

Green Party: Government must refund Universal Credit helpline bills



18 October 2017

The Green Party has called on the Government to refund all bills racked up by people calling the Universal Credit helpline.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader, made the call in response to news today the Government will scrap the 55p-a-minute charge for calling the line.

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

“The Government’s Universal Credit phonenumber has been little short of fining vulnerable people for seeking help. It is shameful it took this long to make the line free. The Government must refund all bills racked up by the phonenumber immediately as a first step towards undoing the damage it has inflicted.”

ENDS.

For more information contact: press@greenparty.org.uk / 0203 691 9401

Notes:

1.
<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/universal-credit-helpline-call-charges-dwp-55p-work-corbyn-labour-pensions-benefits-david-gauke-a8006346.html>

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Government to ‘imminently’ decide on fracking in North Yorkshire



18 October 2017

*Minister confirms to Caroline Lucas that an application on fracking in

Ryedale is currently with the Government

The Government has confirmed that it has received an application for hydraulic fracturing consent for Third Energy's wellsite in North Yorkshire – and a decision is set to be made imminently.

In a response to Parliamentary Question from Caroline Lucas, a minister in the Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy said that an application for hydraulic fracturing consent for the KM8 wellsite in Ryedale, North Yorkshire, had been received [1]. This is the final consent needed by Third Energy to frack the KM8 well at Kirby Misperton. The company has said it expects to complete the fracturing operation by Christmas.

In response to a second parliamentary question ministers also refused to say whether they would consult parliament or the public ahead of decisions on fracking licenses. [2]

Caroline Lucas, the co-leader of the Green Party, has submitted a further [3] question to establish when the fracking submission was received by the government.

Commenting on the imminent decision by the Government, Caroline Lucas said:

"This imminent decision on fracking in North Yorkshire is a watershed moment. If the Government is serious about tackling climate change and protecting our natural world then they will reject this application and stop the dangerous dash for gas.

"Ministers are keen to brag about their 'green' credentials, but their warm words can only be taken seriously if they put a stop to destructive plans to rip up the countryside in pursuit of the fossil fuels that we know will condemn us to climate breakdown."

Notes:

[1] <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2017-10-10.106966.h&s=fracking>

[2] <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/wrans/?id=2017-10-11.107214.h&s=fracking>

[3] To ask the SoS for BEIS, pursuant to PQ [106966](#) on Fracking: Ryedale when the application was received; when the Secretary of State expects to make a decision; if he will publish his assessments prior to making the decision; and if he will make a statement.

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[Green Party: Time to ditch 'phantom' unemployment figures](#)



18 October 2017

* Real rates of 'worklessness', underemployment and insecurity being masked,

say Greens

* Real jobless rate at least three times higher than Government stat

* Today's unemployment figures show economic inactivity went up despite rise in employment rate (1)

Today's unemployment figures distort the real picture of the economy, the Green Party has said.

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

"The real rate of worklessness and underemployment is at least three times higher. The unemployment rate announced today doesn't cover part-time workers who want full-time jobs, 'inactive' workers alienated from the workforce, people of working age who have retired, many students, or those who work in the home.

"No phantom headline statistics will mask the reality for millions of households. People still feel poor. Household incomes are stagnating and it is the cost of living that is rising. Over 14% of households have no one in employment and the real rate of joblessness is over 21%." [2]

Notes:

1.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/latest#economic-inactivity>

3. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/workingandworklesshouseholds/apriltojune2017>

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[Greens: Rising hate crime inevitable in Divided Britain](#)



17 October 2017

The Green Party has responded to news that hate crime offences recorded by police has gone up but 28% since the EU referendum [1].

Amelia Womack, deputy leader of the Green Party, said:

“Rising hate crime is synonymous with the Divided Britain those in power have created. A toxic EU referendum campaign followed by dogged commitment from the Government to create a hostile environment for migrants and refugees have pitted communities and people against one another. Hate crime is the inevitable fallout.”

At Green Party conference last week Womack called for misogyny to be made a hate crime after surviving an abusive relationship [2].

