

# Green Party pledges to end immigration detention at women's manifesto launch at Yarl's Wood



13 May 2017

**\*Greens launch manifesto for gender equality at Yarl's Wood detention centre ahead of major demonstration [1]**

**\*Pledges to shut down detention centres, protect sex workers through decriminalisation, and save women's healthcare**

**\*Deputy leader Amelia Womack: "The detention of asylum seekers in centres such as Yarl's Wood is inhumane, costly and totally unnecessary"**

The Green Party will launch its women's manifesto at 11am today (May 13) outside Yarl's Wood detention centre in Bedfordshire. The manifesto's three key policies all relate to providing safety for all, regardless of gender.

The party is calling for an end to immigration detention, leading to the closing of Yarl's Wood where the majority of female asylum seekers are held while their claims are being processed. In the short term, the Green Party are calling for the release of women who have experienced sexual violence so that their claim can be processed in the community, and would ban male staff from coming into contact with female detainees, who currently supervise detainees while showering, dressing and using the toilet. Hundreds of complaints about sexual abuse and mistreatment have been raised by Yarl's Wood detainees over the last decade [2].

The Greens are also promising to provide safety for sex workers through decriminalisation of both the sale and purchase of sex. This comes after UN [3] and Amnesty International [4] recommendations over the last year, showing that making sex work illegal only reduces safety.

The Green Party has also pledged to reverse the cuts to health care that that

have disproportionately affected women and other marginalised groups [5] [6].

The full pledges are to:

End immigration detention

- Immediately act to protect the most vulnerable asylum seekers who have experienced rape, sexual abuse or torture, by allowing their claims to be processed in the community
- Implement a three month maximum processing time for asylum applications
- Funding for integrated support for asylum seekers
- In the long term work to abolish immigration detention centres to enable all claims to be processed in the community

Keep sex workers safe

- Decriminalise sex work, in line with research from Amnesty International and the UN
- Amend existing criminal records held by sex workers
- Zero tolerance of coercion, violence or sexual abuse

Save women's healthcare

- End pay freezes for public sector workers
- Introduce safe levels of staffing across the NHS
- Reinstate sexual health services

The Green Party's other pledges to stand up for safety also include the role roll out a UK-wide strategy to tackle domestic violence, scrapping the "rape clause" for those wishing to claim child benefit, and restoring legal aid to prevent victims being forced to represent themselves against their abusers in court.

The women's manifesto goes on to announce measures to improve mental health services, close the gender pay gap and support unpaid carers, those who are disabled and older women, and policies to increase gender parity in government.

Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader, said:

"Detaining asylum seekers is inhumane, costly and totally unnecessary. Women who are coming to the UK seeking refuge are being detained in appalling conditions in centres like Yarl's Wood, often for years with no end to their incarceration in sight. We can be so much better than this, a confident and caring country that welcomes people in need instead of closing our borders, building walls and locking up vulnerable people who need help. The bold policies we're announcing today show that the Green Party is committed to standing up for everyone, and we are not afraid to speak out about issues other parties would rather shy away from. From asylum seekers to sex workers, as well as all of us who use the NHS, these policies set us on the path to building a tolerant, inclusive society."

**Notes:**

1. Amelia Womack, Green Party deputy leader, will launch the women's manifesto at 11am on May 13 at the entrance of Twinwoods Business Park, Thurleigh Rd, Milton Ernest MK44 1FD. Movement for Justice is organising a demonstration at Yarl's Wood on the same day from 1pm to 4pm. More information is available here:  
<https://www.facebook.com/events/1397760473581688/>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2015/jun/15/yarls-wood-report-callin-g-for-closure-decade-abuse-complaints>
3. <http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/hiv-aids/sex-work-and-the-law-in-asia-and-the-pacific.html>
4. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2016/05/amnesty-international-publishes-policy-and-research-on-protection-of-sex-workers-rights/>
5. <https://www.unison.org.uk/about/what-we-do/fairness-equality/women/key-issues/women-and-public-spending-cuts/>
6. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2016/nov/19/austerity-women-men-low-income>
7. Green Party Women is a subgroup of the Green Party of England and Wales and welcomes both women, including trans women, as well as gender variant members.
8. The full women's manifesto will be available after the launch.

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## Green Party uses election broadcast to insist it's 'time to change the game'



12 May 2017

**\*Spoof ad offers another boundary-pushing film from Green Party**

The Green Party is using its party election broadcast [1], which will be broadcast for the first time today (12 May), to take a satirical swipe at the broken nature of British politics.

The film uses humour to highlight the fact that politicians don't tell the truth, votes don't count and young people aren't listened to. 'The Race to Number 10' is a spoof advertisement for an imagined board game, rewarding cuts to public spending, lies on battle buses and reshuffles to get rid of Cabinet dissenters.

