

# Let's ban conversion therapy

A 2017 government survey found that almost 1 in 13 LGBT+ have been offered or had conversion therapy. This rises to 1 in 7 amongst transgender people. Over half of these conversion therapy practices are carried out by faith organisations.

As Liberal Democrats we champion the Individual right to privacy and autonomy. **This must include the right to medical autonomy for adults.**

Conversion therapy is incredibly harmful.

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It is a **predatory practice** which is able to take hold due to the ongoing social exclusion that the LGBT+ community faces every day. Conversion therapy **aims to suppress a person's gender identity or change their sexual orientation.**

NHS England has stated that conversion therapy has "no medical or therapeutic value". It is essential we put a stop to this **abhorrent practice.**

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Today at our conference, members called on the Government for:

- **A criminal ban on conversion therapy** in all forms.
- **A criminal ban on referrals, transportations of minors overseas** and any advertising for forms of conversion therapy.
- **A campaign to raise awareness of the dangers of conversion therapy** among vulnerable people.

[Read our new policy in full](#)

Despite repeated promises, the Government has failed to put forward legislation which will end conversion therapy. We are calling on the Government to do more.

As liberals we must fight to build a free and fair society where everyone can be themselves.

That's why we must end conversion therapy, once and for all.

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# Setting out our vision for the country

## Setting out our vision for the country

Our [September Federal Conference](#) has a key trio of debates on **our vision for a Liberal Democratic society, our overall policy platform and the strategy to give us the political power** to achieve those aims.

Having spent the first part of this Parliament fixing many of the practical organisational issues that caused so many problems in the 2019 general election, we now need to shift up a gear to get the external aspects right too. Sarah Green's victory in Chesham and Amersham is a wonderfully inspiring example of what we can achieve when we get this right. **The challenge is now to do that across the country.**

It's promising that we've seen **a sustained boost in our opinion poll ratings since Sarah's victory** (up from 7% on average this year before her victory to 9% since). There's also been a noticeable increase in our local council by-election performances since Sarah's victory and the easing of coronavirus-related restrictions on local campaigning. Local factors mean it's rarely wise to read too much into any one result, but the volume of by-elections – and their spread around the country – now means we look at that improvement with confidence that it's real.

So we can also approach these conference debates with confidence about our potential – **as long as we continue to up our game.**

## Improving people's experience of being a member

**Our party is our membership.** Giving people a good experience is crucial for growing, retaining and encouraging people to be active in our party. And enabling individuals to create the change they want to see in the world is at the heart of our liberal philosophy.

To help get our plans right for this, the Federal People Development Committee (FPDC) is doing telephone research calls to **understand the perspectives of ordinary members** on what works and what doesn't. If the random selector picks you out for a call, please do take part – and **if you have time to volunteer to help make the calls, [let me know](#)** and I can put you in touch.

Alongside this, a variety of ideas are starting to be piloted, such as new ways of recruiting canvassed Lib Dems as members, a new quarterly cycle of briefing and feedback video calls for all local party officers, and the **special £1 registration fee for first-timers at Federal Conference**. I'm also **[very happy to hear](#) any suggestions from you.**

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## [Afghanistan](#)

**Global leaders should hang their heads in shame.**

We've all watched the heartbreaking scenes at Kabul Airport showing citizens of Afghanistan trying to escape from the terror of the Taliban. **Their situation is desperate.**

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## [Come to conference for just £1](#)

### **Only £1 to come to conference**

Our autumn federal party conference is being held online in September. **There's a brilliant offer for people who have not come to conference before: [you can register for just £1.](#)**

**Conference will include an important trio of linked debates:** on our party's values, our policy platform and our strategy. Traditionally, we have debated these separately at conference, even years apart. But all three need to fit together in a coherent way – which is one of the lessons from the 2019 election post-mortem. So this time we're doing things differently.

The values and platform come from our Federal Policy Committee (FPC), while the strategy is being proposed by the Board. **It sets out the practical approach which is needed to grow our party and win more elections, securing us more political power to deliver on what we believe.**

Among the other conference items is also **the latest stage in developing our post-2019 European policy, [which you can read about here.](#)**

As I [mentioned last month](#), the Board has also put in some important proposals for conference to decide on, including boosting our party bodies with an improved, simpler structure and set of rules. These come from the Party Body Review Group, which has run an extensive consultation with existing party bodies before drawing up the plans.

The full conference agenda and reports to conference booklet [are both now out](#).

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## [The UK–EU relationship: the Liberal Democrat position](#)

Anyone who was at the last two Liberal Democrat conferences should remember the two debates that were held on the party's position on the future relationship between the UK and the EU. In a passionately argued debate last September, **conference resolved that the party should support a longer-term objective of UK membership of the the EU**, but we rejected a proposal for an immediate campaign to reverse Brexit, which, it was argued, was more likely to alienate voters sick of the recent history of Brexit-inspired division and bitterness. **Conference also called for the closest possible alignment between the UK and the EU on trade, security, environmental, social, judicial, educational and scientific issues.**

We aim to construct a 'roadmap to rejoin' that ultimately convinces the electorate that membership of the EU is in the UK's best interests

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