

Liberal Democrats
Autumn Conference
BRIGHTON 2024

CONFERENCE AGENDA 2024





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Welcome to the Liberal Democrat Autumn 2024 *Conference Agenda*.

For features, general conference information, exhibition and fringe, see the separate *Conference Directory*.

If you have any questions on-site, please ask a steward or go to the Information Desk in the Brighton Centre.

Further information, registration and conference publications (including plain text and clear print versions) are available at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference.

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ISBN 978-1-915375-26-1

Published and promoted by Mike Dixon on behalf of the Liberal Democrats, 1 Vincent Square, London, SW1P 2PN.

Design and layout by Mike Cooper.

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Conference at a glance

At conference, the party debates policy and party business in the Auditorium.

The **Agenda** section on pages 3–59 of this *Conference Agenda* covers what goes on in the main auditorium – debates on policy and party business. You'll see a timetable for the debates on pages 3–5, then each agenda item is listed, including the motion that is to be debated. There is also a description of how debates are conducted, and how you can participate, on pages 60–65.

Standing orders, on pages 66–77, are the rules that govern the policy and party business that is debated in the auditorium, relating to how motions and amendments are chosen for debate, how the sessions are conducted and more. There is a useful glossary to help understand some of the terms used.

General **information** to help you make the most of conference, and details of the **Fringe** and **Training** programme and the **exhibition** can be found in the *Conference Directory*.

Conference venue

Brighton Centre, Kings Road, Brighton BN1 2GR.

Please note that the Brighton Centre is within the secure zone and that access is only possible with a valid conference pass.

Conference hotel

The Grand Brighton, 97–99 Kings Road, Brighton BN1 2FW.



Conference publications (including plain text and clear print versions)
are available at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_papers

Agenda index and timetable

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Index & timetable

All conference sessions take place in the auditorium in the Brighton Centre, except the consultative sessions marked #, which will take place in The Grand Brighton – see the relevant page of the **Agenda**.

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Saturday 14 September

09.00 Party business

Chair: Dr Mark Pack (President of the Liberal Democrats). Aide: Cara Jenkinson (Vice Chair, FCC). Hall Aide: Cllr Jon Ball (Vice Chair, FCC).

F1 Opening of Conference by Alison Bennett, Member of Parliament for Mid Sussex

@alisonbennett



Saturday

09.10 Party business

Chair: Cara Jenkinson (Vice Chair, FCC). Aide: Cllr Jon Ball (Vice Chair, FCC).
Hall Aide: Lucas North.

F2 Federal Conference Committee Report: questions and accountability

Mover: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, Federal Conference Committee).

The report sessions are the chance for party members to hear how the party is being run and to put questions directly to the movers of reports.

*The deadline for questions for F2 is 13.00 on Monday 9 September. Questions selected will be published in **Conference Extra** and Saturday's **Conference Daily**. These questions will be guaranteed an answer, either in the session or in writing thereafter. Questions may also be submitted up until 08.10 on Saturday 14 September; such questions are only taken at the discretion of the chair. See page 64 for further information.*

F3 Standing order amendment: Rationalising the Reference Back Procedure

Federal Conference Committee

Mover: Duncan Brack.

Summation: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC).

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 i) While the ability to refer back a motion under discussion is an

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Saturday

- 3 important part of conference procedures, due to the ease of
4 submission compared to that of amendments, the procedure
5 can be abused to submit references back which would be better
6 dealt with through amendments.
- 7 ii) This matters, because a motion referred back rather than
8 amended must be brought back to a future conference, keeping
9 other items off the agenda.
- 10 iii) Therefore there is a strong case for harmonising the submission
11 requirements and deadlines for references back with those for
12 amendments.
- 13 iv) This will also allow conference members to see and consider
14 references back in advance of the debate rather than at the last
15 minute during the debate.
- 16 v) The FPC's power to request references back of motions without
17 the preliminary vote, contained in SO 11.3, has hardly ever been
18 used and is unnecessary.
- 19 vi) The standing orders relating to votes on reports are currently
20 inconsistent with Article 6.5 of the constitution, which requires
21 that reports should be approved, rejected or referred back with
22 recommendations, whereas the standing orders allow only for
23 approval or rejection.

24 Conference therefore agrees to the following amendments to
25 conference standing orders:

- 26 1. *In SO 11.2 (Reference back (moved by a voting member)), delete*
27 *a) and b) and insert:*
- 28 a) A request to refer back a motion under debate may be
29 submitted by any of the bodies listed in Standing Order
30 1.3 b) for business motions and 1.3 d) for policy motions.
31 The deadline for submission of such a request shall be the
32 same as that for amendments to motions. In exceptional
33 circumstances, the chair of the debate shall have discretion
34 to accept a request for a reference back if it is received in
35 writing after this deadline.
- 36 b) The submission shall state to whom the motion is to be
37 referred and shall include a statement of the reasons,
38 including reasons why voting against the motion would not
39 achieve a similar result, not exceeding 150 words.
- 40 c) If more than one request is received with respect to a

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41 motion, the Committee (or the chair of the debate in the
42 case of requests received after the deadline) shall decide
43 which to take. No more than one request may be taken with
44 respect to any motion.

45 2. *In SO 11.2 c), delete 'two minutes' and insert 'three minutes'.*

46 3. *Delete SO 11.3 (Reference back (moved by the Federal Policy
47 Committee)).*

48 4. *Delete SO 12.5 (Approval or rejection of reports from Federal
49 Party committees or sub-committees) and insert:*

50 12.5 Approval, rejection or reference back of reports from
51 Federal Party committees or sub-committees

- 52 a) Any report tabled by a Federal Party committee or
53 sub-committee must be submitted for approval by the
54 conference and must be voted upon accordingly.
- 55 b) A voting member may move the rejection of any part of the
56 report or the report as a whole, by submitting a speaker's
57 card prior to the commencement of the consideration of
58 the report, stating the section(s) which they wish to have
59 rejected. All moves to reject a report must be debated
60 (except that the chair shall have discretion to choose
61 between moves to reject the same part of the report), at the
62 conclusion of the question session. The person who made
63 the request shall speak and the mover of the report, or their
64 nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow other speakers,
65 and shall determine the time given to all speakers.
- 66 c) A request to refer back any part of the report or the report
67 as a whole may be submitted by any of the bodies listed
68 in Standing Order 1.3 b) for business motions and 1.3 d)
69 for policy motions. The deadline for submission of such
70 a request shall be the same as that for amendments to
71 motions. In exceptional circumstances, the chair of the
72 debate shall have discretion to accept a request for a
73 reference back if it is received in writing after this deadline.
74 A proposal to refer back shall include a written statement
75 of the reasons, not exceeding 150 words, including reasons
76 why rejecting the report would not achieve a similar result,
77 together with any recommendations to the committee. The

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78 Committee or, in the case of late submissions, the chair,
79 shall decide how many references back to take if more
80 than one is submitted. The representative of the body that
81 submitted the request shall speak and the mover of the
82 report, or their nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow
83 other speakers, and shall determine the time given to all
84 speakers.

85 5. *Delete SO 12.6 (Receipt of reports from other bodies) and insert:*

86 12.6 (Receipt of reports from other bodies)

- 87 a) Any report tabled by a body other than a Federal Party
88 committee or sub-committee must be submitted for receipt
89 by the conference and must be voted upon accordingly.
- 90 b) A voting member may move not to receive any part of the
91 report or the report as a whole, by submitting a speaker's
92 card prior to the commencement of the consideration of the
93 report, stating the section(s) which they wish not to receive.
94 All moves not to receive a report must be debated (except
95 that the chair shall have discretion to choose between
96 moves not to receive the same part of the report), at the
97 conclusion of the question session. The person who made
98 the request shall speak and the mover of the report, or their
99 nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow other speakers,
100 and shall determine the time given to all speakers.
- 101 c) A request to refer back any part of the report or the report
102 as a whole may be submitted by any of the bodies listed
103 in Standing Order 1.3 b) for business motions and 1.3 d)
104 for policy motions. The deadline for submission of such
105 a request shall be the same as that for amendments to
106 motions. In exceptional circumstances, the chair of the
107 debate shall have discretion to accept a request for a
108 reference back if it is received in writing after this deadline.
109 A proposal to refer back shall include a written statement
110 of the reasons, not exceeding 150 words, including reasons
111 why not receiving the report would not achieve a similar
112 result, together with any recommendations to the body.
113 The Committee or, in the case of late submissions, the chair,
114 shall decide how many references back to take if more
115 than one is submitted. The representative of the body that
116 submitted the request shall speak and the mover of the

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- 117 report, or their nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow
118 other speakers, and shall determine the time given to all
119 speakers.

The text of F3 has been subject to minor drafting amendments by FCC, compared to the text in the Preliminary Agenda, in order to resolve some inconsistent wording.

The existing text of conference standing orders is printed at pages 66–77 of this Conference Agenda.

Applicability: Federal.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Thursday 12 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Saturday's Conference Daily**.*

Standing order amendments require a two-thirds majority to pass.

F4 Constitutional amendment: References Back by Federal Policy Committee

Federal Conference Committee

Mover: Duncan Brack.

Summation: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC).

- 1 Conference resolves to delete Article 7.7 of the Federal Party
- 2 constitution.

The Federal Party constitution is available at www.libdems.org.uk/constitution. The existing text of article 7.7 is as follows:

- 7.7 In order to ensure that all aspects of a proposed policy are fully considered, the FPC may request any motion before a Federal Conference to be referred to the next meeting of the Conference. The FPC shall, before such meeting, circulate its reasons for acting under this Article and its comments on the relevant motion and any amendments thereto accepted for debate.

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Applicability: Federal.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Thursday 12 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and Saturday's **Conference Daily**.*

Constitutional amendments require a two-thirds majority to pass.

F5 Federal Policy Committee Report: questions and accountability

Mover: Jeremy Hargreaves (Vice Chair, Federal Policy Committee).

*The deadline for questions for F5 is 13.00 on Monday 9 September. Questions selected will be published in **Conference Extra** and Saturday's **Conference Daily**. These questions will be guaranteed an answer, either in the session or in writing thereafter. Questions may also be submitted up until 08.10 on Saturday 14 September; such questions are only taken at the discretion of the chair.*

See page 64 for further information.

09.50 Policy motion

Chair: Chris Adams. Aide: Fraser Graham. Hall Aide: Cllr Shaffaq Mohammed.

F6 Reforming Sunday Trading Laws

Young Liberals

Mover: Cormac Evans.

Summation: Cllr Hina Bokhari AM.

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 i) Liberal Democrats support liberalising markets where possible,
- 3 to maximise the choice and freedoms of consumers and
- 4 businesses alike.
- 5 ii) Restrictive trading laws can hinder market forces in achieving
- 6 their aims, and can be based on outdated social norms, as is the
- 7 case with Sunday trading laws.

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- 8 iii) The trend on trading laws on Sunday has moved from an
9 outright ban, with exceptions, on buying and selling (under the
10 Shops Act 1950), to more open trading hours under the Sunday
11 Trading Act 1994.
- 12 iv) Over the course of the last century, the significance of Sunday
13 as a day of rest has been decreased, with weekends now being
14 used by many in the UK as an opportunity to carry out errands
15 such as shopping, which Sunday trading law reform would
16 support.
- 17 v) A liberalised Sunday trading system already exists in Scotland,
18 where a package of bills allows for protection of workers' rights
19 alongside these liberal trading laws.
- 20 vi) Sunday trading laws were suspended during the 2012 Olympics,
21 where trading laws were suspended to give opportunities to
22 retailers to 'cash in' on the Games.
- 23 vii) The benefits of liberalising Sunday trading laws were already
24 supported by a 2006 study commissioned for the Department of
25 Trade and Industry.
- 26 viii) Sunday Trading Laws already exhibit a certain degree of
27 subsidiarity, with powers being given to Scotland to regulate
28 their Sunday trading hours.

29 Conference reaffirms:

- 30 a) Its commitment to a market system that uses regulation to
31 balance business and workers' rights and freedoms.
- 32 b) That businesses and individuals should have the opportunity to
33 decide, to the greatest extent, their operating hours, to promote
34 their competitiveness.
- 35 c) Its commitment to devolution and subsidiarity.

36 Conference calls for:

- 37 1. The UK Government to devolve powers over Sunday trading
38 to devolved governments or local authorities as appropriate,
39 empowering communities to regulate their own Sunday trading
40 hours and Sunday trading laws.
- 41 2. The UK Government to extend Sunday trading hours as an
42 interim step before the devolution of powers set out above can
43 be implemented.

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- 44 3. The UK government to couple any reform with appropriate
45 measures to protect workers' rights.
46 4. Local authorities and devolved governments to liberalise
47 Sunday trading rules in their own areas of responsibility.

Applicability: England and Wales.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Thursday 12 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Saturday's Conference Daily**.*

10.35 Consultative session

Chair: Duncan Brack (Chair of the Climate Change Working Group). Aide: to be announced.

F7 Climate Change

Consultative sessions provide a less formal mechanism than the full-scale conference debates for conference representatives and other Party members to participate in the Party's policy- and decision-making process.

This session is organised by the FPC's new Climate Policy Working Group. The conclusions of the session will be taken into account by the group when drawing up their final recommendations for the FPC.

*For the background consultation paper, see:
www.libdems.org.uk/conference_papers*

11.50 Policy motion

Chair: Jennie Rigg. Aide: Callum Robertson. Hall Aide: Fraser Graham.

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F8 Equitable and Improved Outcomes Throughout Pregnancy and the Neonatal Period

Liberal Democrat Women

Mover: Cllr Donna Harris.

Summation: Helen Morgan MP.

