

Greens support union's campaign to make schools safe



8 January 2021

Green Party leader Jonathan Bartley has welcomed calls from the National Education Union to invest more in school staff to cut class sizes and ensure Covid safety.

Bartley said:

"The government should be doing everything it can to reduce class sizes, both in the immediate threat of this pandemic but also for the future. This means a nationwide campaign backed up by the necessary government investment to mobilise all teaching assistants and agency staff, some of whom are furloughed and others who are unemployed.

"The pandemic has also revealed the inadequate amount of space in our school buildings. We need schools to have immediate access to more community buildings to allow more social distancing. And longer term, we should reverse the decade of under investment spending cuts, enabling schools to have adequate space for safe and effective learning."

Data from the Institute for Fiscal Studies show that 83% of schools in England will have less money this year compared with 2015 while overall, schools in England will be £2bn poorer in 2020 than in 2015.[1]

"It was the issue of over-crowded schools that first brought me into politics, when I had to battle to get my wheelchair-using son into our local school. The limitations on space were damaging then and they are shown to be unsafe today. We have heard much about the importance of education in recent months but this rings rather hollow and needs to be backed up with investment in school staff and buildings.

"I am also calling on the health secretary to show support for our brave school staff by prioritising them for vaccination."

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://schoolcuts.org.uk/story/funding-crisis-explained/>

2

The Green Party are supporting the National Education Union's campaign for a better education

system:<https://twitter.com/NEUnion/status/1347146081893818374>

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