

HE Policy Update - election special – Party Manifestos (Part 1)

w/e 22 Nov 2019

We've done an election special on the manifestos this week.

At the time of writing the Conservative manifesto has not been published. Below is a summary of the main aspects relating to education and research from the main parties that have released their election manifesto. Where relevant page references are included after the headline statement so you can read the full relevant text of the elements which interest you.

Green Party

The Green Party were first to [publish](#) their GE2019 Manifesto. On education they say:

Education should be about nurturing potential and inspiring a love of learning. Yet all too often it can feel like a production line, manufacturing children-shaped pieces to fit gaps in the workplace. The freedom to let children play, flourish and grow has been replaced with endless testing and measuring. It demoralises teachers and adds yet more pressure on young people. And we have turned further and higher education into a commodity, when it should be a basic right. It's time to build an education system on the principles that learning must be lifelong, liberating and accessible to all. Education can and should unlock creativity and enable self-expression across all ages.

Here are the headline Green Party promises for the education sector:

- Increase school funding by at least £4bn a year
- Reducing class sizes down to under 20 in the long term to help teachers focus on individual pupil needs and create a pleasant learning environment.
- Formal education will start at 6 years old. Those under 6 will remain in early years education with a focus on play.
- End academisation and bring all schools back into the control of local authorities
- Replace OFSTED with a collaborative system of assessing and supporting schools locally to free schools from centrally imposed testing regimes, inspections, rigid national curriculum and league tables. Teachers will be trusted to plan their lessons and assess progress according to the needs of their pupils
- Create a fully inclusive education system, where children with special education needs are able to access their local school and are fully supported in that school. This means ensuring accessible buildings, an inclusive curriculum and the provision of specially trained teachers across the school system. Specialist schools will be retained, for when children and parents would prefer that option.
- Introduce an English Climate Emergency Education Act to support schools to teach young people about the urgency, severity and scientific basis of the climate and environmental crises, and to ensure youth voices are heard on climate issues. Enable more outdoor lessons, where children will learn more about nature, animals and the environment, and introduce a new Nature GCSE to encourage children to value nature, and to grow a whole new generation of naturalists.
- Restore arts and music education in all state schools, to enable children to develop their creative potential.

- Ensure all children get at least a half-day equivalent of sports in school and encourage both the use of schools sports facilities by the community and participation in regional and national sporting events by our young people.
- Remove charitable status from private schools and charge full VAT on fees. The private school sector will be subject to regular independent audits, to ensure private schools improve accessibility and pay their taxes in full.
- Fully fund every higher education student and scrap tuition fees. Revive the further education sector to provide a wider choice of academic and vocational learning. Raise the funding rate for 16–17-year-olds, followed by an annual rise in line with inflation, at the same time as introducing a capital expansion fund for sixth form providers.
- Write off existing debt for former students who studied under the £9k fee regime
- Increase funding for adult education and create a new range of programmes.
- Guarantee safe and discreet access to public services such as the police, health and education, so that migrants can access these without fear of being subject to immigration enforcement.
- Properly fund training to support the delivery of comprehensive, age appropriate Personal Health and Sexual Education (PHSE) lessons in schools covering all aspects of sex and relationships, with a focus on consent
- Promote and support an increase in co-operatives and community interest companies. Education about these forms of communal enterprise would start in school

A summary of the Green Manifesto covering all sectors (in addition to the education aspects mentioned above) prepared by Dods can be accessed [here](#).

The Greens have a light touch costing list:

The Green Quality of Life Guarantee

> Operational Expenditure

Increased funding for NHS,
including increased nursing
training: £7 billion
Increased funding for schools: £4
billion
Scrapping tuition fees and funding
every student: £7.8 billion
Increasing adult education:
£1 billion
Smaller policies: £1 billion

Total: £20.8 billion
*To be met from tax changes and
savings revenue*

Lib Dems

The Liberal Democrats were next to publish their [manifesto](#) (on Wednesday) you can read it [in full here](#) or dip into the [bitesize version](#) which is arranged topic by topic.

Their aim for the country:

a society where every child and young person is nurtured to become whoever they want to be, where if you play your part in society, you can live a happy and fulfilling life, and where we do everything in our power to save our planet for future generations.

Their priorities for the next parliament are:

- Investing £130 billion in infrastructure – upgrading our transport and energy systems, building schools, hospitals and homes, empowering all regions and nations of the UK and developing the climate-friendly infrastructure of the future.
- Enabling an adaptable, future-focused workforce – empowering individuals through new Skills Wallets worth £10,000 for every individual.
- Introducing a wellbeing budget and basing decisions for government spending on what will improve wellbeing as well as on economic and fiscal indicators.

