

Green Party pledges free prescriptions for all



5 June 2017

*** Caroline Lucas: "This Government is fining people for falling sick"**

*** Molly Scott Cato: "Prescription charges undermine the principle of universal free healthcare"**

*** Event details: 2pm, Easton Day & Night Pharmacist, 192 Stapleton Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 0NY [1]**

Caroline Lucas will announce the Green Party's plans to scrap prescription charges as part of its commitment to a national health service that's genuinely free at the point of use.

Lucas will accuse the Government of fining people for being sick and creating barriers which stop people accessing the medication they need.

GPs have warned that the £8.60 prescription charge in England [2] is forcing some people to make a choice between food and medication [3].

Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland have already scrapped prescription charges, and the Green Party wants to adopt the same scheme in England.

Caroline Lucas, co-leader of the Green Party, is expected to say:

"Let me start by saying my thoughts remains with all those affected by the horrific acts in London yesterday. It is with a heavy heart that I speak to you today, but one which knows how important it is not to let those who seek to divide us succeed, or our democracy be cowed by fear.

"So I am here today to talk to you about the NHS. Every day this Government is fining people for falling sick by charging for prescriptions. GPs have warned that prescription charges force some patients to choose between spending their earnings on food – or essential medical treatment. This is not

acceptable. It's also a false economy because not taking prescribed medication can cause people to miss work and lead to additional GP or hospital appointments."

Lucas will announce the Green Party plans while visiting a community pharmacy in Bristol with Molly Scott Cato MEP.

Molly Scott Cato, Green South West MEP and Bristol West candidate, is expected to say:

"The NHS was founded on the principle of universal access to free, publicly funded and provided health care at the point of use. Prescription charges in England undermine that principle and the Green Party would not make people pay for access to vital medication."

Scrapping prescription fees would cost an estimated £550 million annually [4]. The Green Party argue these costs could be more than met by getting rid of the NHS internal market – a move which would save an estimated £4.5bn according to the Centre for Health and the Public Interest [5].

ENDS.

For more information contact: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

Notes:

1. Event details: 2pm, Easton Day & Night Pharmacist, 192 Stapleton Road, Easton, Bristol, BS5 0NY.

The Green Party has suspended national campaigning until Sunday night after the London terror attack. We are in discussion with the other parties and if campaigning does not resume tomorrow another email will be sent.

2. <http://www.nhs.uk/NHSEngland/Healthcosts/Pages/Prescriptioncosts.aspx>

3. <http://www.pulsetoday.co.uk/news/commissioning/commissioning-topics/prescribing/prescription-charges-adversely-impact-on-patient-care-say-40-of-gps/20007736.article>

4. https://www.sruk.co.uk/media/filer_public/ca/f8/caf8a735-b265-40f6-8d52-40d69152060f/20170428_letter_from_prescription_charges_coalition_-_rt_hon_jeremy_hunt_-_conservative.pdf

5. <https://chpi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/At-what-cost-paying-the-price-for-the-market-in-the-English-NHS-by-Calum-Paton.pdf>

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