General Election briefing for BMA members

Liberal Democrat manifesto 2019
Overview
The Liberal Democrat Party’s manifesto, *Stop Brexit, build a Brighter Future*, makes a number of pledges regarding health and social care.

In trailing policies within the manifesto ahead of its publication, the Lib Dems spoke of their commitment to the NHS. Their first major policy announcement for the election was to “propose a credible and comprehensive plan to protect the NHS from a Tory or Labour Brexit” including the party’s spending commitment to raise an extra £35 billion in reals terms for the NHS and social care by adding a penny on income tax.

**Key manifesto pledges**
- NHS and social care to receive an extra £7bn a year in additional revenue, ringfenced and paid for through an immediate 1p rise on all rates of income tax.
- The provision of a £10 billion capital fund to upgrade equipment, ambulances, hospitals and other NHS buildings to bring them into the 21st century.
- Transforming mental health by treating it with the same urgency as physical health.
- Reforming the Health and Social Care Act as recommended by the NHS, to make the NHS work in a more efficient and joined-up way, and to end the automatic tendering of services.
- If given a majority, the Liberal Democrats would revoke article 50, in other circumstances they would campaign for a second referendum and a vote to remain in the EU.

**The full picture...**
The official document is available [here](#). The summary below provides a full overview of their manifesto pledges impacting upon health and social care sectors, NHS staff, and patients. Most, but not all, of this information is taken verbatim from the manifesto (please check before using).

**NHS funding**
- Raise £7 billion a year additional revenue which will be ring-fenced to be spent only on NHS and social care services. Priority areas for spending include social care, workforce shortages, and investment in mental health and prevention services. This revenue will be generated from a 1p rise on all Income Tax bands (note that this will be neither levied nor spent in Scotland).
- Use £10 billion of capital fund to invest in equipment, hospitals, community, ambulance and mental health services buildings.
- In the longer term, and as a replacement for the 1p income tax rise, commission the development of a dedicated health and care tax.
- Establish a cross-party health and social care convention to carry out a comprehensive review of the longer-term sustainability of the health and social care finances.
- Introduce a statutory independent budget monitoring body for health and care, similar to the Office for Budget Responsibility. This new body would report every three years on how much money the system needs to deliver safe and sustainable treatment and care, and how much is needed to meet the costs of projected increases in demand and any new initiatives.
- Use £130bn package of infrastructure investment that includes capital investment in schools and hospitals to support capacity increases and modernisation, and a programme of installing hyper-fast, fibre-optic broadband across the UK with a particular focus on connecting rural areas.
System transformation
- Support the changes to the Health and Social Care Act recommended by the NHS, with the objective of making the NHS work in a more efficient and joined-up way, and to end the automatic tendering of services.
- Move towards single place-based budgets for health and social care, encouraging greater collaboration between the local NHS and Local Authorities in commissioning.
- Encourage Clinical Commissioning Groups and Local Councils to collaborate on commissioning, including further use of pooled budgets, joint appointments and joint arrangements, and encourage emerging governance structures for Integrated Care Systems to include local government, and be accountable to them.

Brexit
- If given a majority, the Liberal Democrats would revoke article 50, in other circumstances they would campaign for a second referendum and a vote to remain in the EU.
- Protect and maintain freedom of movement, safeguarding the rights of UK citizens living elsewhere in the EU and EU citizens in the UK, and support the right of the people of Gibraltar to remain in the European Union.
- Extend voting rights in UK referendum, general and local elections as well as the ability to stand for office, to all EU citizens who have lived in the UK for five years or longer.

Workforce
- Review the NHS’s future needs for all staff, and produce a national workforce strategy, that matches training places to future needs.
- Target extra help for nursing students, starting with bursaries for specialties where shortages are most acute such as mental health and learning disability nursing.
- Attract and support talented professionals from countries with developed health systems, with an ethical recruitment policy in line with World Health Organization guidance and make the current registration process more flexible and accessible without lowering standards.
- Encourage healthcare professionals to work in areas where there are shortages, especially inner city and remote rural areas, through a Patient Premium which would give incentive payments to clinicians.

General practice & community services
- End the GP shortfall by 2025 by both training more GPs and making greater appropriate use of nurses, physiotherapists and pharmacists, and also phone or video appointments, where clinically suitable.
- Support GPs, nurses, physiotherapists, mental health and other professionals to work together across their local areas to provide multi-disciplinary health and care services, to improve appointments outside of normal working hours, including mobile services.

Employment
- Establish an independent review to consult on how to set a genuine Living Wage across all sectors.
- Establish a new Worker Protection Enforcement Authority to protect those in precarious work
- Change the law so that flexible working is open to all from day one in the job, with employers required to advertise jobs accordingly, unless there are significant business reasons why that is not possible.
- Shifting the burden of proof in employment tribunals regarding employment status from individual to employer.
Free childcare from the age of nine months (the end of paid parental leave), transforming the opportunities for early years education and helping parents who want to combine caring and working.

