

# 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.

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## [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.

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## [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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## **Civil Legal Services Appeal Panels appointments**

Justice Minister Naomi Long today announced the appointment of members of the Civil Legal Services Appeal Panels.

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## **Infrastructure Minister appoints Councillor to the Drainage Council**

Infrastructure Minister, Liz Kimmins has appointed Eddie Thompson to serve as a Non-Executive Councillor Member on the Drainage Council.