

[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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[Leaseholders are suffering due to Conservative inaction on cladding](#)

We all remember seeing the horrific scenes of the burning tower at Grenfell on the news over four years ago.

The tragic loss of 72 lives was a dark moment for our country and the cladding scandal that emerged emboldened me to stand up for the rights of all those living in unsafe buildings.

That event also was a lightning rod for the wider public and put a sharp focus on the quality of housing that many people live in – particularly in more densely populated urban areas.

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It was later found that the Grenfell tower was covered in unsafe, flammable

cladding and lacked a whole host of basic fire prevention measures. Once again, **we saw the dangers of developers putting profit ahead of safety.**

Across the UK there were calls for swift action to support leaseholders to remove this dangerous cladding from their buildings. However, at both a Westminster and Devolved Government level, the response has been sluggish.

Due to Government inaction, millions of leaseholders now find themselves stuck in limbo and facing huge bills, often in the high tens of thousands of pounds, to remove this dangerous cladding.

They are unable to move or sell their property due to the cladding, leaving millions trapped as Mortgage Prisoners. Despite strong community action, and attempts to rally leaseholders together, the situation continues.

It's appalling that the burden of responsibility is being placed on these innocent leaseholders, rather than the building owners and developers who cut the corners in the first place.

The Liberal Democrats will continue to fight to End the Cladding Scandal for good."

The Conservatives strategy for dealing with this is to bury their heads in the sand and pretend everything is fine. They can announce big schemes all they want, but unless they listen to the concerns of leaseholders and shift the financial burden onto building owners – millions of men, women, and children will continue to suffer.

That is why I have been working tirelessly in Parliament to champion the voices and rights of leaseholders.

"Leaseholders have done everything right and nothing wrong yet they are being expected to pay for the failures of construction, of developers, and of materials manufacturers" [@KathPinnock](#)
[#EndOurCladdingScandal](#)

– Lib Dem Lords (@LibDemLords) [July 20, 2021](#)

Working alongside other peers, I have tabled 8 amendments to various bills on this issue and am working closely with Liberal Democrat MPs to keep applying pressure on the Government to change tack.

The most recent of these amendments was debated yesterday, but **sadly the Conservatives once again voted it down. Their refusal to even explore what additional support we can give shows they simply don't get the scale of the issue – or how it is affecting people.**

For the sake of all those families who have seen their livelihoods destroyed we must act. We owe it to them to ensure they do not lose out due to

developer greed.

The Liberal Democrats will continue to fight to End the Cladding Scandal for good.

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[Getting support when you need it](#)

Being involved in politics should be fun and rewarding. But it can be stressful and at times any of us may need to turn to others for help or support.

Often that support can best come from colleagues in your local party or a party body you are active in. But sometimes help is needed elsewhere, and this piece sets out the main places to turn.

24/7 helpline

For the most serious situations, all our members can access a **24×7 support helpline on 0800 028 0199**. It is run by [Health Assured](#), an **independent health and wellbeing specialist**. (When asked which organisation you are from, say the Liberal Democrats.)

Members can also download the **My Healthy Advantage app** from the Google Play store or the Apple App store to access a range of supporting materials. For people without smartphones, there is also a web-based version. For the registration code for the app and for web-based access details, please contact people@libdems.org.uk.

The Health Assured service is provided to support members, regardless of whether the issue is a party-related one or not.

Health Assured has a robust and thorough safeguarding procedure which covers in detail the steps to be taken in the event of risk being identified. All helpline staff receive training and regular updates on their safeguarding/risk policy and procedure. In all instances, Health Assured respects their client's right to confidentiality but also recognises the need and reserves the right to breach confidentiality in exceptional circumstances in line with the data protection legislation.

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July's Federal Conference Committee Report

Federal Conference Committee met via Zoom call on Saturday, 10 July for the agenda selection for our Autumn Conference 2021. The meeting was a lengthy one, which was in part due to the large selection of motions received.

A few announcements before the report; as you may be aware Geoff Payne, departed the FCC in early May, and I am delighted to have been elected the new Chair of FCC. All of us wish Geoff the very best for the future. A recount was held for the vacant place on the Committee, and I am delighted that Keith Melton has joined as our new member of the Federal Conference Committee. Chris Adams has also been elected in the vacant Vice-Chair position and will take responsibility for the General Purposes Sub Committee.

This Autumn conference will be held online, via our third-party provider, Hopin. You will be able to find [more information about the virtual conference](#). If you are planning to attend conference, we highly recommend taking part in the interactive exhibitions and the fringes.

If you haven't yet registered for Conference, [I would recommend doing so here](#).

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Our political opportunity

Our political opportunity

Sarah Green's brilliant victory in Chesham and Amersham shows the **huge political opportunity for us** – as long as we can continue to apply the lessons from our 2019 election post-mortem.

As part of this, a **trio of motions have been submitted for our autumn federal conference**. One is from the Federal Board (FB) on the **party's strategy**. The other two are from the Federal Policy Committee (FPC), on the **party's values and our policy platform**. Hopefully all three can be debated in sequence, so we agree values, strategy and platform in a joined-up way.

Also submitted are changes to implement the major improvements proposed by the [Party Bodies Review Group](#). These will make it easier to create, run and make a success of party bodies, replacing our current A0/SA0 structure with one, simple system. That will help us **involve more people in our work, and build a larger, healthier party.**

Among the other party business for conference is a **set of rules for electing [Isabelle Parasram's successor](#) as Vice President** responsible for working with ethnic minority communities. Having consulted with the Chair of the Federal Appeals Panel, who will be the returning officer, it's clear we need to have conference agree rules on nominations and campaign limits before a contest can be sensibly run. The Board will be **putting options on both to conference so members can choose.**

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