

Green Party will write off student debt for all those hit by £9,000 tuition fee regime



10 December 2019

The Green Party will write off existing debt of all former students who studied under the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition government's exorbitant £9,000 tuition regime, it will announce today.

The Greens would also fully fund every higher education student and scrap tuition fees for undergraduates, as part of its plans to ensure education is fully accessible and does not laden people with a lifetime of debt.

The plans, as laid out in the party's ambitious and fully-costed manifesto, would also include increased funding for adult education, to be in line with training needed to implement the Green New Deal.

The Green Party is the only party committed to writing off the debt for those who were forced to pay £9,000 each year to go to university after the coalition government tripled tuition fees in 2012.

The Greens would also spend an additional £7.8bn per year on scrapping tuition fees for new graduates and restoring grants.

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack will announce the party's higher education proposals in central London today. Womack will say:

"Education is a public good, and we're proud to invest in the next generation. That's why the Green Party is committed to scrapping tuition fees.

"It makes me so angry that tuition fees were introduced by a Labour government which had benefited from free education themselves. Then the coalition government tripled fees, scrapped maintenance grants, and sold off the student loan book.

“The result is a generation of young people saddled with mountains of debt as they start out in life. So yes, we say education should be free, for life, for everyone.”

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[Green Party issues three challenges to Jeremy Corbyn as he visits Bristol](#)



9 December 2019

The Green Party has challenged Jeremy Corbyn to reverse Labour's plans for new nuclear, rule out regional as well as national airport expansion and to proactively campaign to remain in the European Union as he visits Bristol today [Monday 9 December].

Former Green Party leader and Brighton Pavilion candidate Caroline Lucas has demanded the Labour leader makes clear his position on each area and commits to rowing back on his party's harmful policies.

The Labour Party currently supports expanding nuclear energy, despite its inherent dangers and the fact that it remains a costly distraction from faster, safer alternatives. Labour remains open to regional airport expansion and the local labour Mayor supports the deeply unpopular expansion of Bristol airport, a policy completely at odds with tackling the Climate Emergency.

The Labour Party has also failed to take a clear remain stance on Brexit, even though remaining in the EU provides the UK with the best chance to lead the fight against the Climate Emergency and to improve the lives of workers, low income families and refugees.

Lucas said: “The Labour Party needs to be honest about the damaging policies lurking in its manifesto. It is clear that it has a long way to go if it is to be considered to be truly standing up for the environment.

“Any party that is in favour of pursuing the conventional economic model of growth that got us in this mess in the first place cannot be relied on to lead the way in tackling the Climate Emergency.

“This is why it is more important than ever to elect Green MPs to hold both Labour and the Conservatives to account on the pledges they have already made, and to continue to push them forward on the most important issues we

currently face.”

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[Greens will guarantee every child a Good Childhood](#)



Childhoods are being eroded by the policies and actions of recent governments, and child poverty is a growing crisis. The Resolution Foundation has assessed that Conservative plans will mean a rise in children growing up without basic material security to a 60-year high of 34 per cent, while the new investment planned by Labour will only prevent the problem getting worse.[2]

Only the Green Party will eliminate child poverty by investing nine times more into transforming the callous and chaotic welfare system and introducing a Universal Basic Income.

Schools are also facing cuts, and children, teachers and parents are pressured from the moment a child starts school to focus on tests rather than time and space for children to develop.

A Green education system would remove testing and Ofsted, aim for smaller class sizes, broaden education to include more sport, culture, environment and nature lessons, and shift formal lessons in school to start at six years old.

As children get older, community spaces and youth work that can help them flourish and develop have been dramatically cut back, contributing to a crisis of youth violence and mental health. Sian Berry's work in London has exposed a cut of nearly half in council youth service budgets since 2011, and over 100 youth centres have closed in the capital city alone.[3]

Greens would restore £10 billion of funding to councils to provide a full youth service and community support.

Co-leader, Sian Berry says:

“Children who are supported to play, learn and grow as active citizens are the foundation and responsibility of a good society and only the Green manifesto in this election comes close to recognising that, backing the principles of a Good Childhood up with a comprehensive policy programme.

“Young people growing up need a community around them that values their growth and wellbeing, and our plans for system change within both welfare and education will make a profound difference to how children are treated and valued in Britain. They will do what no other party comes close to with their plans: eliminate the blight of child poverty.

“Greens also believe in the principle of giving young people a real voice in policy-making. With both votes at 16 and the ability to stand for Parliament at the same age, Greens will put the spirit of the climate strikes at the heart of our democracy. Young people are leading the way and we must listen to them and provide for their development as citizens with the Good Childhood they need.”

Green Party Education Spokesperson and candidate for the Isle of Wight constituency, Vix Lowthion says:

“A good childhood means fundamentally changing how we see education. Education should be about nurturing potential and inspiring a love of learning. Yet all too often it can feel like a production line, manufacturing children-shaped pieces to fit gaps in the workplace.