- 1 Conference notes that:
 - 2 i) Despite healthcare advancements, significant gaps exist
3 in access to quality maternal care, resulting in persistent
4 inequalities across ethnicities and in more economically
5 deprived communities.
 - 6 ii) 49% of maternity services are rated as 'inadequate' or 'requires
7 improvement' by the Care Quality Commission.
 - 8 iii) The true scale of miscarriage in the UK is unknown because no
9 official record of miscarriages is held.
 - 10 iv) The national ambition set in 2010 to reduce stillbirths, neonatal,
11 and maternal deaths by 50% by 2025 is nearing its expiry, but
12 we are not on track to meet the target.
 - 13 v) The 2022 MBRRACE-UK report demonstrated that Black women
14 are at almost four times greater risk of maternal mortality than
15 White women.
 - 16 vi) Unconscious bias influences medical care and bedside manner,
17 putting Black and Black mixed women at higher risk, and a
18 lack of knowledge hinders the identification and diagnosis of
19 conditions that are specific to and disproportionately affect
20 Black and Black mixed women.
 - 21 vii) There are numerous issues regarding incomplete and inaccurate
22 ethnicity data collection in healthcare, creating barriers when
23 evaluating progress on equity in healthcare.
 - 24 viii) Black babies are nearly twice as likely, and Asian babies are
25 nearly 1.5 times more likely, to die during the first 28 days
26 compared to White babies.
 - 27 ix) A Birthrights' inquiry uncovered testimony that "Black, Brown
28 and Mixed ethnicity women and birthing people's pain [is
29 commonly] ignored or denied, and pain relief [is] withheld due
30 to staff not believing they were in labour".
 - 31 x) Trans and non-binary people report that they are met with less
32 dignity and respect when accessing obstetric services.

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- 33 xi) Infant mortality rates in the most deprived neighbourhoods are
34 double those in the least deprived areas.
- 35 xii) The 2019 NHS Staff Survey records that 40.3% of midwives
36 reported feeling unwell due to work-related stress in the
37 previous 12 months and 63.7% had continued to work despite
38 not feeling well enough to perform their duties.
- 39 xiii) Of every £1 spent on maternity care in the NHS, only 1p is spent
40 on pregnancy research.

41 Conference believes that:

- 42 a) The UK must strive to become the safest place in the world to
43 have a baby.
- 44 b) Addressing disparities in obstetric care is essential for a fair
45 society.
- 46 c) The UK must work towards ending discrimination towards
47 diverse parents during pregnancy.

48 Conference therefore calls for:

- 49 1. The UK Government to renew the national maternity ambitions
50 beyond 2025, to include the four nations, and to enhance them
51 with a clear baseline to measure progress against.
- 52 2. Support and referral to be available after every miscarriage, not
53 just after three.
- 54 3. Anyone experiencing miscarriage to have access to best-practice
55 care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- 56 4. All miscarriages to be recorded so that the problem is no
57 longer hidden, national targets can be set, and the impact of
58 interventions can be measured, in line with requests from Sands
59 and Tommy's Joint Policy Unit.
- 60 5. Coding of ethnicity and data to be improved, surveys should
61 avoid overusing 'other' as a category and provide a text box for
62 people to explain what 'other' means for them, and Black and
63 Black mixed should be clearly defined.
- 64 6. A welcoming and inclusive environment for everyone receiving
65 maternity or perinatal care, including trans and nonbinary
66 people.
- 67 7. The UK Government to ensure that the commitments made in
68 the Workforce Plan are backed by adequate funding and include
69 expansion of the wider maternity and neonatal workforce.

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- 70 8. The implementation of the Women and Equalities Committee's
71 recommendation that there should be a cross-Government
72 target and strategy, led by the Department of Health and Social
73 Care, for eliminating maternal health disparities.

Applicability: England only; except 1. (lines 49–51), which is Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Thursday 12 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Saturday's Conference Daily**.*

12.35 Speech

Chair: Professor Belinda Brooks-Gordon. Aide: Matthew Palmer.

F9 Wendy Chamberlain MP (Chief Whip in the Commons and Spokesperson for Work and Pensions)

@wendychambLD



12.50 Lunch break and fringe

*See the **Conference Directory** for our exhibition and fringe programme.*

13.00–14.30 Consultative sessions

Future of Work Policy Working Group

The Grand Brighton, Empress Room.

Chair: Vinous Ali.

Opportunity and Skills Policy Working Group

The Grand Brighton, Alexandra Room.

Chair: Rosie Shimell.

Saturday 14 September

Consultative sessions provide a less formal mechanism than the full-scale conference debates for conference representatives and other Party members to participate in the Party's policy- and decision-making process. Each session examines a particular topic and hears contributions from Party members and in some cases outside speakers. The session will be organised by the relevant Working Group. The conclusions of the session will be taken into account by the group when drawing up their final recommendations.

14.40 Party business

Chair: Baroness Pinnock (Chair, FCEC). Aide: Baroness Doocey.

F10 Celebrating Our Election Wins

A presentation that lifts the veil on the HQ operation that led to our historic success. Director of Field Campaigns Dave McCobb will take us behind the scenes with an in-depth presentation on our election strategy and why it worked.

14.55 Speech

Chair: Cllr Darryl Smalley. Aide: Cllr Shaffaq Mohammed.

F11 Cllr Joe Harris (Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group in the Local Government Association and Leader of Cotswold District Council)

@joeharrisark



15.10 Policy motion

Chair: Eleanor Kelly. Aide: Duncan Brack. Hall Aide: Callum Robertson.

F12 Europe – Restoring Links for Young People

11 members

Mover: Layla Moran MP (Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and International Development).

Summation: Joshua Reynolds MP.

Saturday 14 September

F12

Saturday

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 i) The former Conservative Government erected significant
3 barriers to young people with their botched deal with Europe,
4 including removing the right of young people to move, live and
5 work across EU countries.
 - 6 ii) The UK Government has a Youth Mobility Scheme in place with
7 several non-EU countries including South Korea and Australia,
8 which allows a set number of young people to live and work in
9 those countries for a specified duration of time, on a reciprocal
10 basis.
 - 11 iii) In April 2024, the European Commission proposed a youth
12 mobility scheme between the UK and the EU, although the then
13 Government rejected this scheme and the new Government has
14 not set out any plans to take it up.
 - 15 iv) Red tape at the UK/EU border has prevented children from
16 taking part in overseas educational trips – which according to
17 the School Travel Forum has resulted in a 30% reduction in
18 overseas educational visits between 2019 and 2023.
 - 19 v) The UK has not returned to the Erasmus Plus programme, even
20 though between 2007 and 2013 the UK received over £500m
21 more in funding from the EU for education and training than it
22 put in.
 - 23 vi) Since the UK left the EU, holidaymakers no longer receive free
24 mobile phone roaming – but nearly one in five are unaware that
25 they could face extra charges.
 - 26 vii) While the Trade and Cooperation Agreement included a
27 reference to roaming charges, UK holiday-makers have faced
28 higher prices for roaming in the EU.
 - 29 viii) In June 2024, now-Prime Minister Keir Starmer urged the EU
30 to look again at their proposed electronic travel authorisation
31 scheme, which will replace passport stamping next year and
32 is expected to add cost and delays to British holidaymakers'
33 experience at the EU border.

34 Conference believes that young people should not face such barriers
35 to travelling, living and working in Europe.

36 Conference reaffirms:

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Saturday

- 37 A. The Liberal Democrats' commitment to fixing our broken
38 relationship with Europe, including our longer-term objective of
39 UK membership of the EU.
- 40 B. The four-stage roadmap to restore our ties of trust and trade
41 with the EU, as set out in Policy Paper 144, *Rebuilding Trade and*
42 *Cooperation with Europe*.
- 43 C. Conference welcomes the new Government's changed
44 approach to relations with the EU, but further believes that
45 the new Government is wrong to rule out membership of the
46 Single Market as an option in the future for fixing our broken
47 relationship with Europe, as set out in Policy Paper 144.

48 Conference calls on the UK Government to:

- 49 1. Open negotiations with the EU and EEA to extend the Youth
50 Mobility Scheme on a reciprocal basis to EU countries, with a
51 view to:
- 52 a) Increasing the age limit from 30 to 35.
53 b) Abolishing the fees for these visas.
54 c) Extending the length of visas from two to three years.
- 55 2. Expand opportunities for young people to study, teach and
56 volunteer abroad by returning to the Erasmus Plus programme
57 as an associated country.
- 58 3. Take action on excessive roaming charges by:
- 59 a) Opening discussions with the EU on roaming charges, as set
60 out in the Trade and Cooperation Agreement.
61 b) Opening a consultation on UK phone company roaming
62 charges, including exploring the possibility of abolishing
63 such charges altogether.
- 64 4. Take steps to negotiate passport- and visa-free school trips
65 between UK and EU member states, on a reciprocal basis.
- 66 5. Open discussions with the EU with the goal of reaching a
67 reciprocal exemption from electronic travel authorisation
68 schemes, with the aim of eliminating costs and reducing border
69 delays for holiday-makers, while maintaining high standards for
70 border security and data protection.

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Saturday

Applicability: Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Thursday 12 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and Saturday's **Conference Daily**.*

15.55 Question and answer session

Chair: Baroness Smith of Newnham (Lords Spokesperson for Defence). Aide: Cllr Hannah Kitching. Hall Aide: Sam Barratt.

F13 Defence and Veterans

Members may put questions on defence and veterans affairs to the panel.

The panel will include Richard Foord MP (Spokesperson for Defence) and some of our newly-elected MPs who have previously served in the armed forces.

Concise questions (maximum 25 words) may be submitted online until 13.00 on Monday 9 September, or to the Speaker's Table by 12.50 on Saturday 14 September. See page 64.

16.40 Policy motion

Chair: Cllr Simon McGrath. Aide: Professor Belinda Brooks-Gordon. Hall Aide: Cllr Darryl Smalley.

F14 Supporting Disadvantaged Children

11 members

Mover: Munira Wilson MP (Spokesperson for Education, Children and Families).

Summation: Calum Miller MP.

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 i) The previous Conservative Government has left the education

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- 3 sector in a shocking state – with schools facing inadequate
4 funding; headteachers struggling to recruit and retain staff;
5 school buildings crumbling; and pupils' education being
6 affected.
- 7 ii) Children from less well-off homes start school already behind
8 their classmates, and gaps only widen further through primary
9 and secondary school.
- 10 iii) The attainment gap between pupils eligible for free school
11 meals and pupils who have never received free school meals
12 has widened considerably following the pandemic and over 10
13 years of progress has been wiped out.
- 14 iv) The attainment gap, which is based on average GCSE English
15 and Maths attainment nationally, widened from 3.84 last year
16 to 3.95 in the latest results from 2023, where a gap of zero
17 would indicate that there is no difference between the average
18 performance of disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged pupils.
- 19 v) By the end of secondary school (key stage 4), disadvantaged
20 pupils are 19.2 months behind their peers – a gap which has
21 widened since 2019 by 1.1 months.
- 22 vi) The attainment gap has now widened every year since 2020.
- 23 vii) Sir Kevan Collins, the then adviser to the former Conservative
24 Government, acknowledged that children needed £15 billion to
25 bridge the educational gap created by the pandemic but only a
26 third of the recovery programme that Sir Kevan called for was
27 delivered.
- 28 viii) That funding for tutoring, through the National Tutoring
29 Programme, will finish at the end of this academic year.

30 Conference further notes that:

- 31 A. Early years education for children below the age of four has a
32 positive impact on the life chances of disadvantaged children,
33 yet disadvantaged children spend significantly less time in pre-
34 school than children from more affluent backgrounds.
- 35 B. Small group tutoring is highly effective and can give pupils four
36 months' additional progress over the course of a year.
- 37 C. For every £1 spent on tutoring, £6.58 in economic returns is
38 generated.
- 39 D. There are also many spill-over benefits of tutoring including
40 improvements in children's confidence and school attendance.

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- 41 E. The National Tutoring Programme had a positive impact on
42 levelling out access to tutoring, with 35% of working class
43 Year 11 students receiving private or school-based tutoring,
44 compared to 36% of students from professional homes.
- 45 F. Accessing tutoring through schools will be much harder from
46 September as schools will be expected to pay themselves from
47 Pupil Premium Funds.
- 48 G. The squeeze on school budgets will mean that many schools will
49 be unable to continue offering tutoring.
- 50 Conference calls on the Government to:
- 51 1. Invest in high-quality early years education and close the
52 attainment gap by giving disadvantaged children aged three and
53 four an extra five free hours a week and tripling the Early Years
54 Pupil Premium to £1,000 a year.
- 55 2. Increase school and college funding per pupil above the rate of
56 inflation every year.
- 57 3. Introduce a 'Tutoring Guarantee' for every disadvantaged pupil
58 who needs extra support which would:
- 59 a) Be focussed on prioritising children from low-income
60 backgrounds, with low prior attainment or with additional
61 needs.
- 62 b) Enable an estimated 1.75 million disadvantaged young
63 people each year to get additional tutoring help and
64 support.
- 65 c) Empower headteachers, who know their children the
66 best, to set up tutoring in a way that works for them and
67 their pupils, use their own teaching staff, recruiting tutors
68 themselves or choosing from quality-assured external
69 providers.
- 70 4. Introduce a Young People's Premium, extending Pupil Premium
71 funding to disadvantaged young people aged 16–18.
- 72 5. Ensure no child is hungry in school by expanding free school
73 meal eligibility to all children in poverty.

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Saturday

Applicability: England only.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Thursday 12 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and Saturday's **Conference Daily**.*

17.30 Policy motion

Chair: Fraser Graham. Aide: Jennie Rigg. Hall Aide: Matthew Palmer.

F15 Buy Now, Pay Later – Standing By Consumers During the Cost-of-Living Crisis

10 members

Mover: Sarah Olney MP (Spokesperson for Business and the Treasury).

Summation: Lord Fox (Lords Spokesperson for Business).

