

Policy Guide

Motions and Amendments

2024-25

Introduction

Members Make Policy

- One of the most unique selling points of the Liberal Democrats (and the Young Liberals) is that our [Members Make our Policy](#)

Your Rights Submitting Liberal Democrat Policy

- As a member, you are entitled to engage with policy in a number of ways. With 10 other members, the support of a local party or other specific groups in the Liberal Democrats, you can submit (and eventually pass!) policy.

Your Rights Voting on Liberal Democrat Policy

- Each Member who attends Conference is entitled to vote.

Your Rights Submitting Young Liberals Policy

- As a Young Liberal member, you can submit policies or amendments for consideration, to Policy Committee.

Your Rights Voting Young Liberals Policy

- As a member, you are entitled to engage with policy in a number of ways. With 10 other members, the support of a local party or other specific groups in the Liberal Democrats, you can submit (and eventually pass!) policy.

Find out more!

- All details on your rights can be found in the [Liberal Democrat Constitution](#) and the [Young Liberals Constitution](#).



What is a Motion?

States your view

- A motion should state a clear objective, and make a clear statement on what conference (be it Young Liberal or Federal) believes, as well as actions taken to achieve the objective.

Supports your view

- Whilst motions often will not contain huge amounts of detail, they should be backed by a minimum level of research that supports your point and reduces the chance for others to oppose it.

Moves politics forward

- Often, motions should aim to move the dial on specific areas. Perhaps they build on existing policy or disagree with current policy (overriding it); motions should almost always offer something new, and not be a rewrite of existing policy or practice.

Reforming Sunday Trading Laws

Policy motion

Submitted by: Young Liberals

Mover: Cormac Evans

Summation: TBC

Conference notes that:

- i. Liberal Democrats support liberalising markets where possible, to maximise the choice and freedoms of consumers and businesses alike.
- ii. Restrictive trading laws can hinder market forces in achieving their aims, and can be based on outdated social norms, as is the case with Sunday trading laws
- iii. The trend on trading laws on Sunday has moved from an outright ban, with exceptions, on buying and selling (under the Shops Act 1950), to more open trading hours under the Sunday Trading Act 1994
- iv. Over the course of the last century, the significance of Sunday as a day of rest has been decreased, with weekends now being used by many in the UK as an opportunity to carry out errands such as shopping, which Sunday trading law reform would support.
- v. A liberalised Sunday trading system already exists in Scotland, where a package of bills allows for protection of workers' rights alongside these liberal trading laws.
- vi. Sunday trading laws were suspended during the 2012 Olympics, where trading laws were suspended to give opportunities to retailers to 'cash in' on the Games.
- vii. The benefits of liberalising Sunday trading laws were already supported by a 2006 study commissioned for the Department of Trade and Industry.
- viii. Sunday Trading Laws already exhibit a certain degree of subsidiarity, with powers being given to Scotland to regulate their Sunday trading hours.

Conference reaffirms:

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

Conference calls for:

1. The UK Government to devolve powers over Sunday trading to devolved governments or local authorities as appropriate, empowering communities to regulate their own Sunday trading hours and Sunday trading laws.
2. The UK Government to extend Sunday trading hours as an interim step before the devolution of powers set out above can be implemented.
3. The UK government to couple any reform with appropriate measures to protect workers' rights ensuring that retail workers can reject requests to work on Sundays with no adverse consequences.
4. Local authorities and devolved governments to liberalise Sunday trading rules in their own areas of responsibility

Applicability: England and Wales.



What is a Motion Amendment?

Changing Details, Not Changing Topics

- An amendment should not look to discuss topics that are not covered in the amendment itself. It should look to lightly expand or lightly amend details in the policies. A good indicator to look at, is whether or not your amendment would need another Secretary of State to enforce.

Drafting Amendments

- Maybe a motion has a typo, or a slight inaccuracy – a change that would be picked up by a spellchecker or a proofreader. In these cases, those in charge of selecting policies, including YL Policy Committee and Federal Conference Committee, often have the power to make drafting amendments with the motion proposers, to tidy up the motion.

