



Let down by Labour:  
**Liberal Democrat policies  
for a fairer Britain**



change that works **for you**  
BUILDING A FAIRER BRITAIN



I have a simple message for all the millions of people Labour let down: only the Liberal Democrats will build the Britain you long for. Only the Liberal Democrats will deliver change that works for you.

This message is for everyone who still wants a fairer Britain, and feels let down by Labour. Now is your chance for real change.

We all remember 1997, when the fresh faced Labour government promised things would get better. People like you – and I – hoped they were right. But after 13 years those hopes have been dashed. We now live in a Britain which is less fair, where too many children's life chances are still determined by their postcode or their parents' bank balance.

Thousands of children are in classes so big they're technically illegal, with millions leaving primary school unable to read and write properly, especially those from deprived backgrounds. The number of families on the housing waiting list has rocketed, while the Government has allowed social homes to be sold off or torn down and, crucially, not replaced.

Millions of people out are of work, with millions more worrying about their jobs. And if you are lucky enough to be in a secure job, you're still paying the price for a tax system that's hugely unfair. Under the tax regime Gordon Brown built, the poorest people in society still lose a bigger chunk of their income to the tax man than the richest. Millionaires pay a lower rate of tax on their mansions than their cleaners pay on their wages.

For all their tough talk Labour hasn't made our streets safe. Re-offending rates have continued to rise even though they have spent more and more money on prison. And, despite two wars, our brave service men and women have never been rewarded with the fair pay they deserve.

It's been 13 years, and Labour has failed. I have a simple message for all the millions of people Labour let down: only the Liberal Democrats will build the Britain you long for. Only the Liberal Democrats will deliver change that works for you:

- No income tax on the first £10,000 people earn
- A fair start for all our children
- Jobs that last
- Affordable homes for everyone
- Cutting crime and making criminals pay
- A pay rise for our brave service men and women

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Nick Clegg". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Nick Clegg  
Leader of the Liberal Democrats

## no income tax on the first £10,000 you earn

We live in a country where the poorest fifth of people still pay more in tax as a proportion of their income than the richest fifth. Under this Government, millions of people on low incomes are forced to pay hundreds of pounds in income tax every year. This means that for many people in low-paid jobs, work simply doesn't pay. Even a person working full time earning the minimum wage has nearly £1000 taken from them in income tax.

Liberal Democrats will ensure that you do not pay income tax on the first £10,000 you earn. This will put £700 back into the pockets of millions of people on low and middle incomes and free 3.6 million more people on low incomes from having to pay any income tax at all. Pensioners will get up to £100 extra, as well as fairer pensions with the earnings link restored.

The change will be paid for by introducing a mansion tax, closing loopholes that benefit the wealthy and making sure airlines pay for the pollution they cause.

## a fair start for all our children

Too many children are still leaving school without the knowledge and skills to be successful. Finding a good school is still a struggle and your family background still has a huge effect on how you do: even a bright but poor child will fall behind a richer classmate by the age of 7 and never catch up.

Liberal Democrats will cut class sizes and give every child a fair start in life by introducing a pupil premium. This will allow schools to reduce class sizes, recruit more teachers to improve discipline and provide more one-to-one tuition to help pupils who are struggling. In total, we will provide an extra £2.5 billion to our schools, allocated according to the number of disadvantaged pupils on their rolls. Headteachers will be free to spend it in the best interests of children.

## jobs that last

Millions of people are unemployed and millions more are worrying about their jobs. The recession is really hurting people, from young people who've just left college or university and can't find work, to people who've been made redundant in their 50s and don't think they'll ever find another job.

Liberal Democrats will create thousands of jobs by investing in new green technology and infrastructure. These include our proposals to insulate public buildings, invest in off-shore wind, bring 250,000 empty homes back into use and encourage families to install green technology in their homes with 'Eco Cash-back' grants.

We will also create a work placement scheme for one year with up to 800,000 places to ensure young people get the opportunity to gain skills, qualifications and work experience even if they can't find a job. They'll be paid £55 a week for up to three months.

## affordable homes for everyone

Britain's housing crisis is hurting everyone. And for poorer families, the struggle for somewhere decent to live has got much harder. 1.8 million are now waiting for a home – up from a million in 1997.

To address Labour's housing crisis, we will bring 250,000 empty homes back into use. Empty properties are not only a wasted resource but a blight on the local community, attracting crime and anti-social behaviour.

People who own these homes will get a grant or a cheap loan to renovate them so they can be used: grants if the home is for social housing, loans for private use. This is cheaper than building new homes, is greener and helps to regenerate streets where empty homes stand derelict.

## cutting crime and making criminals pay

Many people's lives are being ruined by crime and they don't feel safe in their own homes or their neighbourhood. Yet too many criminals are getting away without being caught or punished – and those who are caught are sent to prison and come out, unreformed, ready to commit more crimes. There's an endless cycle that makes us all less safe. Governments are always talking tough but nothing seems to change.

Labour wants to throw away more than half a billion pounds on wasteful and ineffective ID cards. For that same amount of money we can afford to put 3000 more police on the streets. We will also make all police work better by ending the filling in of pointless forms, giving local people a direct say in policing and tackling outdated or bad working practices.

We will crack down on gun and knife crime by making hospitals share information with the police so they know where gun and knife crime is happening and can target stop-and-search in gun and knife crime 'hot spots', helping to find illegal weapons and destroy them. Local people will be given a direct say in how petty criminals and those who engage in anti-social behaviour are punished in their area with new Neighbourhood Justice Panels. Prisoners will also be made to work and contribute from their prison wages to a Victims' Compensation Fund.

## a pay rise for our brave service men and women

We ask so much of our Armed Forces but they have never been rewarded with the fair pay and conditions they deserve. They are sent into conflict without proper equipment, have to put up with sub-standard housing and have been stretched to the limit by two wars.

Liberal Democrats will give lower ranks a pay rise, so that their pay is brought into line with the starting salary of police constables. We will also double the rate of modernisation of forces' family homes.



Liberal Democrats have championed the devolution of powers to Scotland and Wales, and many decisions made in Westminster now apply to England only. That means that policies in those nations are increasingly different from those in England – reflecting different choices, priorities and circumstances. Our Scottish and Welsh Parties make their own policy on those issues. This document sets out our priorities for a Liberal Democrat Government in Westminster.

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