

Green Party backs teachers' urgent call to close schools and move learning online



2 January 2021

- **Support comes as Green-led Brighton & Hove City Council advises primary schools to move to remote learning until Monday 18 January**

The Green Party has backed calls from teaching unions to take steps to protect the safety of staff and students by moving to online learning from Monday in order to reduce the spread of infection of the new coronavirus variant. [1]

The move comes as Green Party-led Brighton & Hove City Council has written to primary schools in the city to advise them to move to remote learning until Monday 18 January. [2]

Green Party education spokesperson Vix Lowthion, a secondary school teacher on the Isle of Wight, said:

“It is right that schools should only reopen when it is safe to do so and that cannot be the case with new-variant Covid spreading out of control. We fully support those unions who wish to remind staff of their legal rights not to work in an unsafe environment. Gavin Williamson needs to change his position on the reopening of primary schools urgently.

“If the government had provided disadvantaged students with what they needed in terms of laptops and connectivity earlier in the year, it would have made it much easier for all concerned to carry out learning from home now. This oversight must be rectified as soon as possible so that access to education is maintained to the best possible standards while ensuring safety for all.

“This is an extremely difficult time for parents, teachers and children and young people and so the government must listen carefully to the experts and

trust teachers when they say it is not safe. This crisis is not going away any time soon. Teachers must be supported to deliver planned, high quality and sustainable learning within an environment which prioritises the health of the community.

“For once, we hope the government will stick to its own mantra and actually follow the science to protect communities and families across the country.”

The Green Party has also repeated its call for all frontline workers, including teachers, to be prioritised for vaccination. [3]

ENDS

Notes

1

The [National Education Union](#) and the [NAHT](#) have both called for schools not to reopen and move instead to home learning

2

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2021/brighton-hove-city-council-advises-primary-schools-city-move-remote-learning-until-monday>

3

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/12/02/greens-call-for-all-frontline-workers-to-be-prioritised-for-vaccine/>

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[Green Party regrets loss of rights and freedoms in spite of Brexit deal](#)



24 December 2020

The Green Party has welcomed the Prime Minister's decision to step back from the brink and compromise over the level playing field but regrets the loss of influence and rights as a result of Brexit.

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

"While we are clearly relieved that we have stepped back from the cliff edge, I deeply regret the loss of rights that this Brexit deal represents.

"At the same time, Labour's refusal to play its role as opposition for fear of losing pro-Brexit voters has left us in a position where the government's Brexit policy has remained untested.

"This is a political failure of the broken two party system which has let us all down in so many ways. We now essentially have only a handful of MPs representing the half of the population who wanted to maintain a close relationship with the EU."

Molly Scott Cato, former MEP and Green Party Brexit spokesperson, said:

"At last we have some certainty about access to markets for businesses as a result of this 11th hour deal, but our economy will still be scarred by our damaging exit from the EU.

"For a movement that was sold on freedom and cutting red tape, the reality is that businesses and people will now have far more restrictions placed on them, and much more time will have to be spent filling forms and dealing with bureaucratic processes.

"Only a minority of the population wanted this outcome where we will face additional economic costs and a difficult trading environment particularly for our services exporters. We have lost so much as a result of this deal and gained so little."

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[Greens call out government on failure to take responsibility for Covid-safe Christmas](#)



18 December 2020

The Green Party is accusing the government today of shirking its responsibilities by pushing Covid Christmas decisions onto individuals.

Rather than be clear and science-led, the government is ploughing on with Christmas rules that risk a further spate of infections in January, leaving people with impossible choices to make.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said: "In homes up and down the country there are anxious conversations going on about what to do over Christmas, now just a week away. People are desperate to see their loved ones but they also understand that the rules the government has chosen to impose will not keep us safe. Rather than prioritising public health, ministers have been goaded by their backbenchers into a position that risks another surge in cases and deaths in the new year.

"What's needed is a clear sense that the government is taking responsibility

for controlling the virus so that we can know that we are doing the right thing and keeping our families and communities safe – we just don't have that at the moment. Instead there is confusion and apprehension.

“Covid has exposed the inequalities and weaknesses in our society, which result from 30 years of offloading political responsibilities onto individuals and businesses. From inadequate social housing and over-stretched hospitals to a welfare safety-net that is full of holes and levels of air pollution that are killing children, this is all part of a pattern of neglect and abdication of responsibility.

“Covid has taught us this year the importance of community, collaboration, working together to find solutions – we need to see that reflected in the behaviour of our politicians too. Only then will we be able to make the kind of progress that's urgently needed on the climate crisis, and avoid ending up in messes like the one we're currently living through with Brexit.”

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[“History has been made today”: Greens respond to coroner's air pollution ruling](#)



16 December 2020

A coroner has today ruled that air pollution was a cause of the death of nine-year-old Ella Kissi-Debrah. [1]

Responding to the ruling, Sian Berry, Green Party co-leader and Mayor of London candidate, said:

“History has been made today, and we can finally see a measure of justice for Ella and for her mother Rosamund, who had fought so bravely to bring this case.

“Now we must see emergency action from all levels of Government: the Prime Minister, the Mayor and every local council, to eliminate the sources of deadly air pollution.”

Caroline Russell, Green Party transport spokesperson and London Assembly member, said:

“We have the tools to clean up our air, and every level of Government must use every single one of them, to save lives in the future.

“In London, this means expanding the ULEZ to the M25, and making our streets safer and more accessible so walking and cycling are the most convenient ways to get around. In the end, we must cut the overall number of miles driven. This means a smart fair system of road charging by the mile and according to engine emissions.

“Traffic clogged roads are not inevitable. Since the pandemic, the square mile of the City of London has been almost completely car free, with thousands of daily deliveries made on foot and by cargo bike. If we can do it there, we can do it anywhere we find toxic levels of pollution.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/dec/16/girls-death-contributed-to-by-air-pollution-coroner-rules-in-landmark-case>

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[Caroline Lucas: Heathrow court decision “takes us backwards” in](#)

climate response



16 December 2020

Heathrow Airport has won a Supreme Court challenge over the Government's decision to give the go-ahead for a third runway.

Green Party MP Caroline Lucas said:

"This is incredibly disappointing news and takes us backwards in our response to the climate crisis. Commercial interests have won out over the protection of our planet and the wellbeing of future generations.

"But it is not the end of the campaign and Heathrow's plans will be opposed at every step of the planning process to stop this very damaging project which remains incompatible with the UK's obligations under the Paris Agreement.

"The CCC has recommended that there be no increase in overall airport capacity in their pathway to reach net zero by 2050. With most flights [taken by a handful of people](#), we should be introducing frequent flyer levies, not expanding airports which would benefit a few and cost us all dearly.

"The Government must urgently ensure that all its policy making – whether on airports or roads – supports the goals of the Paris Agreement rather than putting them way out of reach."

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