Their main manifesto aims are:

- Tackling climate change
- Investing in education, skills and childcare
- Improving mental health services

HE/FE/Adult Learning

British universities are examples of excellence throughout the world. Their ability to maintain top-quality research activity, to attract funding and to deliver the best teaching depends on being open and outward looking – which this Government's disastrous approach to Brexit is already damaging. Liberal Democrats will protect our world-leading higher education sector by stopping Brexit, enabling it to continue to rely on international collaboration and being able to attract leading academics from around the world. Further Education is vital route to learning and we will invest to support it

- A new Skills Wallet for every adult, giving people £10,000 to spend on approved education and training available from set age thresholds: £4,000 at age 25, £3,000 at age 40 and £3,000 at age 55. Individuals, their employers and local government will be able to make additional payments into the wallets. Individuals can choose how and when to spend this money on a range of approved education and training courses *from providers who are regulated and monitored by the Office for Students*. Access to free careers guidance to help them to decide how to spend the money in their Skills Wallets.
- Establish a review of higher education finance in the next parliament (p37) to consider any necessary reforms in the light of the latest evidence of the impact of the existing financing system on access, participation and quality; ensure there are no more retrospective raising of rates or selling-off of loans to private companies.
- Raise standards in universities by strengthening the Office for Students, to make sure all students receive a high-quality education.
- Develop new National Colleges (and new courses) as national centres of expertise for key sectors (p25) such as renewable energy, to deliver the high-level vocational skills that businesses need. New courses to provide the right skills for the jobs of the future (p8).
- Identify and seek to solve skills gap such as lack of advanced technicians by expanding higher vocational training like Foundation Degrees, Higher National Diplomas, Higher National Certificates and Higher Apprenticeships (p25).
- Introduce a Student Mental Health Charter (through legislation) (p37) and require universities to make services accessible to their students

- Ensure that all universities work to widen participation by disadvantaged and underrepresented groups across the sector, prioritising their work with students in schools and colleges, and require every university to be transparent about selection criteria.
- Reinstate maintenance grants for the poorest students (p37)
- Introduce ‘Young People’s Premium’ to help children from poorer families to remain in education and training beyond the age of 16 (p36)
- Target extra help for nursing students, starting with bursaries for specialties where shortages are most acute such as mental health and learning disability nursing, linked to clinical placements in areas that are particularly under-staffed
- Invest an extra £1 billion in Further Education funding, including by refunding colleges for the VAT they pay (p36).
- Introduce a new two-year visa for students to work after graduation and a major expansion of high quality apprenticeships (p18)
- Recruit STEM graduates to be armed forces engineers, providing ‘golden handshakes’ of up to £10,000, (p91)
- Reverse the damage to universities posed by Brexit and related uncertainty by stopping Brexit and keeping the UK at the heart of the EU.

Research & Innovation

We want to lay the foundations for the UK to be the best place in the world for innovation-led businesses in the long-term – to be a place where people come from across the EU and the world to turn their ideas into reality. But with R&D and innovation investment lagging behind other countries and being overly concentrated in South East England, it needs major change to make this vision a reality. [The Conservatives are]...pursuing a Brexit that will hit research and innovation, which is so dependent on European and other international collaboration... Liberal Democrats have a transformative plan to make the UK a world leader in responsible innovation by taking advantage of the UK’s strengths and what we are good at as a nation: our natural advantages in renewable energy; our strong university sector; and our regional strengths such as bioscience in the Midlands, advanced materials in Yorkshire, zero-carbon technology in the North West and photonics in Scotland. We will build a growing economy in which people will have well-paid and fulfilling jobs. We will:

- Increase national spending on research and development to 3% of GDP (p18), publish roadmap on achieving 3% “by the earliest date possible”, and via an interim target of 2.4% by no later than 2027 (p18).
- Double innovation spending across the economy, increase the Strength in Places Fund and creating more ‘Catapult’ innovation and technology centres (p18). Emphasise sectors which are critical to the UK’s ability to trade internationally. Back private investment in zero-carbon and environmental innovation.
- Allow companies to claim R&D tax credits against the cost of purchasing datasets and cloud computing (p19).
- Develop the skilled workforce needed to support growth by introducing the new two-year visa (mentioned above) and a major expansion of high-quality apprenticeships including Higher Apprenticeships, backed up by new sector-led National Colleges (as above).
- Develop a national skills strategy for key sectors, including zero-carbon technologies, to help match skills and people; our new Skills Wallets will allow people to retrain and upskill when they need to (also see Opportunities Throughout Life section, p.25).

