

Greens launch measures to protect children from air pollution



1 May 2018

The Green Party will launch a raft of measures to tackle air pollution and protect children from its worst effects ahead of the local elections on May 3. [1]

The plans will be launched alongside the party's Clean Air Bill, to challenge the Government's failure to clean up Britain's dirty air after three court rulings found its plans so bad they are illegal.

The Green Party will pledge councillors elected on May 3 will fight for:

- School Streets: Closing the streets in front of schools to traffic at the opening and closing times to make the school environment safer and less polluted
- Walking and cycling to school: Safe routes so every child who is able to walk or cycle to school has the opportunity to do so.
- Increased Government spending on walking and cycling: The Green Party will press the Government to quadruple spending per person annually on walking and cycling from £6.50 to £30.

Greens will warn that children are playing in poisoned playgrounds, with a quarter of primary schools in London in areas with illegally dirty air in 2010. [2] Air pollution is linked to stunted lung growth in children and teenagers, [3] with air pollution inside cars 9 to 12 times higher than air outside. [4]

The Green Party also hopes the measures will help young people aged five to 18 get the recommended hour of moderate physical activity a day – something 23% of boys and 31% of girls don't get. [5]

The pledges will be launched alongside the party's Clean Air Bill, which was introduced to the House of Lords by Green peer Jenny Jones.

The Bill will declare clean air as a human right, set up a Citizens' Commission to support people taking legal action to enforce that right, and ensure the 'polluter pays principle' underpins all regulations and charges.

Almost two thirds of people believe Britain needs a new Clean Air Act. [6]

Jenny Jones, Green peer in the House of Lords, is expected to say:

"When I started talking about air pollution as a London Assembly member in 2000, no one was interested in the health impacts and radical solutions. Well now I'm in a position to deliver those solutions.

"I'm going to put a Clean Air Bill before Parliament and hope to get widespread support. Air pollution is now known as an issue that everyone has to care about."

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, is expected to say:

"Closing the streets in front of schools is a common sense policy. From London to Edinburgh, anywhere this has been implemented it has seen fewer cars on the road and more children walking and cycling safely to school. That means parents don't feel forced to drive their kids around out of fear for their safety.

"Not only does this help children get the exercise they need, which is better for a child's heart, but they'll also be breathing in less pollution, which is better for a child's lungs. This Green bill is a win/win for our children's health."

Notes:

[1] Photo opportunity in one of London's School Streets with Green co-leader Jonathan Bartley, Green peer Jenny Jones, and Green campaigners.

[2]

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmenvfru/433/433.pdf>
(paragraph 8)

[3] <http://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMoa040610>

[4]

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/jun/12/children-risk-air-pollution-cars-former-uk-chief-scientist-warns>

[5] <https://www.cycling.scot/mediaLibrary/other/english/2432.pdf>

[6]

<https://www.theguardian.com/cities/2017/feb/14/65-percent-british-public-want-clean-air-act-pollution-harmful-uk-survey>

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