

Never Again: Justice for Contaminated Blood Victims

The contaminated blood scandal remains one of the gravest injustices in NHS history.

More than 30,000 people were infected with HIV and hepatitis C through NHS blood products during the 1970s and 1980s, leading to the deaths of over 3,000 people so far. For decades, victims and their families have been let down by governments that delayed, denied or deflected responsibility.

The Infected Blood Inquiry, published in May 2024, made it clear: This disaster could largely have been avoided had health authorities made different decisions.

Yet despite repeated promises, the Government continues to drag its feet.

Just 460 people have so far received compensation under the scheme, while campaigners estimate that more than 100 victims have died in the last year alone while waiting. This is not justice – it is another betrayal.

The Liberal Democrats believe victims deserve recognition, dignity, and timely compensation. Justice delayed is justice denied.

That's why today, our members have passed new policy which would turn promises into action and make sure no scandal on this scale ever happens again:

- **Deliver justice for victims** by fully implementing the Infected Blood Inquiry's recommendations and ensuring all claims under the compensation scheme are processed quickly and fairly.
- **Provide ongoing support** for all victims of medical scandals, including access to healthcare, psychological services, and social support.
- **Prevent future scandals** by introducing a statutory duty of candour on all public officials, and embedding patient voices at board level across the NHS so that patients' experiences shape decision-making.

Reinvest in the NHS by committing any savings from reducing compensation payouts – which currently cost the NHS nearly £3 billion a year – into frontline care.

Read our new policy in full

Victims have already waited decades for answers and many are still waiting for compensation they were promised. Families have been left without loved ones and without support. Every delay deepens the injustice of this scandal.

We must ensure that the NHS is safer, fairer and more transparent in the future. A statutory duty of candour for public officials, promised under the 'Hillsborough Law', remains undelivered despite Government commitments to introduce it by April 2025.

Without such safeguards, the risk of future cover-ups and scandals remains.

By delivering justice and putting in place lasting safeguards, Liberal Democrats would honour the victims of the contaminated blood scandal and protect future patients from enduring such injustice ever again.

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Improving Access To Justice

Justice is a fundamental right, but under years of Conservative cuts and mismanagement, access to legal aid was eroded, leaving millions unable to get the help they need.

Legal aid deserts have emerged across the country, shutting people out of timely legal advice and forcing costly court battles that could have been avoided.

This isn't just unfair – it's a false economy. Early access to legal support prevents disputes escalating and saves public money in the long run.

Liberal Democrats are committed to rebuilding a legal aid system that is simpler, fairer and truly accessible for everyone, regardless of where they live or how much they earn.

Today, our members passed new policy to improve access to justice for all:

- **Rolling out 'Law Start Centres' in every community**, in libraries, banking hubs, and community centres, with trained legal specialists, funded by local authorities and the Legal Aid Agency.
- **Establishing a new legal right to affordable, reasonable legal aid**, overseen by an independent Justice Commission.
- **Making the legal aid system simpler** and more generous, including reforming funding for exceptional cases to ensure no one is left behind.

- Using data from providers and the Legal Aid Agency to **streamline processes and improve efficiency**.
- Taking proactive steps to **resolve legal problems before they escalate**, saving public money and reducing court burdens.
- Increasing access to **community court buildings** so justice is closer to people's homes.

Read our new policy in full

The damage done by Conservative cuts since 2015 has been severe, and fixing this will require investment. We propose a £150 million funding boost to restore legal aid to 2015 levels in real terms.

But this is not just spending – it's saving. Evidence shows early legal advice stops problems spiralling and saves the Treasury over £1 billion a year in avoidable costs.

Legal aid is a vital safety net that protects people from eviction, abuse, and wrongful conviction. It guarantees everyone the right to a fair trial – a cornerstone of British justice.

Our proposal will make access to justice a legal duty for Ministers, with regular reporting to Parliament, ensuring no future government can ignore this vital public service.

Everyone deserves the right to fair, affordable legal help. It's time to end legal aid deserts and build a justice system that works for all.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Ending Fleecehold and the Great Property Rip-Off

For over a century, Liberal Democrats have fought to reform leasehold – a system that still leaves millions of people trapped, overcharged, and powerless in their own homes. Today, 1 in 5 homes in England are leasehold.

The cladding scandal laid bare the true cost of leasehold's failures.

