

Greens call for extra support for businesses hit by Covid ahead of Small Business Saturday



3 December 2020

The Green Party has called for additional measures to support small businesses that have suffered heavy losses during the coronavirus pandemic, ahead of Small Business Saturday this weekend. [1]

As small companies across the country struggle to keep afloat due to the pandemic [2], the Greens have called for a five point plan to help them keep going:

- **Extend the business rate holiday into 2021/22** for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with the UK government providing compensation to local authorities for loss of income. As business rates are devolved in Wales, we also call on the Welsh Government to do the same.
- **Increase the amount of support to small businesses who have had to close** during lockdown and expand the criteria for those eligible. The current payments offer a derisory £1,300 a month for those with a rateable value of £15,000, which for a lot of small businesses would not even cover rent.
- **Widen the amount of support to small businesses who have stayed open**, such as nurseries, but are struggling due to the additional costs of Covid, through an additional discretionary grant for councils to administer.
- **Grant 15% of government contracts to small and micro businesses** and revise the government contract application process to remove the current barriers for entry to small business
- **Extend the current tourism VAT cut through 2021** and expand by applying to food and drink served in pubs, bars and restaurants, on hotel bookings and on theatre, music concert and museum and gallery tickets. This should form part of a process to review our VAT system outside the EU so that it differentially supports smaller shops compared to larger and online shops.

Green Party councillor Zoe Nicholson, deputy leader of Lewes District Council, said:

“Small businesses make a huge contribution to all of our lives and are at the centre of our plans for thriving local economies which work for the wellbeing of people and the environment.

“However, this year many have been left fighting for survival as a result of the pandemic. It is vital that the government steps up its support for these

businesses which so many people rely on.

“The Green Party’s five point plan would ensure many more are able to carry on providing their essential services that contribute so much to their communities and keeps money local, rather than letting it be eaten up by multinationals and swooshed off to the nearest tax haven.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://smallbusinesssaturdayuk.com/>

2

Research released in September by insurer Simply Business found that coronavirus could have cost small businesses in the UK up to £69bn. The survey found coronavirus had cost the average small company £11,799, with 25% of firms believing they were at risk of closing.

<https://uk.style.yahoo.com/covid19-could-cost-small-businesses-up-to-69bn-coronavirus-103231334.html>

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[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-02122020.pdf>

2

<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

1

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

1

<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

1

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

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