



FREE STATES

LIBERTARIAN PARTY UK MANIFESTO 2019
FIREARMS POLICY



**LIBERTARIAN
PARTY**

FOREWORD

The Libertarian Party believes that we are at a cross roads in British Politics in which the next few years will decide the direction of travel for the foreseeable future. The parties who make up the Westminster cabal have shown that they believe that the people are there to serve them, not the other way round.

We are entering a period in which the two main parties are descending to their extremes which for the Conservative Party is in-fighting, and chaos, and an abandonment of the free market. For Labour it is a push to take private property by force, for example, to nationalise healthy companies in an ideological shake-down as well as to add an ever increasing burden of taxation on middle earners and future generations, yet at the same time stoking class divisions to ensure

there is always someone else to blame.

Luckily we are also seeing a great deal of awareness in the general public who are starting to see how rigged the system is and are looking for an alternative. We are that alternative. We are the party that puts the rights of the individuals ahead of the rights of unions or donors. We are the party that will remove barriers to trade allowing the economy to stand on its own feet unencumbered by unnecessary regulations. We are the party that wants to remove political interference from your everyday life, freeing important services like Health Care and Education from political point scoring and putting them in the hands of the service providers or users: the people who know what is most needed. We are the party that

wants to ensure that this country has a Constitution that protects the individual and treats all parts of the country in an even manner.

In this Manifesto we will set out our policies for a future federal United Kingdom where power is devolved wherever possible and innovative, modern solutions are used to create the good in an efficient way (in place of that which is beloved by the other parties: the status quo).

The Manifesto of the Libertarian Party has been built on five basic principles.

That the overall effect of all our policies together shall decrease the size and power of the state.

That the rights of the individual are paramount and should be nurtured.

That the individual is better

placed to understand what is in their best interest than the state.

That those who have power must be held accountable for their actions.

That power should be devolved so it is as close to the people who are affected by it as possible.

Alongside these principles we have also called on the experience of other countries basing our policies, wherever possible, on systems that have been tried and tested elsewhere and which the evidence shows work well.

This Manifesto provides an alternative to more of the same, a pathway away from the Westminster rule we know to somewhere more prosperous, less authoritarian and less dangerous, more protective of the citizen and

less willing to boss her around for her own good or, as is more commonly the case, to her harm.

Our respect for each individual is embodied in the procedures of our party, such as our policy creation procedure, declared in the policies in our Manifesto which fuels the lamp with which we light the way to the place where we hope you will find your political home as a member, or supporter, of the Libertarian Party UK. We are the party that will set you personally above the collective and by doing so free the country to be better than ever before.

Adam Brown
Party Leader



FIREARMS NOT THROWING THE BABY OUT WITH THE BATHWATER

Individuals should be punished for wrongdoing but licensed shooting should not be criminalised in a blanket fashion.

The United Kingdom has some of the strictest shooting laws in the world. The logic behind this state of affairs is that if you make firearms almost impossible to obtain legally criminals won't get any. The flaw in this reasoning is to presume, given that there is a

regime in place for the provision of legal firearms, that criminals will obtain firearms by the same means as non-criminals. Criminals will want nothing to do with any legally administered process for obtaining firearms. They will want to obtain firearms anonymously

and do so despite the obstacles to obtaining firearms legally. Indeed, in 2016-17 there were 6,375 firearms offences in England and Wales. Of the circa 4,200 committed with non air powered firearms about 1,600 were used in robberies, 400 were instances of criminal damage and so about 2,200 were crimes against persons of which about fifty eight per cent were with hand guns and twenty nine per cent with imitation guns and twelve per cent with shot guns. There were thirty two homicides with guns in 2017 and twenty nine in 2018.

The tight gun laws of today were mostly put in place following the Dunblane massacre of 1996 in which sixteen young children and their teacher were shot dead with a legally licensed firearm in the ownership of Thomas Hamilton.

