



Federation of Small Businesses

The UK's Leading Business Organisation

Liberal Democrat Party Manifesto – Small Business Issues

Finance and Tax

- To make the first £10,000 earned free of income tax
- To simplify the corporate tax system by removing avoidance schemes
- To reverse the 1 per cent increase in National Insurance after identifying matching spending cuts or alternative sources of revenue.
[See the FSB campaign on NICs](#)
- To review the IR35 legislation and seek to replace it with simpler measures that prevents tax avoidance.
- To support the establishment of Local Enterprise Funds and Regional Stock Exchanges.
- To aligning Capital Gains Tax with Income Tax will have an adverse impact on small and medium sized businesses (SMEs), and vitally on the private investors which look to invest in small firms and help them grow, expand and employ. Additionally, this will not help the diversification of credit for SMEs.

Employment

- To scrap compulsory retirement ages.
- Restricting Train to Gain funding to SMEs
- To set up a 'Creative Enterprise Fund' offering training, mentoring and small grants or loans to help creative businesses get off the ground.
- To set the minimum wage at the same level for all workers over the age of 16.
[Read the FSB's report on employment](#)

Equality, Flexible working and Childcare

- To allow parents to share the allocation of maternity and paternity leave between them and seek to extend the period of shared parental leave up to 18 months
- To give fathers the right to time off for ante-natal appointments
- To extend the right to request flexible working to all employees.
- To provide 20 hours free childcare for every child, from the age of 18 months.
[Read the FSB one-page briefing](#) (February 2010)
- To offer more practical help for disabled job seekers and reform Access to Work, so disabled people can apply for jobs with funding already in place for equipment that they need.

Regulation

- To reduce the burden of unnecessary red tape by assessing the cost and effectiveness of regulations before and after they are introduced, using 'sunset clauses' to ensure the need for a regulation is regularly reviewed, and working towards the principle of 'one in, one out' for new rules.
- Putting an end to the so-called 'gold-plating' of EU rules and changing the manner in which regulation is enforced so that the rules are clearly set but with businesses given more flexibility in their detailed implementation.

- To cut red tape for putting on live music by allowing licensed venues for up to 200 people to host live music without the need for an entertainment licence

Infrastructure

- To establish an Infrastructure Bank to direct private finance to projects such as new rail services green energy, high speed rail.
- Switching traffic from road to rail by investing in local rail improvements, such as opening closed rail lines and adding extra tracks.
- To prepare for the introduction of a system of road pricing in a second parliament.
- To introduce a rural fuel discount scheme to allow a reduced rate of fuel duty to be paid in remote rural areas.

Environment

- Protect Greenfield land and our built heritage by reducing the cost of repairs.
- To equalise VAT on new build and repair on an overall revenue-neutral basis.
[Read FSB policy on the construction industry and VAT](#)

Keep Trade Local issues

- To set up a Post Bank,
[See the FSB's Postal Report](#)
- To give smaller businesses fair access to public sector procurement by using standardised procurement requests, creating an online portal detailing opportunities.
[Read the FSB report on Procurement](#)
- To require a local competition test for all planning applications for new retail developments and establish a local competition office within the Office of Fair Trading to investigate anti-competitive practices at a local and regional level.
- To make small business relief automatic and also seek to ensure that the burden is spread more equitably between small and large businesses.
[See the FSB Private Members Bill](#)
- To put more police on the beat.
[See the FSB business beat campaign](#)

[READ THE FSB'S ELECTION MANIFESTO, 'SMALL BUSINESSES, BIG VOTE'](#)

ENDS