

Manifesto 2015

Stronger Economy. Fairer Society.
Opportunity for Everyone.

Prosperity for all

Balance the budget
fairly and invest to
build a high-skill,
low-carbon
economy

Opportunity for every child

Guarantee education
funding from
nursery to 19 and
qualified teachers
in every class

Fair taxes

Cut your taxes
by an additional
£400 by raising the
Personal Allowance
to £12,500

Our environment protected

Protect nature and
fight climate change
with five green laws

Quality health care for all

Invest £8 billion to
improve our NHS
and guarantee equal
care for mental
health



Building a healthier society

Protecting the NHS and improving health

Good health is one of the most important assets we can have in life, and we must do all we can to help people stay healthy, as well as provide high-quality care when they are ill. Our NHS is the envy of the world, and we will fund it properly, ending the discrimination against mental health which has existed for too long, and delivering equal care.



Good health is one of the most important assets we can have in life, and we must do all we can to help people stay healthy, as well as provide high-quality care when they are ill.

Our NHS is the envy of the world, and we will fund it properly, ending the discrimination against mental health which has existed for too long, and delivering equal care.

As a nation, we are living longer but that means we have more people living with conditions like cancer, diabetes and dementia who need care and support to live with dignity and the maximum degree of independence. We must set the highest standards in care, with a well-trained and motivated workforce, and get health and care services to work together without artificial boundaries.

Health and wellbeing are affected by far more than just the quality of health and care services. Liberal Democrats will act to ensure that everything government does supports people to improve their wellbeing: we will work to improve the wider factors that affect our health like warm homes, good air quality and access to healthy food so everyone can have the best opportunity to lead a healthy life.

A Record of Delivery	A Promise of More
Increased the NHS budget every year in real terms, helping fund nearly 10,000 more doctors and 7,000 more nurses	Deliver the £8 billion England's NHS leaders say is needed to keep it strong, with money for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland too
Improved access to talking therapies: 2.6 million patients have been treated since 2010	Invest £500m to transform mental health care with waiting time standards to match those in physical health care
£400m invested to give carers a break with our respite fund	Introduce a package of support for carers including a £250 Carer's Bonus every year
Capped the cost of care, so older people can afford to get the help they need	Crack down on bad care, with better pay and conditions for care staff and higher standards for all



5.1 Investing in our NHS

The NHS is our most treasured public service. Liberal Democrats are committed to the founding principles of the NHS as a taxpayer-funded system, free at the point of use. To ensure this principle is maintained even as demand for health care grows, we will give the NHS the investment it needs. We are the only party with a credible plan to deliver the extra £8 billion NHS leaders know our health service in England needs by 2020, with the appropriate boost to funding for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland too.

We will:

- ◆ Always ensure access to health care is based on need not ability to pay and that the NHS remains free at the point of delivery.
- ◆ Deliver the money needed for England's NHS by:
 - ❖ Continuing real-terms protection of the NHS budget until

we have balanced the books in 2017/18 – with a £1 billion boost on top of this protection. We made a start towards this £1 billion increase in the Budget by securing a £250m a year investment in mental health.

- ❖ Increasing NHS spending in line with economic growth from then on.
- ◆ These commitments mean NHS funding in England will be at least £8 billion higher a year in real terms by 2020. This will lead to higher funding for the Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish governments, too, which Liberal Democrats believe should be spent on their health services.
- ◆ Invest half the initial £1 billion in providing care in people's own homes and communities, preventing emergency admissions and making it easier to discharge people after a hospital stay – and so relieving pressures on all hospital services.
- ◆ Make sure the NHS is funded and organised to carry out diagnostic tests and necessary treatments in a timely and effective manner, so that waiting times meet public expectations without distorting clinical priorities.
- ◆ Join up health and care at national level, shifting full responsibility for care policy and funding to the Department of Health.

To ensure the NHS is safeguarded for the long term we will commission a non-partisan Fundamental Review of NHS and social care funding this year. We will involve as many people as possible in this nationwide consultation.