Leaseholders have paid excessive fees, lived in unsafe buildings and faced mounting frustration as developers and managers evade responsibility. Nearly a decade after Grenfell, building safety remains a crisis, and rogue developers continue to exploit loopholes while residents foot the bill.

The average new build now has 157 defects – nearly doubling since 2005. And complaints about building insurance claims have hit record highs.

We need to get tough on building standards, clamp down on unregulated property management and finally end the great property rip off for leaseholders.

Today, Liberal Democrat members passed new policy with a plan for bold reforms to protect homeowners and hold the industry to account:

- Establish a new **property regulator** to license and enforce standards for property managers and agents.
- **Strengthen accountability** in the construction industry with clear rights for homebuyers and tougher oversight of building inspectors.
- Cap unreasonable service and estate management charges and **abolish ground rents** on all existing leases.
- Give leaseholders the **power to take collective ownership** of management companies and common areas.
- **Empower local authorities** to adopt shared roads and public spaces, sanction developers who fail to deliver, and enforce repairs.

Read our new policy in full

The time for empty promises is over. Leasehold leaves people vulnerable, trapped by unfair charges, and unsafe in their homes.

The Liberal Democrats are committed to abolishing leasehold entirely, capping ground rents and ensuring dangerous cladding is removed without cost to residents.

We will hold developers and property managers accountable.

We will give residents control and end the rip off.

Leaseholders deserve fairness, safety, and dignity in their homes – and these reforms are a vital step towards that goal.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Protecting the Rights of Hong Kongers

Hong Kongers living in the UK, and across the world, face an increasingly robust and alarming campaign of transnational repression directed by Beijing.

From bounties placed on the heads of Hong Kongers living here, to efforts by the Chinese Communist Party to establish a 'super embassy' in the heart of London, these threats are very real and growing.

Yet the Labour Government risks repeating the mistakes of the Conservatives by failing to take the threat posed by China seriously enough. It is vital that we stand firmly with Hong Kongers and pro-democracy Chinese activists, making clear to Beijing that their extraterritorial intimidation will not be tolerated.

Liberal Democrats have always championed the rights of Hong Kongers.

[View video on Facebook](#)

Today our members passed new policy, calling for stronger, clearer support for Hong Kongers – both for those already in the UK and those considering the British National Overseas pathway:

- Implement **targeted sanctions against officials responsible for bounties** on pro-democracy activists in the UK.
- Retain the **5-year settlement pathway for all BNO visa holders**.
- **Block the application for the Chinese 'mega embassy' in London.**
- Establish a dedicated **Police hotline for reporting incidents of political intimidation**, and reaffirm that bounty hunting is illegal in the UK.
- Place all Chinese Communist Party and Hong Kong Special Administrative Region officials, plus CCP-linked organisations, on the '**enhanced tier of the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme**'.
- Appoint a Home Office Departmental Tsar for the **protection of pro-**

democracy activists.

Read our new policy in full

The threat to Hong Kongers and pro-democracy activists is real and growing. The Government must learn from the failures of the past and act decisively to protect our values, support the brave individuals seeking refuge here, and resist Beijing's transnational intimidation.

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Leading the Way

Today, Liberal Democrat members have voted to approve the final report of our party's Policy Review.

This has been a massive project that the party's been working on since the General Election – with contributions from thousands of our members – and I hope you'll find the results both interesting and inspiring.

For the past year, I've had the privilege of chairing the fantastic Policy Review team, made up of activists, councillors, parliamentarians and policy experts from across the party and around the country.

I am incredibly grateful to them all for the time, dedication and effort they put into this important work for our party.

Together, we examined the opportunities and challenges facing the UK today, analysed how well existing Liberal Democrat policies address them, and took a huge amount of evidence from think tanks, academics and policymakers.

But our most important job was listening to you: Liberal Democrat members and supporters.

We ran an enormous programme of engaging with members at federal and regional

conferences, as well as through an online consultation that received thousands of responses.

We heard what you think about the vision you want for the future of our country, and the areas where we need bold new policies to make that vision a reality.

So I want to say a big thank you! This report is your report. Its findings are your findings. I'm immensely proud of it, and I hope you are too.

You can read it here, please share it with anyone you think might be interested:

Read the review in full

Ed Davey

Leader of the Liberal Democrats and Chair of the Policy Review

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