

# Motions submitted for Spring Conference 2015

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## Contents

M1 - A Fairer Deal for Welsh Apprentices .....	2
M2 -A Stronger Economy and a Fairer Society (Manifesto Motion) .....	4
M3 - Healthcare for the Future (Health and Social Care Policy Paper) .....	6
M4 - Music Education .....	8
M5 - Building a Fairer Society (Inequality Policy Paper) .....	9
M6 - Cleddau Bridge .....	11
M7 - CEO Pay Cap.....	12
M8 - Ensuring a Bilingual Wales.....	13

## M1 - A Fairer Deal for Welsh Apprentices

IR Cymru

Conference Notes:

1. The current wage for apprentices is £2.73, below the National Minimum Wage for 16-17 year olds, despite apprentices making an important contribution to the Welsh economy;
2. On average, apprentices earn £100,000 more over their career than less qualified workers;
3. The Welsh Labour Government has presided over a 17% fall in apprenticeships in Wales since 2007, and that the number of people on apprenticeships placements fell by more than 29% between 2006 and 2012;
4. That a 2013 Welsh Government Employer Skills Survey found “skills-shortage vacancies” amounted to 20% of all vacancies in Wales during the time of the survey, with 45% of businesses surveyed reporting “skill-shortage vacancies” impacting on business performance;
5. That the Employer Skills Survey found that 53% of the employers surveyed had more often opted for older candidates, despite younger applicants being suitable for the vacancy;
6. The work of the Welsh Liberal Democrats in securing funding for 5,000 new apprenticeships in Wales through the 2014 budget negotiations with the Welsh Government;
7. The work of the Liberal Democrats in Government investing in quality apprenticeships, resulting in 1.8 million people starting apprenticeships since 2010;
8. The work of Liberal Democrats as part of the Coalition Government means that there are now 86% more apprentices than under the previous Labour Government in Westminster;
9. That Liberal Democrats in Government have supported more than 4,800 jobs for young people in England through cutting Employer National Insurance Contributions for employees under 21, a scheme worth £3.1 million; and
10. Liberal Democrat Business Minister Vince Cable has called for a single rate of £3.79 per hour for apprentices in England, meaning 31,000 apprentices in England in the first year of their programme would benefit from a pay rise of more than £1 an hour.

Conference Believes:

1. The Blair Government’s target of 50% of all young people to progress into Higher Education has resulted in a decline in the number of apprenticeships, and an attitude that an apprenticeship is a less valuable route to employment;
2. That the apprenticeship route through education and employment is a valuable route for young people that is often undersold and undervalued;
3. More should be done to champion apprentices and to promote the apprenticeship model for young people, through working with organisations such as the National Society for Apprentices;
4. Apprenticeships greatly contribute to the development of a highly skilled workforce for the future of the Welsh economy; and
5. Supporting small and medium enterprises take on apprentices will boost local economies, and help young people stay in their home rural, Welsh-speaking communities.

Conference Endorses the paper *Widening Access to Apprenticeships: Supporting positive choices in post-16 education and training*.

Conference Calls For:

1. A national apprenticeship campaign to encourage young people to choose apprenticeships as a route through education and employment and to encourage employers to employ young apprentices;
2. Investment in Further Education College facilities to support apprenticeships across Wales, as has happened in England under the Coalition Government;
3. Plans to be brought forward to replicate the German model of apprenticeships and Liberal Democrat Business Minister Vince Cable's plans to offer grants for small businesses for each young unemployed person employed as an apprentice;
4. The Welsh Liberal Democrats to call on the Welsh and UK Governments to place all apprentices on an equal national minimum wage of £3.79; and
5. Plans to move towards raising the apprentice national minimum wage to the same rate as the minimum wage for 18-20 year olds.