The freedom to let children play, flourish and grow has been replaced with endless testing and measuring. It demoralises teachers and adds yet more pressure on young people. Children growing up today cannot wait another five years for things to change.”

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[Friends of the Earth have got this wrong: Green Party responds to league table](#)



7 December 2019

“We think Friends of the Earth have got this wrong. Going through a similar exercise, Greenpeace scored the Green Party with the highest score. Friends of the Earth themselves actually also score the Green Party manifesto the highest overall, but Labour have simply made additional promises that were not included in their manifesto. We would question Labour’s commitment to any promise they have made which does not appear in their manifesto.

“Friends of the Earth should also analyse the economic policies of the different parties. For as long as Labour and any other party remain locked into growth-based policies, they simply can’t make the ambitious systems-wide

changes that we need.

“Our manifesto clearly sets out the most ambitious Green New Deal of any political party and we are also the only party to commit to reaching net-zero carbon by 2030. It is the Green Party that has consistently led the way on the environment and pushing climate change to the top of the agenda. We encourage voters to read our manifesto to see why both Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace have scored it highest.”

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[Caroline Lucas launches Green Party nature commitments, and A New Deal for Nature](#)



5 December 2019

Caroline Lucas, former co-leader of the Green Party and its candidate in Brighton Pavilion, showcased the Party's commitments on nature and launching A New Deal for Nature, at an event at The Linnean Society in central London.

A New Deal for Nature is an independent report commissioned earlier this year to inform her work in Parliament, as well as to feed in to the Green Party's policies on nature and stimulate public and political debate. It's been written by a group of leading UK conservationists and nature writers, Mark Cocker, Jeremy Mynott, Jake Fiennes, Helen Smith and Patrick Barkham.

“We are not only running out of time on the climate emergency, there's also little time left to reverse the catastrophic decline in nature and wildlife,” Lucas said.

“This election has to mark a turning point and the moment when people vote for Nature.”

Green party commitments on nature and wildlife

It is more urgent than ever to reverse the decline of wildlife and nature in Britain, one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. The 2019 State of Nature report found that 41% of species in the UK have declined, and a quarter of mammals are at risk of disappearing altogether.

The Green Party's manifesto has more than 70 proposals related to nature and wildlife, with the boldest and best policies for protecting it – for the benefit of people and nature. As the UN global assessment of nature, the IPBES, made clear, the breaking of environmental limits presents extreme danger for all humanity.

Among manifesto pledges are a 10-year transition to agro-ecological farming, more outdoor learning and the introduction of a GCSE in Natural History to encourage better knowledge and understanding of nature.

One of the party's key proposals is for a Sustainable Economy Act, so that the way we run our economy works with nature not against it, with new legally binding targets for biodiversity, soil health and water quality alongside other measures.

It is a broken economic system which has caused both the climate and biodiversity crises, and that has to be addressed if we are to restore our natural world.

That means moving away from endless consumption and GDP growth as the measure of economic success, scrapping environmentally destructive projects like HS2 and airport expansion, and repurposing the economy so that it also serves the needs of future generations.

While the Green Party manifesto is more ambitious and comprehensive than any other in its pledges on nature and wildlife, the Party recognises the importance of being challenged by experts to ensure policies measure up to the challenges we face.

Report recommendations

A New Deal for Nature focuses on eight areas for change including farming, schools & young people, urban wildlife, the marine environment and biosecurity. Among its 80 recommendations are:

- New national parks, with a goal of designating 20% of Britain as national park.
- Every farmer should devote a minimum of 15% of their land to nature, and be paid to do so.
- All primary schools should deliver one hour a day outdoor learning every day, in addition to break time.
- Twin every primary school with a farm
- Encourage more wildlife-friendly gardens by casting off the obsession with tidiness. Ban the sale of all plastic grass, unless for sports pitches via planning permission.
- Wild public land. Hospital grounds to be re-greened and re-wilded to aid patient recovery
- Permanently protect some brownfield sites as SSSIs, give others "pop-up" temporary wildlife protection
- A moratorium on expansion of aquaculture operations, particularly open-cage salmon farming, shown to be harming the aquatic environment..
- Improve early-warning systems to assess the threats posed by invasive,

non-native species which are growing by 10-12 species every year.

Caroline Lucas said at the report launch:

“Other parties still ignore the fundamental economic and infrastructure changes we need to truly protect the natural world. We’re looking ahead to what’s being called ‘2020 super year’ for nature and climate with crucial international summits taking place.

“Yet we’re also looking at a Johnson Brexit deal that is even worse for the environment and nature than the May hard-Brexit deal. Now more than ever, we need more Green MPs to stand up for wildlife and put the wellbeing of people and nature first across all policy making.”

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