- 1 Conference notes with concern that:
 - 2 A. The outgoing Conservative Government oversaw a devastating
 - 3 cost-of-living crisis which has left people's household finances
 - 4 stretched to breaking point.
 - 5 B. Millions of households are in arrears on their bills and, as of July
 - 6 2024, the number of people seeking help with unsustainable
 - 7 debt through a Debt Relief Order (DRO) is at a record high.
 - 8 C. Support organisations have seen a surge in those seeking help
 - 9 with Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) issues, with Citizens Advice
 - 10 seeing a doubling of cases in May 2024 compared to the year
 - 11 before.
 - 12 D. The number of BNPL users has increased significantly in recent
 - 13 years, with frequent users of BNPL more likely to be in financial
 - 14 difficulty and more than two million people using BNPL to
 - 15 purchase groceries in 2023 .
 - 16 E. While for many people BNPL can offer convenience and
 - 17 flexibility, it remains unregulated by the Financial Conduct
 - 18 Authority (FCA) and doesn't meet standards set by the

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- 19 Consumer Credit Act 1974 for other forms of credit, leaving
20 consumers exposed to significant financial harm.
- 21 Conference further notes with concern a number of risks arising
22 from the lack of regulation of BNPL products, including:
- 23 i) Misleading and irresponsible advertising, including via social
24 media, inappropriately encouraging the use of credit.
- 25 ii) A lack of transparency leaving many BNPL customers unaware
26 that they are using an unregulated borrowing product, with key
27 information about potential consequences hidden in long terms
28 and conditions pages.
- 29 iii) Digital design making it hard for consumers to make informed
30 decisions – such as presenting BNPL as the default payment
31 method when shopping online.
- 32 iv) A lack of proper affordability assessments that take into account
33 borrowing from different BNPL platforms, leaving users at risk
34 of amassing large debts across several providers.
- 35 v) BNPL providers not sharing data with credit reference agencies,
36 leaving regulated credit providers (e.g. banks) without a
37 complete view of a consumer's financial position when assessing
38 their affordability – risking even higher levels of indebtedness.
- 39 Conference believes that regulation of BNPL should:
- 40 a) Be balanced and proportionate – mitigating harms while
41 ensuring consumers can continue to use BNPL products safely.
- 42 b) Have the overarching aims of promoting consumer protection;
43 affordability; transparency of information; and fair treatment of
44 people in financial difficulty.
- 45 Conference therefore calls on the Government to:
- 46 1. Protect people struggling with the cost-of-living crisis by rapidly
47 legislating to bring BNPL within the Financial Conduct Authority's
48 regulatory remit.
- 49 2. Put rules in place stopping BNPL firms from engaging in harmful
50 or misleading advertising, making it clear that that BNPL is a
51 form of credit.
- 52 3. Bring BNPL under 'consumer duty' rules for financial products,
53 which require that key information is clearly set out; products

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- 54 are designed to enable informed decisions by consumers;
55 and that firms must consider whether users are in vulnerable
56 situations, such as financial or mental health distress.
- 57 4. Require that fair and consistent support is available to all BNPL
58 users who need it, including access to the Financial Ombudsman
59 Service; clear signposting to debt support; and debt collection
60 practises consistent with industry standards.
- 61 5. Enable the FCA to consider setting a centralised cap on BNPL
62 late fees to promote fair and consistent treatment across
63 platforms.
- 64 6. To prevent vulnerable consumers from amassing unsustainable
65 debt, ensure that proper affordability checks are in place, with
66 appropriate information-sharing across BNPL firms and other
67 credit providers.
- 68 7. Review whether BNPL products by large online retailers, such
69 as Amazon or Apple, should be treated in the same way as
70 products by third-party providers.
- 71 8. Improve awareness of DROs and seek ways to expand access
72 to the scheme, recognising that around 3.7 million UK adults in
73 debt are unaware they can seek help through a DRO.

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Applicability: Federal; except B. (lines 5–7) and 8. (lines 71–73), which are England only.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Thursday 12 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Saturday's Conference Daily**.*

18.00 Close of session

*See the **Conference Directory** for our exhibition and fringe programme.*

Sunday 15 September

09.00 Policy motion

Chair: Cllr Thom Campion. Aide: Matthew Palmer. Hall Aide: Cllr Simon McGrath.

F16 National Nature Parks

10 members

Mover: Tim Farron MP (Spokesperson for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).

Summation: Jess Brown-Fuller MP.

- 1 Conference notes that:
 - 2 I. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the
 - 3 world and one of the least densely forested countries in Europe
 - 4 with only 14.5% of the country covered in woodland, compared to
 - 5 the European average of 35%.
 - 6 II. The Office for Environmental Protection found that the actions
 - 7 of the Conservatives in government fell “far short” of what was
 - 8 required to leave the environment in a better state than they
 - 9 found it.
 - 10 III. The Glover Review outlined that National Parks and National
 - 11 Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding National Beauty)
 - 12 have not done enough to protect the natural environment.
 - 13 IV. One in six species are threatened with extinction from Britain.
 - 14 V. A BBC investigation found that almost 32,000 public rights
 - 15 of way are obstructed, with the number of path blockages
 - 16 increasing year on year.
- 17 Conference believes that:
 - 18 i) Everybody should be able to access a healthy environment;
19 open green spaces, clean blue rivers and the beauty of Britain’s
20 coastlines.
 - 21 ii) We need our protected landscapes to lead the restoration of our
22 natural environment.
 - 23 iii) Local authorities are key to unlocking the potential of protected
24 landscapes for nature’s recovery, including with community
25 engagement.

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- 26 iv) We must support farmers, who have a vital role in tackling
27 climate change and the nature crisis, to ensure they can
28 contribute to the restoration of the countryside and produce
29 high-quality food for our tables.
- 30 Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat pledges to:
- 31 A. Create a new designation of National Nature Parks.
32 B. Work with existing National Parks and National Landscapes to
33 improve their work to restore nature and transform them into
34 National Nature Parks, with stronger duties on National Park
35 Authorities to create and protect carbon sinks.
36 C. Plant 60 million trees a year to improve air quality, enrich public
37 spaces and help us reach net-zero.
38 D. Strengthen the Office for Environmental Protection and provide
39 more funding to the Environment Agency and Natural England
40 to help protect our environment and enforce environmental
41 laws.
42 E. Designate 16 new National Trails, thereby doubling the current
43 total.
44 F. Empower Local Nature Recovery Strategies to identify a new
45 Wild Belt for nature's recovery.
46 G. Work with our European neighbours to tackle the nature crisis,
47 including applying to join the European Environment Agency
48 (EEA).
49 H. Make sure that the UK has the highest environmental standards
50 in the world.
51 I. Properly fund Environmental Land Management schemes
52 (ELMs) and support farmers with the restoration of woodland,
53 peatland and waterways, the creation of natural flood
54 protections and the management of land to recover species and
55 carbon storage, while producing food for the table.
- 56 Conference resolves to:
- 57 1. Create at least three new National Nature Parks to the existing
58 10 National Parks in England.
- 59 2. Provide the National Parks budget with an additional £50m a
60 year to support new and existing National Parks to become
61 National Nature Parks.

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- 62 3. Ensure any new National Park has a clear duty to manage
63 protected areas for nature's restoration.
- 64 4. Launch a consultation to determine which new areas should
65 become National Nature Parks, giving natural landscapes
66 priority for the shortlist.
- 67 5. Call on the government to provide funding to:
68 a) Establish new walking routes, including routes through
69 National Parks.
70 b) Ensure local authorities can maintain existing walking
71 routes.

Applicability: England; except G. (lines 46–48), which is Federal.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Saturday 14 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and Sunday's **Conference Daily**.*

09.30 Policy motion

Chair: Chris Maines. Aide: Eleanor Kelly. Hall Aide: Callum Robertson.

F17 Our Plan to Save the NHS

10 members

Mover: Daisy Cooper MP (Spokesperson for Health and Care).

Summation: Clive Jones MP.

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 A. The UK's population is ageing and that has a profound impact
3 on how we design our health and care services.
- 4 B. The United Kingdom is lagging behind its peers when it comes to
5 people's health – it is 29th in the global obesity rankings, has the
6 worst healthy life expectancy in Western Europe, and according
7 to one study has the worst mental health in the world.

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- 8 C. The Conservatives have hollowed out community services like
9 GPs, dentists and mental health, public health and social care
10 leading to people seeking care in far more expensive urgent and
11 emergency settings.
- 12 D. Health inequalities have become more stark.
- 13 E. There are still more than 6 million people on NHS hospital
14 waiting lists, double the number since 2015.
- 15 F. The number of fully qualified GPs in England has fallen by
16 almost 500 since 2019, despite the previous Conservative
17 government's promise to increase the number by 6,000.
- 18 G. More than 100,000 patients in the last year waited longer than
19 the NHS target of 62 days to start urgent cancer treatment – the
20 worst on record.
- 21 H. 9 in 10 dental practices are no longer accepting new patients
22 and people are being forced to spend hundreds if not
23 thousands on private dental care with some even resorting to
24 DIY dentistry.
- 25 I. Half a million people are on waiting lists for care in residential
26 settings or at home and one in 10 care staff positions are
27 vacant.
- 28 J. On average, patients have to wait more than half an hour for an
29 ambulance to respond to emergencies such as heart attacks or
30 strokes.
- 31 K. Over 1.35 million (53%) of those inactive because of long-term
32 sickness reported that they had a mental health condition such
33 as depression or anxiety and the cost to the UK of poor mental
34 health is estimated to total £120bn every year.
- 35 L. There are huge vacancies across the NHS and social care, and
36 retention rates are poor too.
- 37 M. The NHS estate is facing a record £12 billion backlog of repairs
38 and the primary care estate is in need of significant upgrading
39 too.
- 40 N. The new Labour government has brought forward only two
41 pieces of legislation on health for this parliamentary session,
42 and none on social care.

43 Conference believes that:

- 44 i) The previous Conservative government ran our NHS into the
45 ground, neglected health and care services, and let patients
46 down.

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- 47 ii) Health and wealth are two sides of the same coin.
- 48 iii) Enabling people to access the health care they need as soon
- 49 as they need it, is not only better for health outcomes, it's also
- 50 better for the public purse.
- 51 iv) Adopting an 'invest to save' approach will drive investment in
- 52 community services and help shift the focus to prevention.
- 53 v) Improving the health of the nation is just as important as
- 54 providing access to health care when people need it.
- 55 vi) Mental health should be put on the same footing as physical
- 56 health.
- 57 vii) The NHS cannot be fixed unless social care is fixed too, and
- 58 reform cannot wait any longer.

59 Conference calls on the new government to:

- 60 1. Bring forward a plan to save GP services including increasing the
- 61 number of full-time equivalent GPs by 8,000 to ensure everyone
- 62 has the right to see a GP within seven days, or within 24 hours if
- 63 they urgently need to.
- 64 2. End DIY dentistry and 'dental deserts' by guaranteeing access
- 65 to an NHS dentist for everyone needing urgent and emergency
- 66 care, and fixing the broken NHS dental contract to bring dentists
- 67 back to the NHS from the private sector.
- 68 3. Boost cancer survival rates and introduce a guarantee for 100%
- 69 of patients to start treatment for cancer within 62 days from
- 70 urgent referral.
- 71 4. Increase the Public Health Grant so that local authorities can
- 72 improve the health of their communities and prevent ill health.
- 73 5. Fix the life-threatening crisis in our ambulance services by
- 74 ending excessive handover delays and increasing the number of
- 75 staffed hospital beds.
- 76 6. Improve early access to mental health services by establishing
- 77 walk-in mental health hubs for young people in every
- 78 community and introducing regular mental health check-ups at
- 79 key points in people's lives.
- 80 7. Prioritise the proposed bill brought forward in the King's Speech
- 81 to finally reform the Mental Health Act.
- 82 8. Implement a ten-year plan to invest in hospitals and the primary
- 83 care estate to end the scandal of crumbling roofs, dangerous
- 84 concrete and life-expired buildings.

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- 85 9. Introduce free personal care, a higher Carer's Minimum Wage,
86 and a workforce plan for social care.
- 87 10. Provide the resources and support for cross-party talks so that
88 they can report as soon as possible and well before the most
89 common time of between two and four years.

Applicability: England only.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Saturday 14 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and Sunday's **Conference Daily**.*

10.25 Topical issue

Chair: Cllr Hannah Kitching. Aide: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC). Hall Aide: Duncan Brack.

F18 Topical Issue Discussion

*This slot has been reserved for the discussion of a topical issue. The deadline for suggestions for topical issues is 13.00 on Monday 9 September. The topic selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and Sunday's **Conference Daily**. See pages 63 and 65 for further information.*

11.05 Speech

Chair: Callum Robertson. Aide: Cllr Simon McGrath.

F19 Munira Wilson MP (Spokesperson for Education, Children and Families)

@munirawilson



11.20 Lunch break and fringe

*See the **Conference Directory** for our exhibition and fringe programme.*

Sunday 15 September

F20

14.10 Question and answer session

Chair: Cara Jenkinson (Vice Chair, FCC). Aide: Jennie Rigg. Hall Aide: Cllr Hannah Kitching.

F20 Ed Davey MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

Members may put questions on any topic to the Leader of the Liberal Democrats. Concise questions (maximum 25 words) may be submitted online until 17.00 on Saturday 14 September, or to the Speaker's Table by 12.50 on Sunday 15 September. See page 63.

15.00 Consultative session

Chair: Jeremy Hargreaves (Vice Chair, FPC). Aide: Cllr Lucy Nethsingha (Vice Chair, FPC).

F21 Leading the Way – Liberal Democrat policy direction in the years ahead

Consultative sessions provide a less formal mechanism than the full-scale conference debates for conference representatives and other Party members to participate in the Party's policy- and decision-making process. The session will be organised by the relevant Working Group. The conclusions of the session will be taken into account by the group when drawing up their final recommendations.

This session is an opportunity for members to contribute to the Federal Policy Committee's review of the new political landscape and our next policy development priorities within it.

For more information and the structure of the session, see:
www.libdems.org.uk/conference_papers

Speakers' cards will not be used for this session. The chair will call members to speak from their seats, using a roving microphone. A panel will respond and feed members' views into FPC's policy review.

Sunday 15 September

F22

16.40 Party business

Chair: Cllr Jon Ball (Vice Chair, FCC). Aide: Cllr Shaffaq Mohammed. Hall Aide: Chris Maines.

F22 Membership Subscriptions and Federal Levy

Federal Board

Mover: Mike Cox (Party Treasurer).

Summation: Mark Pack (President of the Liberal Democrats).

- 1 Conference agrees:
 - 2 1. To continue to freeze the existing minimum membership rate
 - 3 of £15, except for members from before 2022 for whom it shall
 - 4 remain £12.
 - 5 2. To continue to freeze the £6 minimum for those in receipt of or
 - 6 entitled to state benefits, and the £6 minimum for members of
 - 7 the Young Liberals.
 - 8 3. To continue to freeze the £3 minimum 1 year introductory rate
 - 9 for members directly recruited by the Young Liberals.
 - 10 4. That nothing in this motion shall prevent a State Party from
 - 11 setting via their internal procedures higher recommended or
 - 12 minimum subscription rates or from introducing additional
 - 13 concessionary rates.
 - 14 5. That the Federal Levy shall remain 50 per cent.

Applicability: Federal.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Saturday 14 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Sunday's Conference Daily**.*

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F23

16.50 Party business

Chair: Cllr Jon Ball (Vice Chair, FCC). Aide: Cllr Shaffaq Mohammed. Hall Aide: Chris Maines.

F23 Federal Board Report: questions and accountability

Mover: Dr Mark Pack (President of the Liberal Democrats).

The report sessions are the chance for party members to hear how the party is being run and to put questions directly to the Party President and other movers of reports.

