

# General Election 2024: Student Minds' look at party manifestos

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As Student Minds is a registered charity, we aren't party-political, and we pride ourselves on building consensus to improve student mental health. In April, we published our [Student Mental Health Manifesto \(SMHM\)](#), sharing our ambitious, whole-society vision for the next government. The Manifesto lays out five key themes for change, making both urgent and long-term recommendations. Now the general election has been called, political candidates and parties are campaigning for your vote, and sharing their plans for if they get elected.

Here, we explore some of the key proposals made by the Conservatives, Greens, Labour, and Liberal Democrats, under the themes covered in the Student Mental Health Manifesto. We've considered the parties fielding candidates across the UK for this piece, but will provide a similar look at parties in the devolved nations soon.

**Student Minds does not endorse any particular party or candidate.** We hope students, staff, and everybody who cares about student mental health will use this information as insight into each party's platform, but the choice of who to vote for is yours. **It's important to do your own research** and check out party manifestos as well as pledges by candidates, including independent candidates, in your constituency. We note that this article is not a comprehensive nor exhaustive account of all party manifestos and shouldn't be taken as such.

Theme	Student Mental Health Manifesto	Conservatives	Greens	Labour	Liberal Democrats
Healthcare	"All students should have access to quality and timely mental health support. We're calling for an urgent commitment to increase funding for the NHS and improve support for healthcare staff and students. We also want to see a long term commitment to ensure the sustainability and improvement of mental health services, and improved support for students and young people who experience poor mental health."	<b>The Conservatives</b> want to open early support hubs for those aged 11-25 in every local community by 2030 and increase NHS Talking Therapies capacity by 50%. They aim to "increase NHS spending above inflation every year, recruiting 92,000 more nurses and 28,000 more doctors, driving up productivity in the NHS	<b>The Green Party</b> wants to ensure that the rights of those struggling with their mental health are respected and that a legal framework supports all people to live fulfilling lives. They want to put mental health on an equal footing with physical health. They also plan to "tackle the crisis in staff retention through pushing for an immediate and	<b>Labour</b> seek to improve early access to mental health services, introducing mental health hubs for young people (up to age 25) in every community as well as mental health check-ups. The party pledges to recruit 8,500 more mental health staff, creating a significant increase in capacity. They want to cut NHS waiting times with	<b>The Liberal Democrats</b> want 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." They will guarantee access to an

		and moving care closer to people’s homes.”	additional increase to the budgets for NHS staff costs,” as well as improving access to NHS dentistry. Finally, they support junior doctors’ calls for pay restoration.	40,000 extra appointments each week and have proposed a “Dentistry Rescue Plan.” They want mental health to get the same focus and attention as physical health.	NHS dentist for everybody and end “dentistry deserts”. They aim to provide 8,000 more GPs so that everybody can be seen by their GP within seven days, or twenty-four hours if urgent.
<b>Financial hardship</b>	<p>“All students should have enough money to support them through their studies. This requires a review of existing student funding systems nationwide, reversing real-terms cuts due to inflation, increasing entitlement thresholds based on household income, restructuring Postgraduate Taught finance, and introducing maintenance funding for part time students. We identify immediate changes to alleviate cost-of-living pressures such as a winter fuel allowance, increasing the minimum wage for all 18 year-olds to the Real Living Wage, further subsidising public transport, and introducing payments for healthcare students on placement. Students’ specific experiences must be accounted for when policies designed to tackle the</p>	<p><b>The Conservatives,</b> arguing that mental health conditions don’t incur additional living expenses the way that physical conditions do, want to reform the benefits system so fewer people with mental health conditions receive support. They argue that they have already made student loans fairer while in government.</p>	<p><b>The Green Party</b> seek to reintroduce maintenance grants and raise the minimum wage to £15 per hour for all. They also want to abolish tuition fees and, in the long-term, graduate student loan debt. They will campaign for a maximum 10:1 pay ratio for all private and public sector organisations, meaning the highest earner in an organisation can’t be paid above 10x more than the lowest earner(s).</p>	<p><b>Labour</b> have pledged that minimum wage will be a “genuine living wage” and they will change the remit of the Independent Low Pay Commission to also factor in cost-of-living in their work.</p>	<p><b>The Liberal Democrats</b> want to introduce a 20% higher minimum wage for those on zero-hours contracts for times of “normal demand” to compensate for the instability of their working patterns. They plan to re-introduce maintenance grants for disadvantaged students immediately. The Liberal Democrats also say they will recognise the relationship between mental health and debt, and provide better signposting between talking therapies and debt advice.</p>