5.2 Equal care for mental health

One in four of us will experience mental health problems, but for decades mental health has been the last in the queue for funding and attention. Mental health problems cost the country as much as £100 billion each year yet less than a quarter of people with depression get the treatment they need.

In 2012, we called a halt to this and wrote equality for mental health into law. We are now making real progress, introducing the first ever waiting time standards in mental health. We have invested £400m in increasing access to talking therapies and £150m in help for people with eating disorders, but there is still a long way to go. That is why we will increase mental health spending in England's NHS by £500m a year by 2016/17 – half of which we delivered in this year's Budget – and provide the cash for similar investments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



To deliver genuine equality between mental and physical health in the NHS we will:

- ◆ Continue to roll out access and waiting time standards for children, young people and adults. This will include a waiting time standard from referral of no more than six weeks for therapy for depression or anxiety and a two-week wait standard for all young people experiencing a first episode of psychosis.
- ◆ Increase access to clinically and cost-effective talking therapies so hundreds of thousands more people can get this support. Our long-term goal is to see everyone who can benefit being treated, but we will set an interim target of getting 25% of those suffering into treatment.
- ◆ Transform care for pregnant women, new mothers and those who have experienced miscarriage or stillbirth, and help them get the early care they need.
- ◆ Revolutionise children's mental health services. With the £250m a year announced in this year's Budget we will implement the proposals outlined in the report of the Government's Children's Mental Health Taskforce. This means building better links with schools, ensuring all children develop mental resilience, and getting support and care quickly to those who are struggling. Our investment will help ensure children can access high-quality care closer to home.

Mental Health

1 in 4

of us will experience
mental health difficulties
in our lifetimes



**Mental
illness**



£100bn
each year

**Early
treatment**



better access to

**talking
therapies**



could save millions
in fewer hospital admissions & working days lost

- ◆ Ensure no one in crisis is turned away, with new waiting time standards and better crisis care in Accident and Emergency (A&E), in the community and via phone lines. This will enable us to end the use of police cells for people facing a mental health crisis.
- ◆ Radically transform mental health services, extending the use of personal budgets, integrating care more fully with the rest of the NHS, introducing rigorous inspection and high-quality standards, comprehensive collection of data to monitor outcomes and waiting times and changing the way services are funded so they do not lose out in funding decisions in future.
- ◆ Introduce care navigators so people get help finding their way around the system, and set stretching standards to improve the physical health of people with mental health problems.

To improve wellbeing and make the UK more mental health-friendly, we will:

- ◆ Publish a national wellbeing strategy, which puts better health and wellbeing for all at the heart of government policy. This will cover all aspects of government policy, including transport, access to nature, and housing, at national and local level.
- ◆ Develop a clear approach on preventing mental illness, with a public health campaign promoting the steps people can take to improve their own mental resilience – the wellbeing equivalent of the ‘Five a Day’ campaign.
- ◆ Support good practice among employers in promoting wellbeing and ensure people with mental health problems get the help they need to stay in or find work.
- ◆ Establish a world-leading mental health research fund, investing £50m to further our understanding of mental illness and develop more effective treatments.
- ◆ Continue to support the Time to Change programme to tackle stigma against mental health.
- ◆ Ensure all frontline public service professionals, including in schools and universities, get better training in mental health – helping them to develop their own mental resilience as well as learning to identify people with mental health problems.
- ◆ Support community services and volunteers working to combat loneliness, particularly in later life.

5.3 Joining up health and social care

We need services that fit around people’s lives, not ones that force them to fit their lives around the care they need. This is going to be increasingly important as our population ages and the number of

ACCIDENT & EMERGENCY



people living with long-term conditions continues to grow. It is time to move away from a fragmented system to an integrated service with more joined-up care, and more personal budgets so people can design services for their own individual needs. We believe this should happen from the bottom up, suiting the needs of local communities.

