

BASIC INCOME

Liberal Democrats hold a positive view of freedom. We believe that it is the responsibility of the enabling state to ensure that all citizens have access to what life has to offer. We therefore believe that a Liberal Democrat government must not only guarantee high quality public services such as health and education, but should also provide an adequate system of financial support for all.

Young people are amongst the lowest income earners in society. All young people below the age of 25 receive a lower level of benefits merely because of their age, whilst those under 18 are assumed to be living at home and are not entitled to receive the majority of benefits. The recent withdrawal of student entitlement to Housing Benefit is further evidence of the government's desire to make young people dependent upon their families, even though in many circumstances such a relationship does not exist.

The Beveridge Social Security system was not designed for use during long periods of large-scale unemployment. The use of means tests is both an inefficient system of benefit distribution and stigmatises those who are subjected to it.

In the short term, we seek the restoration of full benefit rights to all people over the age of 16 and the removal of in-built discrimination on the grounds of sex. In the longer term, we support the introduction of a basic income.



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Equality

The Young Liberal Democrats support the introduction of a basic citizen's income for all, regardless of age, income, sex or marital status.

- Everyone over the age of 16 will be entitled to receive the citizen's income.
- Citizen's income will replace tax allowances. All income received above this level will be subject to income tax.
- Citizen's income will be paid to parents in respect of children under 16; thus replacing child benefit.
- Citizen's income will not be withdrawn from those participating in education or training, or from those who have taken time out from employment for family or other reasons.
- Integration of the tax and benefits systems will not only lead to a more efficient, less costly administration but will also lead to the removal of means testing from the benefits system as all income above the basic level would be subject to income tax.
- All state benefits above and beyond citizen's income will be assessed in terms of specific need, rather than by means test.

By the implementation of a fairer and more efficient tax and benefits system, the Young Liberal Democrats hope to make progress towards our overriding aims: the eradication of the twin evils of poverty and dependency and to use the power of the enabling state to give individuals real power over their own lives and real opportunities to develop and realise their own potential.



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