing impact on employment, investment or growth.

The family farm tax and the attack on family businesses. Short-term Treasury tax-grabs by the Chancellor that could lead to some of the most resilient long-standing British businesses being broken up and sold off.

The list goes on.

But this isn't a new problem.

For too long, political parties without a vision for growth have allowed the Treasury tail to wag the political dog.

And it must stop.

For decades, everyone has identified this as a problem.

**The Treasury does too much.** Fiscal policy, economic policy, and controlling government spending. In most other countries, these roles are split up.

The Treasury enables governments to go for **short-term tax grabs that suit political cycles over the need for long-term growth.**

**The Treasury is disconnected from the real economy.** Despite holding all the economic power, the Treasury isn't responsible for policies on business or trade.

This leaves British business jumping through hoops, speaking to three, four, five different government departments before they can get an answer.

In short – the Treasury is over-centralised. It drives short-term thinking. And it simply isn't designed to deliver long-term economic growth.

Some think it can be tweaked here and there. Some want to centralise it even further by putting some of its power in the hands of the Prime Minister.

We have a more radical plan.

**Today I can announce that we Liberal Democrats don't just want to get rid of this anti-growth Chancellor. We want to get rid of this anti-growth Treasury.**

**As part of our plan for government, we would break up the Treasury – and replace it with a new powerful Department for Growth.**

A new Department for Growth with a mandate to boost long-term prosperity, improve living standards and end the cost of living crisis.

The Department for Business and Trade would be merged into this new growth department, recognising the central role of British business in driving growth.

And a smaller Department for Public Expenditure would be set up to oversee departmental spending and ensure value for money.

This new Department for Growth would focus minds on what growth could help us achieve:

- Stronger economic growth would finally be recognised as the only sustainable, long-term solution to end the UK's cost of living crisis.
- Investment in our NHS, renewable energy and defence would not be seen as a cost but as the way to build a healthy workforce, develop strategic competitive advantage and Get Britain Growing Again.
- And it would finally force all other political parties to explain why they refuse to pull the biggest growth lever we have: a better trading relationship with Europe that could rip up red tape and raise £25 billion a year to fix public services and end the cost of living crisis.

And the Department for Growth could help re-set the relationship between government and business too:

- It would end the tyranny of short-term tax grabs trumping long-term growth.
- It would be a single point of contact for business and investors: one "Team UK" where business and investment is aligned with national priorities.
- It would align tax policy to economic growth – **so something like the jobs tax could never happen again.**

In splitting up these functions into different departments, we would be following the lead of other major economies: like Ireland, America, Australia.

But we wouldn't stop there.

For centuries, the UK government has been too London-centric. "Whitehall" is short-hand for "calling the shots".

We Liberal Democrats are the only political party with MPs that span from the highlands and the islands of Scotland down to the tip of the South West, so we know, we see the differences in economic growth between the South East and everywhere else.

So we think it's time for change.

Under our plans, the new Growth Department wouldn't just have a focus on

getting growth beyond London.

**The new Growth Department would itself be based outside London – in the heart of the UK's second city, Birmingham.**

And this would send a strong signal – because a significant indicator of the imbalance in our economy is the yawning gap between the UK's capital city and every other city and all other parts in the UK.

As a clear example, if we could close Birmingham's productivity gap with London from 37% to 20% this alone could add around £12bn a year to the size of our economy.

That's a bigger boost to GDP than the India, Australia and New Zealand trade deals combined.

And all things being equal, it could lead to roughly £4bn a year in additional tax revenue. That's enough to build two brand new hospitals every year; or recruit an extra 80,000 teachers; or even boost the Government's entire farming Budget by more than 50%..

It's clear as day that the challenges are piling up.

Falling living standards. Broken public services. Rising inequality. And the constant cost-of-living pressures – grinding people down, pushing businesses to the brink.

The two old parties have failed the British people. The British public are now asking whether anyone knows how to fix it.

Well we do – and the answer is to Get Britain Growing Again.

Creating a new Department for Growth in Birmingham would be just the first step.

We Liberal Democrats know that there is a big job to do.

We know that there is a **huge gap between where we are as a country and where we know we could and should be.**

Like everyone else, we feel **proud and patriotic** but also **fed up and angry.**

We're the 6th largest economy in the world yet **for most people, life is too hard and too expensive.**

The **next generation of young people** could always expect they would have a better life than the generation before but **that promise for today's young people has been ripped away.**

With so many economic shocks – from the financial crisis, Brexit, Covid, and the Mini-Budget, to Russia’s full invasion of Ukraine, and Trump’s tariff wars – **almost everyone under the age of 40 has spent their entire adult lives with the UK economy in a state of perma-crisis.**

Some like Nigel Farage and his party seek to exploit it.

They only want to break institutions – not fix them. Others want to hoard power in Westminster for themselves – not spread it around the country for communities.

