

Measures to stop second wave do not go far enough, warn Greens



22 September 2020

The new coronavirus measures announced by Boris Johnson will not prevent a second wave of infections without a proper test and trace system, the Greens have warned.

Sian Berry, Green Party co-leader and Mayor of London candidate, said the government must also stop blaming the public for not understanding its confusing communication around the virus and instead work on making guidance much clearer.

Berry said:

“The new measures simply do not go far enough to stop a second wave of coronavirus.

“As we’ve said since very early on in this pandemic, the only way to ensure people are kept as safe as possible from this deadly disease is an effective test and trace system, run by those with local expertise and with appropriate government funding.

“We already know that people do not want large private companies running test and trace, and it is now clear they are unable to provide the service necessary to keep people safe.

“The government has now totally lost the trust of the public. Not only has it failed on its promise to deliver a reliable test and trace system, but it has also completely mishandled the communication around its guidance.

“Blaming the public for not understanding the confusing and contradictory messaging is not going to solve anything and makes restrictions much less effective. The government should instead be doing all it can to make its guidance as clear and concise as possible.”

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Green Party urges government to extend eviction ban



18 September 2020

The Green Party has urged the government to extend the ban on evictions in England and Wales that is due to end on Sunday (20 September).

Ahead of the expected end of the ban, Sian Berry, Green Party co-leader and Mayor of London candidate, said:

“Everybody has a right to a home. It is frankly unconscionable that during a pandemic and a massive economic downturn people face being forced on to the streets.

“Unfortunately, neither the Conservatives nor Labour are doing enough to help renters hit by the coronavirus crisis.

“The short extensions to the ban have done nothing to alleviate the fears of renters up and down the country. We are now once again on the precipice of a homelessness crisis which will not only bring misery to many but will also hinder any effort to tackle Covid-19.

“We must do whatever it takes to protect people through the pandemic and that means a permanent ban on evictions for the duration of this crisis.

“As with most crises, it is the poorest and most vulnerable who face being hardest hit. It is within the government’s power to ensure nobody is left without the basic human right of a roof over their head.”

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Green Party announces Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry re-elected as co-leaders



9 September 2020

- Green members re-elect Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry as co-leaders
- Amelia Womack elected as deputy leader for fourth term
- Jonathan Bartley: “Only the Greens have a clear, positive vision for what the country could be, and the ambition to build a grassroots mass movement which will demand, and work for, better than what came before”
- Sian Berry: “Next year people will have a chance to bring real change to their area by electing more Green councils, putting Green voices in the Senedd, and electing a Green Mayor for London”

Green members have re-elected Jonathan Bartley and Sian Berry as co-leaders of the party following an internal election this summer.

Bartley and Berry have now begun their second term as co-leaders by setting out their vision to build a grassroots mass movement for a Green recovery from the economic, climate and health crises we are currently in.

The pair have also set out how it is only the Green Party that has a “clear, positive vision” for the country and how they are ready to move the party to the next level.

Jonathan Bartley said:

“The economic, climate and health crises have put the country at a crossroads. We can continue down the same old road or we can choose a transformative Green recovery that ensures the wellbeing of us all, now and in the future.

“Only the Greens have a clear, positive vision for what the country could be, and the ambition to build a grassroots mass movement which will demand, and work for, better than what came before.

“We want to thank the members of the Green Party for re-electing us at such a crucial time for our movement and the country. Thank you, too, to all the candidates who put themselves forward and ran powerful campaigns that generated vibrant discussions and new ideas – the lifeblood of a democratic party.”

The pair have set their sights on reproducing last year’s stunning local election results, which saw the party increase its number of councillors from 178 to 362 on 122 councils.

Sian Berry said:

“We’re growing fast. Last year we doubled the number of Green councillors, and the 18 councils where Greens are part of the administration are among the most innovative and exciting in the country. But we can do so much more.

“Next year people will have a chance to bring real change to their area by electing more Green councils, putting Green voices in the Senedd, and electing a Green Mayor for London.

“Green politics is built on grassroots action, co-operation and democratic participation. We believe in a democracy where every voice is heard and

politicians' power comes from an active citizenry, not big-money donors.

