

Greens challenge emphasis on Maths & English targets and testing and oppose forced academisation of schools



28 March 2022

- **No evidence that academies and free schools raise standards overall.**
- **A comprehensive recovery plan would include a focus on the real needs of children and students and an inclusive, creative and collaborative curriculum**

The Green Party has responded to the government's new white paper on education which calls for all schools to join a multi-academy trust by 2030 and to be open for a minimum 32.5 hour school week [1]. Greens are backing teaching unions in challenging the lack of ambition for young people in this document, the focus on academic targets without the extra resources and oppose the academisation of schools.

Green Party Education spokesperson, Vix Lowthion, who is a working secondary school teacher, said:

"The government is using the disruption caused by Covid as a way to push through their damaging educational agenda of tough academic targets and more testing, rooted in a longer school week and Ofsted inspections.

"This White Paper also resurrects the previously unpopular policy to force the academisation of our schools, when there remains no evidence that academies and free schools raise standards overall. By contrast, there is plenty of evidence that multi academy trusts, in particular, are syphoning public money without the accountability offered by local councils.

"This is not the way to support children and teachers to recover from the disruption caused by the pandemic. A comprehensive recovery plan would include a focus on the rounded needs of children and students and an inclusive, creative and collaborative curriculum. Instead, we will see even more pressure heaped on teachers and students to achieve higher targets in English and Maths, resulting in even more school hours spent away from lessons in music, PE, humanities, technology and the arts. Young people need to be offered a broad and balanced curriculum to learn, show their potential and to succeed."

Young Greens co-chair Kelsey Trevett said:

"A focus on maths and English means the government once again fails to

recognise the value of creative and humanities-based subjects, creating exam factories for the sole purpose of preparing young people to enter an exploitative profit-driven workplace.”

Young Greens co-chair Jane Baston added:

“These standards also place an extra burden on teachers, taking them over their annual hours and placing them under even more pressure within a system which only sees academic achievement and grades, not people.”

Notes

[1] <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/mar/28/plans-for-englands-schools-include-national-behaviour-survey>

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[Chancellor has ignored plight of millions of families, Greens warn](#)



23 March 2022

- **Spring Statement negligent to those on lowest incomes**
- **Not one mention of the climate made by Rishi Sunak during statement**
- **Adrian Ramsay: “It’s staggering that while the country faces crisis after crisis, the Chancellor continues to look after the interests of fossil fuel companies and his party’s backbenchers, while ignoring the plight of millions on lower incomes”**

Responding to the Chancellor’s Spring Statement today [Wednesday 23 March], Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“It’s staggering that while the country faces crisis after crisis, the Chancellor continues to look after the interests of fossil fuel companies and his party’s backbenchers, while ignoring the plight of millions on lower incomes.

“It’s negligence in the extreme to have offered so little to help those struggling through this cost of living crisis, when we would have restored and doubled the Universal Credit uplift for those on the lowest incomes.

“And he didn’t even bother to mention the climate once. The Chancellor clearly does not see that tackling the cost of living crisis requires solving the climate crisis.

"The Green Party has repeatedly called for a 'Dirty Profits Tax' on the excessive profits from UK oil and gas extraction, and to use this money to provide proper support for every household, and particularly those who need it most.

"Instead, the Chancellor has turned a deaf ear to the pleas of those on the lowest incomes, ignored the plight of those on benefits and has done next to nothing to tackle the climate crisis.

"He had money to spend but chose to spend it on tax cuts for the better off and encouraging climate-damaging activity. A cut to fuel duty which will disproportionately benefit wealthier households that are more likely to own cars, more likely to drive larger cars, and more likely to travel long distances, fails to support those reliant on ever more expensive public transport.

"While the cut to VAT on energy efficiency measures and renewables is a positive step and a win for green campaigners, it will not have the impact we need without a proper government retrofit programme to support people to take advantage of it. The fact there was no clear plan for a full retrofit programme, which would help keep people warm and reduce eye-watering energy bills, shows the absolute lack of vision this floundering government has.

"Meanwhile, the promised future tax cut shows the Chancellor is focused on winning the next general election, and not helping those on benefits and lower incomes who are in desperate need right now."