We will:

- ◆ Secure local agreement on full pooling of budgets between the NHS and care services with a target date of 2018, consulting on a legal duty for this. The details of how services are commissioned will remain a matter for local areas. In this way we will build on the radical proposals to integrate health and care funding in Greater Manchester.
- ◆ Continue to develop Health and Wellbeing Boards to take a broad view of how services can improve wellbeing in their area, ensuring democratic accountability for local care.
- ◆ Combine the public health, adult social care and health outcome frameworks into a single national wellbeing outcomes framework to ensure the NHS and local government work together towards common goals.
- ◆ Support new joined-up services such as GPs providing services like scans and blood tests closer to home, or hospitals having GP surgeries within A&E departments.
- ◆ Encourage the development of joined-up health providers, which cover hospital and community services, including GPs, learning from international best practice. We will permit NHS commissioners and providers in a local area to form a single integrated health organisation where appropriate.
- ◆ Work with Monitor to reform NHS funding systems, moving away from payments for activity to tariffs that encourage joined-up services and preventive care.

Liberal Democrats are committed to repealing any parts of the Health and Social Care Act 2012 which make NHS services vulnerable to forced privatisation through international agreements on free markets in goods and services. We will end the role of the Competition and Markets Authority in health, making it clear that the needs of patients, fairness and access always come ahead of competition, and that good local NHS services do not have to be put out to tender. After determined negotiations, we now have a clear guarantee from the EU that member states' rights to provide public services directly and not open them up to competition are explicitly enshrined in the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), and we will ensure this remains the case for TTIP and any future trade agreements.

5.4 Better access to GPs and community care

Most people's experience of the NHS is their local GP, or the nurses and support staff who visit them at home or work in community clinics. Better access to care in GP surgeries and closer to home is better for patients and will also help reduce pressure on hospitals, A&E departments and ambulances.

We will:

- ◆ Ensure easier access to GPs, expanding evening and weekend opening, encouraging phone and Skype appointments, encouraging GPs to work together in federations, and allowing people more choice.
- ◆ Encourage GPs and other community clinicians to work in disadvantaged areas through our Patient Premium.
- ◆ Better utilise the network of community pharmacists across the country so they become the first point of contact for advice on minor illnesses and are joined-up with GPs and community health teams.
- ◆ Encourage health services to link up with Local Authority social care teams and voluntary services to join up care.
- ◆ Review the rules for exemption from prescription charges to ensure they are fair to those with long-term conditions and disabilities.

5.5 Aiming higher: following the evidence to improve health and care

We will set ambitious goals so everything we do in the NHS is focused on helping people in Britain live longer, healthier, lives. Early diagnosis is absolutely crucial and can make a life-saving difference, so we will support screening programmes where these are proven to be both clinically and cost-effective. It is also vital we invest in research to develop new treatments and find new ways of delivering innovative treatments in affordable ways.

We will:

- ◆ Set ambitious goals to improve outcomes for the most serious life-threatening diseases like cancer and long-term conditions like dementia.
- ◆ Work towards a global deal to release significant additional funds for finding a cure or preventive treatment for dementia, doubling NHS

research spend for this condition by 2020.

- ◆ Set clear goals for earlier diagnosis and improved aftercare for conditions like cancer and heart disease.
- ◆ Promote evidence-based ‘social prescribing’ of sport, arts and other activity to help tackle obesity, mental health problems and other health conditions, and work to widen the evidence base.
- ◆ Continue to introduce evidence-based screening programmes, encouraging increased participation with informed consent.
- ◆ Improve patient safety by updating the laws on regulation of health professionals and on cosmetic procedures.
- ◆ Ensure targets in the NHS are evidence-based and do not distort clinical priorities.
- ◆ Improve support for groups that often face lower standards of care, such as older people and people with mental health problems or learning disabilities.
- ◆ Get the best for the NHS out of innovative medicines and treatments while continuing to ensure value for money for the NHS in negotiations on the cost of medicines, promoting the use of generic medicines where appropriate.
- ◆ Support, including through rules on public funding and research, moves towards ensuring all clinical trials are registered, with their methods and summary results reported in public.

We will develop a just settlement for haemophiliacs who were given contaminated blood, and their families.