Offer free, high-quality childcare for every child aged two to four and children aged between nine and 24 months where their parents or guardians are in work: 35 hours a week, 48 weeks a year.

**Public health**

- Publish a National Wellbeing Strategy - ministers from all departments will be responsible for implementing the strategy.
- Pursue a Health in All Policies approach, as recommended by the World Health Organization. This means national and local decision making, policies and interventions will only take place after the impact on people’s mental and physical health has been fully assessed.
- Keep public health within local government
- Re-instate the funding that was cut from public health budgets by the Conservatives and join up services across public health and the NHS.
- Introduce a new statutory requirement for public health interventions evaluated as cost effective by NICE to be available to qualifying people, within three months of publication of guidance.
- Develop a strategy to tackle childhood obesity including restricting the marketing of junk food to children, closing loopholes in the Soft Drinks Industry Levy, and extending the Levy to include juice- and milk-based drinks that are high in added sugar.
- Guarantee that every child who is eligible for free school meals has access to at least an hour a day of free activities to improve their health and wellbeing - local authorities will be funded through the public health grant to deliver the ‘Wellbeing Hour’ according to local needs, for example through voluntary organisations or after-school clubs.
- Require labelling for food products, in a readable font size, and publication of information on calorie, fat, sugar and salt content in restaurants and takeaways.
- Restrict how products high in fat, salt and sugar are marketed and advertised by multiple retailers.
- Reduce smoking rates by introducing a new levy on tobacco companies to contribute to the costs of health care and smoking cessation services.
- Legislate for the right to unpolluted air and take urgent action to reduce pollution especially from traffic.
- Introduce minimum unit pricing for alcohol, taking note of the impact of the policy in Scotland.
- Ensure universal access to alcohol addiction treatment.
- Fund public information campaigns to tackle stigmas within specific communities.
- Ensure Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) for HIV prevention is fully available to all who need it on the NHS.
- Move the departmental lead on drugs policy to the Department of Health and Social Care, and invest in more addiction services and support for drug users.
- Reform access to cannabis through a regulated cannabis market in UK, with a robust approach to licensing, drawing on emerging evidence on models from the US and Canada.
- Support and encourage more clinical trials of cannabis for medicinal use to establish a clear evidence base.
- Introduce a wellbeing budget, following the example of New Zealand basing decisions on what will improve wellbeing as well as on economic and fiscal indicators.
- Appoint a Minister for Wellbeing, who will make an annual statement to Parliament on the main measures of wellbeing and the effects of government policies on them.
- Introduce wellbeing impact assessments for all government policies.
- Prioritise government spending on the things that matter most to people’s wellbeing both now and in the future including:
  o Access to high-quality mental health and other health services Community services that tackle loneliness and prevent isolation
  o Targeted support for those most at risk of poor wellbeing: vulnerable children, people who are homeless, victims of trafficking and exploitation
  o Providing welfare support to those who need it
  o Reducing Adverse Childhood Experiences by investing further in services during pregnancy and the first two years of a child’s life

**Mental health**
- Ring-fence funding from within the one penny income tax rise, to provide additional investment in mental health.
- Introduce further mental health maximum waiting time standards, starting with children’s services, services for people with eating disorders, and severe and enduring conditions.
- Increase access to a broader range and number of clinically effective talking therapies with equal access for older people, BAME and LGBT+ patients and people with autism and learning disabilities.
- Make prescriptions for people with chronic mental health conditions available for free on the NHS and a commitment to review the entire schedule of exemptions for prescription charges.
- Transform perinatal mental health support for those who are pregnant, new mothers and those who have experienced miscarriage or stillbirth.
- Ensure every new mother gets a dedicated maternal postnatal appointment and other measures to tackle under-diagnosis of maternal physical and mental health problems.
- Implement all the recommendations of the Wessely review of the Mental Health Act, including increased investment to modernise and improve inpatient settings and ambulances.
- Move towards a 24-hour mental health crisis services, including mental health liaison teams in all hospitals, and ending the use of police cells for people facing a mental health crisis.
- Minimise the use of hospital admissions through high-quality community and housing support.
- Ensure all frontline public service professionals (schools, universities, etc.) are properly trained in mental health and add a requirement for mental health first aiders in the Health and Safety First Aid Regulations.
- Fully introduce the recommendations from Sir Stephen Bubb’s ‘Time for Change’ report recommendations and ensure Assessment and Treatment Units are closed urgently.
- Establish a Student Mental Health Charter which will require all universities and colleges to ensure a good level of mental health provisions and services for students.
- Improve Mental Health Support and treatment within the criminal justice system and ensure continuity of mental health care and addiction treatment in prison and the community.

