

Greens call for universal basic income as government prepares to wind down furlough scheme



31 July 2021

The Green Party has reiterated its calls for a universal basic income to offer protection for all, as the government risks the livelihoods of millions of people by further winding down the furlough scheme tomorrow [Sunday 1 August].

The Greens have warned that by cutting its contribution the government will lay more of the costs onto the employers in sectors that are already struggling to recover.

Professor Catherine Rowett, Green Party work, employment and social security spokesperson and former MEP, said:

“The furlough scheme has offered a vital lifeline to workers and employers up and down the country during this awful pandemic. Asking the employers to bear more of the burden will be the last straw for many businesses who are barely making ends meet.

“Latest figures show that nearly 2 million people were still on the furlough scheme at the end of June [1]. It is extremely irresponsible of this government to cut its contribution when we know that certain sectors, in particular those in the arts and entertainment, are still struggling to operate properly, and poised at a moment that could make or break them. [2]

“The government seems to be willing to throw the lives of millions into uncertainty, yet much of this anxiety and uncertainty could have been saved if a generous package of universal basic income had been introduced at the start of the pandemic, as a permanent measure to make sure that nobody is left high and dry.

“It would ensure that freelance workers are no worse off than those in regular employment, and that every single one of us has enough to meet our basic needs, to give us all a fairer chance of weathering this storm together.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/numbers-on-furlough-fall-to-lowest-level-since-start-of-pandemic>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jul/29/number-of-uk-workers-on-furlough-drops-by-590000-as-taper-kicks-in>

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[Greens celebrate High Court ruling on Stonehenge road tunnel](#)



30 July 2021

The Green Party has welcomed the High Court decision to rule that Transport Secretary Grant Shapps acted unlawfully when granting permission for a road tunnel to be built near Stonehenge. [1]

Caroline Russell, Green Party transport and healthy streets spokesperson, said:.

“It is the right decision by the High Court to accept this legal challenge which stops the carbon smashing, heritage destroying road under Stonehenge in its tracks.

“It’s good that the judge recognised the strong case made by the Stonehenge Alliance campaigners against the government’s vandalistic plan to tunnel through a Unesco world heritage site.

“Now the government needs to halt the whole of their damaging and emissions busting £27bn road building programme, which is entirely incompatible with chairing COP26. Instead, it needs to start investing seriously in public transport, along with walking and cycling, and making our roads resilient to the climate emergency.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-wiltshire-58024139>

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Nominations open for new Green Party Leadership



26 July 2021

The Green Party election process for the next leader or co-leaders of the party has begun today.

Co-leader Jonathan Bartley stood down earlier this month to spend more time working on building progressive alliances in UK politics, which triggered an election for new leadership. [1]

Nominations have opened today with candidates having three weeks [2] to declare their intention to run.

In line with the party's constitution, individuals can put themselves forward or two people can stand together in a bid to be co-leaders.

Members will have the opportunity to vote for their next generation of leadership from 31 August until the ballot closes on 21 September with results set to be announced soon after.

Bartley said: "I am so proud of the democratic nature of our party and the leadership vote is a big part of that. I'd like to see as many members as possible engaged in this process because this is the person or people who are going to take us a significant way towards the next General Election where we are focused on increasing our representation in Parliament.

"We've shown ourselves to be a credible political force and I'm so excited to see who our members choose to lead us to the next stage. I feel confident there are going to be some fantastic candidates making up our new generation of leaders."

Bartley remains in place until 1 August, his co-leader Sian Berry will then become acting leader until the outcome of the election is known.

ENDS

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1

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/07/05/jonathan-bartley-to-stand-down-as-co-leader-of-the-green-party/>

2

Nominations will close on Monday 16 August

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[Greens disappointed with High Court ruling on £27bn road building programme](#)



26 July 2021

The Green Party has expressed its disappointment with the High Court's ruling on a legal challenge to the government's £27bn Second Roads Investment Strategy (RIS2). [1]

Caroline Russell, Green Party transport and healthy streets spokesperson, said:

"It's very disappointing that the High Court has not upheld the legal challenge to the £27bn road building programme, but we continue to urge the government to halt this emissions busting policy immediately and will hold it to account on making sure its transport policy is consistent with its legally-binding climate commitments.

"There is simply no room for a £27bn road building programme in a climate emergency. It is inexcusable that this Conservative government wants to pave the way for more cars on the road, with more climate emissions, more congestion and more pollution, making life worse for communities across the country.

