**Liberal Democrat Manifesto: Relevant policies for REC members**

**Below is a summary of policies in the 2024 Liberal Democrat General Election manifesto most relevant to REC members. These have been directly taken from the manifesto and the specific wording is not necessarily the view of the REC.**

**Business and Jobs**

* Develop an industrial strategy that will give businesses certainty and incentivise them to invest in new technologies to grow the economy, create good jobs and tackle the climate crisis.
* Fix the skills and recruitment crisis by investing in education and training, including increasing the availability of apprenticeships and career advice for young people. Replace the Apprenticeships Levy with a broader and more flexible skills and training levy.
* Boost productivity and empower more people to enter the job market by making the most of technology and new ways of working.
* Boost small businesses and empower them to create new local jobs, including by abolishing business rates and replacing them with a Commercial Landowner Levy to help our high streets.

**The Economy**

* Invest in green infrastructure, innovation and skills to boost economic growth and create good jobs and prosperity in every nation and region of the UK, while tackling the climate crisis.
* Foster stability, certainty and confidence by managing the public finances responsibly to get the national debt falling as a share of the economy and ensure that day-to-day spending does not exceed the amount raised in taxes, while making the investments our country needs.
* Giving HMRC the resources it needs to properly tackle tax avoidance and evasion.
* Focus tax changes on reversing the tax cuts for big banks and imposing a one-off windfall tax on the profits of oil and gas producers and traders.

**Health and Social Care**

* Recruit 8000 more GPs to give everyone the right to see a GP within seven days, or within 24 hours if they urgently need to.
* Improve early access to mental health services by establishing mental health hubs for young people in every community and introducing regular mental health check-ups at key points in people’s lives when they are most vulnerable to mental ill-health.

**Immigration**

* Transfer policy-making over work visas and overseas students out of the Home Office and into other departments.
* Lift the ban on asylum seekers working if they have been waiting for a decision for more than three months.
* Replace the current salary threshold with a more flexible merit-based system for work visas, with the relevant department working with employers in each sector to address specific needs as part of a long-term workforce strategy. This will also focus on education and training to address skills gaps from within the UK.
* Exempt NHS and care staff from the £1,000-a-year Immigration Skills Charge, and reverse the ban on care workers bringing partners and children.
* Reverse the increase to income thresholds for family visas.
* Extend the participation of devolved administrations in the development of the evidence base for UK-wide policy on work permits and student visas, helping **ensure rules are sensitive to the skills needs across the UK** and in all sectors. Expand the Youth Mobility Scheme by: Negotiating with the EU to extend it on a reciprocal basis, increasing the age limit from 30 to 35, abolishing the fees for these visas, extending the length of visas from two to three years.

**Employment rights and equality**

* Give everyone a new right to flexible working and every disabled person the right to work from home if they want to, unless there are significant business reasons why it is not possible.
* Tackle the specific economic barriers facing women by ending the gender price gap, and expanding access to flexible, affordable childcare, doubling Statutory Maternity Pay and expanding shared parental leave.
* Improve diversity in the workplace by:
	+ Requiring large employers to monitor and publish data on gender, ethnicity, disability, and LGBT+ employment levels, pay gaps and progression, and publish five-year aspirational diversity targets, extending the use of name-blind recruitment processes in the public sector and encouraging their use in the private sector.
	+ Improving diversity in public appointments by setting ambitious targets and requiring progress reports to Parliament with explanations when targets are not met.
	+ Providing additional support and advice to employers on neurodiversity in the workplace, and developing a cross-government strategy to tackle all aspects of discrimination faced by neurodiverse children and adults.
* Make it easier for disabled people to access public life, by:
	+ Tackling the disability employment gap by implementing a targeted strategy to support disabled people into work, with specialist disability employment support.
	+ Raising employers’ awareness of the Access to Work scheme and simplifying and speeding up the application process.
	+ Introducing ‘Adjustment Passports’ to record the adjustments, modifications and equipment a disabled person has received, and ensuring that Access to Work support and equipment stays with the person if they change jobs.

**Transport**

* Significantly extend the electrification of Britain’s rail network, improve stations, greatly improve disabled access, reopen smaller stations and deliver Northern Powerhouse rail.
Boost bus services by giving local authorities more powers to franchise services so that bus routes can be restored or new routes added where there is local need, especially in rural areas.
* Reviewing the cancellation of the northern leg of HS2 to see if it can still be delivered in a way that provides value for money.
* Make public transport more affordable for young people by extending half-fares on buses, trams and trains to 18-year-olds, and working with operators to introduce a ‘Young Person’s Buscard’.

**Welfare to work**

* Repair the benefits safety net by reducing the wait for the first payment of Universal Credit from five weeks to five days, and replacing the sanctions regime with an incentive-based scheme to help people into work.
* Increase Carer’s Allowance and expand eligibility for it by raising the amount carers can earn and introducing an earnings taper to end the unfair cliff-edge, reducing the number of hours’ care per week required, and extending it to carers in full-time education.
* Reform Statutory Sick Pay, by:
	+ Making it available to the more than one million workers earning less than £123 a week, most of whom are women.
	+ Aligning the rate with the National Minimum Wage.
	+ Making payments available from the first day of missing work rather than the fourth.
	+ Supporting small employers with Statutory Sick Pay costs, consulting with them on the best way to do this.