In the wake of this incident the Firearms amendment of 1997 banned handguns from private ownership. The law was further tightened in 2010 after Derrick Bird shot twelve people dead with both a licensed rifle and a licensed shot gun. For example, in 2012 the maximum punishment for the illegal importation of firearms into the UK was increased to life.

According to the Home Office firearms crimes increased between 1998 and 2002 by circa 100% from 5,000 to 10,000 per year. This was much faster than violent crime in general. Over the same period licensed firearm ownership fell by twenty five per cent. But in 2000 The Guardian newspaper reported that since the 1997 ban on handguns the number of illegal firearms in the

UK had increased 50% from two to three million.

In 1625 in Jacobean England murder was about twelve times more likely than it is today (in 1200 it was fifty times more likely) but by 1775 it had fallen to being about twice as likely. This rose back up to three times more likely in 1862 but by 1887 touched new lows being then sixty per cent more likely. In 1962 murder was forty per cent more likely per head than it is now.

For the last eight hundred years our society has been moving away from being murderous. This is not the result of tighter firearms laws. They were no more restrictive in 1775 than in 1862. This is the result of more fundamental changes in how we live and are. These deep changes would provide a horizon for

people's behaviour even in a rather different legal environment. Indeed, the steady decline in homicides in England since 1200 is characteristic of the rest of Western Europe too making the point that the change is so fundamental that it effects many diverse societies simultaneously. This is reason to suppose that if firearms were as available today as they were in 1862 that we nonetheless would not murder ourselves as often as we then did. This history is a backdrop to the Libertarian Party UK's belief in evidence based policy. We dislike knee jerk policy-making.

The Libertarian Party UK believes individuals should be punished for wrongdoing but licensed shooting should not be criminalised in a blanket fashion and our policies are to that end.



1. REVIEW OF THE 1997 HAND GUN OWNERSHIP BAN

A Libertarian government will grant the review a wide remit to analyse the effect of the law including the costs of administration and policing as against the lives that may be saved more effectively in other ways by use of the same money. If the review finds that there has been little or no impact on gun crime or that the ban is not the most effective way of saving lives

or creating confidence in the peacefulness of our society among the public then the option of licensed ownership of hand guns will be given back to gun club members and people who shoot competitively for sport.

BENEFITS

Depending on the evidence of the review resources to save lives will be deployed more effectively and responsible citizens will be free to pursue firearm sports without being treated as potential murderers.

NOTES

Northern Ireland operates a twelve month probation system for the ownership of hand guns for vetted pistol club members and a Libertarian government would introduce such a system into England and Wales too.

2. AMENDING THE VIOLENT CRIME REDUCTION ACT 2006

A Libertarian government will increase punishment for those who break the law with air guns, non-firing replicas or blank firing devices but will remove restrictions on the ownership of such machines.

BENEFITS

The responsible user of air guns or the person wishing to own non-firing replicas will not be restricted in doing so as if she were a ne'er-do-well.

3. REVIEW OF THE FIREARMS LICENSING SYSTEM

A Libertarian government will review the firearms licensing system with a view to opening it up to tender if review determines that the system is an excessive burden on the police.

BENEFITS

An organisation focused on the specialised question of who should and who should not hold a license and motivated to maintain this focus in a cost effective way will work better than a police department manned by officers who would be better deployed doing less administrative work.

4. RE-CLASSIFY NOT LETHAL ITEMS

Removal of not lethal items, such as pepper sprays, from the aegis of the firearms law section five.

BENEFITS

It is not helpful to subject items of an essentially defensive nature, such as pepper sprays, to the same controls under section five (which covers “firearms” that are not legal under Sections 1 and 2 which, for example, shot guns with limited shell numbers are) as potentially lethal weapons that are as useful to aggressors as to defenders. This correction will allow people to defend themselves in a proportionate way.

CONCLUSION

In our 2020 manifesto it is possible that we will consider, and adopt positions, on the more wide-ranging question of the relationship between the human right of self-defence, including with arms, and a government (as say the German government was in the nineteen thirties) that was in breach of its people’s, or some of its people’s, inalienable rights.

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