## M2 -A Stronger Economy and a Fairer Society (Manifesto Motion)

National Policy Committee

Conference Welcomes the Liberal Democrats' achievements in Government such as:

1. Giving an £800 tax cut to 1.2 million low-income Welsh workers by raising the income tax threshold to £10,500, taking 153,000 out of paying income tax altogether;
2. Giving 83,600 Welsh families £2,000 off the cost of their childcare;
3. Helping businesses create 1.7m new jobs;
4. Delivering an increase of £650 in the state pension and protecting the value of the state pension by ensuring each year that it always rises with inflation, earnings or 2.5% - whichever is highest – the pensions triple lock;
5. Establishing the world's first Green Investment Bank;
6. Giving all employers £2,000 cash back on the tax they pay on their employees;
7. Cracking down on tax avoidance, bringing in an extra £9 billion per year;
8. Electrifying the South Wales and Valleys rail lines;
9. Ending Labour's disgraceful practice of routinely detaining innocent children for immigration purposes;
10. Making sure farmers get a fair deal by creating a Groceries Code to stop big supermarkets ripping them off;
11. Introducing shared parental leave, so mothers and fathers can share maternity and paternity leave as they see fit;
12. Introducing same-sex marriage;
13. Scrapping Labour's intrusive and expensive ID card scheme, stopping government permanently storing the DNA of innocent people and ending the fingerprinting of children in schools without parental consent; and
14. Stopping the Conservatives paying Welsh public sector workers less simply for living outside London and the South East.

Conference Believes that:

1. Since 2010, the Liberal Democrats have worked in Government in Westminster to rescue and repair Britain's shattered economy and the Welsh Liberal Democrats have worked in opposition in Wales to build a stronger economy and a fairer society by securing £282 million to help disadvantaged children get a better education, funding for 5,000 apprentices, and introducing a Young Travellers' Youth Concessionary Fare Scheme for discounted bus travel for 16 to 18 year olds; and
2. The Welsh Liberal Democrats should seek to ensure that we build a stronger economy and a fairer society in Wales, providing opportunity to all.

Conference Welcomes the publication of the Federal party pre-manifesto for the General Election 2015 and calls on Policy Committee to use this and Welsh party policy as the basis for constructing the Welsh Liberal Democrat's Manifesto for the General Election 2015.

Conference Welcomes in particular proposals to:

- A. Balance the budget by 2018, protecting the economic recovery and bringing down Britain's debt;
- B. Make deficit reduction fair by ensuring high earners and the wealthiest pay their share, including through the introduction of a banded Mansion tax;

- C. Set new fiscal rules to balance the budget while allowing borrowing for productive investment;
- D. Rewire the economy to cut out carbon, rebuild our national infrastructure, and embrace new technology, so the next generation can enjoy long-term prosperity and be protected from the threat of runaway climate change;
- E. Cut income tax by £400 for low and middle earners, easing the squeeze on household budgets;
- F. Campaign for more nurses and increased spending for Wales' struggling NHS;
- G. Campaign in Wales to increase the amount spent on our most disadvantaged pupils through our Pupil Premium;
- H. Produce enough renewable and low-carbon energy in Wales to cover our own needs and provide export potential by 2050;
- I. Invest to make the UK a world leader in low carbon cars, energy efficiency and high-tech manufacturing;
- J. Deliver further powers for Wales over transport, S4C, teachers' pay, sewerage, energy consents, youth justice, policing and in the longer term other justice powers, and power to introduce votes at 16;
- K. Fully implement the Silk Part 1 proposals on financial powers for Wales;
- L. Deliver fair funding for Wales by increasing the Welsh block grant to an equitable level over a Parliament and address the imbalance by immediately entrenching a Barnett floor set at a level which reflects the need for Wales to be funded fairly;
- M. Move to a 'reserved powers' model for a Welsh Parliament as recommended by the Silk Commission;
- N. Allow the Welsh Government to set its own bank holidays;
- O. Transfer responsibility for the local government election system in Wales to the National Assembly for Wales;
- P. Protect the funding and editorial independence of Welsh language broadcasters;
- Q. Restore confidence in Britain's immigration system with fair rules and competent administration, so the next generation can continue to live in an open, tolerant society that benefits from people and expertise from around the world;
- R. Electrify main lines such as the North Wales coast line and re-open local stations to enable more people to travel by train; and
- S. Abolish tolls on the Severn Bridge once the existing construction and repair costs are paid off.

