

Green co-leader joins refugee English lesson to mark anniversary of Casey Review



29 November 2017

***Government has failed to respond to Casey Review**

***Green co-leader joins refugee English lesson and writes to Sajid Javid to demand action**

***Co-leader Jonathan Bartley: "Being unable to communicate is a huge barrier to refugees trying to start a new life in Britain"**

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley will today visit an English language lesson for refugees in Bradford ahead of the anniversary of the Casey Review.

Next week will mark one year since Dame Louise Casey's review into opportunity and integration [1] was published on December 5, 2016 and the Government has yet to respond.

The review highlighted English lessons as the most important factor in helping immigrants integrate into their new communities. However, funding for classes has been cut by more than 50 per cent since 2008 [2].

The Green Party has now written to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Sajid Javid [3] to ask how the promotion of English language skills will be included in the Government's upcoming integration strategy.

Bartley said:

"It's disgraceful that the Government has firstly reduced access to such a vital service and secondly ignored the evidence that we are failing to ensure social integration. Being unable to communicate is a huge barrier to refugees trying to start a new life in Britain and will only lead to isolation and loneliness.

"All refugees want to do is settle into their new homes, rebuild their lives and become part of their communities. But the Government is effectively shutting them out by cutting off funding for the English language lessons they need to communicate.

"I'm looking forward to visiting Bradford and seeing firsthand what an impact English lessons can have on refugees' lives and making the case for them to be front and centre of the Government's new integration strategy."

Notes:

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-casey-review-a-review-int-o-opportunity-and-integration>
2. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/migrants-wait-years-english-classes-government-lessons-esol-a7517221.html>
3. Full text of the letter:

Dear Sajid,

I write to you regarding the Government's failure to respond to the independent review by Dame Louise Casey into opportunity and integration.

The Casey Review was published on December 5, 2016 and revealed a failure of governments to ensure that social integration policies and strategies kept up with immigration levels over the past decade. The report highlighted that access to English language lessons was the most important factor in integration and that resources for language lessons needed to be increased.

In January this year, the all-party parliamentary group on social integration also published a report recommending that migrants be enrolled in compulsory English language classes on arrival.

English lessons are essential for refugees to engage in day-to-day life. A shared language allows refugees to work, study, meet new people and even just share a meal.

However, the Skills Funding Agency has cut English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) funding from £212m in 2008 to £95m in 2015.

I would like to know how the Department for Communities and Local Government intends to respond to the Casey review and if it will be considering increasing funding for lessons in future years.

Yours sincerely,

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader

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[Greens blame austerity, cuts to public services and a broken electoral system](#)

for lack of social mobility



28 November 2017

A new report has ranked every region of the country on social mobility, concluding there is a “postcode lottery” on the ability to improve educational or job prospects. However, Greens have pointed to funding cuts, privatisation and outsourcing and the loss of one million public sector jobs since 2010 as reasons for a lack of social mobility. They also blame an ‘unfair and unrepresentative first-past-the-post electoral system’.

Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West and Green Party speaker on economy and finance, said:

“This new report shows the impacts of a decade of austerity on some of the most disadvantaged people in our society. This is a story of neglect of vulnerable communities and the consequences of the chronic under-funding of the services they rely on to improve their life chances. The public sector has also traditionally offered a route to skilled and high-paid employment for those outside the major urban centres so the loss of one million public sector jobs due to funding cuts has closed off these opportunities in many regional economics.”

Scott Cato blamed a broken electoral system for a failure to improve the life chances of the poorest:

“Many Conservatives MPs have no incentive to do anything to improve the life chances of some of the most excluded in society as they sit in safe seats under our desperately unfair and unrepresentative first-past-the-post electoral system. We need electoral reform and a system of proportional representation to give the powerless a voice in elections.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-42112436>

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European Green Party supports call for

ratification referendum on Brexit deal



26 November 2017

South West Green MEP, Molly Scott Cato, has welcomed support for a resolution on holding a ratification referendum, agreed at the European Green Party conference in Karlstad today [1]. Such a referendum, which has long been supported by the Green Party of England and Wales, would allow people a democratic choice between accepting the negotiated terms for Brexit or remaining part of the EU.

