



Liberal Democrats – our manifesto in practise

The Liberal Democrats have been in government for only eight months, but we have already implemented many of our manifesto policies.

Below is a list of these policies and what we are doing to make them happen. The list does not even include those of our policies that are in the coalition agreement but have not yet been implemented – so this list is just the first part of a long line of Liberal Democrat policies to come.

The list is organised according to each section of our 2010 manifesto, for ease of comparison. However in some areas, such as environmental policy, it made more sense to group it together in one section, so it will not always be completely true to the original structure.

This document is a striking illustration of the influence the Liberal Democrats are having in government.

Your Money

Lib Dem Manifesto p.18 - "We will increase the income tax threshold to £10,000"

- 👍 In June's emergency budget, we raised the tax threshold by £1,000, lifting 880,000 low earners out of tax completely. This will increase each year of the coalition government until it reaches £10,000, which will lift an additional 3 million people out of tax altogether.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.14 - "We will tackle tax avoidance and evasion, with new powers for HMRC"

- 👍 In September, Danny Alexander announced a £900m crackdown on tax avoidance and evasion, expected to raise billions each year by 2014/15 from those who currently avoid paying their fair share of tax.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.14 - "We will tax capital gains at the same rates as income, so that all the money you make is taxed in the same way."

- 👍 In June's emergency budget we increased the rate of Capital Gains Tax to 28% for higher rate taxpayers while keeping it at 18% for basic rate taxpayers. This will raise an extra £1bn and end the disgraceful situation of bankers paying a lower rate of tax than their cleaners.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.18 – “We will immediately restore the link between the basic state pension and earnings. We will uprate the state pension annually by whichever is the higher of growth in earnings or 2.5%”

- 👍 The link between pensions and earnings, scrapped by Margaret Thatcher, was restored in the Coalition's first budget. The annual increase in the state pension will be protected by a 'triple lock' - the rise will be in line with earnings, prices or a 2.5% increase, whichever is the greater.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.17 – “We will pay down the deficit by saying no to the like-for-like replacement of the Trident nuclear weapons system.”

- 👍 There will be no like-for-like replacement of Trident this Parliament.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.16 - “We will scrap ID cards”

- 👍 We have scrapped the ID card programme.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.18 - “We will give people control over their pension by scrapping the rule that compels you to buy an annuity when you reach age 75”

- 👍 The Government announced in the Emergency Budget that it will end the effective requirement to purchase an annuity by age 75 from April 2011.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.18 – “Meeting the government's obligations towards Equitable Life policyholders who have suffered loss. We will set up a swift, simple, transparent and fair payment scheme”

- 👍 We have agreed a deal on Equitable Life which is fair to policy owners and the tax payer. This will finally bring an end to a terrible saga which Labour wouldn't resolve.

Your Job

Lib Dem Manifesto p.22 - “We will break up the banks, to ensure taxpayers are never again expected to underwrite high-risk banking. We will introduce a Banking Levy, so that banks pay for their tax-payer guarantee, until the break-up is complete.”

- ✔ We have set up an independent commission on separating investment and retail banking, reporting by September 2011, and introduced a banking levy that will raise £2.5bn a year.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.24 - "To help the transition to a green economy over the longer-term, we will set up a United Kingdom Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) to attract private finance."

- ✔ The creation of a UK-wide Green Investment Bank will be funded by a £1 billion spending allocation and additional proceeds from the sale of Government-owned assets. The bank will encourage significant additional investment in green infrastructure.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.26 - "Support public investment in the roll-out of superfast broadband, targeted first at those areas which are least likely to be provided for by the market."

- ✔ The Government has published an action plan, "Britain's Superfast Broadband Future", announcing an £830 million strategy to put a digital hub in every community, making sure the UK has the best broadband in Europe by 2015.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.28 - "Give both Royal Mail and post offices a long-term future, by separating Post Office Ltd from the Royal Mail and retaining Post Office Ltd in full public ownership."

- ✔ The Postal Services Bill is currently passing through Parliament. It allows for the restructuring of Royal Mail, including the introduction of private sector capital and expertise from the sale of part of it, an employee share scheme, and provisions for Post Office Ltd to continue to be owned by the Crown or a mutual ownership structure.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.30 - "We will extend the right to request flexible working to all employees."

- ✔ We have put in place secondary legislation to extend the right to request flexible working to parents of children up to age 18 and are consulting with business on shared parental leave and extension of flexible working to all employees

Your Life

Education and Skills

Lib Dem Manifesto p.34 - "We will increase the funding of the most disadvantaged pupils, around one million children. We will invest £2.5bn in this 'Pupil Premium' to boost education opportunities for every child."

