

Greens call for all frontline workers to be prioritised for vaccine



2 December 2020

- **Larry Sanders has written to Nadhim Zahawi MP to urge prioritisation of those who have greater risk of being exposed to coronavirus**

The Green Party has urged Nadhim Zahawi MP, the minister responsible for the vaccine rollout, to prioritise all frontline workers who are at risk of coronavirus as they go about their jobs day-to-day.

The Green Party's health spokesperson Larry Sanders has today [Wednesday 2 December] written to Mr Zahawi highlighting World Health Organisation guidance which suggests balancing age-related vulnerabilities against risk acquired through socially essential work.

The letter reads:

"First, we support the primary commitment to public health and the impulse to inoculate those most at risk first, but we believe that more variables than age alone, such as a person's vulnerability to catching the virus, should be taken into consideration.

"We commend the decision to offer a vaccine to frontline health workers as a priority but would remind you about the many other frontline workers on whom we depend including teachers, public transport workers, shop-workers, and those who deliver our goods and collect our rubbish."

The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) has today confirmed its priority list for vaccine rollout, which is now expected to begin next week. [2]

In the letter, Sanders said:

"Many of these people who have been keeping society going may have health conditions that make them especially vulnerable to Covid and they have all been risking their lives for the common good.

"They should receive greater priority when it comes to health protection."

ENDS

Notes

1

The full letter can be read here:

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/letters/Letter-to-Nadhim-Zahawi-02>

<https://news.sky.com/story/covid-19-who-will-get-the-pfizer-vaccine-first-12081391>

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Greens warn governments must go further, faster to limit temperature rises



1 December 2020

- **Jonathan Bartley:** “Kicking the can down the road means leaving the problem to our children and destroying their life chances. What responsible parent or politician would do that?”

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has welcomed new analysis suggesting the world is making serious progress to limit temperatures rising from CO₂ emissions, but warned governments must act now to protect future generations. [1]

Responding to the report from Climate Action Tracker, Bartley said:

“In the past few months we have seen really significant progress with a range of countries committing to removing fossil fuels from their economies. This is a vital step towards addressing the climate emergency and the commitments from Biden’s US and from China are particularly welcome.

“But long-range optimism is no substitute for urgent action today. This generation of politicians appear to be leaving the difficult political decisions, on issues like constraining aviation, electrifying our heating and transport systems, and moving to plant-based diets, to their successors.”

In another report published today, Cambridge Econometrics criticised the Prime Minister’s 10-point climate plan, claiming it will reduce emissions by only 59% by 2030, when they need to fall by 70% by that date. [2]

Bartley said:

"We know that reductions today save money and achieve much stronger protection for our climate than equivalent reductions next year or the year after. Kicking the can down the road means leaving the problem to our children and destroying their life chances. What responsible parent or politician would do that?"

ENDS

Notes

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Climate Action Tracker calculate that revised commitments from USA, China, Japan and South Korea mean that the rise in world temperatures could be held to 2.1C by the end of this century:

<https://climateactiontracker.org/publications/global-update-paris-agreement-turning-point/>

2

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-55138338>

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Greens condemn government for failing to protect livelihoods as well as lives



1 December 2020

- **Molly Scott Cato: "It is a mark of the true failure of this government that they have mismanaged the economic consequences of the pandemic as disastrously as they mismanaged the pandemic itself"**

The Green Party has condemned the government's handling of the pandemic after shocking new OECD data showed that while many European economies have suffered unprecedented declines as a result of Covid-19, the UK is predicted to be amongst the slowest to recover. [1]

Green Party finance spokesperson Molly Scott Cato said:

“It is a mark of the true failure of this government that it has mismanaged the economic consequences of the pandemic as disastrously as it mismanaged the pandemic itself.

“This failure can be laid at the door of this Brexit government being driven by ideology rather than evidence. Their conviction that markets solve problems and their centralisation of power has led to a massive waste of public money on a failed contact-tracing system without which many sectors of the economy were forced to remain closed.