*The deadline for questions for F23–F28 is 13.00 on Monday 9 September. Questions selected will be published in **Conference Extra** and Sunday's **Conference Daily**. These questions will be guaranteed an answer, either in the session or in writing thereafter.*

Questions may also be submitted up until 15.50 on Sunday 15 September; such questions are only taken at the discretion of the chair.

See page 64 for further information.

*As part of the report session F23, there will also be votes to confirm new members of the Federal Appeals Panel. The proposed new members will be listed in **Conference Extra** and Sunday's **Conference Daily**.*

F24 Campaign for Gender Balance Report: questions and accountability

Mover: Cllr Julia Cambridge (Vice Chair, Campaign for Gender Balance).

See notes to F23.

F25 Federal Communications and Elections Committee Report: questions and accountability

Mover: Baroness Pinnock (Chair, Federal Communications and Elections Committee).

See notes to F23.

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F26 Federal International Relations Committee Report: questions and accountability

Mover: David Chalmers (Chair, Federal International Relations Committee).

See notes to F23.

F27 Federal Council Report: questions and accountability

Mover: Cllr Antony Hook (Chair, Federal Council).

See notes to F23.

F28 Federal Appeals Panel: questions and accountability

Mover: David Graham (Chair, Federal Appeals Panel).

See notes to F23.

18.00 Close of session

See the [Conference Directory](#) for our exhibition and fringe programme.

Monday 16 September

09.00 Policy motion

Chair: James Gurling. Aide: Cara Jenkinson (Vice Chair, FCC). Hall Aide: Eleanor Kelly.

F29 Fair Votes Now

11 members

Mover: Christine Jardine MP (Spokesperson for the Cabinet Office).

Summation: Al Pinkerton MP.

- 1 Conference notes:
- 2 i) That public trust in British government and politics has sunk to
- 3 its lowest-ever recorded level.
- 4 ii) That the 2024 UK General Election was the most
- 5 disproportionate ever, with the new Government winning two-
- 6 thirds of the seats in Parliament while receiving one-third of the
- 7 vote.
- 8 iii) That more than a majority of votes cast in the General Election
- 9 were for a losing candidate – at 58%, the highest in seventy
- 10 years.
- 11 iv) That turnout at the 2024 General Election was 59.9%, the lowest
- 12 since 2001.
- 13 v) That several million UK citizens are missing from the Electoral
- 14 Register.
- 15 vi) That recent years have seen repeated ethics scandals and
- 16 a failure to uphold the Nolan principles of public life, not
- 17 just by the UK Government, but by the Scottish and Welsh
- 18 Governments too.
- 19 vii) That, in the previous Parliament, the former Conservative
- 20 Government weakened the independence of the Electoral
- 21 Commission, introduced disproportionate voting systems for
- 22 mayoral elections in England, and introduced the Voter ID
- 23 scheme.
- 24 viii) The work of organisations like Make Votes Matter, Unlock
- 25 Democracy and the Electoral Reform Society, amongst others, in
- 26 building the case for electoral reform.
- 27 ix) That the new Government has not committed to reform of the
- 28 voting system.

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29 Conference believes that:

- 30 a) First Past the Post underpins the adversarial and divisive nature
31 of Westminster politics, and feeds public disillusion.
- 32 b) The UK's electoral system leaves millions of people feeling that
33 their votes are irrelevant and their views unrepresented.
- 34 c) It is undemocratic that, under the UK's electoral system, not all
35 votes count the same, which leaves millions of people feeling
36 powerless and without a say in how the country is run.
- 37 d) Improving our democracy is an important end in itself, but also
38 a necessary step to building a better country with good schools
39 and hospitals, affordable housing and safe communities.
- 40 e) The Liberal Democrats and the Liberal Party have called for fair
41 votes for a century, and should continue to lead the campaign
42 for fundamental reform of the electoral system.

43 Conference calls on the Government to:

- 44 1. Replace the first past the past system for UK General Elections,
45 with proportional representation by the Single Transferable Vote
46 system.
- 47 2. Introduce the Single Transferable Vote system for the election of
48 local councillors in England.
- 49 3. Implement the Alternative Vote system for elections for single
50 positions such as directly-elected Mayors.
- 51 4. Ensure that the UK has an automatic system of inclusion on the
52 electoral register.
- 53 5. Protect and strengthen the Electoral Commission, including by
54 repealing the Government's power to designate a strategy and
55 policy statement for the Commission.
- 56 6. Scrap the Conservatives' Voter ID scheme.
- 57 7. Enable all UK citizens living abroad to vote for MPs in separate
58 overseas constituencies, and to participate in UK referendums.
- 59 8. Give young people the right to vote in the first election after
60 their 16th birthday, for UK general elections and referendums,
61 and local elections in England.
- 62 9. Extend the right to full participation in civic life, including the
63 ability to stand for office or vote in UK referendums, local
64 elections and general elections, to all EU citizens with settled
65 status, and to anyone else who has lived in the UK for at least
66 five years and has the right to stay permanently.

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- 67 10. Extend political education in secondary schools, to prepare
68 future citizens to participate in public life.
69 11. Use citizens' assemblies to engage the electorate, particularly on
70 long-standing topics such as climate change or social care.

Applicability: Federal; except 2. and 3. (lines 47–50), and part of 8. (line 61), which are England only.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Sunday 15 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Monday's Conference Daily**.*

09.45 Consultative session

Chair: Tim Farron MP (Chair of the General Election Review). Aide: Vinous Ali.

F30 General Election Review

Consultative sessions provide a less formal mechanism than the full-scale conference debates for conference representatives and other Party members to participate in the Party's policy- and decision-making process.

The Federal Board has established an independent review into the recent general election. The review is chaired by Tim Farron MP, and the other members are Cllr Ade Adeyemo, Paul Farthing, Cllr Donna Harris, Cllr Emma Holland-Lindsay, Mike O'Carroll and Sally Patty.

This session is an opportunity for members to contribute to the work of the General Election Review, and the feedback provided will feed into the work of the review.

Speakers' cards will not be used for this session. The chair will call members to speak from their seats, using a roving microphone. A panel will respond and feed members' views into the review.

Monday 16 September

F31

11.05 Speech

Chair: Jennie Rigg. Aide: Sam Barratt.

F31 Daisy Cooper MP (Spokesperson for Health and Care)

@libdemdaisy



11.20 Lunch break and fringe

See the *Conference Directory* for our exhibition and fringe programme.

14.10 Emergency motion

Chair: Duncan Brack. Aide: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC). Hall Aide: Cllr Hannah Kitching.

F32 Emergency Motion: Israel-Gaza Conflict

This slot has been reserved for the debate of an emergency motion on the subject of the Israel-Gaza Conflict.

*The deadline for emergency motions is 13.00 on Monday 9 September. The FCC will select which motion is to be debated, and that motion will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Monday's Conference Daily**.*

See pages 63 and 64 for further information.

14.55 Policy motion

Chair: Cllr Darryl Smalley. Aide: Chris Maines. Hall Aide: Jennie Rigg.

F33 Tackling the Prisons Crisis

10 members

Mover: Alistair Carmichael MP (Spokesperson for Home Affairs and Justice).
Summation: Lord German.

Monday 16 September

F33

1 Conference believes that:

- 2 i) Keeping communities safe is one of the most important
- 3 responsibilities for any government.
- 4 ii) Reducing reoffending is key for cutting crime, keeping people
- 5 safe and ultimately saving public money.
- 6 iii) To achieve these aims, the effective rehabilitation of offenders
- 7 should be a core priority of the prison system.

8 Conference notes with grave concern that years of neglect and
9 mismanagement from the previous Conservative Government
10 has plunged our prisons into crisis – leaving them overcrowded,
11 understaffed and unable to properly rehabilitate offenders.

12 Conference further notes that:

- 13 A. England and Wales' prisons are dangerously close to capacity –
- 14 with a prison population of 87,453 as of July 2024, compared to
- 15 an operational capacity of 88,864.
- 16 B. Reoffending rates remain high, with 75% of ex-inmates
- 17 reoffending within nine years of release, and 39.3% within the
- 18 first twelve months. It is estimated that reoffending costs our
- 19 society more than £18 billion a year.
- 20 C. Incidents of violence and self-harm in prisons are on the rise.
- 21 D. Violence against prison staff has also soared, with an average
- 22 of 23 attacks recorded every day last year across England and
- 23 Wales.
- 24 E. Issues with staff recruitment and retention have persisted,
- 25 with English prisons running red regimes due to falling below
- 26 minimum staffing levels at least 22 times in 2023.
- 27 F. The growing backlog in our criminal courts – which skyrocketed
- 28 under the previous Conservative Government – is directly
- 29 contributing to prison overcrowding. Remand populations have
- 30 risen by 84% to a record high of 16,458 people as of March
- 31 2024, accounting for nearly 20% of the total prison population.
- 32 G. The previous Conservative Government has left the probation
- 33 service overstretched, under-resourced, and unable to provide
- 34 the quality of supervision needed.
- 35 H. Although there are meant to be limits on how long people can
- 36 be held on remand, the previous Conservative Government

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F33

- 37 refused to admit how many people had been in prison on
38 remand for longer than six months.
- 39 I. After years of failing to respond to the growing prisons crisis,
40 the previous Conservative Government finally introduced
41 emergency measures to ease prison overcrowding in November
42 2023 – including delays to sentencing and an Early Release
43 Scheme which saw violent prisoners with a history of domestic
44 abuse and stalking released early, despite assurances the
45 scheme would only be available to low-risk offenders.
- 46 J. The new Government has been forced to take further
47 emergency steps to tackle the prison overcrowding crisis,
48 including plans for some prisoners to be released after they
49 have served 40% of their sentence in England and Wales, rather
50 than the current 50%.

51 Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to cutting
52 reoffending by taking a holistic approach to rehabilitation – spanning
53 sentencing, prisons and community supervision and including a full
54 range of rehabilitative services.

55 Conference therefore calls on the new Government to:

- 56 1. Tackle the backlog in criminal courts to reduce the number
57 of people in prison on remand, including by prioritising case
58 hearings where the defendant is currently on remand.
- 59 2. Bring forward an urgent plan to recruit and retain more prison
60 officers.
- 61 3. Ensure that no violent prisoners are eligible for an early release
62 programme, including perpetrators of domestic abuse.
- 63 4. Put cutting reoffending at the heart of their plan to end the
64 prisons crisis, including by:
- 65 a) Improving the provision of training, education and work
66 opportunities in prison.
- 67 b) Ensuring that every prison has a ‘through the gate’
68 mentorship programme.
- 69 c) Introducing a plan to improve the rehabilitation of people
70 leaving prison.

Monday 16 September

F33

- 71 5. Implement a presumption against short sentences of 12 months
72 or less to facilitate rehabilitation in the community.
- 73 6. Bring forward a new strategy for the prisons estate to ensure
74 that all prisons are fit for purpose and able to provide the
75 rehabilitation services needed to cut reoffending.
- 76 7. Ensure that probation services have the resources they need to
77 properly cope with an increased workload due to early release
78 schemes.

Applicability: England only.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Sunday 15 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Monday's Conference Daily**.*

15.40 Speech

Chair: Matthew Palmer. Aide: Lucas North.

F34 Jane Dodds MS (Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats)

@DoddsJane



15.55 Policy motion

Chair: Sam Barratt. Aide: James Gurling. Hall Aide: Jennie Rigg.

F35 International Development – Restoring the UK's role

11 members

Mover: Layla Moran MP (Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and International Development).

Summation: Lord Purvis (Lords Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs and International Development).

Monday 16 September

F35

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 I. The Liberal Democrats were the first UK political party to
- 3 commit to the 0.7% of Gross National Income target for Official
- 4 Development Assistance spending, and enshrined this target in
- 5 law whilst in Government.
- 6 II. Britain's reputation as an 'international development
- 7 superpower' has been seriously compromised by the previous
- 8 Conservative government, after:
 - 9 a) Boris Johnson abolished the independent Department
 - 10 for International Development (DFID), merging it with the
 - 11 Foreign and Commonwealth Office, resulting in the new
 - 12 department's development capability being "reduced"
 - 13 according to the National Audit Office.
 - 14 b) Rishi Sunak took the decision to cut UK international
 - 15 development spending from 0.7% to 0.5% of GNI, which
 - 16 has resulted in thousands of preventable deaths and vital
 - 17 programmes being cut.
- 18 III. Conflicts in the Middle East, the Sahel, Afghanistan, the Horn
- 19 of Africa and Ukraine means the UK's support is needed more
- 20 than ever, while the UN Secretary General has made clear that
- 21 progress towards meeting the Sustainable Development Goals
- 22 (SDGs) will require a concerted international policy response
- 23 which is currently lacking.
- 24 IV. UK bilateral ODA spending has been further cut by the former
- 25 Conservative Government's failure to cut the asylum backlog,
- 26 resulting in almost 30% of UK ODA being spent on in-country
- 27 refugee costs in 2022.
- 28 V. The incoming Government does not have plans to re-establish
- 29 an independent department for international development, and
- 30 has not yet committed to restoring ODA spending to 0.7% of
- 31 GNI.
- 32 Conference believes that:
 - 33 i) The British people always respond with great generosity of spirit
 - 34 to humanitarian disasters and conflicts in other countries.

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- 35 ii) UK ODA spending is a powerful tool for good in the world which
36 helps the most disadvantaged and vulnerable.
- 37 iii) The UK reneging on its promises has created a vacuum which
38 Russia and China want to fill.
- 39 iv) For the UK to best play its role on the world stage, it needs to
40 restore its role as a development superpower.
- 41 v) An independent department is the best way to ensure that the
42 UK is a global leader on development.

43 Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrats' commitment to:

- 44 A. Immediately reversing the international development cut,
45 returning UK ODA spending to 0.7% of GNI.
- 46 B. Ensuring that the use of ODA is consistent with the OECD/DAC
47 rules/guidelines, and with UK legislation, and in particular that
48 its primary purpose should remain the economic development
49 of, and poverty reduction within, the partner country.
- 50 C. Ensuring that the Sustainable Development Goals, which have
51 universal applicability, lie at the heart of the UK's international
52 development policy.