"In this last week we've seen terrible extreme rainfall events across the world, including flash floods in London. When is this government going to take the action that is needed and stop forcing through environmentally-damaging new roads while paying lip service to its role as chair of COP26?"

ENDS

Notes

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<https://transportactionnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Court-protects-stabi>

[lity-of-roads-programme-over-climate-RIS2-decision-press-release.pdf](#)

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[Lack of pay rise for NHS staff “an absolute insult”, say Greens](#)



21 July 2021

- **Amelia Womack: “For the government to once again delay any pay rise at all after a decade of falling pay is disgraceful”**

The lack of any pay rise for NHS staff in the government’s announcement today is “an absolute insult” to those who have risked their lives throughout the Covid pandemic, the Green Party has said. [1]

It had been widely reported that the government was due to announce an inadequate 3% rise for NHS staff in an address to the House of Commons today. But health minister Helen Whately made no such offer during a statement on the NHS this afternoon.

According to research by *London Economics*, most NHS staff on Agenda for Change [2] contracts to which the expected offer would have applied, have seen their pay fall by between 10% and 15% in real terms since 2010 [3]. The 3% proposal that had been reported was just 0.6% above the rate of inflation, and would have failed to reverse the trend of stagnating pay in the NHS [4].

Unions and grassroots campaigners are demanding pay offers of between 12% and 15%, to restore pay levels and address the understaffing crisis. In March the Green Party of England & Wales became the largest political party in the UK to support a 15% pay offer for Agenda for Change staff, by passing a motion at its 2021 Spring Conference. [5]

Green Party Deputy Leader Amelia Womack said:

“NHS workers have just worked the hardest year of their lives in incredibly difficult conditions. The reported 3% was nowhere near adequate, but for the government to once again delay any pay rise at all after a decade of falling pay is disgraceful.

“The NHS’ amazing staff have kept this country going throughout the pandemic, overcoming chronic understaffing and underfunding in order to provide critical care. The government’s lack of announcement today is an absolute insult for the same key workers they clapped on their doorsteps just months

ago.”

Green Party Health spokesperson, Peter Cranie said:

“We face a shortage of at least 84,000 key NHS staff in England, and we should be making every effort to attract people to health professions. Instead, this government has shown disdain for key health workers and exacerbated the threats posed by underfunding and understaffing.”

Jordan Rivera, an Occupational Therapist at Homerton Hospital in London, UNISON workplace representative and grassroots campaigner, said:

“After months of delays, leaving us to wait for a pay offer over the summer holidays is simply cruel. Poor pay is contributing massively to short staffing and now is the time for the government to show us that we are valued. The public recognise the role we’ve played in helping to fight covid over the last year, often at a huge cost to ourselves, and they know that we deserve a decent pay rise. Why doesn’t the government realise this?”

The news comes amid a recruitment crisis in the NHS, which faces a shortfall of 84,000 staff in England according to the King’s Fund[6]. The UK currently ranks 27th out of 36 OECD countries for the number of physicians per head of the population[7].

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/politics/breaking-tories-scrap-nhs-pay-24584579>

2

Agenda for Change is the NHS pay scale and employee grade system. Introduced in 2004, it covers more than one million staff. Staff on Agenda for Change contracts include nurses, occupational therapists, and other directly employed NHS staff. It does not cover doctors, dentists, or senior manager roles.

3

‘The Net Exchequer Impact of Increasing Pay for Agenda for Change Staff’ (18th January 2021), London Economics. [The Net Exchequer Impact of Increasing Pay for Agenda for Change Staff | London Economics](#).

4

‘Consumer price inflation, UK: June 2021’ (14th July 2021), Office for National Statistics. [Consumer price inflation, UK – Office for National Statistics](#)

5

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/03/06/green-party-supports-calls-for-15-pay-rise-for-nhs-workers/>

6

'NHS workforce: our position' (26th February 2021), The King's Fund. NHS workforce: our position | <https://www.kingsfund.org.uk/projects/positions/nhs-workforce>

7

'Global Health Indicators', World Health Organisation. Medical doctors (per 10 000 population) [https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/medical-doctors-\(per-10-000-population\)](https://www.who.int/data/gho/data/indicators/indicator-details/GHO/medical-doctors-(per-10-000-population))

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