The film was the work of the independent creative company Creature of London, whose award-winning [2] film for the Greens for last year's local elections, 'The not so secret life of five-year-old politicians', was the most shared broadcast of all the political parties, receiving millions of views online [3].

Green Party head of communications said: "This is the party election broadcast that's worth watching. Creature have again proved that politics doesn't have to be dull, bringing biting satire to the broken state of British politics and helping the Green Party to make its powerful, and serious, case for changing the game."

Stu Outhwaite, Chief Creative Officer of Creature said: "You'd have to have been a raging sadist to be excited when the election was called. Well, either that or the creative agency that gets to make the Green Party's broadcast. The process (all two weeks of it) was a dream: we hope the finished spot might prove to be a bit of a nightmare for the other parties. Let's change the game."

This was Creature's fourth film for the Green Party. 'Change the Tune', a boy band spoof, also went viral [4].

#### **Notes:**

1. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPXtN1QW9uY&feature=youtu.be>
2. <http://smugglersite.com/4656/campaign-big-awards-brings-big-wins-for-smuggler-directors/>
3. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2016/04/15/the-greens-partys-%E2%80%998the-not-so-secret-life-of-5-year-old-politicians%E2%80%99-takes-the-internet-by-storm/>
4. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PPgS7p40ERg>

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# Greens announce final candidate numbers



12 May 2017

**\* Greens stand in 80% of seats in England and Wales\***

**\* Jonathan Bartley, co-leader: "With Britain at a crossroads we're giving voters a real choice"**

The Green Party will stand candidates in 80% of seats in England and Wales on June 8 giving the majority of voters the chance to vote for a candidate who will fight for a new kind of politics.

Greens will stand in a total of 457 seats across England and Wales. At least 22 Greens stood aside to increase the chance of a progressive candidate beating the Conservatives. The Women's Equality Party stood down for the Greens in five seats, while the Lib Dems stood down in one.

A total of 467 Green candidates will stand for election across the UK with bold policies to create a better Britain – including giving voters a final say on Brexit with the chance to stay in Europe

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

"The vast majority of people in England and Wales have the chance to vote Green. With Britain at a crossroads we're giving voters a real choice.

"In a handful of seats Green Party members took the brave decision not to stand – and we're proud that our party has put the opportunity to create a more compassionate country above narrow political divides.

"For a confident and caring country, vote Green on June 8th."

**ENDS.**

For more information: [press@greenparty.org.uk](mailto:press@greenparty.org.uk) / 0203 691 9401

## Notes:

### 1. Green candidates include:

- Aimee Challenor, 19, in Coventry South: Aimee is Green Party LGBTIQ+ spokesperson and the only openly trans spokesperson of a UK Political Party.
- Larry Sanders, 82, in Oxford East: Larry is Green Party health spokesperson and brother to US Senator Bernie Sanders.
- Lawrence McNally, 18, in Cities of London and Westminster constituency: Lawrence is the Green Party's youngest candidate.

### 2. Green Party candidate numbers since 1974:

- 1974: 6
- 1977: 5
- 1979: 53
- 1983: 109
- 1987: 133
- 1992: 253
- 1997: 89
- 2001: 145
- 2005: 182
- 2010: 310
- 2015: 535
- 2017: 467

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# Caroline Lucas announces Green Party's environment promises



11 May 2017

- **Green Party pledges to protect the natural world in the wake of the EU referendum, introduce locally owned energy companies, and end plastic waste**
- **Caroline Lucas: "Building a successful economy is not at odds with protecting our environment, it is impossible without it."**
- **Launch: 10.30am, Thursday 11 May, Woodberry Wetlands, N16 5HQ [1]**

Caroline Lucas is set to announce how the Green Party will put the environment at the heart of its politics at the launch of the party's Environment Manifesto.

Speaking to conservation activists at Woodberry Wetlands [2] in London, Lucas is expected to say Britain's economic prosperity "depends on the natural world", and that "a prosperous, thriving future will be green – or not at all".

The Green Party Environment Manifesto [3] will include plans for:

- A new Environmental Protection Act which to protect natural world in the wake of the EU referendum decision by creating a new environmental regulator and court
- Ending the monopoly of the Big Six energy companies by building democratic, locally owned alternatives
- Ending plastic waste by introducing a bottle deposit scheme to stop 16 million plastic bottles ending up in environment every day

Caroline Lucas, Green Party co-leader, is expected to say:

"The environment has been wilfully ignored by the political mainstream and our climate and our countryside will pay the price of an environment-free election. With 2016 the hottest year on record, and a climate-denier in the

White House, the need for bold and dynamic action on climate change has never been more urgent. The UK must lead the world in building a green economy and investing in a viable future – one that respects and nurtures the natural systems on which we depend. The Greens are the only party to truly recognise the importance of the environment.