53 Conference accordingly calls on the UK Government to restore the
54 UK's development superpower status, including by:

- 55 1. Establishing an independent department for international
56 development.
- 57 2. Immediately restore full funding for programmes supporting
58 women and girls.
- 59 3. Creating the role of a UK Sustainable Development Goals tsar to
60 drive delivery of the SDGs, in both domestic and international
61 policy, including conducting a root and branch review of the
62 allocation of UK ODA to maximise its impact on developing
63 countries.
- 64 4. Restoring the humanitarian relief reserve fund, increasing the
65 UK's ability to respond to conflict, such as in Sudan and Ukraine,
66 as well as natural disasters.
- 67 5. Addressing the increasingly severe challenges of debt distress.
- 68 6. Recognising the role of education as a force for good and
69 committing to spend 15% of ODA on education in the world's
70 most vulnerable areas, with a fully funded Global Partnership
71 for Education (GPE) and Education Cannot Wait (ECW).

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- 72 7. Restoring the cuts to water and sanitary health programmes,
73 and health programmes.
- 74 8. Increasing the proportion of ODA committed to tackling climate
75 change and environmental degradation.
- 76 9. Addressing the growing global crisis of food insecurity and
77 malnutrition by restoring our commitment to nutrition and
78 famine relief and increasing the proportion of ODA committed
79 to delivering life-saving nutrition interventions.
- 80 10. Tackling the asylum backlog, and accordingly ensuring that ODA
81 is not used to cover for a broken asylum system, as took place
82 under the former Conservative Government.
- 83 11. Taking further steps to tackle economic crime, including the
84 use of tax havens and money laundering, by passing further
85 economic crime legislation.

Applicability: Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Sunday 15 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and Monday's **Conference Daily**.*

16.40 Policy motion

Chair: Cllr Shaffaq Mohammed. Aide: Cllr Thom Campion. Hall Aide: Cara Jenkinson (Vice Chair, FCC).

F36 A Fair Deal for Musicians

London Region and Camden

Mover: Charlie Clinton.

Summation: Jamie Stone MP (Spokesperson for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport).

Monday 16 September

F36

- 1 Conference notes:
- 2 I. The London Liberal Democrat motion *A Fair Deal for Musicians*
- 3 passed in February 2024.
- 4 II. That in 2022 the UK music industry contributed £6.7bn to the
- 5 UK economy, employed 210,000 people, and generated £4bn in
- 6 exports.
- 7 III. That despite this, nearly half of UK musicians earn under
- 8 £14,000 per year, and Grassroots Music Venues (GMVs) profit
- 9 margins average 0.5%.
- 10 IV. That in 2023 16% of GMVs were lost: 125 spaces permanently
- 11 closed to live music.
- 12 V. That the Agent of Change (AOC) principle was included in
- 13 policy guidance in 2018, but developers are not always held to
- 14 account and noise abatement notices are still being issued to
- 15 longstanding venues.
- 16 VI. The House of Commons DCMS Select Committee report
- 17 *Grassroots Music Venues*, April 2024, which recommended:
- 18 a) A voluntary industry levy on large venues to fund GMVs, or
- 19 failing that for the government to introduce a statutory levy.
- 20 b) A targeted and temporary cut to VAT for GMVs.
- 21 c) Enshrining the AOC principle in statute.
- 22 VII. That barriers to touring erected by Brexit have impacted 30%
- 23 of musicians, with lowest earners losing 49% of EU revenue on
- 24 average.
- 25 VIII. That the courts have recognised that musicians have a right to
- 26 practise at home for 5 hours a day, 3 on Sunday, but councils
- 27 have not consistently applied these rulings, and musicians often
- 28 do not have the resources to take legal action.
- 29 IX. That music education investment is unequal and in decline, for
- 30 example:
- 31 a) Since 2011 GCSE participation has fallen by 25%, A-level

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- 32 participation by 50% and Arts hub funding been cut in real-
33 terms by 17%.
- 34 b) Only 15% of state schools pupils received sustained music
35 tuition. The figure is 50% in independent schools.
- 36 X. Prime Minister Keir Starmer's previous calls for all children to
37 have the chance to learn a musical instrument at school.
- 38 Conference believes that there are many challenges facing the
39 music industry and the failure to address these challenges today will
40 undermine the future of the music industry in the UK.
- 41 Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to
42 negotiating free, simple short-term travel for UK artists to perform in
43 the EU, and vice versa, including transport of equipment and sale of
44 merchandise.
- 45 Conference calls on local councils to:
- 46 i) Ensure that the AOC principle is applied in practice, in particular
47 by:
- 48 a) Withholding planning permission for developments next
49 to venues in the absence of enforceable conditions for
50 appropriate soundproofing.
- 51 b) Rigorously enforcing such conditions.
- 52 c) Additionally applying the AOC principle when reviewing
53 noise complaints about venues, even when not a new
54 development.
- 55 ii) Move towards providing every primary school child with two
56 years of free small-group instrumental lessons, and a free
57 instrument, following the example of Newham's 'Every Child A
58 Musician' programme.
- 59 iii) Commit to upholding the common law position on musicians
60 practising at home.
- 61 Conference calls on the new Government to:
- 62 1. Reinvest in music education including:

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F36

- 63 a) Training and recruiting 1000 music teachers.
 64 b) Delivering an Arts pupil premium with funding of at least
 65 £90m per year.
 66 c) Reverse real-terms cuts to Arts Hubs since 2011, with a 17%
 67 increase in funding followed by a commitment to annual
 68 increases in line with inflation.
- 69 2. Implement the following recommendations of the DCMS Select
 70 Committee report:
 71 a) Imposing the large venue levy if not done voluntarily by
 72 September.
 73 b) Reintroducing a VAT cut for GMVs.
 74 c) Enshrining AOC Principles on the statute book.

Applicability: England only; except VI. b) (line 20), VII (lines 22–24), lines 41–44 and 2. b). (line 73), which are Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Sunday 15 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and Monday's **Conference Daily**.*

17.20 Policy motion

Chair: Cara Jenkinson (Vice Chair, FCC). Aide: Lucas North. Hall Aide: Matthew Palmer.

F37 Reversing the Cuts to Bereavement Support Payments and Supporting Kinship Carers

10 members

Mover: Wendy Chamberlain MP (Spokesperson for Work and Pensions).

Summation: Christine Jardine MP (Spokesperson for Women and Equalities).

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- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 i) Losing a parent is one of the toughest moments it is possible for
3 a child to experience.
 - 4 ii) Nothing was brought forward in the King's speech that would
5 legislate to improve the lives of bereaved families or kinship
6 carers, and the new Labour government has made no plans to
7 increase funding for support.
 - 8 iii) Since 2017, the Conservative Government has cut funding for
9 Bereavement Support Payments by around 50%.
 - 10 iv) Ed Davey MP successfully pressured the Conservative
11 Government to ensure cohabiting couples are eligible for the
12 Bereavement Support Payment – previously only married
13 couples or those in civil partnerships were eligible.
 - 14 v) Around 26,900 parents die each year in the UK, leaving 46,300
15 dependent children.
 - 16 vi) Kinship carers most often women, in particular grandmothers.
 - 17 vii) 141,000 children are in kinship care.
 - 18 viii) Children growing up in kinship care have better educational and
19 emotional outcomes than children in unrelated foster care, but
20 worse than children in the general population.
 - 21 ix) An estimated half of the children in kinship care are there
22 because their parents have had problems with drugs or alcohol,
23 have died, gone to prison, or are abusive, neglectful, or unwell.
- 24 Conference believes that:
- 25 A. The Conservative's cuts to bereavement support payments were
26 cruel and short-sighted.
 - 27 B. The Conservatives' cuts to bereavement support payments in
28 2017 have had an adverse impact on families who have lost a
29 loved one.
 - 30 C. Providing financial support for families that have lost a parent is
31 critical to ensuring that families are not left struggling to pay the
32 bills at such a difficult period of time.
 - 33 D. Kinship carers play a critical and often unsung role in children's
34 lives and ensure more young people can grow up in a loving,
35 stable home.
- 36 Conference calls on the Government to:

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- 37 1. Double the funding for Bereavement Support Payments,
38 reversing the Conservative party's cuts since 2017.
- 39 2. Use this extra funding to extend the amount of time that
40 people receive payments for beyond the current 18 months and
41 increase the size of payments.
- 42 3. Pass Christine Jardine MP's Bereavement Support (Children and
43 Young People) Bill that would ensure that children and young
44 people are aware of what support is available to them following
45 the death of a parent.
- 46 4. Support the education of children in care, extend Pupil Premium
47 Plus funding to children in kinship care, and guarantee any child
48 taken into care a school place within three weeks, if required to
49 move schools.
- 50 5. Appoint a Cabinet Minister for Children and Young People
51 with specific responsibilities for closing the gaps in support for
52 children who have lost a parent or both their parents.
- 53 6. Support children in kinship care and their family carers by:
54 a) Introducing a statutory definition of kinship care.
55 b) Building on the existing pilot to develop a weekly allowance
56 for all kinship carers.
- 57 7. Make care experience a protected characteristic under the
58 Equality Act 2010 to strengthen the rights of people who are in
59 or have been in care.

Monday

Applicability: England only; except iii) and iv) (lines 8–13), A., B. and C. (lines 25–32), 1. and 2. (lines 37–41) and 7. (lines 57–59), which are Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Sunday 15 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Monday's Conference Daily**.*

18.00 Close of session

*See the **Conference Directory** for our exhibition and fringe programme.*

Tuesday 17 September

09.00 Emergency motions or topical issue discussions

Chair: Lucas North. Aide: Sam Barratt. Hall Aide: Fraser Graham.

F38 Emergency motion or topical issue discussion

This slot has been reserved for the debate of an emergency motion and / or discussion of a topical issues.

*The deadline for emergency motions and for suggestions for topical issues is 13.00 on Monday 9 September. The motion or topic selected for debate or proposed for the ballot will be printed in **Conference Extra** and Tuesday's **Conference Daily**.*

See pages 63 and 64 for further information.

09.30 Policy motion

Chair: Professor Belinda Brooks-Gordon. Aide: Chris Maines. Hall Aide: Cllr Thom Campion.

F39 The Clean Water Authority

10 members

Mover: Tim Farron MP (Spokesperson for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs).

Summation: Josh Babarinde MP.

- 1 Conference notes with concern that:
 - 2 I. Regulators and the former Conservative Government have not
 - 3 held water companies to account for their failures to maintain
 - 4 and improve water quality and create sustainable funding
 - 5 structures, whilst also stifling innovation within the industry.
 - 6 II. Water companies want to increase customer bills by an average
 - 7 of 33% by 2030 to fund improvements to infrastructure, when
 - 8 they have paid out millions in bonuses to executives and failed
 - 9 to make sound investments.
 - 10 III. The Conservatives in government repeatedly voted against

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11 providing Ofwat with more powers to hold water companies to
12 account and end the sewage scandal.

13 IV. Labour have pledged to increase Ofwat's powers but keep the
14 existing regulator in place.

15 V. Water company bosses in England and Wales received £54
16 million in benefits, bonuses and incentives since the 2019
17 election – in which period, sewage was dumped 1.5 million
18 times, lasting over 11 million hours.

19 VI. Millions of litres of water are lost every day through leaks and
20 two of Britain's biggest water companies do not have complete
21 maps of their sewer pipe network.

22 VII. The quality and frequency of water monitoring is inadequate;
23 there is no requirement on water companies to record
24 the volume of sewage spills and water companies are self-
25 monitoring pollution incidents.

26 Conference believes that:

27 A. As a point of principle, customers should not bear the brunt of
28 costs for infrastructure improvements on account of the failings
29 of water companies.

30 B. Water companies should be more transparent about how bill
31 payers' money is spent to restore customers' trust that water
32 companies will invest in the system to reduce leakage, sewerage
33 flooding and pollution.

34 C. Nobody should be in water poverty.

35 D. Effective regulation and investment to maintain and
36 upgrade water infrastructure are key to restoring the natural
37 environment and mitigating the risks of climate change,
38 including flooding and water shortages. Ofwat has failed to be
39 an effective regulator.

40 E. Local authorities need more powers and resources to monitor
41 the health of our waterways, hold water companies to account
42 and work with them in catchment partnerships to prevent
43 discharges and upgrade infrastructure.

44 F. Citizens should be able to hold water companies accountable
45 directly.

46 Conference reaffirms calls for:

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F39

- 47 i) Meaningful targets and deadlines to be set for water companies
- 48 to end sewage discharges.
- 49 ii) Water companies to publish 25-year investment plans to
- 50 encourage sound investment and promote the use of nature-
- 51 based solutions.
- 52 iii) The implementation of a ban on water bonuses until sewage
- 53 spills end and leaks are fixed.
- 54 iv) The transformation of water companies into public benefit
- 55 companies.
- 56 v) A new Blue Flag status for rivers, streams and lakes.
- 57 vi) A single social tariff for water bills to help eliminate water
- 58 poverty within the next Parliament.

59 Conference resolves to:

- 60 1. Replace Ofwat with a new regulator, the Clean Water Authority,
- 61 taking on the relevant powers from the Environment Agency
- 62 and working with Natural Resources Wales.

- 63 2. Provide more funding to regulators including the Clean Water
- 64 Authority, the Environment Agency, the Office for Environmental
- 65 Protection and Natural England to improve regulation and the
- 66 enforcement of environmental laws.

- 67 3. Strengthen regulatory powers and resources for the new Clean
- 68 Water Authority to:
 - 69 a) Mandate that water companies publish publicly accessible
 - 70 live time data on the recorded volume, duration and
 - 71 number of sewage spills.
 - 72 b) Set legally binding targets to prevent sewage discharges into
 - 73 bathing waters and highly sensitive nature sites by 2030.
 - 74 c) Revoke the licence of poorly performing water companies
 - 75 swiftly.
 - 76 d) Fine top executives of water companies and initiate
 - 77 prosecutions.
 - 78 e) Increase water monitoring with new Sewage Inspectors,
 - 79 including unannounced inspections, with the aim of ending
 - 80 water companies' self-monitoring.
 - 81 f) Better regulate the ownership of water companies.
 - 82 g) Reform water companies to put local environmental experts
 - 83 on water company boards.

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F39

- 84 h) Lead the transformation of water companies into public
85 benefit companies.

Applicability: England and Wales.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Monday 16 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and Tuesday's **Conference Daily**.*

10.15 Party business

Chair: Chris Maines. Aide: Eleanor Kelly. Hall Aide: Duncan Brack.

F40 Reports of the Parliamentary Parties

Movers: Wendy Chamberlain MP (Chief Whip of the Commons Parliamentary Party) and Lord Newby (Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords).