- ✔ The government has delivered on the key Liberal Democrat pledge of a £2.5bn pupil premium to bring extra funding to the most vulnerable students.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.34 – “We will improve discipline by early intervention to tackle to poor basic education of those children who are otherwise most likely to misbehave and become demotivated”

- ✔ The schools white paper introduced simple reading checks at age 6, designed to stop young children falling behind in basic skills which go unnoticed until it is too late and therefore contribute to future bad behaviour.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.35 – “We will confront bullying, including homophobic bullying, and include bullying prevention in teacher training”

- ✔ The schools white paper specifically states that we will expect teachers and head teachers to take a strong stand on homophobic bullying. It sets out plans to rationalise and simplify anti-bullying guidance from a fragmented 500 pages to around 20 pages. It also commits to working with NGOs such as Stonewall and the Anti-Bullying Alliance to promote best practice and make sure that schools know where to go for support.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.34 – “We will... support the expansion of Teach First to attract more top graduates into teaching”

- ✔ The Government has announced plans to expand the Teach First scheme. It also announced a new Teach Next programme to encourage more mature entrants into teaching.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.34 – “We will improve teacher training by increasing the size of the school-based Graduate Teacher Programme... we will improve training for existing teachers over the course of their careers to keep them up to date with best practice”

- ✔ We have announced plans to expand the Graduate Teacher Programme.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.34 – “Axe the rigid National Curriculum, and replace it with a slimmed down ‘minimum curriculum entitlement’ to be delivered by every state funded school.”

- ✔ The schools white paper announced that both primary and secondary National Curriculums will be reviewed and slimmed down to become a national benchmark of the knowledge and concepts children should be expected to master in core subjects at each key stage. It will be designed so that parents can hold schools to account for what their child has learned.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.36 – “Reform league tables to give parents more meaningful information which truly reflects the performance of a school. Schools should be working to get the best from all their pupils but government league tables are forcing them to focus on those who are just above or below the key C-grade borderline.”

- ☑ Under government proposals, performance tables will include a measure of how well pupils progress as well as attainment. All of the information that underpins government statistical tables will be published for each school, and DfE will publish ‘families of schools’ documents that group similar schools in a region and provide detailed performance information that can be used to identify best practice.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.38 - “Reform the existing rigid national pay and conditions rules to give schools and colleges more freedom”

- ☑ The schools white paper announced that we would give schools greater flexibility and freedom to set pay.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.35 - “We will replace the bureaucratic Early Years Foundation Stage with a slimmed-down framework which includes a range of educational approaches and enough flexibility for every young child.”

- ☑ Dame Clare Tickell has been commissioned to review how the curriculum of the Early Years Foundation Stage prepares all children for school, reporting in spring 2011.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.37 - “Introduce an Education Freedom Act banning politicians from getting involved in the day-to-day running of schools.”

- ☑ The schools white paper introduced this year addresses many of our concerns, removing much of the centralised and stifling bureaucracy imposed by Labour. Every school will have more autonomy, but the white paper also includes provision for local authorities’ strategic oversight.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.40 – “We will end Train to Gain funding for large companies, restricting the funds to the small and medium-sized firms that need the support.”

- ☑ The Government has announced that it will end Train to Gain and replace it with an SME-focused programme to help small employers train low-skilled staff.

Health

Lib Dem Manifesto p.41 – “Integrate health and social care to create a seamless service, ending bureaucratic barriers and saving money to allow people to stay in their homes for longer rather than going into hospital or long term residential care.”

- ✔ Around 35,000 people will benefit from a £70 million cash boost announced by the Coalition that will enable the NHS to support people back into their homes after a spell in hospital.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.40 – “We will... scrap Strategic Health Authorities”

- ✔ The Government White Paper on Health states that we will scrap Strategic Health Authorities.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.43 – “Giving every patient the right to choose to register with the GP they want, without being restricted by where they live.”

- ✔ The NHS White Paper states that we will give every patient a clear right to choose to register with any GP practice they want with an open list, without being restricted by where they live.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.41 – “We will prioritise dementia research within the health research and development budget.”

- ✔ The Treasury confirmed in October that this commitment on dementia research will be prioritised within health research and development. Paul Burstow is now personally overseeing this commitment through his role as chair of a Ministerial Advisory Group by ensuring that dementia researchers get a fair share of the £1.7 billion research fund. Plans will be published in the New Year to accelerate the pace in this vital area of research.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.41 – “We will improve access to counselling for people with mental health problems, by continuing the roll-out of cognitive and behavioural therapies.”

- ✔ The Spending Review included funding to expand access to talking therapies, including those with severe mental illness and for the first time the children and adolescents. We have already committed £70million this year to give more people the opportunity to access talking therapies. This funding will help tackle the devastating human cost of mental health by ensuring that the right action is taken early in people’s lives. By March 2011 services will be offered to around 60 per cent of the country increasing to 100 per cent by 2014.