“The misguided assumption behind government policy that there was a trade-off between public health and the health of the economy led to a late lockdown causing thousands of unnecessary deaths but also the loss of many viable businesses.

“The OECD is absolutely right to warn against any return to austerity. To avert the threat of mass unemployment we need the government to invest in a green transition, creating thousands of well paid jobs in all our communities and making the pandemic a turning point for climate action.”

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Notes

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<http://www.oecd.org/economic-outlook/december-2020/>

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Greens warn Agricultural Transition Plan is a wasted opportunity and betrayal of farmers



30 November 2020

- Natalie Bennett: “We need to see the same kind of urgency that we saw a decade ago to rescue the banks but this time to rescue the natural world.”

Green peer Natalie Bennett has responded to the government’s Agricultural

Transition Plan, intended to support the farming sector and replace the CAP payments on which so many farmers depend. [1]

Baroness Bennett said:

“Although limiting payments for the wealthiest farmers makes sense, the proposal to cut agricultural subsidies in half as EU support disappears is a betrayal of our farmers and the rural communities they are at the heart of. Coming together with the pressure on exports from post-Brexit tariffs this will be a body-blow to an industry that is of vital importance to our very survival.

“This government likes to portray the UK as ‘world-leading’ and this is sadly true when it comes to the destruction of nature. The 70% of our land that is agricultural must be used to maximize carbon capture and restore our depleted wildlife as a matter of urgency. This plan for a leisurely process of trials and gradual implementation over a decade is grossly negligent against the backdrop of nature and climate emergencies.

“We also need our farmers to respond to changing consumer tastes as a growing number of people adopt plant-based diets. Government should support training and offer transition grants to promote a shift towards vegetable growing, something that would reduce the climate impact of our diets and improve public health.

“We need to see the same kind of urgency that we saw a decade ago to rescue the banks but this time to rescue the natural world. Issues such as protecting and restoring peatlands, slashing the use of pesticides, enhancing habitats for farmland birds, and of course planting trees and supporting natural regeneration should be a matter of priority.”

ENDS

Notes

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<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-unveils-path-to-sustainable-farming-from-2021>

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Greens call for plan to ensure no cross-infection between schools and family gatherings

27 November 2020

The Green Party has called on Education Secretary Gavin Williamson to provide a plan for closing schools this Christmas that will ensure the spread of the coronavirus infection is kept to a minimum.

The latest figures from the Office of National Statistics suggest over the most recent week, the only group that has seen positive tests for coronavirus was secondary school-age children. [1]

Green Party Education Spokesperson Vix Lowthion has now called on the UK government to outline what its plans are to ensure there is as little risk of spreading the infection as possible once schools close for Christmas.

Lowthion, a secondary school teacher on the Isle of Wight, said:

“Families are desperate to see one another this Christmas and it is a tragic consequence of the pandemic that this brings with it an inevitable risk.

“However Gavin Williamson has so far not laid out any plans for protecting families this Christmas as they relax restrictions and schools close for the holiday.

“School-age children remain the only group that are still seeing a rise in infections, despite nearly four weeks of national lockdown. It was wrong to put children and their families in this position in the first place, but the government now has a duty of care to the country to ensure that it does all it can to mitigate the spread of infection over the Christmas period.”

In Wales, the UCAC teaching union has called on the Welsh Government to close schools early so pupils and teachers would not have to self-isolate on Christmas Day. [2]

Lowthion said:

“Closing schools early would allow staff and students to self-isolate before Christmas so they can feel more confident that they do not have coronavirus when they meet the rest of their family over the five days that restrictions have been relaxed.

“It is extremely worrying, yet no great surprise, that this education secretary appears to have done nothing to plan for this situation yet.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/healthandsocialcare/conditionsanddiseases/bulletins/coronaviruscovid19infectionssurveypilot/26november2020#age-analysis-of-the-number-of-people-in-england-who-had-covid-19>

2

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-wales-55095175>

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