5.6 Helping people keep healthy

It is better for patients and for the NHS if we keep people healthy in the first place, rather than just waiting until people develop illnesses and come for treatment. This means doing more to promote healthy eating and exercise, making people aware of the dangers of smoking and excessive consumption of alcohol and other drugs, and helping to improve mental health and wellbeing.

In government we have taken significant steps, taking tobacco off display in shops and introducing standardised packaging, for example. We have also returned the delivery of public health services to Local Authorities to ensure a more coordinated and localised approach.

Improving our environment is a vital step to improving people’s health. By insulating homes we can reduce the number of people who become unwell because of the cold; by tackling air pollution we can attack the root causes of many deaths; by opening up more sports facilities and building more cycle routes we can cut obesity and reduce heart problems.

We will:

- ◆ Support effective public awareness campaigns like Be Clear on Cancer, working closely with charities to raise awareness of the signs and symptoms of killer diseases.
- ◆ Keep public health within local government, where it is effectively joined-up with preventive community services.
- ◆ Restrict the marketing of junk food to children, including restricting TV advertising before the 9pm watershed, and maintain the effective ‘Five a Day’ campaign.
- ◆ Encourage the traffic light labelling system for food products and publication of information on calorie, fat, sugar and salt content in restaurants and takeaways.
- ◆ Reduce smoking rates, including by completing the introduction of standardised packaging for tobacco products. We will introduce a tax levy on tobacco companies so they fairly contribute to the costs of health care and smoking cessation services, subject to consultation on the detailed design and practicalities.
- ◆ Carefully monitor the growing evidence base around electronic cigarettes, which appear to be a route by which many people are quitting tobacco, and ensure restrictions on marketing and use are proportionate and evidence-based. For example, we support restrictions on advertising which risks promoting tobacco or targets under 18s, such as those introduced in 2014, but would rule out a statutory ban on ‘vaping’ in public places.
- ◆ Introduce Minimum Unit Pricing for alcohol, subject to the outcome of the legal challenge in Scotland, and support the greater use of Local Authority powers and criminal behaviour orders to help communities tackle alcohol-related crime and disorder.
- ◆ Pass a Nature Act to increase access to green spaces and a Green Transport Act to cut air pollution.

5.7 Help for carers

The number of family carers is rising, including in the ‘sandwich generation’ who find themselves trying to care for their children and their parents at the same time. Carers are unsung heroes and we need to do more to help them. We have already invested £400m in carers’ breaks, but we can and must go further.

We will:

- ◆ Introduce an annual Carer’s Bonus of £250 for carers looking after someone for 35 hours or more each week.
- ◆ Work to raise the amount you can earn before losing Carer’s Allowance from £110 to £150 a week.

- ◆ Consult on introducing five days' paid additional 'care leave' a year for carers who qualify for the Carer's Allowance.
- ◆ Give the NHS a legal duty to identify carers and develop a Carer's Passport scheme to inform carers of their rights in the NHS, like more flexible visiting hours, assert their role as expert partners in care and gain access to support.

5.8 Improving social care

Although we want to support people to remain independent as long as possible, many people will eventually need to rely on the care system. Liberal Democrats fought hard to secure the cap on the cost of care that will be introduced in 2017, but the quality of care is vital too.

We have introduced rigorous new inspections under the Chief Inspector of Social Care and new guidance to end the use of fifteen-minute visits. We will end 'care cramming', which turns care workers into clockwatchers rushing between jobs. We are clamping down on care workers being paid less than the National Minimum Wage by resourcing and directing HMRC to pursue and prosecute providers who exploit their staff.

We will:

- ◆ Finish the job of implementing the Dilnot Report proposals for a cap on the cost of social care.
- ◆ Provide more choice at the end of life, and free end-of-life social care for those placed on their local end-of-life register if evidence shows it is affordable and cost effective.
- ◆ Ask the Care Quality Commission to showcase examples of good and bad practice in care commissioning by Councils.
- ◆ Raise the professional status and training of care home managers through statutory licensing.
- ◆ Ensure those who work in the care sector are properly trained and suitable to practice by introducing a statutory code of conduct backed up by a care workers' suitability register.
- ◆ Work with local government and providers to promote paying a Living Wage.