Womack said:

““These statistics would be even more stark if they showed the abuse and violence against women. From groping to harassment, rape to online abuse, we know women are often targeted because they are women. The Government needs to admit we have a problem with misogyny and commit to eradicating it by making misogyny a hate crime.”

After news prosecutions for hate crimes are down 6.2% [3], Womack said:

“The Government also needs to ask serious questions about why, in spite of rising reports, prosecutions for hate crimes are falling. Tougher sentences are welcome but meaningless if people do not even face prosecution.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2017/oct/17/hate-soars-in-england-and-wales>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/10/10/greens-call-for-violence-against-women-motivated-by-their-gender-to-be-a-hate-crime/>
1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/brexit-hate-crime-prosecutions-fall-attack-report-spike-cps-report-statistics-islamophobia-racist-a8003716.html>

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[Caroline Lucas: Clean Growth Strategy is a missed opportunity](#)



12 October 2017

- * Lucas welcomes many of the proposals, but slams Government for being too vague
- * Green MP attacks handouts to nuclear, and lack of support for onshore wind and solar

Caroline Lucas, the Green Party co-leader, has said that the Government has 'blown' an opportunity to meet its climate targets after it published the Clean Growth Strategy.

Lucas, who said that many of the proposals in the strategy are 'welcome', argued that document overall was 'too vague to guarantee success'.

Caroline Lucas said:

"The Government has blown this enormous opportunity to put Britain on track to meet its climate target. This should have been a greenprint for the future, but instead this looks like a blueprint for under-achievement.

Missing targets

"This strategy suggests they won't meet the fourth and fifth carbon budgets [1] and, while some of the aspirations in the document certainly move us in the right direction, they don't go far enough to shift this UK to a zero carbon future.

"While many of these proposals are welcome, parts of the document appear too vague to guarantee success. The energy efficiency upgrades, for example, seem ambitious but are caveated with unspecific language and no cast iron guarantees.

Failure on onshore wind and tidal

"The lack of a plan to reinvigorate onshore wind is a huge missed opportunity – especially given that this is the cheapest low carbon technology available. Similarly a lack of commitment to solar and a persistent refusal to fully back tidal energy are serious shortcomings from a strategy that should be embracing the technologies of the future. When it comes to democratising energy this strategy also fell woefully short – and risks locking us into years more centralisation."

Ploughing millions into new nuclear

"It's absurd to see the Government ploughing more than half of the low carbon innovation fund in nuclear[3], when we should be doubling down on the incredible progress in truly renewable energy. There is no role for overpriced, dirty nuclear power in an energy system fit for the future."

Failure on airport expansion

"It's shocking that this plan fails to get a grip on key issues around transport. With no plans rethink airport growth [4], and nothing new reducing Britain's dependence on cars, it's clear that the Government have utterly failed to truly understand just how big they need to be thinking if they're serious about placing our economy on a truly sustainable footing."

"This should have been a greenprint for an economy fit for the future, instead it seems that the Government risks damning the next generation by failing to take the action now that will protect them from the dangers of climate breakdown in the coming decades."

Notes:

[1] Page 41, Table 2

[2] Page 13

We want all fuel poor homes to be upgraded to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band C by 2030 and our aspiration is for **as many homes as possible** to be EPC Band C by 2035 **where practical, cost-effective and affordable**

Develop a long term trajectory to improve the energy performance standards of privatelyrented homes, with the aim of upgrading **as many as possible** to EPC Band C by 2030 **where practical, cost-effective and affordable**

Consult on how social housing can meet similar standards over this period

[3] Page 15

Innovation: Invest around £900 million of public funds, including around:

- £265 million in smart systems to reduce the cost of electricity storage, advance innovative demand response technologies and develop new ways of balancing the grid
- **£460 million in nuclear to support work** in areas including future nuclear fuels, new nuclear manufacturing techniques, recycling and reprocessing, and advanced reactor design
- £177 million to further reduce the cost of renewables, including innovation in offshore wind turbine blade technology and foundations

[4] Page 153

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