Culture and Sport

Lib Dem Manifesto p.44 - “We will maintain free entry to national museums and galleries and open up the Government Art Collection for greater public use.”

- ✔ We have maintained free entry to national museums and galleries, and Government Art Collection works are to be shown in a public gallery for the first time.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.46 - "Use cash in dormant betting accounts to set up a capital fund for improving local sports facilities and supporting sports clubs"

- ✔ Don Foster is currently conducting a review into dormant betting accounts, due to report soon.

Your Family

Lib Dem Manifesto p.49 - "We will protect existing childcare support arrangements until the nation's finances can support a longer term solution: a move to 20 hours free childcare for every child, from the age of 18 months."

- ✔ We have extended 15 hours free early education to all disadvantaged two year-olds, while keeping the free offer of 15 hours early education for every three and four year-old. We will be spending £300 million more on this by the end of the Parliament

Lib Dem Manifesto p.52 - "We will offer a week's respite for the one million carers who spend 50 hours every week looking after a sick relative."

- ✔ Paul Burstow has made over £400 million available in additional funding over the next four years to provide a week's respite care to the almost one million carers who work over 50 hours a week.
- ✔ Sarah Teather also recently announced £800 million investment in short break provision for disabled children and their families.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.50 - "Maintain the commitment to end child poverty in the UK by 2020."

- ✔ This commitment has been maintained.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.50 - "Enhance child protection. We will enforce the publication of an anonymised version of Serious Case Reviews to ensure that lessons are learned."

- ✔ Serious Case Reviews, including that of Baby Peter, have been published.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.52 - "Scrap compulsory retirement ages, allowing those who wish to continue in work to do so."

- ☑ The government has announced it is ending the compulsory retirement age.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.54 – “We will stop private sector wheel-clamping”

- ☑ Lynne Featherstone has announced that wheel-clamping on private land will be banned.

Your World

Lib Dem Manifesto p.23 – “If you choose micro-generation, you will be able to sell the energy back to the National Grid at a profit, with a more attractive feed-in tariff than under current government plans.”

- ☑ Feed-in tariffs were protected under the spending review. Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change Chris Huhne has announced that the Renewable Heat Incentive, which pays for every kilowatt hour of heat produced, will go ahead in 2011.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.58 - “Begin a ten-year programme of home insulation, offering a home energy improvement package of up to £10,000 per home, paid for by the savings from lower energy bills, and make sure every new home is fully energy-efficient by improving building regulations.”

- ☑ At the beginning of November, Chris Huhne announced the Green Deal. Through the Green Deal, people will be able to pay back the up front costs of home insulation work through the lower bills that will result.
- ☑ We’ve also recognised that those in fuel poverty need extra help. This is why, under the new Energy Company Obligation, we’ll be requiring energy companies to help poorer customers, by providing basic heating and insulation to the most vulnerable households. Until the Green Deal and ECO kick in, we’ve put in place the Warm Home Discount which will help around £2 million households per year take up to an anticipated £130 off their bills.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.58 – “We will set out a clear renewable route map to 2050, covering grid access and investment in electricity networks.”

- ☑ We are mapping out the path to renewable energy in 2050, and have enabled £110 billion of investment in low carbon electricity infrastructure over the next decade.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.59 - “Block any new coal-fired power stations – the most polluting form of power generation – unless they are accompanied by the highest level of carbon capture and storage facilities.”

- ✔ Chris Huhne has stated that the coalition would not allow any new coal power station to be built without being equipped with CCS technology.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.62 – “We will increase the UK’s aid budget to reach the UN target of 0.7% of GNI by 2013”

- ✔ The overseas aid budget has been protected from cuts and will rise to £11.5bn over the next four years. The effect will be that the UK will reach the United Nations goal of giving 0.7% of national income in aid by 2013.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.63 – “We will prioritise health and education programmes in the developing world which aim to promote gender equality and reduce maternal and infant mortality.”

- ✔ In September 2010, Nick Clegg announced that the government will refocus its aid efforts to put the lives of women in developing countries at its heart

Lib Dem Manifesto p.68 – “We will hold a full judicial inquiry into allegations of British complicity in torture and state kidnapping as part of a process to restore Britain’s reputation for decency and fairness.”

- ✔ The Coalition government has announced a judicial inquiry into Britain's role in torture and rendition since the al-Qaida attacks of September 2001. A three-person inquiry panel will be headed by Sir Peter Gibson, a former appeal court judge who is currently commissioner for the intelligence services

Your Community

Lib Dem Manifesto, p.76 – “We will end the detention of children in immigration detention centres”

- ✔ On 16th December, Nick Clegg announced the ending of child detention for immigration purposes.