Ahead of today's budget, the Green Party called on the Chancellor to use the Spring Statement to:

- **Address pay inequality and provide real society security**, including restoring the £20 uplift to Universal Credit and doubling it to £40 per week and extending emergency fuel payments to all by providing each household with an additional £320 to help them pay for spiralling energy costs
- **Invest in energy efficiency and energy security**, including funding local authorities to better insulate all homes and carry out deep retrofit of 1 million homes a year
- **Invest in green jobs**, including a retraining guarantee for existing oil and gas workers, as well as those who have recently left the sector
- **Tax pollution and wealth**, including increasing the supplementary tax already charged on North Sea oil and gas to 40%, which would raise £5bn, and transition towards a carbon tax to make polluters pay
- **Use the power of money for good**, including banning any bank holding a UK banking licence from investing in new fossil fuel development and updating the Bank of England's mandate so that funding the sustainability transition becomes a central objective, alongside the maintenance of price stability.

ENDS

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[Nuclear power is a distraction from cleaner, cheaper solutions, say Greens](#)



22 March 2022

Nuclear power is a distraction from cleaner, cheaper solutions, say Greens

Responding to the announcement by the government that it plans for the UK to get 25% of its electricity from nuclear power [1], co-leader of the Green Party, Adrian Ramsay, responded:

“Nuclear energy is an expensive distraction at a time when we face the dual challenges of spiralling energy costs and concerns over energy security.

“Our focus needs to be on developing renewable energy technologies and a big push on energy efficiency. Both are cleaner and cheaper solutions that can be delivered far quicker than nuclear ever can.

“That’s why we are calling for a £250 billion investment plan for a nationwide home retrofit scheme and renewables in tomorrow’s Spring statement [2].

“Because the safety of nuclear plants requires cooling water, climate change also poses a safety hazard. Extreme weather events and rising sea levels will increasingly render nuclear power plants vulnerable.”

Notes

[1] [Johnson announces aim for UK to get 25% of electricity from nuclear power | The Guardian](#)

[2] [Greens urge Chancellor to announce £250bn home retrofit plan in Spring Statement to tackle cost of living crisis | The Green Party](#)

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Greens urge Chancellor to announce £250bn home retrofit plan in Spring Statement to tackle cost of living crisis



21 March 2022

- Greens call for retrofitting of 10 million homes over the next decade, as well as insulating every home that needs it
- Tax on energy companies could help fund energy efficiency improvements to end fuel poverty
- Adrian Ramsay: “Our Green plan would simultaneously address the three most pressing crises we are facing – the cost of living crisis, fossil fuel dependency which is funding a deadly invasion in Ukraine and climate change”

The Green Party has called on the Chancellor to announce a £250 billion investment plan for a nationwide home retrofit scheme and renewables to help tackle the three most serious crises facing the country in the Spring Statement this week.

With the country facing a cost of living crisis unlike anything we have seen for decades, while at same time a war in Europe and the existential threat of climate change threaten our security in several ways at once, the Greens have published their five key demands for this week’s budget to tackle these crises head on. [1]

At the centre of the proposal is a call for the government to invest in an emergency programme to upgrade cold, damp homes across the country through a mass retrofit programme, which will help reduce bills and carbon emissions, while reducing our reliance on fossil fuels from murderous regimes.

The Greens are calling for local authorities to receive £25bn each year for a decade in order to carry out deep retrofitting of ten million homes and provide insulation improvements for every home that needs it.

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“The country is in the midst of the most critical economic situation for a generation. Millions of people are facing the sort of poverty that we thought had been condemned to the history books. While at the same time we see a war in Europe that also feels like something from another century, and is having massive economic impacts.

“Our Green plan would simultaneously address the three most pressing crises we are facing – the cost of living crisis, fossil fuel dependency which is funding a deadly invasion in Ukraine and climate change.

“A nationwide home retrofit plan, along with immediate financial support for those who need it most, paid for by taxing the record profits of fossil fuel companies, would see the beginning of a fairer, greener world for us all.”