**Social care**
- Introduce a cap on the cost of social care.
- Support the creation of a new Professional Body for Care Workers, to promote clear career pathways with ongoing training and development, and improved pay structures.
- Introduce a new requirement for professional regulation of all care home managers, who would also be required to have a relevant qualification.
- Set a target that 70% of all care staff should have an NVQ level 2 or equivalent (currently levels are around 50%).
- Provide support for ongoing training of care workers to improve retention and raise the status of caring.
- Provide more choice at the end of life and move towards free end-of-life social care, whether people spend their last days at home or in a hospice.
- Introduce a statutory guarantee of regular respite breaks for unpaid carers and require councils to make regular contact with carers to offer support and signpost services.
- Provide a package of carer benefits such as free leisure centre access, free bus travel for young carers, and self-referral to socially prescribed activities and courses.
- Raise the amount people can earn before losing their Carer’s Allowance from £123 to £150 a week and reduce the number of hours’ care per week required to qualify for it.

**Housing and homelessness**
- Build at least 100,000 homes for social rent each year and ensure that total housebuilding increases to 300,000 each year.
- Help finance the large increase in the building of social homes with investment from our £130 billion capital infrastructure budget.
- Urgently publish a cross-Whitehall plan to end all forms of homelessness.

**Diversity and equality in the workplace**
- Increase statutory paternity leave from the current two weeks up to six weeks and ensure that parental leave is a day-one right, and address continuing inequalities faced by same-sex couples; require organisations to publish parental leave and pay policies.
- Implement the recommendations of Roger Kline’s report into the lack of diversity in senior management in the NHS and commission a strategic analysis of racial discrimination in the NHS.
- Develop a free, comprehensive unconscious bias training toolkit and make the provision of unconscious bias training to all members of staff a condition of the receipt of public funds.
- Extend the Equality Act to all large companies with more than 250 employees, requiring them to monitor and publish data on gender, BAME, and LGBT+ employment levels and pay gaps.
- Tackle pension unfairness by ensuring that the women born in the 1950s are properly compensated for the failure of government to properly notify them of changes to the state pension age, in line with the recommendations of the parliamentary ombudsman; and address continuing inequalities in pensions law for those in same-sex relationships.

**Rights and Justice**
- Divert people arrested for possession of drugs for personal use into treatment and imposing civil penalties rather than imprisonment.
- Help to break the grip of the criminal gangs by introducing a legal, regulated market for cannabis.
- Introduce limits on the potency levels and permit cannabis to be sold through licensed outlets to adults over the age of 18.
- Allow those who feel that cannabis helps to manage their pain to do so without fear of criminal prosecution.
- Decriminalise abortion across the UK while retaining the existing 24-week limit and legislate for access to abortion facilities within Northern Ireland.
- Enforce safe zones around abortion clinics, make intimidation or harassment of abortion service users and staff outside clinics, or on common transport routes to these services, illegal.
- Fund abortion clinics to provide their services free of charge to service users regardless of nationality or residency.
Tackling inequalities in access to care

- Address continuing inequalities in health services access faced by same-sex couples, and continue to improve LGBT+ healthcare overall, including an evidence-based review of any unscientific and discriminatory practices aimed solely at LGBT+ people, such as around blood donations.
- Address the scandal of women with learning disabilities dying an average 20 years younger, setting a national target for reducing this gap, and ensure people with learning disabilities can access screening, prevention, health and care services fairly.
- Complete reform of the Gender Recognition Act to remove the requirement for medical reports, scrap the fee and recognise non-binary gender identities.
- Develop a government-wide plan to tackle BAME inequalities and review the funding of the Equality and Human Rights Commission to ensure that it is adequate implement the recommendations of Roger Kline’s report into the lack of diversity in senior management in the NHS and commission a strategic analysis of racial discrimination in the NHS.
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- Extend the Equality Act to all large companies with more than 250 employees, requiring them to monitor and publish data on gender, BAME, and LGBT+ employment levels and pay gaps.
- Extend the use of name-blind recruitment processes in the public sector and encourage their use in the private sector.
- Improve diversity in public appointments by setting ambitious targets, which go further than targets for the private sector, and require reporting against progress with explanations when targets are not met.
- Develop a free, comprehensive unconscious bias training toolkit and make the provision of unconscious bias training to all members of staff a condition of the receipt of public funds.
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Environment
- Achieve a net-zero climate target by 2045.
- Establish a Department for Climate Change and Natural Resources, appoint a cabinet-level Chief Secretary for Sustainability in the Treasury to coordinate government-wide action to make the economy sustainable resource-efficient and zero-carbon, and require every government agency to account for its contribution towards meeting climate targets.
- Create a statutory duty on all local authorities to produce a Zero Carbon Strategy, including plans for local energy, transport and land use, and devolve powers and funding to enable every council to implement it.

International development & global health
- Commitment to spend 0.7 per cent of Gross National Income on aid, prioritising development that both helps the poorest and ties in with the UK’s strategic international objectives on gender equality, climate change and the environment, human rights, conflict prevention and tackling inequality.
- Pursue a foreign agenda with gender equality at its heart, focusing on: the transformation of the position of women through economic inclusion, education and training, and working on working to extend reproductive rights and end female genital mutilation; and ending sexual violence in conflict zones.