Amendments

Drafting

The FCC has agreed to make the following drafting amendment to the motion:

In 7. (line 82) after 'and cap ground rents', insert 'on commonhold and commercial leaseholds'.

Amendment One

PASSED

Submitted by: Young Liberals and 149 members

Mover: Janey Little.

Summation: Cllr Stephen Robinson.

Delete lines 44 to 56 and insert:

Conference maintains its commitment to a national housing target of 380,000 new homes per year, to set a clear direction of travel and to indicate serious intent to address the housing crisis.

Conference believes that local housing targets need to exist as part of delivering an overall national target; local and central government share responsibility for delivering the housing we desperately need. Local Planning Authorities should co-operate at regional or sub-regional level to ensure that they deliver homes where they are needed.

Conference agrees that Liberal Democrats should put in place detailed policies to address the ongoing national failure to build enough homes. Only with an ambitious response to the housing crisis can people in desperate housing need have a realistic ambition to buy or rent the home they need.

In 2. (lines 62–65) delete 'with robust ...' to '... population changes' and insert 'that translates the national target into achievable local targets, creating sustainable communities and rewarding local authorities that support the housing growth agenda'.



Different Types of Conference Motions

Policy Motion

- The most common type of motion – these motions aim to make Conference come to a position on a certain policy or idea, For instance, a policy motion on [Reforming Sunday Trading Laws](#)

Constitutional Amendment

- A motion to make Conference amend the Constitution, which governs how parties are run, and the rights and responsibilities of members, committees and leaders. For instance, a constitutional amendment to create [Voting Rights for YL representatives on Federal Committees](#)

Business Motion

- A motion to decide on internal party management. For instance, a business motion on [membership fees](#)

Spokesperson Paper

- In the Federal Party, parliamentary spokespeople can submit policies on their brief, for debate at conference. These often come with an attached, longer ‘spokesperson paper’. For instance, a spokesperson paper on [Regulating the Water Industry and Clean Water](#)

Working Group Paper

- When the Federal Policy Committee or the Young Liberals Policy Committee (the latter is less common) commissions working groups, they can submit these to Conference as shorter policy motions, with an attached, longer ‘policy paper’. The policy motion voted on by Conference takes precedence over the policy paper, if there is disagreement. For instance, a working group paper on [International Security](#)

Emergency Motion

- Similar to a policy motion, but which must be about an emergency, and has different deadlines for submission. For instance, an emergency motion on [Alexei Navalny](#)



How do you Submit Policy?

- **Get in touch with YL and Federal Officers!!**
- **Format well (see later in the presentation)**
 - In the third person, as if you were acting as an entity known as ‘Conference’
 - Cover key topics (conferences can get easily distracted!)
 - Do not ramble: short and concise is better than long and technocratic
 - Remember your audience; use language that might work well with your audience
- **Get support**
 - Associated organisations and high-profile Lib Dems
 - Other members and ‘coalitions of the willing’

Make Policy

Find out how our members make our policies

In the Liberal Democrats, our members decide our policy. Your experience and understanding helps ensure we have the very best policies that matter to people. Liberal Democrat members can vote on all policy at our Party Conferences. No proposal can become Lib Dem policy until Conference has voted for it - and our members can put forward their own proposals. You can get involved through writing policy, joining policy working groups, responding to consultations and attending conference.

Submit items for debate at Autumn Conference 2024

Amendments and Emergency motions drafting advice deadline - 13:00 on 27 August 2024
Amendments and Emergency motions deadline - 13:00 on 9 September 2024
Appeals deadline for Amendments and Emergency motions - 13:00 on 12 September 2024
Currently and recently passed policy can be found on the [policy index page](#).
Amendments can be submitted after the 23rd August when the full agenda has been published.



Submit a speakers card online in advance of or during conference
Submit a speakers card online in advance of or during conference

Submit a speakers card



Submit a question
Submit a question to be asked during a report at conference or the leader's Q&A

Submit a question



Procedural Motions, Points of Order and Communications with the Chair

Submit



'Conference Notes'

- **Statements of fact**
 - Aim to make sure none of the notes are amended: debate should happen later.
- **Research well**
 - No need for essays on a report you read (short phrases will do), but use well-known think tanks or academics to strengthen your points.
- **Example**
 - Conference notes that Doctor Who has consistently had average yearly viewership numbers of over 4million.