*The deadline for questions for F40 is 13.00 on Monday 9 September. Questions selected will be published in **Conference Extra** and Tuesday's **Conference Daily**. These questions will be guaranteed an answer, either in the session or in writing thereafter.*

Questions may also be submitted up until 09.15 on Tuesday 17 September; such questions are only taken at the discretion of the chair.

See page 64 for further information.

11.05 Policy motion

Chair: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC). Aide: Cllr Hannah Kitching. Hall Aide: Sam Barratt.

Tuesday 17 September

F41

F41 Tackling Child Poverty

Young Liberals and 10 members

Mover: Cllr Hina Bokhari AM.

Summation: Cllr Simon McGrath.

- 1 Conference notes that:
 - 2 1. Children are the most likely group in society to be in poverty.
 - 3 2. DWP figures for 2022/23 show 3.6m children living in absolute
 - 4 poverty after housing costs.
 - 5 3. 1.6m children in 440,000 families are affected by the two-child
 - 6 benefit cap and in over 59% of these families at least one parent
 - 7 is in paid work.
 - 8 4. Abolition of the two-child benefit cap would take 300,000
 - 9 children out of poverty.
 - 10 5. The impact of the cap is greater on families with an ethnic
 - 11 minority background.
- 12 Conference welcomes the establishment of a Ministerial Taskforce on
- 13 Child Poverty, and notes that the organisations invited to the initial
- 14 meeting with the Secretary of State have called for the abolition of
- 15 the two-child benefit cap.
- 16 Conference calls on the Government to immediately abolish the two-
- 17 child benefit cap.

Applicability: Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Monday 16 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Tuesday's Conference Daily**.*

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F42

11.50 Policy motion

Chair: Baroness Doocey. Aide: Cllr Darryl Smalley. Hall Aide: Lucas North.

F42 A Fair Deal for Family Carers

10 members

Mover: Daisy Cooper MP (Spokesperson for Health and Care).

Summation: Alex Brewer MP.

- 1 Conference notes that:
 - 2 i) There are 10.6 million people across the UK who give unpaid
 - 3 support to someone who is elderly, seriously ill or disabled.
 - 4 ii) Carer's Allowance, the main benefit for carers, remains the
 - 5 lowest benefit of its kind at £81.90 per week and 1.4 million full-
 - 6 time unpaid carers rely on the benefit.
 - 7 iii) Those caring for family members and friends are saving the
 - 8 taxpayer and state over £160 billion every year.
 - 9 iv) A Carers Trust survey shows that 14% of unpaid carers had to
 - 10 use a food bank this year.
 - 11 v) One in seven people in the workplace in the UK are juggling
 - 12 work and care and 59% of unpaid carers are women.
 - 13 vi) 52% of carers who apply for flexible working have their
 - 14 applications refused and 72% want to work or work more if they
 - 15 could access flexible working.
 - 16 vii) Too many carers are currently excluded from receiving Carer's
 - 17 Allowance due to the eligibility criteria being set too low.
 - 18 viii) The Conservatives failed to tackle the scandal of thousands of
 - 19 Carer's Allowance recipients being issued disproportionate fines
 - 20 for overpayments.
 - 21 ix) The Liberal Democrats secured a legal entitlement to unpaid
 - 22 leave for unpaid carers in the last parliament.
 - 23 x) The Liberal Democrats continue to call for cross-party talks to
 - 24 agree a long-term basis for sustainably funding social care into
 - 25 the future.
- 26 Conference believes that:
 - 27 a) The Liberal Democrats must stand up for all carers, ensure their

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- 28 voices are heard in this new parliament, and work to build a
29 more caring society.
- 30 b) We can only tackle the crisis in our NHS if we fix social care and
31 support the millions of unpaid carers across the country.
- 32 c) Social care is an essential service, like healthcare or education,
33 and should be designed to ensure that everyone is able to live
34 with independence and in dignity.
- 35 d) Unpaid carers deserve a fair deal for their skilled work that
36 saves the country billions every year.
- 37 e) All carers are too often ignored by government and left to fend
38 for themselves.
- 39 f) No one who cares for their loved ones should be living in
40 poverty because the government has failed to support them.
- 41 g) Supporting unpaid carers will create a fairer society and improve
42 gender equality.

43 Conference calls on the new Government to:

- 44 1. Ensure unpaid carers are at the heart of every announcement
45 including any cross-party talks on social care.
- 46 2. Stop prosecuting and pursuing unpaid carers for overpayments
47 of Carer's Allowance.
- 48 3. Raise the amount carers can earn before losing Carer's
49 Allowance to be significantly higher than the current
50 £151-a-week threshold and introduce a taper so that unpaid
51 carers are not subject to a cliff edge removal of benefits.
- 52 4. Raise Carer's Allowance by £20 a week, reduce the number of
53 hours' care per week required to qualify for it and extend it to
54 carers in full-time education.
- 55 5. Introduce paid carer's leave, building on the entitlement to
56 unpaid leave secured by the Liberal Democrats.
- 57 6. Introduce a statutory guarantee of regular respite breaks for
58 unpaid carers.
- 59 7. Make flexible working a 'day one' right unless there are
60 significant business reasons why that is not possible.

Applicability: England only; except i) to vi) (lines 2–15), viii) and ix) (lines 18–23), 2. (lines 46–47), 5. (lines 55–56) and 7. (lines 59–60), which are Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any

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amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see pages 61–62.

*The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 on Monday 9 September; see page 64. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 on Monday 16 September; see page 61. Amendments and separate votes selected for debate will be printed in **Conference Extra** and **Tuesday's Conference Daily**.*

12.35 Speech

Chair: Fraser Graham. Aide: Cllr Thom Campion.

F43 Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP (Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats)

@agcolehamilton



12.50 Lunch break and fringe

*See the **Conference Directory** for our exhibition and fringe programme.*

14.10 Party business

Chair: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC). Aide: Cara Jenkinson (Vice Chair, FCC).
Hall Aide: Cllr Jon Ball (Vice Chair, FCC).

F44 Party Awards

The Belinda Eyre-Brook Award:

Given to recognise and celebrate the efforts of people working for our elected representatives in their local areas.

The Dadabhai Naoroji Award:

Presented annually to the local Party that has done most to promote ethnic minority participants to elected office.

The Harriet Smith Liberal Democrat Distinguished Service Award:

Open to any Party Member never elected to public office recognised for outstanding commitment and service to the Party.

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The Patsy Calton Award:

An award for exceptional women ranging from Councillors, to members, to Parliamentarians.

The Penhaligon Award:

Presented to the local party anywhere in the world which demonstrates the most impressive increase in membership and exemplary activities to deliver and involve members and supporters.

The President's Award:

Open to any Party Member elected to public office and who has demonstrated excellence and commitment.

14.20 Speech

Chair: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC). Aide: Cara Jenkinson (Vice Chair, FCC).
Hall Aide: Cllr Jon Ball (Vice Chair, FCC).

F45 Ed Davey MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

@edwardjdavey



15.30 approx. Close of conference

Conference timetable 2025

21-23 March 2025, Harrogate

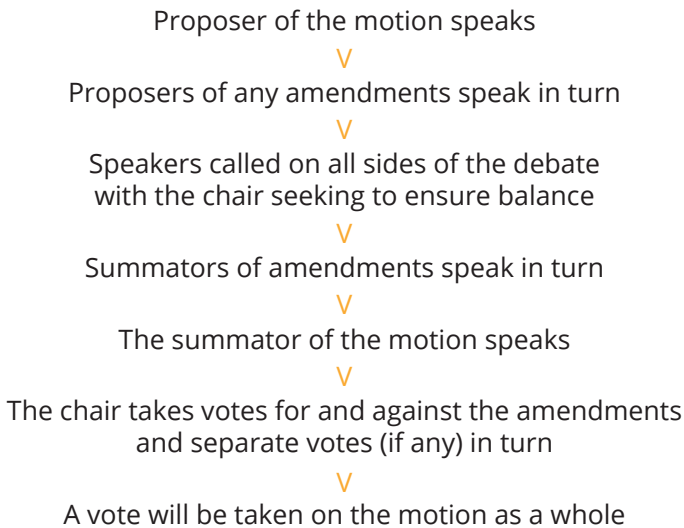
Drafting advice deadline (motions)	13.00	Wednesday, 18 December 2024
Motions deadline	13.00	Wednesday, 15 January 2025
Drafting advice deadline (amendments, emergency motions)	13.00	Monday, 24 February 2025
Deadline for amendments to motions, emergency motions, topical issues, questions to reports	13.00	Monday, 10 March 2025

Agenda information

Debates and votes at conference

Debates on policy and business motions are at the heart of federal conference. It is through them that the party sets its policy and future direction. Unlike in other parties, Liberal Democrat members are sovereign, and what they decide really matters.

The structure of debate on policy and business motions:



Interventions: concise (one minute) speeches made from the intervention microphone(s) on the floor of the auditorium, during debates where it is indicated in the *Agenda*.

Amendments: all motions except emergency motions are open to amendment; amendments accepted will be published in *Conference Daily*.

Voting: decisions on most motions and all amendments and separate votes are by simple majority of those voting (2/3 majority for constitutional amendments). To vote, voting members must show their voting badge whilst seated on the ground floor of the auditorium.

Agenda information

Separate votes: a vote to delete or retain the specified words or section of of a motion or amendment.

A request for a separate vote may be submitted by any party member by:

- 09.00 on Thursday 12 September for debates scheduled for Saturday 14 September;
- or* by:
- 09.00 on the day before the debate for debates scheduled for other days.

The request for a separate vote should be submitted using the online form at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

or in writing to the Speakers' Table in the auditorium.

Counted vote: the chair of the session may decide that a vote needs to be counted. Any voting member may request a count from the floor; if fifty voting members stand and show their voting cards, a count will be taken.

Communications with the chair and aide: the chair and aide team can be contacted at conference – solely for formal communication on procedural motions and points of order, via the Speakers Desk or via the link:

www.libdems.org.uk/procedural-motions

Speaking and voting at conference

Eligibility to speak and vote

All party members are entitled to speak and vote in conference debates, providing they are attending conference as a party member (and not for example as an exhibitor or observer). Party members fulfilling these criteria are known as 'voting members'.

Length of speeches

The length of speeches is shown against each motion in the **Agenda**.

There are three lights on the speaker's rostrum and visible either side of the stage. The green light comes on at the beginning of the speech. The amber light comes on 60 seconds before the end of the allowed time (20 seconds

Agenda information

before the end of an intervention). The red light comes on when all the time is used up, and the speaker must stop immediately.

Applying to speak

To make a speech in a debate you must:

- complete a speaker's card, collected from and returned to the Speakers' Table at the front of the auditorium, an auditorium steward or the Information Desk; or
- submit an electronic speaker's card, from Monday 9 September up to one hour before the start of the debate, online at www.libdems.org.uk/speakers-card

Completing a speaker's card

When completing a speaker's card, remember:

1 Submit your card well in advance.

The chair and aide team for the debate will meet well in advance to plan the debate – sometimes the previous day.

2 Fill in your card completely.

Complete the back of the card as well as the front. These sections are needed for the chair and aide to balance the debate, so they can call people with relevant experience and avoid a string of people making the same point.

3 Make sure it's readable!

Don't fill every square centimetre of the card and write legibly – the easier you make it for the chair and aide to read the card the more likely you will be called.

Interventions

To speak during interventions, voting members should complete an intervention form, collected from and returned to a steward in the auditorium. Speakers will be chosen by the chair of the session by random.

Agenda information

Other conference sessions

Emergency motions

Emergency motions are debated and voted on and make formal party policy like other motions, but refer to a substantial development since the deadline for submission of motions.

There is a slot for emergency motions on any topic at F38 on Tuesday 17 September. The motions for selection by ballot will be printed in *Conference Extra*. The emergency motions ballot will be held electronically. Members of conference will receive a ballot by email at 17.00 on Friday 13 September, and should complete it online by 17.00 on Saturday 14 September.

In addition, there is a slot for an emergency motion specifically on the topic of the Israel-Gaza Conflict at F32 on Monday 16 September. The FCC will select which motion is to be debated, and that motion will be printed in *Conference Extra* and Monday's *Conference Daily*.

Topical issue discussions

Topical issue discussions allow members and spokespeople to discuss and comment on a political issue live at the time of conference; they do not make party policy.

Party members may submit suggested topics for a discussion, which will be considered by officers of the FCC and FPC. If a topical issue discussion is selected, it will be published in the relevant *Conference Daily*.

Question & answer sessions

Any voting member may submit a concise question (maximum 25 words) on any subject for the Leader's Q&A (F20). Questions will be selected by the chair and the questioner will be able to ask their question via the interventions microphone.

Questions may be submitted by 13.00 on Monday 9 September using the online form at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

Questions may also be submitted on a form collected from and returned to the Speakers' Table in the auditorium by 12.50 on Sunday 15 September.

Agenda information

In addition, there is a question and answer session on Defence and Veterans at F13 on Saturday 14 September. Any voting member may submit a concise question (maximum 25 words) on that topic. Questions will be selected and read out by the chair.

Questions may be submitted by 13.00 on Monday 9 September using the online form at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

Questions may also be submitted on a form collected from and returned to the Speakers' Table in the auditorium by 12.50 on Saturday 14 March.

Reports

The reports of Federal Committees and Parliamentary Parties are printed in the separate reports document. Any voting member may submit concise questions on these reports. Questions may be submitted by 13.00 on Monday 9 September using the online form at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

Questions received by the deadline above will be published in *Conference Extra* and are guaranteed a reply, in the session or in writing thereafter.

Questions may also be submitted on a form collected from and returned to the Speakers' Table in the auditorium until one hour before the start of the relevant session, but will only be called if time allows and at the discretion of the chair of the session.

Submitting amendments, emergency motions, topical issues and appeals

Amendments and emergency motions

Amendments and emergency motions must be:

- signed by 10 party members; *or*
- submitted by one or more of: a local party, state party, regional party in England, Federal Associated Organisation or Federal Party Committee.

Agenda information

And must be submitted by 13.00 on Monday 9 September online at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

Submitters should include:

- For amendments – a short explanation of the intended effect of the amendment.
- For emergency motions – a short explanation of its emergency nature.

Topical issues

Suggestions for topical issues may be submitted by any party member by 13.00 on Monday 9 September online at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

The title of the issue should be no more than ten words, and should not include an expression of opinion; please include full contact details of the submitter and up to 100 words explanatory background.

Drafting advice

Submitters are encouraged to use our drafting advice service: draft amendments and emergency motions should be submitted by 13.00 on Tuesday 27 August online at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

Appeals

If you wish to appeal the FCC's decision not to select your emergency motion or amendment, follow these instructions.