"If you want a safe, fair and exciting future for your area, for the country and for the world, we invite you to join the Green Party and help us make the difference. Better is possible, if we build it together."

Bartley has led the opposition on Lambeth council since being elected a Streatham councillor in 2018. Berry is the Green Party's candidate for London Mayor and has been a Green London Assembly member since 2016. She has been a Camden councillor since 2014. They were elected by the Green Party membership after an internal election over the summer.

Amelia Womack was elected deputy leader of the party for a fourth time and will continue to campaign to get Greens elected across the country.

Womack, who will be the Green candidate for South Wales East in next year's Senedd election, said:

"We are building on strong foundations to ensure that we get more Greens elected across the country, and I am proud to be re-elected as deputy leader to continue that work.

"We have proven ourselves to be a political force to be reckoned with, and we will prove that again in the vital elections next year. Delivering real action on the climate and ecological emergency, while working to tackle inequality, our party is the only party that has the message and policy fit for the challenges of the 21st century."

New co-leaders Bartley and Berry won with 49% of the first preference votes. Contenders Shahrar Ali and Rosi Sexton received 24% and 27% of first preference votes respectively. New deputy leader Amelia Womack won with 47% of the first preference votes.

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One month extension to eviction ban not enough, Greens warn



21 August 2020

The ban on evictions in England has today been extended until 20 September. [1]

The ban was due to end on Sunday, 23 August, risking an unprecedented wave of homelessness, with a possible second wave of coronavirus on the way.

Responding to the announcement, Green Party councillor Carla Denyer from Bristol said:

“A one month extension to the ban is simply not enough. It must be extended until this crisis is over.

“Citizens Advice has said [2] that carers, key workers and those who have been shielding are set to be most at risk. This is an intolerable injustice.

“Everybody has the right to a home always, but especially during a pandemic the government must do whatever it takes to ensure people are protected and not left without a safe place to live.

“Throughout lockdown the Greens have been calling for a permanent end to no-fault evictions and for rent arrears accrued during the pandemic to be forgiven to ensure that nobody is left behind on housing security. [3]

“This latest u-turn does not offer the security renters need. Thousands of people will still be left fearing what is going to happen in just a few weeks.

“The government must make clear that nobody will be forced on to the streets during this pandemic.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-53851945>

2

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-bailiff-collections-resume-coronavirus-debt-eviction-ban-homelessness-a9679856.html>

3

The Green Party’s “Whatever It Takes” sets out the party’s plan to ensure no one is left behind during this pandemic

<https://medium.com/@TheGreenParty/whatever-it-takes-60091678a239>

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Greens call for overhaul of education system after results fiasco



19 August 2020

Ahead of GCSE results day, the Green Party has warned the recent fiasco over using an algorithm to determine results illustrates the failings of placing too much emphasis on national examinations and league tables over the learning needs of individual children.

The Greens have now called for an overhaul of the education system in order to tackle the disadvantage and inequality within it and provide further opportunities to learn throughout life.

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

“The education system needs a complete overhaul to bring it into the 21st century.

“The results fiasco is a clear example of how the current system is not fit for purpose. The mere idea of adjusting results by algorithm in order to fit in with league tables shows just how warped the system has become and how little it prioritises the most important aspect, the students.

“As teachers we are nurturing the leaders of tomorrow and so we must stop limiting their potential through high stakes testing which creates unnecessary pressure and instead promote a system of continuous assessment to enhance the learning of each individual child.”

The Green Party has issued a five point plan to overhaul the education system and encourage learning for life:

- Trust teachers and take into account regular centre assessed grades at fixed points throughout the course for GCSE and A level
- Reinstate opportunities for coursework and modular assessment, which was removed by Michael Gove’s reforms
- Scrap league tables of exam results, and instead focus on reporting to parents on a mix of academic, practical and cultural achievements and opportunities for students in our schools
- Evaluate the purpose of education, which is not merely to pass exams, but to equip young people with practical and academic skills for the 21st century. Students do not need a curriculum for the office workers

of the past, but to become problem solvers of the future

- Support educational opportunities outside of schools including home learning, adult learning and distance learning

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