## M3 - Healthcare for the Future (Health and Social Care Policy Paper)

National Policy Committee

### Conference Notes:

1. Health and social care is the largest single area of devolving spending in Wales' public services;
2. In 2010, health and social spending represented around 42% of the Welsh Government's revenue budget;
3. The scale of the challenge is illustrated by estimated that the NHS needs around £200-250m extra a year just to "stand-still" and avoid a potentially "catastrophic failure of service"; and
4. Although we spend more per head on the NHS than England, we suffer worse outcomes - longer waiting times, slower ambulance response times, poorer and poorer access to new treatments.

### Conference Believes:

1. The Welsh Liberal Democrats will always be guided by the founding principles of the NHS - providing free care, when you need it, regardless of your ability to pay;
2. We must join up different elements of health and social care, in order to achieve greater efficiency;
3. Patient needs must be at the core of the NHS and that patient care must be centred on dignity, compassion, choice and control within a clean, safe and well-managed environment;
4. Patients should be guaranteed the best treatment, in the right place, at the right time to cover their healthcare needs;
5. Mental health should be taken as seriously as physical health;
6. In focussing on prevention and local service delivery; with the aim of meeting patients' needs and being more cost-effective in the long term;
7. We must improve public education on the health service regarding what they should expect from the NHS and where they should go for care;
8. We need more cooperation between health and social services, but no mass re-organisation, instead we will enable integration on demand; and
9. We must embed reablement at the heart of our approach to health and social care, helping people to do things for themselves and maximising their ability to live life as independently as possible.

Conference Endorses the policy paper *Healthcare for the Future*.

### Conference Calls For:

1. The establishment of an all-party and non-party Commission to be established to ensure Wales has an NHS that is clinically and financially sustainable, and to secure a historic and long-term plan for health and social care;
2. Better management of health delivery, at a reasonably cost, in a more restricted environment by:
  - a. Implementing a new model of healthcare for older people, including by training more clinicians in the care of elderly people, investing in cottage hospitals and community care, and tasking GP practices with identifying people at risk of age-related illnesses and pro-actively managing their care and health;
  - b. Improving the status of mental health by:

- i. Enshrining parity of esteem between mental and physical health in legislation;
    - ii. Increasing proportional funding for mental health within the overall NHS budget, including prevention, to reflect the relative size of the health challenge in relation to physical health;
    - iii. Including classes for children and young people on how to look after their mental health and build emotional resilience in the national curriculum;
    - iv. Encouraging all organisations to work to become mental health friendly employers;
    - v. Introducing a Crisis Care Concordat between policy, paramedics and health services in Wales to ensure that people experiencing a mental health crisis have the support they need; and
    - vi. Establishing a Mental Health Taskforce.
  - c. Development of a national medical workforce and training strategy, to ensure that staff are deployed and trained effectively;
  - d. The Health Technologies Fund to be extended to support the take-up of new medicines and in particular to support research into stratified medicines;
  - e. Development of an all-Wales individual patient funding request scheme and removal of the 'exceptionality' hurdle which prevents many patients access to drugs which their clinician thinks could help them;
  - f. Local authorities to be required to fast-track applications for social care for terminally ill people and their families and carers;
  - g. Introduction of a scheme for targeted recruitment into rural GP practices; and
  - h. Introduce a properly funded Access to GPs scheme, funding GP practices to make sure people can get the appointments they need.
3. Improving preventative care and early intervention by:
- a. The creation of a network of Healthy Living Pharmacies, improving patients' information about the health and lifestyle choices; and
  - b. Ensuring every school has a dedicated nurse.
4. Empowering patients by:
- a. Introduction of e-mail and Skype contact with your GP, following a pilot; and
  - b. Ensuring every patient is accompanied by an electronic patient record which they have the most control possible over.
5. Developing the governance around health and social care by:
- a. Permitting health and social care providers in a local area to form a single integrated health organisation, responsible for managing the provision and integration of services in that area, subject to public consultation, built-in arrangements for rigorous evaluation of effectiveness, and approval by Welsh Government;
  - b. Hospitals establishing a medical division to coordinate care for patients and be responsible for all medical services across the hospital, led by a senior doctor; and
  - c. Negotiation of a new Compact on Cross-border Health Provision with the Westminster Government to ensure that there is a consistent approach to treatment for Welsh and English patients.
6. Monitoring and assuring quality by:
- a. Introducing clinically led and peer reviewed hospital inspection, with patient input;
  - b. Working with the health service to develop new ways of measuring performance in a clinically appropriate and meaningful way.