Ending Period Poverty

Policy motion

Conference notes that:

- I. The average spend on sanitary products is £120 a year, according to the charity Bloody Good Period.
- II. A poll from Plan International reveals that over a quarter (28%) of girls aged 14-21 in the UK are struggling to afford period products, and nearly 1-in-5 (19%) report being unable to afford period products at all since the start of 2022.
- III. An ActionAid 2022 survey showed that of those who have struggled to afford menstrual products in the last six months, 75% said they had prioritised spending money on food, 49% had prioritised gas/electric, and 31% prioritised fuel.
- IV. Nearly half (46%) of those who struggled to afford sanitary products in the last six months kept sanitary pads or tampons in for longer than recommended or used toilet paper, and 10% doubled up their underwear; and women, girls and others who menstruate are at risk of Toxic Shock Syndrome (TSS) if they do not have access to clean period products.
- V. There is significant evidence of the widespread adverse impact of periods on attendance in education and at work.
- VI. Menstruation is not just a women's issue, and also affects some trans and non-binary people.
- VII. Vulnerable people, such as asylum seekers, have particular difficulty in accessing sanitary products. Three quarters of such women interviewed by Women for Refugee Women struggled to obtain period pads or tampons while destitute.
- VIII. The Scottish Parliament has enacted legal requirements in the Period Products (Free Provision) (Scotland) Act 2021 to allow anyone who needs period products to receive them free of charge; to have the power to make other public bodies provide free period products; and for local councils and education providers to make period products freely available within their buildings.
- IX. The Period Products Scheme for schools and colleges in England has provided free period products to all state-maintained schools and 16-19 education organisations in England since 2020.
- X. Many local authorities, including Liberal Democrat-controlled Sutton Council, have committed to providing sanitary products in council buildings but need long-term funding from the UK Government to continue this support.
- XI. The public health grant is used to provide vital services that support health and it has been cut by 26% in real terms per capita since 2015/16 (equivalent to a reduction of £1bn).
- XII. More than a quarter of women (26%) have experienced negative comments about their periods.
- XIII. Half (48%) of women and girls aged between 14 and 21 are embarrassed by their periods, and 22% do not feel comfortable discussing periods with their teachers.



'Conference believes'

- **Party political/ideological facts that may or may not cause debate.**
 - This is an opportunity to mould the party's ideology; a chance for you to define conference's opinion on specific areas.
- **Put your own into this part**
 - This is an area where what you believe might differ from what others believe, and a chance to convince others to agree with you.
- **Example**
 - Conference believes that Doctor Who is part of our national culture, and should be protected.

Ending Period Poverty

Policy motion

Conference believes that:

- A. Period products are a human right, not a luxury.
- B. Nobody should experience period poverty.
- C. England's current free period product provision is not fit for purpose.
- D. It is in everyone's interests for stigma around periods to be addressed.



'Conference calls for'

- **What you want someone (the party, representatives, an organisation, the government) to do.**
 - If your policy is accepted, what are the next steps to putting your policy in place.
- **Be ambitious!**
 - You can 100% call for the UK Government to do something, even if the chance of doing so is slim.
 - Push limits (within reason...). If your calls go too far, you may get an amendment that creates a middle ground.
- **Example:**
 - Conference calls for the UK Government to invest in a TARDIS as a way to enshrine our country's culture at the heart of our space strategy.

Ending Period Poverty

Policy motion

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

- Introduce a right for people in England to access a choice of free period products.
- Place a duty on local authorities and education providers to make period products freely available in their buildings, providing guidance and additional funding to support them in doing so.
- Give consideration as to how free period products can be made available to groups who might face barriers to accessing them, including people with disability, gypsy/ travellers, victims of domestic abuse, carers, asylum seekers, refugees, homeless people, and people living in remote locations.
- Improve comprehensive education on periods for both educators and young people, to ensure an appreciation for the lived experience of menstruation, and a widespread understanding of period products.
- Reinstate the public health grant to a minimum real-terms per capita equivalent of 2015 - the grant from which these activities will be funded.