- Support growth in the creative industries, including video gaming, by continuing to support the Creative Industries Council and tailored industry-specific tax support, promoting creative skills, supporting modern and flexible patent, copyright and licensing rules, and addressing the barriers to finance faced by small creative businesses. Create creative enterprise zones to grow and regenerate the cultural output of areas across the UK.
- Reform immigration rules – including enabling industry bodies to sponsor work visas.
- Ethical standards and kite marks for artificial intelligence and other new technologies. Convene a citizens’ assembly to determine when it is appropriate for the government to use algorithms in decision-making. Develop a mechanism to allow the public to share in the profits made by tech companies in the use of their data.

Apprenticeships/General

With technology advancing and the world of work always and rapidly changing, skills learned at 18 or 21 will not last a lifetime and it has never been more important for people to continually develop new skills. The system is not set up for this though – opportunities are limited and people do not get the chance to make the most of their talents. We need to empower people to develop new skills so that they can thrive in the technologies and industries that are key to Britain’s economic future.[We are]..embracing the future, championing flexible lifelong learning that gives people the power to follow the path that best suits their ability.

- Expand the apprenticeship levy into a wider ‘Skills and Training Levy’ to help prepare the UK’s workforce for the economic challenges ahead with 25% of fund raised by the levy going into a ‘Social Mobility Fund’ (p25).
- Introduce a national skills strategy for key sectors (as above and p18) - Government will work with industry to identify skills needs and to evaluate and certify courses.
- Introduce a ‘Training up Britain’ programme to make the most of migrants’ skills (p77).

Schools

- Increase teacher numbers by 20,000 (p8); reverse cuts to school funding (p30); reduce class sizes to 2015 levels (p32).
- Scrap SATS; replace school league tables with a broader set of indicators (p30). Replace Ofsted with a new HM Inspector of Schools (p33).
- Triple the Early Years Pupil Premium (to £1,000) to give extra help to disadvantaged children who are at risk of falling behind from the very beginning of their education (p32).
- Extend free school meals to all children in primary education and to all secondary school children whose families receive Universal Credit (p35).
- More cash to local authorities to end the crisis in Special Educational Needs (p33).
- Establish a national fund for projects that work in schools to raise the aspirations of ethnic minority children and young people (p76).
- Set a requirement for schools to introduce gender-neutral uniform policies and break down perceptions of subject gender-appropriateness (p75); affordable uniforms.
- All teaching staff to be trained to identify mental health issues (p35), with a specific individual responsible for mental health in schools (p35). School statutory duty to promote the wellbeing of their pupils as part of the inspection framework (p35).
- Introduce a ‘curriculum for life’ in all state-funded schools (p33) includes staying safe online and social media info for children and parents. Establish an independent body of education experts

who will use the most up-to-date educational evidence to oversee any future curriculum changes (p33).

- Protect the availability of arts and creative subjects in the curriculum and act to remove barriers to pupils studying these subjects, including by abolishing the English Baccalaureate as a performance measure (p33). Teach the core skills required for children including critical thinking, verbal reasoning and creativity (p33). Digital literacy prioritised too.
- Give local authorities with responsibility for education the powers and resources to act as Strategic Education Authorities for their area, including responsibility for places planning, exclusions, administering admissions including in-year admissions, and SEND functions (p34).
- MATs to undergo external inspection; local authorities to open new Community Schools where needed (p34). Oppose future grammar school expansion; devolve all capital funding for new schools spaces to local authorities (p34).
- Invest to clear backlog of repairs for school and college buildings to ensure safety. Overall £130bn infrastructure fund support projects to increase capacity and modernise schools (p17).

Early Years

- Provide free, high quality childcare for children of working parents/guardians from nine months (p30), universal free childcare from age 2 to school, including increasing the funding to cover the actual cost of nursery provision (p32).
- Invest £1 billion a year in Children's Centres to support families and tackle inequalities in children's health, development and life chances (p32).
- Require all Early Years settings to have a training programme for staff, with the majority of staff working with children who are at risk of falling behind (p32). At least one person qualified to graduate level (p32).

Labour

Labour published their [manifesto](#) on Thursday and during the build-up Corbyn said it would be the most radical manifesto they've had in post war history. Here we only cover those aspects relevant to education, skills and research.

HE

- Abolition of university tuition fees (levels 4-6) and the reintroduction of maintenance grants for disadvantaged learners (p41)
- Develop a new funding formula for higher education that ensures all public HE institutions have adequate funding for teaching and research, widens access to higher education and ends the casualisation of staff (p41)
- Transform the Office for Students from a market regulator to a body of the National Education Service (p41).
- Introduce post-qualification admissions in higher education (p.41)

FE

- Align the base rate of per-pupil funding in post-16 education with key stage 4, providing dedicated capital funding to expand provision and bringing back the Education Maintenance Allowance (p40).
- Ensuring that training delivers the right skills by giving employers a role in the design of qualifications (p41).
- Reverse of the privatisation of further and adult education (p.41)