## M4 - Music Education

IR Cymru

### Conference Notes:

1. Councils throughout Wales have made cuts, or are considering cuts to their Music Education Service;
2. The provision of Music Education across Wales is uneven, with the level of provision varying from Council to Council;
3. The detrimental impact this is having not only in terms of our National Youth Ensembles, but also in terms of the wider educational benefit gained from children having access to music education;
4. Music develops a child's concentration, stimulates their intellectual development, builds confidence, raises aspiration and gives them a greater understanding and empathy for others;
5. That it is widely recognised that children who sing or play musical instruments perform significantly better in other lessons than their peers that don't; and
6. That in England, £18 million has been allocated to support music services whilst the Scottish Government's Youth Music Initiative ensures that all school children have access to one year's free music tuition by the time they reach Year 6.

### Conference Believes:

1. Wales is as proud of our national youth music ensembles as we are of our sports teams; and
2. The ability to access music education should be based purely on the ability to play, not the ability to pay.

### Conference Calls For:

1. A national strategy on music education that ensures access to such provision is consistent through Wales, helps make such provisions more sustainable and financial barriers to accessing these services are minimised as much as practically possible; and for
2. The Welsh Government to ensure that the National Youth Ensembles are provided with the necessary resources to ensure they are given a more stable footing to continue to thrive.

## M5 - Building a Fairer Society (Inequality Policy Paper)

National Policy Committee

### Conference Notes:

1. That it was a Liberal, William Beveridge, who wrote the 1942 ground breaking report on '*Social Justice and Allied Services*'. He called for ways to fight the five giant evils of want, disease, ignorance, squalor and unemployment;
2. It was the Liberal Democrats who prioritised those in most need by introducing the pupil premium, reducing the lower income tax threshold and tackling unscrupulous money lenders by capping the interest rates charged;
3. One in five Welsh households is below the poverty line and among children the figure is an appalling one in three;
4. Wales has the lowest education attainment levels in the UK, which has a particularly negative impact on deprived communities; and
5. Childhood obesity, smoking rates and youth alcohol consumption rates are worse in Wales than in England.

### Conference Believes:

1. Everyone should have access to an excellent public services;
2. People should be empowered to lead the life they want to lead;
3. The Labour Welsh Government are letting people down; and
4. There is no room for complacency in the battle to ensure equality for all.

Conference Endorses the Welsh Liberal Democrats Policy Paper *Building a Fairer Society and Opportunity for all*.

### Conference Calls For:

1. more effective support for those in need by:
  - a. focusing on addressing inequality by rationalising the number of organisations and funding pots dealing with deprivation;
  - b. preparing strategies to facilitate the sectors dominated by low paid employment to move away from business models based on low cost;
  - c. making Wales more attractive to potential investors in higher skilled sectors;
  - d. maximising the impact of finite resources on addressing inequality by reforming the public sector culture through establishing a robust leadership programme and having consistent excellence in monitoring, performance and project management;
  - e. having more openness and transparency on government expenditure and people's rights;
  - f. using public sector funding to generate extra capacity, activity and resources; and
  - g. promoting the use of Credit Unions and make them more accessible.
2. improved education for all by
  - a. providing access to the Flying Start initiative to all children across Wales on the basis of need rather than geographical entitlement;
  - b. improving the system of continuous professional development for teachers;
  - c. establishing a Welsh Academy of Leadership;
  - d. ensuring automatic eligibility for free school meals for children whose parents are in receipt of a passported benefit and ensure good nutritional standards;
  - e. further improving the impact of the pupil premium grant by making the PDG guidance more clear and concise, use of a Sutton Trust Toolkit, provide earlier confirmation of funding amounts to schools, increase sharing of best practice and extend funding;