The appeal should come from the email address of the original contact for the motion and should be no longer than one side of A4.

It should explain why you are appealing and any new information the FCC was unaware of when it made its decision. You should attach the full text of the original motion or amendment and the letter of rejection.

The email should also contain a contact name and telephone number.

Appeals should be emailed by 09.00 on Thursday 12 September to:

appeals@libdems.org.uk

Standing Orders

Glossary of terms

Business motion

A proposal to conduct the affairs of the Party in a particular way or to express an opinion on the way affairs have been conducted.

Business amendment

A proposal to change a business motion. *Any such proposal should be significant, should be within the scope of the original motion and must not be a direct negative.*

Committee

Throughout these standing orders, Committee means the Federal Conference Committee unless otherwise qualified.

Constitutional amendment

A proposal to change the constitution of the Party.

Secondary constitutional amendment

An amendment to a constitutional amendment. *This must not introduce new material.*

Consultative session

A meeting where selected areas of policy or strategy are considered in greater depth than is possible in full debates.

Day visitor

Someone who has paid the appropriate day visitor fee. Day visitors are not entitled to speak or vote in full sessions of conference.

Emergency motion

A proposal which derives from a significant recent development which occurred after the deadline for submission of motions. *Emergency motions must be brief (maximum 500 words).*

Emergency amendment

An amendment to a motion which relates to a specific event which occurred

after the deadline for the submission of amendments. *It must be brief and uncontentious.*

Full session

Any part of the conference agenda during which debates, topical issue discussions or discussion of business, including formal reports, takes place. This specifically excludes formal speeches such as those by the Leader or Party Officers.

Point of order

A suggestion to the chair of a debate that the conduct of the debate, as laid down in the standing orders, has not been followed correctly.

Policy motion

A proposal to adopt a new policy or reaffirm an existing one. This includes motions accompanying policy papers.

Policy amendment

A proposal to change a policy motion. *Any proposal should be of significant importance, should be within the scope of the original motion and must not be a direct negative.*

Policy paper

A paper prepared by the Federal Policy Committee and submitted to conference for debate under the terms of Article 7.4 of the Federal Party constitution.

Procedural motion

A proposal that the conduct of a debate should be changed in a specific way. Procedural motions are:

Move to next business

A proposal that the conference should cease to consider an item of business and immediately move to the next item on the agenda.

Standing Orders

Reference back

A proposal to refer a motion or amendment to a named body of the Party for further consideration.

Request for a count

A request to the chair that a specific vote be counted and recorded rather than decided on the chair’s assessment of a show of voting cards.

Separate vote

A request to the chair of a debate that a part or parts of a motion or amendment should be voted on separately.

Suspension of standing orders

A proposal to relax specific standing orders for a stated purpose.

Special conference

An additional meeting of the conference requisitioned by the Federal Board, Federal Policy Committee, conference itself or 2% of party members, in not

fewer than 10% of local parties under the provisions of Article 6.3 of the Federal constitution.

Standing order amendment

A proposal to change these standing orders.

Secondary standing order amendment

An amendment to a standing order amendment. This must not introduce new material.

Topical issue discussion

A discussion on a policy issue of significant and topical relevance, conducted without a vote.

Voting member

A member attending conference who has satisfied the requirements for attendance and has paid the registration fee presently in force for party members as agreed by FCC, and who is not a day visitor [or observer].

Standing Orders for a conference held remotely

- A. In the event that the Federal Board determines it is impossible to hold a conference under the normal rules, and instead summons a special meeting of the conference to be held remotely, or the Committee otherwise directs that a conference shall be conducted remotely, these Standing Orders shall apply.
 - ii) Any communications with the chair must be made via an online channel designated by the Committee for that purpose and advertised to voting members prior to the commencement of a debate.
 - iii) In original Standing Order 6.2, the reference to the Chief Steward shall also include lead moderators designated by the Chief Steward.
 - iv) Original Standing Order 8.7 shall apply save that the Committee may set a deadline in respect of any given full session for the receipt of electronic speakers’
- B. A remote conference shall be conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders that apply to a conference not conducted remotely (‘the original Standing Orders’), save that:
 - i) All references in the original Standing Orders to votes, whether by ballot, show of hands or show of voting cards, shall instead be conducted via an online poll or alternative secure method of online voting, designated by the Committee; similarly all references to speakers cards shall be taken to mean electronic speakers’ cards.

Standing Orders

- cards; the chair shall have discretion to accept electronic speakers' cards after the deadline.
- v) Original Standing Orders 9.1, 9.2, 11.5 and Procedural motion 3 (Request for a Count) in the Glossary of Terms, shall not apply; instead, voting members shall, when appropriate, be directed by the chair to vote using the online voting tool made available to them. Standing Order 2.3 shall not apply.
 - vi) In original Standing Order 10.1, any voting member may signal to the chair via the designated online channel that they are moving a point of order, in lieu of rising in their place.
 - vii) As, by necessity, all votes shall be counted votes, Standing Order 11.5 shall not apply; instead the chair shall ensure the result of the counted vote is publicised to members, via the appropriate online channel.

Standing Orders for the Federal Conference

1. The Conference Agenda

1.1 What is on the Agenda

The agenda for each meeting of conference, other than a special conference, shall include time for:

- a) One or more consultative sessions; save that the Committee may decide not to hold any consultative sessions at a spring conference;
- b) A business session or sessions for the consideration of reports from the Parliamentary Parties as listed in Article 6.5 of the Federal Party's Constitution, the Federal Board, the Federal Policy Committee, Federal Communications and Elections Committee, Federal International Relations Committee, Federal Council, and the Federal Conference Committee together with, when appropriate, reports from any other body the Committee considers appropriate, accounts, the annual report, a motion accompanying the proposed strategy of the party, business motions, constitutional amendments and standing order amendments;
- c) Policy motions (including motions accompanying policy papers);

- d) Emergency motions;
- e) Topical issue discussions;
- f) Any other business which the Committee thinks appropriate.

The time to be allocated to each type of business and the order of that business shall be decided by the Committee provided that conference may decide not to take any particular item on the agenda.

1.2 Conference or council of state parties

In addition, time before or after any meeting may be agreed with the relevant state party for a meeting of the conference or council of that party.

1.3 Right to submit agenda items

- a) Reports to conference may be submitted only by the bodies listed in paragraph 1.1(b).
- b) Business motions (including amendments and emergency business motions and amendments), constitutional amendments and secondary constitutional amendments, standing order amendments and secondary standing order amendments may be submitted by the Federal Board, Federal Policy Committee, Federal Council, Federal

Standing Orders

- Conference Committee, state parties, regional parties in England, local parties, Affiliated Organisations and 10 party members.
- c) Motions accompanying policy papers may only be submitted by the Federal Policy Committee.
 - d) Policy motions (including amendments, emergency policy motions and amendments) may be submitted by the Federal Policy Committee, state parties, regional parties in England, local parties, Affiliated Organisations and 10 party members.
 - e) The Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons may submit a motion relating to supporting a government containing members of the other parties, in accordance with Article 24 of the constitution.
 - f) Proposals for topical issue discussions may be submitted by any party member.

1.4 How motions and amendments are submitted

All motions and amendments must be submitted to the Committee. They must identify a person authorised to agree to their being composited or redrafted. The detail of methods of submission will be notified for each conference via the party website.

1.5 The deadlines by which motions, amendments, reports and questions to reports must be submitted

The Committee shall specify:

- a) The closing date for the receipt of policy motions (including motions accompanying policy papers), business motions, constitutional amendments and amendments to standing orders, which shall be at least eight weeks before the start of conference.
- b) The closing date for the receipt of amendments to motions published in

the Agenda and emergency motions, which shall be at least two days before the start of conference.

- c) The closing date for the submission of written reports from the bodies listed in paragraph 1.1(b), which will be set so as to enable their distribution with the Agenda. Any supplementary report submitted later than this deadline may only be tabled at conference with the permission of the Committee.
- d) The closing date for the submission of questions to any of the reports listed in the Agenda, which shall be the same as the deadline for emergency motions. Questions submitted by this deadline are guaranteed to be asked.
- e) Notwithstanding 1.5 (d), questions may always be submitted to any of the reports listed in the Agenda, by the end of the preceding morning (for report sessions taking place in the afternoon) or afternoon (for report sessions taking place in the morning). Any questions submitted by this deadline will only be taken at the discretion of the chair.
- f) The closing date for proposals for topical issue discussions, which shall be at least two days before the start of conference.

1.6 Notification of deadlines

All dates specified under Standing Order 1.5 shall be publicised to party members and bodies entitled to submit motions. Publication in the party newspaper/magazine and website may be treated as notice for this purpose.

1.7 Later deadlines in special circumstances

In special circumstances the Committee may specify later dates than those indicated above. In particular, where developments which, in the opinion of the Committee, are of great importance have taken place after the closing date

Standing Orders

for emergency motions and questions to reports, the Committee may make time available for an additional emergency motion or for a statement to be made on behalf of the Party or for additional questions to be submitted to reports.

2. Consultative sessions

2.1 The subjects for consultative sessions

The subjects for debate at consultative sessions shall be chosen by the Committee on the advice of the Federal Policy Committee and, where appropriate, the Federal Board, and published in the Agenda. Two or more such sessions may be held simultaneously.

2.2 Speaking at consultative sessions

Any member of the Party may be called to speak at a consultative session and, with the approval of the chair, non-members with relevant expertise may also be called.

2.3 Voting at consultative sessions

At the discretion of the chair a vote by show of hands may be taken to indicate the weight of opinion among members present on any issue that has been debated.

3. The Agenda

3.1 The shortlisting of motions

The Committee shall draw up the Agenda and shall decide which of the motions duly submitted shall be included in it. The Committee may allocate time for one or more policy or business motions to be selected by ballot. Copies of motions not selected shall be available for inspection and will be supplied to any party member on payment of a copying charge and postage.

3.2 Motions for the amendment of the constitution or standing orders

Save as detailed below in Standing Order 4.3, all proposed amendments to the constitution or standing orders must be selected for debate.

3.3 Balance between State and Federal policy debates

The Committee shall, in drawing up the Agenda, have due regard to the balance of State and Federal policy debates and in particular shall as far as possible organise the agenda so that all matters which relate solely to one or more state parties but not all State Parties or the Federal Party shall be considered at either the beginning or the end of the conference.

4. Selection of motions and amendments

4.1 Compositing or otherwise altering motions

In drawing up the Agenda the Committee shall seek to reflect the range of views in the Party as indicated by the motions and amendments submitted. The Committee may:

- a) Treat any severable part of a motion or amendment as a separate motion or amendment.
- b) Redraft a motion or amendment so as to improve expression, remove inaccuracy or superfluity or take account of new developments.
- c) Composite similar motions or amendments.

4.2 Selection of amendments

The Committee shall decide which of the amendments duly submitted to each motion shall be selected. No amendment shall be selected if, in the opinion of the Committee it is insubstantial, outside the scope of the motion, or tantamount to a direct negative of the motion.

Standing Orders

4.3 Motions for the amendment of the constitution or standing orders

The Committee may refuse to select a motion for amendment of the constitution or standing orders if, in their opinion, it is:

- a) Similar in effect to another motion which has been selected for debate or ballot at the same meeting of conference.
- b) Similar in effect to a motion that has been rejected at either of the last two meetings of conference.
- c) In the case of amendments to the constitution, incomplete in that it leaves unamended some other part of the constitution which contradicts the meaning of the amendment.
- d) In the case of amendments to standing orders, incomplete in that it leaves unamended some other part of standing orders which contradicts the meaning of the amendment.
- e) Ambiguous.

4.4 Emergency motions

The Committee may reject an emergency motion if:

- a) It is similar in effect to another motion that has been selected for debate or ballot.
- b) It is similar in effect to a subject chosen for a topical issue discussion.
- c) It is unclear as to its meaning or intent or is, in the opinion of the Committee, too poorly drafted to provide a sensible basis for debate.
- d) It falls outside the definition of emergency motions.

No amendment shall be taken to any motion selected under this Standing Order.

4.5 Ballots for emergency motions

All emergency motions, except those rejected under Standing Order 4.4, must be placed either on the agenda

for debate or in a ballot for selection by Conference. The Committee may hold separate ballots to select which of a range of emergency policy motions and which of a range of emergency business motions to debate. If one or more ballots is held the Committee shall circulate the text of all balloted motions to the voting members as soon as practicable and shall specify a closing time for the ballot. Following the counting of any ballots the Committee shall decide how many motions shall be debated in the time available.

4.6 Emergency amendments

The Committee shall have complete discretion whether to select emergency amendments for debate.

4.7 Topical issue discussions

The choice of subjects for topical issue discussions shall be made by the Officers of the Committee in consultation with the Officers of the Federal Policy Committee. In choosing the subjects, the Officers shall have regard to the significance and topicality of the subjects proposed and whether they are likely to provoke a lively discussion.

5. Special meetings

5.1 Timetabling of special meetings

The Committee shall, as soon as practicable after the requisitioning of a special meeting of the conference, fix a date for the meeting, draw up the Agenda and, if appropriate, specify a date for the submission of amendments. The meeting shall deal only with the business stated in the notice of requisition save that the Committee may allow time for emergency motions and for business which is formal or, in its opinion, uncontentious.

Standing Orders

5.2 Preferred timescales for special meetings

In setting dates for the submission of motions and amendments and giving notice thereof and of the conference itself the Committee shall endeavour to follow the timescales laid down elsewhere in these standing orders but, where this is not practicable, the Committee shall set such dates as it sees fit.

6. Appeals

6.1 Appeals against rejection of motions

The Committee shall provide written reasoning to the nominee of the proposers for the rejection of any motion or amendment. The proposers may appeal, in writing, to the next meeting of the Committee. Any such appeal shall provide reasons why, in the opinion of the proposers, the expressed reasons for rejection are not valid. If the appeal is allowed, the motion or amendment shall be treated as an emergency motion or amendment according to the stage of the agenda-setting process at which the appeal has been allowed.

6.2 Appeals against exclusion from conference

Any person excluded from conference by a decision of the Chief Steward shall have the right of appeal to the Committee at the next of its regular meetings. The exclusion shall remain in force pending the appeal.

7. The chair

7.1 Who chairs conference

The President, if present, shall normally take the chair at the formal opening and closing of conference and when the Party Leader is making a formal

speech from the platform. At all other sessions the chair shall be appointed by the Committee. Normally no person shall chair more than one session at any meeting.