Scott Cato said:

“The European Green family has expressed concern about the chaotic nature of the UK government’s negotiating strategy, and the massive failure of transparency in its refusal to release detailed studies on the impact of Brexit.

“But the key focus of debate was the need for democratic decision-making on Britain’s future, which demands a ratification referendum on the final Brexit deal. This referendum needs to offer the option of remaining a member of the EU and be an open, honest and transparent vote.

“It was obvious that there was a serious and disturbing lack of honesty in the debate in the 2016 referendum, and it is becoming increasingly clear there has been a lack of transparency, and possibly outright illegality in the funding of the Leave campaigns.”

Natalie Bennett, Green Party former leader, who was in Karlstad, said:

“It was encouraging to receive the wholehearted support of the European Green family for the England and Wales Green Party’s position, and their understanding of the way in which the British people had been failed by the political system and media in the referendum debate.

“The Council also heard a scathing critique of the failings of the British political system and media from Sweden’s foreign minister and deputy prime minister, Margot Wallstrom (a Social Democrat), who addressed the Council.

“There was no desire at all to punish the British people for the referendum vote, or to harm British interests. What was heartening was the compassion and support for the British people in the midst of the uncertainty and turmoil.

“And, as the motion adopted expressed, there was a strong desire for us to remain as part of the European Union, in our interests, and those of the EU27.”

Notes:

1. <https://europeangreens.eu/sites/europeangreens.eu/files/8.%20Adopted%20resolution%20Karlstad%20-%200n%20the%20UK%20ratification%20referendum.pdf>

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[Greens respond to High Court ruling: Ineos vs the People](#)



23 November 2017

*** Jonathan Bartley: 'Ruling places right to protest under threat'**

The Green Party has responded to a High Court ruling to continue an injunction obtained by Ineos, an energy company, which bans activities like trespass or obstruction at its fracking sites.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

"This ruling places the right to protest under threat. Ineos have won a technical battle but they are on the wrong side of history and will not win the war. I have visited fracking sites across the country. I have seen the commitment, the energy, and the passion of those who know that fracking is bad for their communities and their country. Their opposition to fracking will never be silenced and the campaign for a future that's clean and green will win out in the end."

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[Lucas accuses government of 'ducking' opportunity to take action on](#)

environmental protection



22 November 2017

*** 'This could have been a Blue Planet Budget, but instead it's a missed opportunity'**

Caroline Lucas, the Green Party co-leader, has responded to the Budget. Lucas slammed the Government for failing to get to grips with the climate crisis – saying that this 'should have been a Blue Planet Budget' but ministers 'ducked' the opportunity to take action.

She said:

"This should have been the Blue Planet budget, but instead the action we're seeing on environmental protection is little more than a drop in the ocean. While the proposals on plastics are welcome, the Chancellor has ducked the opportunity to take bold action on climate change – the most pressing of all environmental threats. Indeed continued tax breaks for oil & gas and the lack of serious new for solar risk locking us into a fossil fuelled future at the exact moment when we need to be leaving dirty energy sources in the ground. A plastic tax will help – but in the context of warming oceans and rising sea levels it simply isn't enough.

"When it comes to air pollution and transport we're simply not seeing action that's commensurate with the scale of the crisis. We needed a hefty Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) and a fuel duty rise for diesel to take dangerously polluting cars off the road, but instead we saw just a tiny increase in VED for diesel cars – suggesting that the Government simply doesn't understand the threat posed by filthy air.

"The Government's obsession with electric cars isn't a panacea either – especially if they continue to be charged up with electricity from fossil fuelled power plants. Once again the Government has swerved at the chance to lower the cost of public transport for the majority – and ploughed ahead with its obsessive support for private cars.

"This Budget will lock in the pain of years of slashed budgets. Wave after wave of cuts have left our public services stretched to the limit and families up and down the country face poverty this Christmas – there's hardly a scrap of good news in this budget for those with the least. We needed a change in direction from this callous Government, but instead this budget will lock more people in poverty with a continuation of the benefits freeze – and add further pressure on our schools, hospitals and local councils.

"The Government's housing pledge doesn't go near what's needed to solve this crisis. We needed a specific focus on building social housing, which is genuinely affordable. Instead we have a housing target which could see homes built that people can't afford to live in – and continued inaction on the spiraling rents we're seeing in Brighton and Hove."

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