

# Government must take action on the cancer backlog

**Cancer has very sadly touched the lives of many in our community.**

With millions suffering from the disease across the nation and countless families concerned about a loved one, the impact of a diagnosis is huge.

The pandemic has caused critical delays in diagnosing cancers

**Coronavirus has caused immense worry for those living with cancer.** Isolated from friends, family, and community, the mental health impact cannot be underestimated. Worse still, the pandemic has caused critical delays in diagnosing cancers, and leaves people at risk of suffering the worst effects of this disease.

**This World Cancer Day, I would like to commend the bravery of those people living with cancer through this extraordinary period,** and pay tribute to all the NHS and care staff consistently helping our loved ones through even the most trying of times.

**It is vital the Government now delivers a strategy to ensure all those who have been left behind as a result of the pandemic are offered timely cancer diagnosis and treatment.**

They must also push efforts to ensure research keeps moving forward, with the aim of finding a cure.

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## February Facebook Ads Bulk Buy

Lockdown regulations make it more difficult to communicate with voters. That's why we are offering a new bulk-buy deal to help local campaigners reach residents on Facebook and Instagram.

Our first bulk-buy in January was a big success:

- Campaigners from 1 in 6 local parties bought into the deal;
- Our adverts were seen more than 2.4 million times;
- We reached more than 700,000 people;

- More than 4,000 people signed the [Carer's Allowance petition](#) from our advertising.

In February, we're offering two strands of advertising:

- **Crime Survey** – England & Wales (except London and Greater Manchester) – ask people in your area about their experiences of crime, policing and anti-social behaviour ahead of May's Police and Crime Commissioner elections.
- **Party Political Broadcast** – England – reach people in your area with our recent PPB. [You can check out the PPB here.](#)

We are working with colleagues in Wales and Scotland to develop additional advertising bulk buys, which we hope to launch in the next few weeks.

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## [Apply now for the 2021 Campaign Innovation Fund](#)

May 2021 will see the largest round of elections for nearly 50 years. Pretty much everywhere in Great Britain will have at least one election, and many places will have several overlapping elections.

Whilst it's vital that we focus our efforts on winning as many Liberal Democrat votes across the country, elections also offer the opportunity to test innovative campaign methods and techniques – helping campaigners win more elections in the future.

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## [Myanmar's military must step back from the brink](#)

Myanmar's military must step back from the brink, end this coup and release all civilian leaders immediately.

The UK should step up and lead the world in shining a spotlight on the plight of democracy and human rights in Myanmar

**Democracy and the rule of law need to be respected.**

The Foreign Secretary should use this pivotal moment to urge the international community to secure democratic and human rights of all citizens in Myanmar.

Today's developments are **yet another disturbing chapter in Myanmar's recent history** of political unrest, which has already caused a refugee crisis forcing hundreds of thousands of Rohingya people to flee the country.

Their future now looks even more uncertain and perilous.

**It is time for the UK to step up and lead the world** in shining a spotlight on the plight of democracy and human rights in Myanmar, and seek peaceful resolution for all its people.

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## [May elections still likely](#)

### **Protecting public health**

In our most recent meeting, we discussed the fact that the **Prime Minister is determined to proceed with the May elections in England** (in Scotland and Wales this will be a matter for the State Parliaments).

As a result, we must do everything we can to **protect public health, while campaigning as hard as we can.**

As a Committee we were pleased to note the heroic volunteer efforts to increase our phone banking work and we continue to investigate ways to assist local parties in funding paid- deliveries for their political leaflets.

These deliveries are necessary because the Conservative Government is attempting to rig the elections in their favour by banning volunteer deliveries (they have fewer volunteers) and allowing paid deliveries (they have more money from big business backers).

For the Tories, this is not about protecting public health. We know that because delivering leaflets by volunteers is still allowed, just not political leaflets. **In England it seems you can volunteer to do almost**

anything except oppose the Conservatives.

## **Campaigning to win**

Discussing the success of Mara-phone sessions across the country was a real highlight for the committee. Our congratulations to the Manchester team for topping the charts and best of luck to everyone taking part in the next session will be on the 6th of February.

## **Facebook Adverts**

The Carers campaign has been [opened to all local parties for Facebook Advertising](#), and future campaigns will be given the same consideration.

Campaigning is the only way that Liberal Democrats will get elected in the current climate. Do not leave it to others, they may be leaving it to you!

## **Media and Messaging**

We received a report on the restructuring of the media and messaging team at LDHQ. We are currently recruiting for a new team of specialist officers.

The new direction will improve the party's ability to be heard by the public, focusing our messaging in the spaces where our values speak most powerfully to the issues faced by ordinary people. One particularly exciting change will be a **renewed focus on how our Local Government base can be a springboard for our campaigning.**

## **Defectors protocol**

The report that we commissioned into the impact that the management of the 2019 defections was presented to the meeting.

We recognised that there must be buy-in to the protocol from across the party and that whilst individual cases may not be discussed in advance for obvious reasons, there must be a clear understanding in the party that the process is robust, fair, and constitutional.

We also discussed how to better provide pastoral care for our candidates, before, during and, especially, after elections. This is a matter on which we can, and must, do better.

## **Parliamentary Candidate Selections**

Selections for Westminster seats, which have been made more complicated by Coronavirus-related restrictions, are now set to be under way from February.

The Thornhill review made clear that, particularly in our target seats, candidates need as long as possible to build the foundations of a successful General Election campaign. Our thanks to the volunteers of the Candidates Committees in England, Scotland and Wales, as well as HQ staff, for their

hard work in making these processes possible.

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