“Our economic prosperity depends on the natural world. It is the ultimate source of everything we make and use – from food and materials, to the air we breathe. Even the digital economy depends on rare earth metals and huge amounts of energy. Building a successful economy is not at odds with protecting our environment, it is impossible without it. A prosperous, thriving future will be green – or not at all.”

Notes:

1. The launch will be held at 10.30am on Thursday 11 May 2017 at Woodberry Wetlands, West & Coal House Entrance: New River Path via Lordship Road, N16 5HQ
2. Woodberry Wetlands was opened last year by Sir David Attenborough and is an example of how it is possible to create green space within cities to benefit both the environment and local communities.
3. **THE GREEN PARTY'S ENVIRONMENT MANIFESTO – KEY POLICIES**

## **A LONG-TERM GOAL FOR NATURE**

The Green Party will push for a new Act of Parliament to protect important EU regulations, and enshrine long-term goals for the environment into law. With almost 60% of species in the UK in long-term decline, and 15% are at risk of disappearing altogether, the need for a generational plan to restore our natural world is clearer than ever.

- **A Green Guarantee in Brexit negotiations and Trade Deals** to ensure that all EU-derived legislation, including the Precautionary and Polluter-Pays principles, are maintained and strengthened.
- Create a new **Office for Environmental Protection and an Environmental Court** that would monitor and enforce new long-term goals for biodiversity, water and air quality.
- Build a **network of inter-linking local ecological spaces on both land and sea**, ensuring that both our wildest places and urban green spaces are protected and allowed to flourish.
- Establish a **right for every person in the UK to have access to a healthy and safe green space** promoting good mental health, physical exercise, and building community.

## **INNOVATE AND INVEST IN THE LOW-CARBON ECONOMY**

Our energy system is broken and is not delivering what households and businesses need – fuelled by dirty energy that belongs in the past, it is failing us both as customers and as citizens. The Green Party will harness the dramatically falling costs of renewable energy, and reverse the uncertainty created by years of government neglect.



- **Create a new Green Investment and Innovation Centre** with borrowing powers to finance the transition to a zero-carbon economy, creating a government owned hub for innovation and investment in our low-carbon economy. Without decisive action, investment in renewable energy is set [to drop by 95% over next two years](#).
- **Keep fossil fuels where they belong: in the ground.** We will introduce a ban on fracking, phase-out the £6bn-a-year fossil fuel subsidies, bring forward the coal phaseout date to 2023 (at the latest), divest public funds from the fossil fuel industry, and ensure a just transition for those communities dependent on fossil fuel jobs.

## **TAKE BACK CONTROL OF OUR ENERGY SYSTEM**

- **End the monopoly of the Big Six** by building democratic, locally owned alternatives – reaching at least 42 gigawatts by 2025. We will require grid operators to give **priority access to community energy projects**, and pioneer a new *Community Energy Toolkit* to **empower local communities to create energy and municipal heating projects in every town and city**.
- **Democratise energy ownership** by reforming tax-relief for smaller-scale projects, introducing Green ISAs, promoting Green Bonds by allowing tax-free bonds for green projects, and issuing government backed Green Bonds.
- Introduce **progressive energy tariffs** so that small consumers pay less per unit than large ones, special needs are recognised, people are not cut off when they can't afford to pay, and nobody is forced to have pre-payment meters.

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## **Green Party condemns Labour support for 'HMS Pointless'**



11 May 2017

The Green Party has responded to the pledge in Labour's leaked draft manifesto to retain the Trident nuclear weapon system [1]. The Greens have already pledged to scrap Trident and spend its £3.6bn per year running costs on the NHS [2].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

"Labour's stance on Trident is both deeply disappointing and self-evidently absurd. What could be more illogical than pledging to renew a multibillion pound nuclear weapons system that will never be used? With people struggling to get by in Britain it's inexcusable to be wasting people's money on this cold war relic.

"Instead of funding HMS Pointless we could plough billions of pounds into our health service, hiring 85,000 more nurses, midwives and other NHS staff. Labour has acknowledged that nuclear weapons would result in the 'indiscriminate killing of millions of innocent civilians' [3] yet refuses to see sense and pledge to scrap Trident. Real security means having a world class health service, not locking ourselves into replacing obsolete, useless weapons."

#### Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2017/may/11/leaker-draft-manifesto-jeremy-corbyn-labour-trident>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/05/04/greens-tories-and-labour-offer-a-choice-between-first-strike-fanaticism-or-hms-pointless/>
3. <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/05/10/labour-extremely-cautious-trident-would-deploy-troops-last-resort/>

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