Other Motion Terminology

Conference further [actions]

- Adding 'further' ahead of an action (for instance 'further calls for' or 'further notes'), can help structure a motion.

Conference reaffirms

- To note an existing motion (often policy), passed by Conference, which the motion seeks to continue supporting.

Conference celebrates

- To highlight key successes that the Liberal Democrats have had, often in terms of successful campaigns.

Conference endorses

- To support a document, often policy papers.

Conference resolves to

- To call for conference itself to do an action (as opposed to 'calling' for a third party to do an action)

Conference regrets

- Opposingly to 'conference celebrates', this notes key failures of Government (or rarely, the Liberal Democrats).

Applicability

- Due to the Liberal Democrats' Federal system of governance, applicability highlights which devolved state parties the motion applies to.



REMEMBER

This is only a guide

- People will have different views, policies may need to be amended for different audiences, and different groups (eg FCC) have different guidances in place.
 - Different policy submissions may have different policy-writing styles; a big, Federal Policy Committee-commissioned policy paper may be longer and more detailed than a specific policy paper on one piece of legislation

Policy is yours

- Policies exist to give members their democratic right to expression; you have a right to submit whatever you want to conferences (whether they get selected is another story...)

Get in touch! The leadership and executive officers are here to help!

Policy Officer, ulyse.abbate@youngliberals.uk

Policy Committee, policy@youngliberals.uk



Other Tips

Look at previous policies

- Federal Party records (of Federal Conference), Young Liberals Policy Booklet, attend conferences (online or in-person)

Get familiar with the constitution, especially conference standing orders

- This might be a bit harder, but is useful in making sure you have a rough understanding of how conference will debate your policy

Reach out to other members through Forum or other contacts

- This is useful to both understand where your policy might face challenges, and who may be able to offer support for your motion.



Useful Links

Young Liberal Policy Book, Constitution, Conference Standing Orders and Briefing Papers:

- <https://www.youngliberals.uk/documents>

Federal Liberal Democrat Constitution and Conference Standing Orders:

- <https://www.libdems.org.uk/federal-constitution>

Federal Liberal Democrat Motions Passed by Conference:

- <https://www.libdems.org.uk/conference/motions>

Federal Conference Committee advice

- <https://www.libdems.org.uk/conference/submissions/motion-writing>

Jeremy Hargreaves (Vice-Chair, FPC) policy writing advice

- <https://www.libdemnewswire.com/files/2018/03/How-to-submit-a-motion-to-Liberal-Democrat-Federal-Party-conference.pdf>

Mark Pack's Glossary of Terms

- <https://www.markpack.org.uk/133262/glossary-of-liberal-democrat-terms/>



Glossary of Terms (1)

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.*

Constitutional amendment

- A proposal to change the constitution of the Young Liberals.

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.

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.*

Emergency amendment

- An amendment to a motion which relates to a specific event which occurred after the deadline for the submission of amendments.

Full session

- Any part of the conference agenda *during* which debates, topical issue discussions or discussion of business, including formal reports, takes place.



Glossary of Terms (2)

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 Young Liberals Policy Committee and submitted to conference for debate.

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.

Special conference

- An additional meeting of the conference requisitioned by not fewer than 40 full members including at least 4 members of each State Organisation

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 Young Liberals members as agreed by the Events Committee.



Glossary of Terms (Procedural Motions)

Procedural motion

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

Procedural Motion: No Confidence in the Chair

- A motion proposing to remove the current Chair of the session

Procedural Motion: Overrule a Decision of the Chair

- A motion proposing to overrule a specific decision made by the current Chair of the session

Procedural Motion: Suspend Standing Orders

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

Procedural Motion: 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.

Procedural Motion: Move Straight to a Vote

- A proposal that the conference should cease to consider an item of business and immediately move to voting on the item of business

Procedural Motion: Refer Back (To the Executive or to a Committee)

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

Procedural Motion: Request a Counted Vote

- 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.

Procedural Motion: 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.

Procedural Motion: Secret Ballot

- A mandate for the chair to conduct a vote using voting paper that guarantees the secrecy of voters