- f. facilitating closer engagement with parents through schools to raise pupil achievement;
  - g. establishing one funding stream for programmes which get people ready for work and increase the number of apprenticeships; and
  - h. ensuring apprentices are not exploited and receive excellent training programmes.
3. improved health for all by:
- a. providing additional “talking therapies” for those facing mental health challenges;
  - b. amending the Estyn Framework to ensure that greater focus is given to education on healthy eating and exercise in schools;
  - c. properly implementing the All Wales Obesity Pathway;
  - d. reducing the harmful effects of alcohol by introducing a public health licensing objective and ensuring items in alcoholic drink multi-packs are not sold separately;
  - e. focusing more resources on the cessation of youth smoking cessation and tackling illegal tobacco; and
  - f. guaranteeing access to an NHS dentist.
4. improved housing for all by:
- a. raising minimum standards for private sector rented housing;
  - b. ensuring the Welsh Housing Quality Standard is implemented across all Wales;
  - c. improving enforcement of standards and training of landlords to ensure better housing quality;
  - d. establishing a system of redress for private sector tenants;
  - e. stopping landlords evicting tenants who make a complaint about essential repairs;
  - f. having compulsory accessible housing registers and provide advice on building disability friendly homes;
  - g. setting targets for the number of affordable homes to be built in Wales during an Assembly term, to be set by Ministers within six months of the Assembly election and reported on annually to the National Assembly;
  - h. tackling fuel poverty by incentivising private sector landlords to insulate homes; and
  - i. encouraging and facilitating the use of direct debits to ensure people benefit from utility bill savings.
5. improved transport for all by:
- a. creating Passenger Transport Authorities in Wales to deliver more affordable, accessible transport services;
  - b. re-regulating bus services through the Transport Authorities to improve the coverage of routes in rural and poorer areas of Wales;
  - c. lowering ticket prices and introducing an all-Wales "Oystercard" on re-regulated bus services;
  - d. exploring a fairer "per mile" ticket cost for most rail journeys in Wales through the specification of the next Wales and Borders Rail Franchise;
  - e. improving the frequency and quality of rail travel by electrifying the North Wales Coast line in addition to the agreed lines in South Wales;
  - f. giving greater priority to safe routes to schools; and
  - g. encouraging more walking and cycling by providing support for route development and education programmes.

## M6 - Cleddau Bridge

Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire Local Party

### Conference Notes:

1. The Campaign to abolish tolls on the Severn Bridge;
2. That the Severn Bridge is not the only toll bridge in Wales and that the Cleddau Bridge in Pembrokeshire has charged tolls since it opened in 1975;
3. That the Cleddau Bridge forms part of the A477 road linking north and south Pembrokeshire;
4. That for the majority of its route, the A477 is designated as a Trunk Road – it is downgraded from a Trunk Road at Waterloo Roundabout in Pembroke Dock, and responsibility for maintaining the road from this point lies with Pembrokeshire County Council; and
5. That in the 2014/15 Financial Year the Cleddau Bridge is projected to achieve a revenue income of £2.94m with maintenance and the staffing of the toll booths costing £1.1m, leaving an estimated revenue surplus of over £1.8m.

### Conference Believes:

1. That continuing to charge tolls on the Cleddau Bridge is inequitable and represents an unfair method of paying for local infrastructure projects;
2. That the charging of tolls on the Cleddau Bridge is damaging to the local economy of Pembrokeshire and acts as a local tax impeding economic development and travel within the County; and
3. The charging of tolls on the Cleddau Bridge will act as a disincentive to potential investors in the designated Haven Waterway Enterprise Zone.

### Conference Calls For:

1. The abolition of tolls on the Cleddau Bridge; and
2. The full length of the A477 to be designated as a Trunk Road and for the Welsh Government, through its Trunk Road Agency, to assume full responsibility for the bridge and its maintenance at an estimated cost of £1m per annum.

