

## Benefit cuts and Brexit squeeze to leave 3 million families £2,500 worse off

Planned benefit cuts by the Conservative government combined with soaring inflation will leave nearly 3 million working households an average of £2,500 a year worse off, according to analysis by the Institute of Fiscal Studies.

Low inflation over the last two years has meant the government's freeze on most working-age benefits has only amounted to a 1% real cut so far.

But rising inflation from the falling pound is now set to reduce the value of these benefits by 5% between now and 2020, with total cuts of over £5 billion a year in the long run.

Liberal Democrat Shadow Chancellor Susan Kramer commented: "Theresa May's plans for a divisive Hard Brexit and savage cuts to benefits will leave millions of working families worse off.

"Three million households will be hit to the tune of £2,500 a year as a result of cuts to tax credits, rising prices and the falling pound.

"The Brexit squeeze will hit people in the pocket across the country, with the poorest families hit hardest.

"This election is a chance to change Britain's future and stop a disastrous hard Brexit that will leave us all poorer.

"Every Liberal Democrat MP elected is a challenge to Theresa May's Hard Brexit agenda."

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## China adopts revised surveying and mapping law

China's top legislature Thursday passed a revised surveying and mapping law, protecting geographic information security and raising public awareness of national territory.

The legislation was adopted after a second reading at the bimonthly session of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

Revisions deal with the use of safe, reliable technology and equipment, managing navigation and positioning reference stations and supervision of

Internet mapping services.

The law will help protect the security of important national geographic information and boost the sound development of geographic information industry, said Zhang Dejiang, chairman of the NPC Standing Committee, at the closing meeting.

Raising awareness of national territory should be included in the curricula for primary and middle schools as it is an important part of patriotic education, according to the law.

In order to enable everyone to use maps that represent China's territory correctly, the law states that regulations should be followed in formulating, publishing or exhibiting maps.

"The omission of sensitive information in maps breaks the integrity of national territory and harms national security and interests to some extent," legislator Yue Zhongming told reporters at a press conference Thursday.

The law stipulates that Internet map providers should use maps that are legally authorized and protect the integrity of mapping data.

The revision has become more pressing as some extant clauses do not address current problems, such as the leakage of information of Internet map service users, due to new business models including bike-sharing services.

The bike-sharing system allows riders to locate the nearest bicycle through an interactive map in a mobile app, rent them by scanning a QR code on the bike, and leave them wherever they end their trip, with no need to return them to a fixed station.

According to the law, those responsible for the production and use of geographic information, as well as Internet mapping service providers, should abide by laws and regulations on personal information protection when they gather or use personal information.

Lawmakers called for intensified military-civilian integration in surveying and mapping activities to make better use of resources

Violators could face fines up to 1 million yuan (over 145,000 U.S. dollars) or have their business licenses revoked, and could face criminal charges. Foreign offenders may be deported.

The fine for those who release geological data without authorization about territory administered by the government will face fines of up to 500,000 yuan, compared with the current ceiling of 100,000 yuan.

The law was formulated in 1992 and amended for the first time 10 years later. The latest version will come into force on July 1.

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## [China eyes better military relations with the US](#)

China is willing to work with the United States to constructively manage risks and properly handle disagreements in order to propel mutual trust and seek more progress in promoting ties between the militaries, a Chinese defense ministry spokesman said Thursday.

Speaking to reporters at a regular press briefing, Yang Yujun expressed hopes that the U.S. military could make joint efforts with the Chinese side to “meet each other halfway and inject positive and constructive elements to Sino-U.S. ties, and contribute to world and regional peace and stability.”

Quoting Chinese President Xi Jinping who had just visited the United States earlier this month, Yang said military relations make up an important part of bilateral ties between China and the United States, adding that mutual trust in military and security areas forms the basis of strategic mutual trust between the two countries.

The Chinese military will resolutely implement the important consensus reached between Chinese and U.S. heads of states, Yang said.

It will work to maintain exchanges between the two militaries at all levels, bring into full play their dialogue and consultation mechanisms, carry out the annual exchange programs the two sides have agreed upon, and implement and improve the mutual reporting mechanism on major military operations and the code of safe conduct on naval and air military encounters, he said.