	cost-of-living crisis are developed.”				
<b>Higher education</b>	<p>“Our higher education institutions need improved support and investment. The funding model for higher education must be reviewed to ensure the long-term sustainability of the sector without compromising on staff or student wellbeing. Clarity on the roles and responsibilities of universities and statutory health services must be provided to ensure mental health support is delivered appropriately. Continued political and financial support for the University Mental Health Charter should be given to enable these improvements through a whole-university approach. Higher education should be given greater esteem in recognition of its positive contribution to our economy and society rather than being undermined by “culture war” narratives.”</p>	<p><b>The Conservatives</b> want to close courses with an “excessive” number of dropouts, or where they believe students are financially worse off for having attended. They want assurances that students will receive their minimum contact hours.</p>	<p><b>The Green Party</b> argue that marketisation has been “disastrous” for higher education. They plan to “tackle the challenges posed by changes to employer contributions for the Teachers’ Pension Scheme (TPS)” within universities.</p>	<p><b>Labour</b>, rather than focusing on value for money, want to work on ensuring “teaching standards” are met through courses. They want to deliver a “secure future for higher education”. Arguing that higher education is in crisis, Labour seek to pursue a “comprehensive” approach to post-16 education which will guarantee training, help finding work, or apprenticeships, for all 18-21 -year-olds.</p>	<p><b>The Liberal Democrats</b> seek to implement both a statutory duty of care for universities and a statutory “Student Mental Health Charter”. They want to “establish a review of higher education finance in the next Parliament”, exploring any necessary reforms while focusing on access, participation, and quality. They want to stop retrospective repayment hikes and for student loan debt not to be sold to the private sector.</p>
<b>Inclusive healthcare and education</b>	<p>“All students should have access to inclusive education and healthcare without facing barriers. The government must urgently improve support for marginalised communities, including trans,</p>	<p><b>The Conservatives</b> wish to remove the student discount for the immigration health surcharge and seek to end the ability of “almost all”</p>	<p><b>The Green Party</b> aims to end the hostile environment policy for international students and also remove the restriction that</p>	<p><b>Labour</b> state they want to build the UK’s “international soft power” but do not make specific reference to international students within their</p>	<p><b>The Liberal Democrats</b> pledge for international students not to be counted as part of wider statistics concerning immigration. They also</p>

	<p>international, and disabled students; ensuring university communities are protected from discrimination and hate speech. We're calling for a long-term commitment to building truly inclusive education and healthcare systems, free from cultural, social and physical barriers."</p>	<p>international students to bring their dependents with them to the UK. They want to continue to modernise autism and learning disability services and deliver on the Disability Action Plan to make the UK the "most accessible country in the world".</p>	<p>international students have no recourse to public funds. They want to retain a "full, evidence-based and age appropriate programme of Relationships, Sex and Health Education, including LGBTIQ+ content and resources." The Greens also want to provide free personal care for disabled people. Finally, the Greens want to see access to evidence-based mental health therapies within 28 days, and tailored support for different groups such as children, older people, LGBTQ+ people, racialised people, and more.</p>	<p>manifesto. Labour wish to protect LGBT+ and disabled people by making all existing strands of hate crime an aggravated offence. Labour will introduce ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting.</p>	<p>intend to develop a comprehensive strategy for promoting the decriminalisation of homosexuality and advancing LGBT+ rights. The Liberal Democrats aim to give disabled people more say in the design of policies affecting them.</p>
<p><b>A mentally healthier nation</b></p>	<p>"We must move towards a holistic approach to the mental health and wellbeing of the nation, improving support, prevention, and equality. This includes, but is not limited to, early intervention and preventative policies for healthcare, suicide prevention, and embedding mental health and wellbeing into curriculums, to support transitions into and out of</p>	<p><b>The Conservatives</b> want to introduce a Renters Reform Bill, abolishing Section 21 (no-fault) evictions. They aim to deliver net zero carbon emissions by 2050. They aim to introduce national service for eighteen year-olds. They also want to increase school</p>	<p><b>The Greens</b> aim to end no-fault evictions and grant local authorities the ability to control rents. They also want to invest £30bn in tackling the climate crisis. They plan to introduce Private Residential Tenancy Boards which they hope will provide a speedy, fair</p>	<p><b>Labour</b> want to end no-fault evictions, give tenants the power to challenge landlords over unfair rent increases, and "decisively raise standards". They aim to ensure homes in the private rented sector meet minimum energy efficiency standards by</p>	<p><b>The Liberal Democrats</b> also want to end no-fault evictions, on top of introducing a standard, three-year tenancy, and creating a register of landlords. They want to reach net zero by 2045. They also want to improve suicide prevention training for frontline NHS staff and</p>

	<p>higher education. We are calling for the government to improve the state of housing in the country, particularly tenants' rights in the rental sector, commit to protecting green space and invest in mental health research."</p>	<p>attendance through "improved mental health support".</p>	<p>avenue for the resolution of any disputes between tenants and landlords. The Greens will "push for more accessible and prompt mental health needs assessments for children and adolescents" as well as providing "a trained and paid counsellor in every primary and secondary school, and every sixth-form college".</p>	<p>2030. Labour also plan to deliver zero-carbon electricity by 2030. Labour aim to provide specialist mental health staff in every school. Finally, Labour are seeking to reduce deaths by suicide through early intervention and access to mental health support through their "Young Futures" hubs.</p>	<p>focus on community suicide prevention services. Finally, the Liberal Democrats want there to be a mental health professional in every school.</p>
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