## M7 - CEO Pay Cap

Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire Local Party

### Conference Notes:

1. The increasing trend for public sector bodies to negotiate six-figure 'golden goodbyes' with departing senior managers – recent examples being the departure of the former Chief Executives at Pembrokeshire County Council and the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board;
2. That the salaries and wages of most staff in the public sector have been frozen or increases have been at or below the rate of inflation;
3. That future trends in public expenditure levels will necessitate further efficiency improvements and re-structuring across the public sector; and
4. That any proposed wide-scale re-structuring of local government in the future may lead to an escalation of such 'golden goodbyes'.

### Conference Believes:

1. That severance or redundancy pay-outs in excess of £90,000 to senior staff in the public sector who are already well-paid cannot be justified;
2. That any proposals for redundancy and severance payments of senior staff in the public sector in excess of the relevant statutory figures laid down in employment legislation must be supported by an appropriate business case; and
3. All business cases in support of redundancy and severance payments should be published and subject to public consultation and debate.

### Conference Calls For:

1. A maximum figure of £90,000 on all future redundancy and severance payments across the public sector in Wales subject to provisions to protect those who are paid below average but who have long service records.

## M8 - Ensuring a Bilingual Wales

### National Assembly Group

#### Conference Notes:

1. The recent census results demonstrated that there has been a drop in the number of Welsh language speakers in much of Wales, with the biggest drops occurring where Welsh has traditionally been strongest;
2. Only 0.33% of planning applications were subject to a Welsh language impact assessment;
3. A recent poll by Cymdeithas yr Iaith which showed that 56% of respondents think that in principle schools in Wales should aim to teach all pupils to communicate effectively in Welsh; and
4. The failure of successive Welsh Governments' policy to support the Welsh language.

#### Conference Believes

1. That the state of the Welsh language can be changed with political will and positive campaigns.
2. That we must work to make all of Wales an attractive place to live, particularly for our young people in rural areas, in order to help people remain a part of their linguistic community.
3. Speaking Welsh shouldn't be restricted to certain communities, but all people living in Wales should be enabled and encouraged to speak Welsh.

#### Conference Calls For:

1. All Welsh Government policy initiatives to undergo a full Welsh language equality impact assessment.
2. The funding and editorial independence of Welsh language broadcasters to be protected.
3. The Welsh Government to be allowed to set its own bank holidays, such as St. David's Day.
4. Planning regulations to protect the Welsh language while still ensuring that suitable new housing can be built in rural areas, such as by:
  - a. Immediately reviewing TAN20.
  - b. Making language impact assessments of planning developments a statutory requirement in the Local Development Plan.
  - c. Ensuring language can be a material consideration in the determination of planning applications.
5. Promote the learning of Welsh by:
  - a. Ensuring everyone has a genuine right to study in Welsh.
  - b. Urgently improving Welsh as a second language in schools as a key policy aim and duty of Welsh in Education Strategic Plans;
  - c. Encourage the use of Welsh in all school activities and across the curriculum;
  - d. Ensure that every primary and secondary school has sufficient numbers of teachers qualified and able to teach Welsh;
  - e. Ensure oral language skills suitable for the workplace are embedded in the Welsh language curriculum;
  - f. Preparing an individual strategy and action plan to protect and promote the Welsh language in a specific number of areas across Wales, with an annual review of the situation of a drop of 5% or more was seen in the percentage of Welsh speakers.

- g. Targeting 6-10 areas as Welsh Language Renewal and Development Areas, and preparing comprehensive language schemes to support and develop linguistic, social and economic growth.
  - h. Launching an intensive national campaign to persuade more parents of young children to choose Welsh language education.
  - i. Targeting Welsh speaking teenagers as a key group for the future of the Welsh language, increasing youth services for this group.
  - j. Encouraging the learning of Welsh as part of teacher training, and providing additional professional development for teachers wishing to improve their Welsh.
  - k. Introducing special provision for pupils and students to catch-up to learning Welsh in order to undertake education through the medium of Welsh.
6. Ensure that any forthcoming legislation reflects the need to promote the Welsh language within the health and social care system.
  7. Inclusion of the vitality of the Welsh language as part of the Welsh Government's definition of sustainable development.
  8. Work with other Celtic-language speaking nations to spread best practice.