The Green Party’s full proposal calls on the Chancellor to use the Spring Statement to:

- **Address pay inequality and provide real society security**, including restoring the £20 uplift to Universal Credit and doubling it to £40 per week and extending emergency fuel payments to all by providing each household with an additional £320 to help them pay for spiralling energy costs.
- **Invest in energy efficiency and energy security**, including funding local authorities to better insulate all homes and carry out deep retrofit of 1 million homes a year.
- **Invest in green jobs**, including a retraining guarantee for existing oil and gas workers, as well as those who have recently left the sector.
- **Tax pollution and wealth**, including increasing the supplementary tax already charged on North Sea oil and gas to 40%, which would raise £5bn, and transition towards a carbon tax to make polluters pay.
- **Use the power of money for good**, including banning any bank holding a UK banking licence from investing in new fossil fuel development and updating the Bank of England’s mandate so that funding the sustainability transition becomes a central objective, alongside the maintenance of price stability

Molly Scott Cato, Green Party finance and economy spokesperson and former MEP, said:

“It is unacceptable that while people are freezing in their homes, this Government is tucked up in bed with the dirty energy companies who are making ever-growing profits off the back of the misery of millions.

“We urge the Chancellor to put people first. A dirty profits tax would see us make steps towards a world where energy bills are a minor part of spending, not only supporting those millions of people who are struggling to make ends meet today, but also protecting the climate for future generations.

“The technology to rid ourselves of fossil fuels, and all the misery they bring, is already here. The government has so far chosen not to take this path but the costs of responding to fossil fuel lobbying rather than the needs of British people is becoming clearer by the day. The Chancellor has to use his statement this week to take the first step off this track and towards a fairer, cleaner future.”

ENDS

Notes

1

The Green Party’s full paper outlining its demands for the Chancellor ahead of the Spring Statement can be read [here](#).

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[Greens say fuel duty cut would not fix the cost of living crisis](#)



21 March 2022

- **People need help right now – but cuts to fuel duty aren't targeted to support the poorest**
- **Focus should be on an uplift to the incomes of the poorest while ensuring everyone can keep warm in their homes**

Responding to pressure from some Tory MPs for a fuel duty cut in the Spring budget statement [1], Greens have said such a cut is not going to fix the cost of living crisis, is not targeted to support the poorest households and is the wrong approach faced with a climate emergency and the need to transition away from fossil fuels.

Co-leader, Adrian Ramsay, said:

“This is a difficult time for those who need to use cars and vans for work, to visit family and access shops and leisure, particularly where public transport is so inadequate due to years of underinvestment and cuts to services.

“We absolutely know people need help right now – but cuts to fuel duty aren't targeted to support the poorest and the greatest numbers of people. They're not going to fix the cost of living crisis.

“Research shows such a cut would mainly benefit the richest while doing little or nothing to help those on the lowest incomes [2].

“It is also worth noting that prices at the pumps have risen by no more than inflation since 2011 [3], and since March 2021 have increased by 35% compared to a 275% increase in the gas retail price over the same period [4].

“Faced with a climate emergency and the need for a rapid transition away from fossil fuels, we also need to acknowledge that now is not the time to cut fuel duty. It is really disappointing to see Labour has jumped on this particular bandwagon.

“Our focus should be on an uplift to the incomes of the poorest while ensuring everyone can keep warm in their homes. That’s why Greens want to see a dirty profits tax – a windfall tax – on fossil fuel companies who are raking in billions on the back of rising energy prices. This could restore the £20 uplift to Universal Credit and double it to £40 per week, and extend emergency fuel payments, providing each household with an additional £320 to help them pay for spiralling domestic energy costs [4].”

Notes

1. [Fuel duty cut in Spring Statement 2022 ‘inevitable’ as Rishi Sunak drops big hint – Mirror Online](#)
2. <https://twitter.com/NEF/status/1505850705952788480>
3. [Petrol Prices \(speedlimit.org.uk\)](http://speedlimit.org.uk)
4. [Wholesale Energy Prices for Oil, Gas and Electricity – Interactive Charts \(cliffordtalbot.co.uk\)](http://cliffordtalbot.co.uk)
5. [Government energy loans will increase household fuel debt to £7.2bn, Green co-leaders warn | The Green Party](#)

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