7.2 The chair's aide

The Committee may appoint an aide or aides to assist the chair of each session.

8. Conduct of debate

8.1 Variation in the order of business

The Committee may propose to the conference a variation in the order of business as set out in the Agenda. Such variation shall be put to the vote and shall take effect if approved by a majority of those voting.

8.2 Withdrawal of motions and amendments

Once the Committee has included a motion or amendment, or part of a motion or amendment, in the Agenda, may not be withdrawn except by leave of conference. A request to withdraw a motion may be submitted to conference either by the movers of the motion or the Committee

8.3 The order of debate

The Committee shall direct the order of debate. Generally, however, a motion will be moved and immediately thereafter the amendments and options will be moved in the order directed by the Committee. There will then be a general debate. The movers of amendments and options (or their nominees) shall have the right of reply in the same order (except that where an amendment or option has not been opposed during the debate, the chair of the session shall have the right to direct that its movers shall not exercise their right of reply), after which the mover of the motion (or the mover's nominee) shall have the right of reply. Votes shall

Standing Orders

then be taken on the amendments and options in the order in which they have been moved and, finally, on the substantive motion. The Committee may direct that part of any motion or amendment or groups or amendments may be the subject of a separate debate.

8.4 Topical issue discussions

The Committee shall direct the order of the discussion. Normally the proposer of the subject shall speak first, and a representative of the Federal Policy Committee shall speak last.

8.5 Who may speak

All voting members may speak at a full session of conference. Additionally, the Committee may invite any person to address the conference as a guest. Neither such provision shall prejudice the right of the chair of a session to select speakers.

8.6 The special rights of the Federal Committees

Provided that the Federal Policy Committee is not proposing the motion or any of the amendments to be taken in a debate on a policy motion or on motions relating to the policy-making processes of the Party it shall have the right to nominate a person to report its views on the subject before the conference. The Federal Board shall have similar rights on business motions or motions to amend the constitution, as shall the Federal Conference Committee on motions relating to the proceeding and procedures of the conference and to amend standing orders. Such a person shall be called to speak for the same length of time as the person replying on behalf of the mover of the motion.

8.7 The selection of speakers

Voting members wishing to speak in any debate shall submit a speaker's

card, prior to the commencement of the debate in which they wish to speak, stating whether they wish to speak for or against an amendment, the motion or part of the motion. The chair shall be responsible for the choice of the speakers and shall attempt to provide a balanced debate between the different viewpoints in the conference, but may announce a departure from this rule if there is an overwhelming preponderance of members wishing to speak on the same side. The chair shall have the discretion to accept speakers' cards after the start of the debate. Save as provided for in these standing orders, no person may speak more than once in any debate.

8.8 The length of speeches

The Committee shall set out in the Agenda time limits for speeches.

9. Voting at Conference

9.1 The method of voting

Voting cards shall be issued at each meeting to voting members. (The Committee may direct that voting on any issue be by ballot.) Subject thereto all votes at full sessions shall be taken by show of voting cards and by voting members voting securely online.

9.2 Counting of votes

A vote by show of voting cards shall be counted:

- a) If the Committee has so directed.
 - b) If the chair so directs.
 - c) As the result of a procedural motion under Standing Order 11.5 below.
- A recount will only be held if the chair is not satisfied that the first count was accurate.

9.3 Separate votes

A separate vote may be taken on a part of a motion or amendment:

- a) On the direction of the Committee.

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- b) At the discretion of the chair.
- c) As a result of a procedural motion under Standing Order 11.4 below.

10. Points of order

10.1 Making a point of order

Any voting member may rise on a point of order which shall be taken immediately except that, during a vote, no point of order shall be taken that does not refer to the conduct of the vote. The chair's decision on all points of order shall be final.

11. Procedural motions

11.1 Next business

- a) A voting member may, during any full conference session, submit, in writing, a request that conference move to next business, giving the reasons to do so. The submission shall not exceed 75 words.
- b) The chair may either take the request immediately upon receipt, or at the end of any speech currently being made. If more than one request is received the chair shall decide which to take. No more than one request may be taken in respect to any motion or report.
- c) When the request is to be taken, the chair shall read the statement of reasons and ask conference whether it wishes to consider the request to move to next business. If conference decides, by a simple majority of those voting, to do so, the person who made the request may speak. The chair may allow other speakers. All speeches under this standing order shall be limited to two minutes. If conference decides not to debate the proposal, it falls.
- d) The proposal shall require a two-thirds majority of those voting being to be passed. If it is carried the current

agenda item shall be abandoned without any further debate or vote and, at the discretion of the chair, either the next agenda item shall be taken or there shall be an adjournment until the time at which the next agenda item was due to be taken.

11.2 Reference back (moved by a voting member)

- a) A voting member, who has not already spoken in the debate, may, at any time before the chair has asked the first speaker in reply to stand by, submit, in writing, a request to refer back the motion under debate. The submission shall state to whom the motion is to be referred and shall include a statement of the reasons, including reasons why voting against the motion would not achieve a similar result, not exceeding 75 words.
- b) The chair may take the request to refer back at whatever stage of the debate they consider appropriate. If more than one request is received, the chair shall decide which to take. No more than one request may be taken with respect to any motion.
- c) When the request is to be taken, the chair shall read the statement of reasons and ask conference whether it wishes to consider the request to refer. If conference decides, by a simple majority of those voting, to do so, the person who made the request may speak and the mover of the substantive motion, or their nominee, may reply. The chair may allow other speakers. All speeches under this standing order shall be limited to two minutes. If conference decides not to debate the reference back, it falls.
- d) The reference back shall require a simple majority of those voting to be passed. If it is carried the current agenda item shall be abandoned

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without any further debate or vote and, at the discretion of the chair, either the next agenda item shall be taken or there shall be an adjournment until the time at which the next agenda item was due to be taken.

- e) If the substantive motion is referred to the Federal Board, the Federal Policy Committee or the Federal Conference Committee that body shall, in its report to the next meeting of the conference, state what action it has taken on the reference.

11.3 Reference back (moved by the Federal Policy Committee)

- a) The Federal Policy Committee may, at any time before the beginning of the debate on a motion, submit, in writing, a request to refer that motion to the next meeting of the conference. The chair shall announce the existence of such a request at the start of the debate.
- b) The chair may take the request to refer back at whatever stage of the debate they consider appropriate. A nominee of the Federal Policy Committee will speak and the mover of the substantive motion, or their nominee, may reply. The chair shall have discretion whether to allow other speakers on the request.
- c) The reference back shall require a simple majority of those voting to be passed. If it is carried the current agenda item shall be abandoned without any further debate or vote and, at the discretion of the chair, either the next agenda item shall be taken or there shall be an adjournment until the time at which the next agenda item was due to be taken.
- d) If passed, the Federal Policy Committee shall, before the next meeting of the conference, circulate its

reasons for acting under this section and its comments on the motion and any amendments thereto accepted for debate.

11.4 Separate vote

A voting member of conference may request that the chair take a separate vote on a part of a motion or amendment provided that such a request is in writing and received by the commencement of the first conference session on the day before the debate is scheduled. If the debate is scheduled for the first day of conference, the request must be received in writing no later than 48 hours before the opening of conference. The Committee shall have complete discretion whether to take a separate vote. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the debate shall have discretion to accept a request for a separate vote if it is received in writing after this deadline.

11.5 Counted vote

Any voting member may ask for a counted vote, which shall be taken if the request is supported by 50 members rising in their places and showing their voting cards.

11.6 Suspension of standing orders

- a) A voting conference member may, during any full conference session, move a motion for the suspension of standing orders. The mover shall submit the motion together with a written statement of its purpose, not exceeding 75 words, to the chair, who shall read them to the meeting. Such a motion may contain no more than one proposed change to the agenda or conduct of debate. The chair may either take the request immediately upon receipt, or at the end of the speech currently being made.
- b) No motion to suspend standing orders may suspend any requirement of the

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constitution, nor any part of these standing orders which govern:

- i) The rights of, or timetable for, submission of motions and amendments.
 - ii) Consultative sessions.
 - iii) Procedural motions for next business or suspension of standing orders.
- c) No motion to suspend standing orders to introduce a motion or amendment on to the agenda can be taken unless the motion or amendment has been submitted to the Committee in accordance with the published timetable and, where a right of appeal against non-selection exists, the right has been exercised.
- d) The chair shall read the statement of purpose and, if the suspension is allowable in the terms of this standing order, ask the conference whether it wishes to debate the request for suspension. If the conference decides not to debate the request, it falls. If the conference decides, by a majority of those present and voting, to hear the request the mover may speak and a representative of the Committee may reply. The chair shall have the discretion to allow other speakers. All speeches on the motion to suspend standing orders will be limited to two minutes.
- e) A motion to suspend standing orders shall only be carried if supported by at least two-thirds of the conference members voting. If the procedural motion is carried all standing orders shall remain in force except only for the purposes set out in the motion.

11.7 No procedural motions during votes

No procedural motion can be moved during a vote.

12. Reports

12.1 Which reports are tabled

The business session or sessions of the conference must include consideration of reports from the bodies listed in Standing Order 1.1 (b).

12.2 Submission and selection of questions

A voting member may submit questions to any report tabled for consideration, by the deadlines set under Standing Orders 1.5 (d) and (e). The Committee shall publish in advance of the report session all the questions submitted under Standing Order 1.5 (d) which are in order, compositing similar questions where appropriate. Questions to the Federal Board report may include questions about the work of the Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee and the work of the Federal People Development Committee

12.3 Whether questions are in order or not

A question shall be ruled out of order if it asks the body submitting the report about issues which are outside its duties and responsibilities. If the question could be answered by another body reporting to the same conference, the Committee may transfer the question to that body.

12.4 How questions and supplementary questions are put and answered

After the report is moved, the mover, or their nominee, shall answer the questions in turn. After each question has been answered, the voting member who submitted the question will be given the opportunity to put a supplementary question, speaking for a maximum of 1 minute, and the mover, or their nominee, will be given an opportunity to respond. The chair shall determine the time given to the mover in moving the

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report and replying to questions. The chair shall also determine how many of the published questions, and how many of the questions submitted under Standing Order 1.5 (e), can be taken. After the conference the Committee shall publish the answers to all questions submitted under Standing Orders 1.5 (d) and (e) which are in order, and to all supplementary questions asked.

12.5 Approval or rejection of reports from Federal Party committees or sub-committees

Any report tabled by a Federal Party committee or sub-committee must be submitted for approval by the conference and must be voted upon accordingly. A voting member may move the rejection of any part of the report or of the report as a whole. A voting member wishing to move a rejection shall submit a speaker's card prior to the commencement of the consideration of the report, stating the section(s) which they wish to have rejected. All moves to reject a report must be debated (except that the chair shall have discretion to choose between moves to reject the same part of the report), at the conclusion of the question session. The person who made the request shall speak and the mover of the report, or their nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow other speakers, and shall determine the time given to all speakers.

12.6 Receipt of reports from other bodies

Any report tabled by a body other than a Federal Party committee or sub-committee must be submitted for receipt by the conference and must be voted upon accordingly. A voting member may move not to receive the report, by submitting a speaker's card prior to the commencement of the consideration of the report. A move not to receive a report must be debated (except that the chair

shall have discretion to choose between more than one move not to receive the same report), at the conclusion of the question session. The person who made the request shall speak and the mover of the report, or their nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow other speakers, and shall determine the time given to all speakers.

13. Amendment of standing orders

13.1 Amendment of standing orders

These standing orders may be amended by a two-thirds majority of members of conference voting on a motion duly submitted and selected in accordance with standing orders. Subject to any amendment they shall remain in force from meeting to meeting.

14. The chair and vice chairs of the Committee

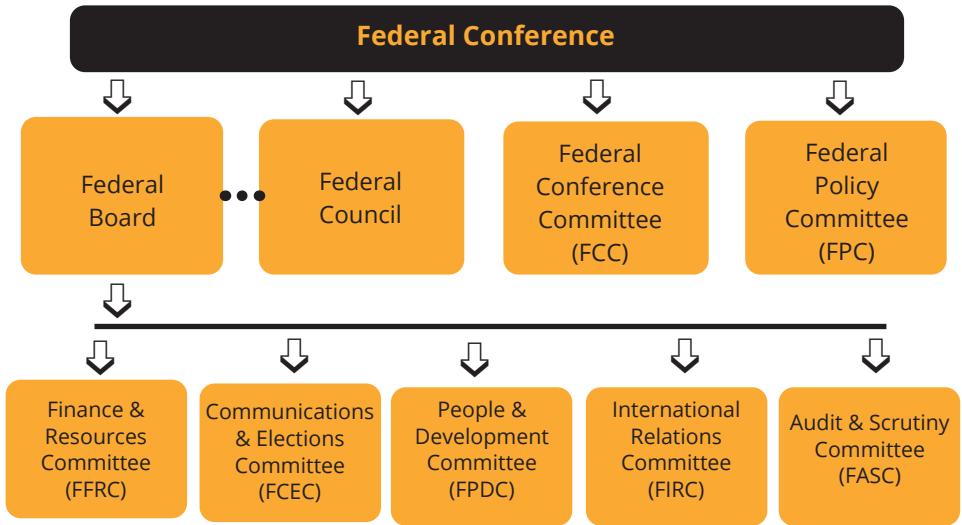
14.1 Chair and vice chairs

At its first meeting after a new election the Committee shall elect a chair, who must be a member of the Committee directly elected by party members, and at least one vice chair, who must be members of the Committee either directly elected by party members or elected by one of the State Parties.

The Federal Party

The Federal Party is responsible for the Party’s overall strategy, overall preparations for Parliamentary Elections; the overall presentation, image and media relations of the Party; and our international relationships.

It has the following committee structure:



The roles of each Committee are outlined in Articles 9 through 16 of the Federal Constitution. The Committees have the following Chairs:

- Federal Board: Dr Mark Pack, Party President
- Federal Council: Cllr Antony Hook
- Federal Conference Committee: Cllr Nick da Costa
- Federal Policy Committee: Ed Davey MP
- Federal Finance and Resources Committee: Mike Cox, Registered Treasurer
- Federal Communications and Elections Committee: Baroness Pinnock
- Federal People and Development Committee: Claire Hudson
- Federal International Relations Committee: David Chalmers
- Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee: Dave Radcliffe

Details of all the Committees, their functions and members can be found on the Party website at:

www.libdems.org.uk/committees_organisations