Lib Dem Manifesto, p.83 - “Through our policy on Capital Gains Tax, ensure that those who use second homes as speculative investments will pay tax on enhanced capital value at the same rate as on earned income, not at 18% as at present”

- ✔ In June’s emergency budget we increased the rate of Capital Gains Tax to 28% for higher rate taxpayers while keeping it at 18% for basic rate taxpayers.

Lib Dem Manifesto, p.77 - "In a fair society, everyone should have the right to a decent home, but this is not the reality of Britain today. There should be quality social and private rented housing available for those who need or choose it."

- ✔ We have announced plans for 150,000 new affordable homes over the next four years, the first net increase in the social housing stock by any government in 30 years.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.77 - "We will make sure every new home is fully energy efficient by improving building regulations."

- ✔ We have required a 25% improvement in energy efficiency standards for new buildings.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.78 "We will scrap burdensome Home Information Packs, retaining the requirement for homes to have an energy performance certificate."

- ✔ We have scrapped Home Information Packs, and retained the requirement for homes to have an energy performance certificate.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.82 – "We will stop 'garden grabbing' by defining gardens as Greenfield sites in planning law so that they cannot so easily be built over."

- ✔ We have ended 'garden grabbing', saving considerable amounts of greenbelt land from being built over.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.83 – "We will promote schemes for affordable homes like equity mortgages and 'Home on the Farm' which encourage farmers to convert existing buildings into affordable housing."

- ✔ We have promoted 'Home on the Farm' schemes that encourage farmers to convert existing buildings into affordable housing.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.74 - "We will make prisoners work and contribute from their prison wages to a compensation fund for victims"

- ✔ The government's sentencing green paper included proposals for 'working prisons' to get prisoners used to working regular hours, and to contribute toward financial reparations for victims

Lib Dem Manifesto p.75 – "We will give people a direct say in how petty criminals and those who engage in anti-social behaviour are punished by setting up Neighbourhood Justice Panels"

- ✔ The sentencing green paper also included proposals for increasing the opportunities for communities to become involved in local justice through Neighbourhood Justice Panels

Lib Dem Manifesto p.75 – “Champion restorative justice programmes which make offenders confront their behaviour and are more successful at reducing crime”

- ✔ The sentencing green paper also includes proposals to make more use of restorative justice as a more effective punishment

Lib Dem Manifesto p.74 – “Move offenders who are drug addicts or mentally ill into more appropriate secure accommodation.”

- ✔ As of June 2011 we will pilot drug recovery wings in prisons, reviewing this in June 2012 with a view to working with the Department of Health to roll it out more widely.
- ✔ The sentencing green paper proposes to pilot and roll out liaison and diversion services nationally by 2014 for mentally ill offenders, and increase the treatment capacity for offenders who present a high risk of harm where this is linked to a severe personality disorder.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.73 – “Require better recording of hate crime against disabled, homosexual and transgender people.”

- ✔ In December 2010 Lynne Featherstone launched the government’s new equalities strategy, which includes a commitment to promote better recording of, and response to, hate crimes.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.79 – “Include promotion of safer cycling and pedestrian routes in all local transport plans.”

- ✔ In September Norman Baker announced plans for a new Local Sustainable Transport Fund to challenge local transport authorities outside London to develop packages of measures that support economic growth and reduce carbon in their communities, as well as delivering cleaner environments, improved safety and increased levels of physical activity.

Your Say

Lib Dem Manifesto p.94 - “We will scrap the intrusive ContactPoint database which is intended to hold the details of every child in England.”

- ✔ The ContactPoint database was switched off on the 6th August 2010

Lib Dem Manifesto p.92- “We will implement the recommendations of the Calman Commission to give significant new powers and responsibilities to the Scottish Parliament.”

- ✔ The Scotland Bill had its first reading on the 30th November. It implements the recommendations of the Calman Commission, devolving landfill tax and stamp duty, and introducing a Scottish Income Tax and new borrowing powers.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.89 - "We will introduce fixed-term parliaments to ensure that the Prime Minister of the day cannot change the date of an election to suit them."

- ✔ The Fixed Term Parliaments Bill, which legislates for fixed term Parliaments, is in the process of going through Parliament.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.87 – "We will give people a real say in who governs the country by introducing fair votes."

- ✔ The Parliamentary Voting System and Constituencies Bill is currently before Parliament. It provides for a referendum on the Alternative Vote, a new, fairer electoral system, most likely to be held in May.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.92 – "We will scrap the Government Offices for the Regions and regional ministers."

- ✔ We have scrapped the Government Offices for the Regions and regional ministers, devolving some of their powers and resources to local government.

Lib Dem Manifesto p.92 – "Give the National Assembly primary legislative powers so that it becomes a true Welsh Parliament. We also support passing on a greater number of responsibilities to the National Assembly."

- ✔ A referendum on extending the law-making powers of the National Assembly for Wales is to be held on 3rd March, 2011.