- Free lifelong entitlement to training up to level 3 six years

Research

- Target for 3% of GDP to be spent on research and development (R&D) by 2030 (p17).
- Continued participation in EU agencies and funding programmes, including scientific research and culture (p90).
- Increase direct support for R&D and reforming the innovation ecosystem to better ‘crowd in’ private investment (p17).
- Fund R&D into newer technologies like hydrogen and carbon capture and storage. (p17)

Apprenticeships

- Reform the apprenticeship levy so it is more flexible and easier for employers to spend it – allow a wider range of accredited training and allowing employers longer to spend it (p18).
- Introduce a Climate Apprenticeship programme (320,000 apprenticeships created 2020; 886,000 by 2030) funded by utilising 25% of the Apprenticeship Levy funds. (p18) *Businesses will benefit from an average of 80,000 people per year being trained as apprentice engineers and technicians in renewable energy and transport, civil engineers and skilled tradespeople in sustainable construction, designers, welders and fabricators in low carbon industries and sustainable agriculture and forestry specialists.* Also fund targeted bursaries for women, BAME people, care leavers, ex-armed forces personnel, and people with disabilities to encourage them to take up climate apprenticeships (p18).

Schools

- End the marketisation of the school system (p.39) Close tax loopholes enjoyed by elite private schools (p.40)
- Introduction of a fairer funding formula for schools (p.38); provide schools with long-term funding and ensure that primary schools have maximum class sizes of 30 (p.39). A new teacher supply service will tackle the waste of funds going to private supply teacher agencies (p.40)
- £150 billion Social Transformation Fund to replace, upgrade and expand schools, hospitals, care homes and council houses (p30).
- Budget and day-to-day decisions will be transferred back to schools, overseen by an accountable governing body with elected representatives (p.39). Responsibility for delivery of education and support for young people will sit with local authorities, they will manage admissions. And have responsibility for school places, including the power to open schools (p39).
- All schools will be subject to a common rulebook, set out in legislation (p.40) Replacing Ofsted and transfer responsibilities for inspections to a new body which shall be designed to drive school improvement (p.40)
- Scrap Key Stage 1 and 2 SATs and baseline assessments and refocusing assessment on supporting pupil progress (p.39)
- Review the curriculum to cover subjects like black history and the environmental emergency (p.39). Introduce an arts pupil premium to funds arts education for all primary school children (p.39)
- Establish a network of open access mental health hubs to enable more children to access mental health and recruit c.3,500 qualified counsellors to guarantee every child access to school counsellors (p34).
- Free school meals for all primary school children (p.40)
- Invest more than £1 billion in public health and recruit 4,500 more health visitors and school nurses (p34)

- Introduce an arts pupil premium to every primary school in England – a £160 million annual boost for schools to ensure creative and arts education is embedded in secondary education (p54).

Early Years

- Within a five year period, all 2,3 and 4 year olds will be entitled to 30 hours of free preschool education per week, with access to extra hours at affordable subsidised rates (p38). Work to extend childcare provision to 1 year olds (p.38). Extend paid maternity leave to 12 months (p.38).
- Reverse cuts to Sure Start and create Sure Start Plus to have a centre in every community focussing on the under 2s (p38).
- Transition to a qualified, graduate led workforce in child development and free training for the existing workforce to obtain these qualifications (p38). Recruit 150,000 additional early years staff including SEN coordinators (p38).

General

- Reform of existing careers advice, working towards an integrated information, advice and guidance system that covers the entire National Education Service (p.41).
- Restore public sector pay to at least pre-financial crisis levels (in real terms), by enforcing pay rises yearly above-inflation rates, starting with a 5% increase (p30).
- Reform and regulation of all education providers (p.40)
- There are also a number of manifesto commitments relating to youth work, funding ESOL, the (young) care system, and early/long-term intervention for troubled families.

Conservatives

The Conservative and Unionist Party have not finalised the publication date for their manifesto. On Friday, the Evening Standard reported:

“Tory rising star Rishi Sunak has said “of course” he knows when the party’s manifesto is out - but he won’t confirm the date. Mr Sunak, chief secretary to the Treasury, said it would be released “very shortly” but stopped short of saying exactly when. It has been anticipated the document could be released on Sunday, though Chancellor Sajid Javid spoke of “next week” when he referenced it yesterday. “

DUP

The DUP’s status and influence in Parliament increased significantly during the 2017-19 sitting because the Conservative’s relied on the DUP’s backing to pass significant votes in the absence of a clear Conservative parliamentary majority.

Their manifesto pledges relating to education are most significantly focused on schools including improving provision in isolated communities, tackling adverse childhood experiences, improving pupil attainment through tracking mechanisms, identifying SEN early, a focus on coding, and positive mental health. Outside of schools it aims to align the skills strategy with key industrial growth sectors, promote social care careers and training, and apprenticeship reform.

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