And the Conservatives are shamelessly chasing Reform – saying plainly that moderates are no longer wanted in their party.

**Well – as our party leader Ed Davey has said – moderates are welcome in ours.**

And our message to them is clear:

Our future liberal economic vision is rooted in the values that have guided us for almost 200 years. We defeated the protectionist Corn Laws. We opposed the trade barriers of Brexit. We’re standing up to Trump’s tariff wars. We are the party that champions **international trade, fair markets, innovation and dynamic enterprise.**

We are the party that established the **welfare state: we rolled out the old age pension and free school meals, and conceived of the National Health Service.**

We are the party which in government, lifted **millions of people out of paying tax** altogether.

We are the party that established the **Green Investment Bank** and the **British Business Bank** to back new climate technologies and British start-ups.

We see **wealth creation and social justice – not as an either or – but as two sides of the same coin.**

We want to **Get Britain Growing Again to end the cost of living crisis.**

Above all else, we believe in our bones that we can once again give people a sense of hope.

Hope we will Get Britain Growing Again.

Hope we will End the Cost of Living Crisis.

And hope that the UK’s future will be built, by all of us, for all of us, together.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

---

## [Tackling historical sexual misconduct in our party](#)

We have all rightly been appalled at the revelations about Jeffrey Epstein's child sex trafficking ring, and the rich and powerful men associated with him. We have rightly condemned Peter Mandelson and led calls for him to be held to account.

Sexual abuse in whatever form is totally unacceptable. Survivors should be believed, and those responsible should always be held properly to account.

But we have to be honest – that hasn't always been the case in our party. There are people who have come forward with credible allegations who haven't been believed. People who didn't have their complaints investigated, or did but in a way that did not meet the standards we should expect.

That's why we have, in recent years, strengthened our rules and overhauled our complaints processes to deliver justice. Our party handles complaints better today than it did in the past.

So today I am asking you: if you are a survivor of sexual abuse, misconduct or harassment at the hands of a party member, employee, official or parliamentarian – no matter when it occurred – please consider coming forward and making a complaint today.

[You can find details of how to do that here.](#)

Make a Complaint

Help us hold those responsible to account. Help us stamp out this sort of appalling behaviour in our party – and across our society.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

---

# Ed Davey reflects on LGBT History Month 2026

This LGBT+ History Month we celebrate the contributions of LGBT+ people throughout history, reflect on the struggles they have faced and reaffirm our determination to make progress on equality.

LGBT+ people have always existed. From artists, activists and athletes to scientists, innovators and pioneers, they have helped shape our country and our world, even when their sexuality and stories were erased. This year's theme, Science and Innovation, highlights the vital contributions LGBT+ people have made to fields from healthcare and engineering to environmental science and technology and reminds us that diverse voices have driven progress for everyone.

From Barbara Burford, a medical researcher who established NHS equality and diversity guidelines to Alan Turing, a mathematician who conceived modern computing and played a crucial part in the Allied victory over Nazi Germany in World War II, to Robert Boyle, a founder of modern chemistry and the modern scientific method, history is littered with the contributions of LGBT+ scientists. However, this month also calls for honesty. For too long, science has been misused to pathologise and marginalise LGBT+ identities, causing real harm. Still today, many LGBT+ people face discrimination in healthcare, education, housing and employment, as well as being victims of hate crime and hostility. No one should be made to feel unsafe, invisible or lesser simply because of who they are.

The Liberal Democrats have a proud legacy of leading the fight for LGBTQ+ equality. From repealing Section 28 – the Conservatives' law which prohibited the "promotion of homosexuality" by local authorities – thanks to a clause moved by Ed Davey, to Lynne Featherstone's tireless efforts to legalise same-sex marriage, and the former Liberal Democrat MP John Leech securing pardons for those unjustly criminalised for their sexuality, our party has always stood on the right side of history. That same commitment drives us today.

The Liberal Democrats believe that everyone should be free to live authentically, without fear or prejudice. That is why, through our policy Free To Be Who You Are, we remain committed to banning all forms of conversion practices, strengthening protections against discrimination and hate crime, improving access to inclusive healthcare, and delivering a new LGBTQ+ Action Plan to drive progress across government. Because everyone deserves full and equal access to healthcare, education, workplaces, and the protections and freedoms every citizen enjoys.

This LGBT+ History Month, we honour the trailblazers who came before, celebrate the contributions of LGBT+ people today, and stand with the next generation as they push for a fairer, more inclusive future. Our message is

unwavering: you belong, your history matters, and we will continue fighting for a country where everyone is truly free to be who they are.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

---

## [Choose a brighter future with the Liberal Democrats | Election Broadcast](#)

The United Kingdom is at its best when we're true to our values: tolerance, decency, respect for individual freedom and the rule of law.

We can't let Nigel Farage throw that all away by turning Britain into Trump's America.

Choose a brighter future with the Liberal Democrats.

[Go to Source](#)

Author: