

# **Liberal Vannin**

## **Policy Discussion Paper**

On

### **Health & Welfare**

#### **Manifesto Pledge (What we will do)**

The Liberal Vannin Party will fight for the improved management of the National Health Service. We believe that over a number of years too many resources have been placed into the management and administration levels of the Health Services instead of the frontline services. A complete overhaul is needed to ensure that the Department of Health is both more accountable and efficient in its management of resources as far as the Social Services are concerned. We will push for improvements and value for money from our National Health Service which should be everyone's right in a caring and prosperous society.

#### **Policy Statements (How we will do it)**

##### ***Health Services***

The Liberal Vannin Party believes that we should have a first class Health Service and that this should be one of the highest priorities of a caring Government. The issue is not the lack of money but rather the way it is spent and in order to restore a sense of pride back into the Service we would address issues of management and accountability. Part of our restructuring package would be the introduction of an Administration Committee representing a cross section of people in society who are not in the employment of the Health Services. This would bring back an independent audit and allow for staff to have an input where management is wasteful and inefficient and create some ownership for all staff employed in this vital area of welfare. Regarding community health issues the same structure needs to be in place not just for the benefit of the staff but also for those using the services to ensure that they have some redress when services are not up to scratch.

##### ***Preventative Health measures***

We need to have a more proactive policy on preventative health measures and encourage people to make well informed lifestyle choices and this has to be of the highest priority. We would invest in early detection screening for heart disease, cancer, diabetes and other illnesses as the earlier these are diagnosed the quicker and more successfully they can be treated. The issue of HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases has to be addressed and recognised for the serious long term health consequences they will create. If we are to keep a first class Health Service we need to have an open debate particularly with younger people.

##### ***Residential & Nursing Homes***

The Liberal Vannin Party believes that a review of this legislation is long overdue. This section of the community is one of the most vulnerable and the Independent Inspection Procedure needs to be broadened with lay input from interested organisations as part of the inspection procedures. Reports about these institutions should be open to public scrutiny so that residents and relatives are aware of any concerns surrounding these establishments. A total review of alternatives to this type of accommodation and funding for people entering these facilities is required. The Party would investigate a compulsory insurance scheme for the younger generation's long term needs.

### ***Dental Services***

We need to set up a working party between Government and the dental profession to implement the development of a policy for a first class dental service that is both effective and efficient for all concerned. A further review of this service is overdue to enable access for all and offer value for money.

### ***Pensions***

The Liberal Vannin Party views this issue with the deepest concern. We need to look at putting policies into place that will safeguard both the old age pension and the public sector pensions for future generations. The Party believes that ring-fencing the National Insurance Fund has to be one of the highest priorities of Government. We also believe and that state pensions should be linked to average earnings and not retail prices and we will investigate ways of funding this improved scheme. We would look into the changes that would have to be made to the Manx national insurance scheme to fund this scheme which would prevent a vulnerable section of the community reverting backwards with their standard of living.

The financing of the public sector pension has to be addressed as a matter of urgency. If we do not get a sustainable policy on this subject we will be leaving a major financial liability to future generations. The issue of a money purchase scheme has to be investigated for all new employees without exception across Government employment sooner rather than later if we are to be a responsible Government.

To offset the financial cost of soaring energy prices and other bills the Liberal Vannin Party would introduce additional financial assistance for single pension households in the form of a rate discount of 25%.