

Green Party condemns stealth taxes on students



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- **Responding to IFS report, Young Greens Co-Chair accuses government of ‘pushing more students into poverty’ and presiding over a system ‘designed to extract money from young people’**

The Green Party has responded angrily to evidence that the government is making stealthy changes to the student funding system that will cost students and universities to the tune of £2.3bn.

According to the IFS, students will see hefty real-terms cuts to the value of maintenance loans, with the parental earnings threshold frozen at £25,000 when it should have risen to £34,000, meaning many students will not be receiving enough to live on.

Kelsey Trevett, Young Greens Co-Chair said:

‘It is disgraceful that at a time of rising inflation that the government has chosen to push more students into poverty by cutting maintenance loans in real terms. Making changes that will particularly penalise young working-class people while simultaneously mouthing platitudes about “levelling up” is dishonest and unjust.’[1]

‘As well as creating intolerable cost-of-living pressures for current students, the changes will also see even more money clawed back from them during their working lives. The freezing of the student loan repayment threshold is adding to financial pressures on former students.’ [2]

Jane Baston, Co-Chair of Young Greens continued:

‘Our marketised education system of tuition fees and maintenance loans was designed to extract money from young people while leaving them in precarious financial positions during their studies and when they enter the workplace, especially impacting those from working-class backgrounds and traditionally marginalised groups.’

Green Party Deputy Leader Amelia Womack added:

‘The Green Party has always opposed the marketisation of higher education. We hold it as a matter of principle that education is a public good and should be funded as a public service. We stand by our policy of abolishing tuition fees and cancelling all existing student debts.’

‘We need adequate grant support for current students and to remove the burden of debt from young people as they struggle to gain a foothold in the labour-market.’

Notes

1 The IFS report says the rate at which the level of maintenance loans will be increased – at 2.3% – falls short of both the current level of inflation and predicted levels for the year ahead.

2 The recent government decision to freeze the student loan repayment threshold at £27,295 rather than applying the current rate of inflation means that a graduate earning £30,000 will need to pay £113 more towards their student loan in the next tax year.

3 More details on the IFS report:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/feb/10/ministers-quietly-tighten-financial-screws-on-students-in-england-ifs>

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