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## [Green Party agrees electoral alliance with Women's Equality Party](#)



27 April 2017

The Green Party has agreed an electoral alliance with the Women's Equality Party in the Yorkshire seat of Shipley, in a bid to unseat the sitting Conservative MP, Philip Davies.

The Women's Equality Party has agreed not to stand in five seats being contested by the Greens: Brighton Pavilion, Bristol West, Bath, Isle of Wight and Sheffield. In all these the Green Party is fielding a female candidate.

In return, local Green Party members have voted not to field a candidate in

Shipley, where the Women's Equality Party leader Sophie Walker is standing as a candidate in a bid to oust Mr Davies.

Caroline Lucas MP, Green Party co-leader, said:

"I'm delighted to endorse Sophie in Shipley. Under the Conservative government – the one Mr Davies has supported – we have seen the biggest rise in inequality since Margaret Thatcher was Prime Minister. Sophie and I are both committed to tackling that – from reversing the cuts that have left women behind and ending the gender pay gap, to increasing women's representation in parliament and in business. Sophie has pledged to stand on an agenda that many Green Party members and supporters will agree with and I look forward to her playing an active role in my campaigns to undo the privatisation of our NHS and for a fairer voter system."

Bradford Green Party is calling on the local Liberal Democrats and Labour to follow its bold lead and unite behind Sophie Walker as the single progressive candidate. The local party's move has been applauded by the party nationally.

Lucas said:

"This was far-sighted and bold decision by our local members. On election day we'll be urging people to vote for us because ours is the only policy platform which offers the bold changes so desperately needed to transform this country for the better. But to beat the Tories we need to be realistic about what's needed to form a progressive Government. That's why, in just a handful of places, our members will be taking brave decisions for the common good, as they have in Shipley.

"With an electoral system that benefits the Tories and locks out progressives, it's easy to imagine that predictions of the Conservatives winning the General Election, and winning big, will prove accurate, and that there's nothing we can do to change things. That isn't true and an agreement reached between the Green Party and the Women's Equality Party, together with other agreements being discussed locally, is a first step towards rewriting the future and fixing our failed politics. This could prove to be an historic moment and one that changes not just the course of this election but every future election too."

Sophie Walker, Women's Equality Party leader, said:

"I am glad to endorse Caroline Lucas for Brighton Pavilion. The Women's Equality Party and the Greens share a desire to build a caring, tolerant and sustainable country that values women and works to create equal opportunities for all. Caroline's commitment to challenging the Government on its austerity agenda, which has affected women disproportionately, to ending the gender pay gap and to ensuring equal representation of women across political and working life means many of our members and supporters in Brighton will, like me, get behind her campaign for re-election."

The Green Party has renewed its call for the Liberal Democrat and Labour leaderships to sit down for talks about how to make the movement for

electoral alliances work.

The Green Party's five leading candidates are: Caroline Lucas, Brighton Pavilion; Molly Scott Cato, Bristol West; Natalie Bennett, Sheffield Central; Vix Lowthion, Isle of Wight and Eleanor Field, Bath.

Sarah Cope, the Green Party's Women's Spokesperson, said:

"The Green Party has long been feminist party, with policies including improved maternity services, quotas for women on boards and abortion rights, to name just three. Our women's sub-group, Green Party Women, established almost a decade ago, has backed campaigns and worked with organisations to advance women's equality in the UK.

"In working with the Women's Equality Party, we are leading the way in showcasing a progressive, cooperative form of politics. Even where we may have policy differences, we can find shared ground and work for the common good."

Matt Edwards, Bradford District Green Party campaign coordinator, said:

"We have been convinced that Sophie is a candidate that the other progressive parties in Shipley should unite behind. People have been crying out for a new kind of politics where the left leaning parties work together to achieve their common goals, rather than attack each other over their differences."

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## [Friends of Balgay Spring Litter](#)



**"Catch the Community Spirit"**

The Friends of Balgay Spring Litter pick at Balgay takes place at 2pm on Saturday 29th April.

All welcome to help tidy the park!

Equipment provided – meet at Balgay Bridge.