

## [Stop fraud in the Aid budget? Simple, slash that budget and spend the money here](#)

The Public Accounts Committee report on fraud in the International Aid budget was scathing about the dismissive attitude to fraud displayed by both the Foreign and International Development departments which suggested that there was no significant problem with fraud.

Lisa Duffy, UKIP's Foreign Aid spokesman said, "As the Committee made clear, it isn't good enough to wave a hand and claim not to be able to divulge who is committing the fraud, it is imperative that people are able to know who is stealing their hard earned taxes.

"That the Committee itself seems to accept that there are both "legal and cultural sensitivities" in divulging the identities of the fraudsters is equally worrying.

"We have our own cultural sensitivity here in the UK, the one in which tax payers money is accounted for and accountable.

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## [Corbyn and May 'running scared' of TV debates, says Lucas](#)



26 April 2017

Caroline Lucas, the Green Party co-leader, has accused both the Prime Minister and Leader of Opposition of 'running scared' of national television debates after Jeremy Corbyn's spokesperson said that the Labour leader wouldn't take part without Theresa May's involvement.

Caroline Lucas said:

"Both the Prime Minister and leader of the Opposition are running scared of the TV debates. Our democracy deserves better than this. Theresa May should commit to doing the TV debates, and Jeremy Corbyn shouldn't be afraid to 'empty chair' the Prime Minister and debate with the other parties. A failure by both Corbyn and May to appear in the television debates would be a dereliction of their duty as party leaders."

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## [Desperate SNP 'running scared' after plea to Greens](#)

- [Home](#)
- [All News](#)
- Desperate SNP 'running scared' after plea to Greens

26 Apr 2017



The SNP is “running scared” after begging the Greens not to stand candidates in seats it thinks could be vulnerable.

MP Tommy Sheppard said the Greens would “have to choose” when it came to certain constituencies in a bid “not to split the pro-Yes vote”.

The Greens’ “co-convener” Maggie Chapman has already hinted at support for “non-Green candidates” in parts of the country, so long as they’re backing separation.

In 2015, 31 Green candidates stood in the General Election, losing the deposit in all but three seats.

The Scottish Conservatives have warned the party to “put up or shut up”, adding that its core voters wouldn’t forgive lying down to the SNP.

**Scottish Conservative candidate for Aberdeen South Ross Thomson said:**

“The Greens have to put up or shut up.

“They can’t pretend to be a proper party while sitting this election out and begging its voters to back someone else.

“That’s a shameful approach, and any genuine Green voter will be disgusted with it.

“It’s also very telling that the SNP has taken this step.

“It shows the party is rattled and running scared, and its MPs right across Scotland are terrified of losing their seats.

“So they should be. People are sick of the nationalists’ rabble-rousing on

separation, and this latest intervention will just put more people off.”

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- **Maggie Chapman said that she would be happy to support ‘non-Green candidates’ and that the Party would not stand in constituencies that it had previously lost its deposit in.** ‘I would be quite happy for us to support non-Green candidates if it meant getting Tories out of Scotland and making sure we had elected representatives who walk the walk of the politics of the new Scotland we want to see... I think what we need to do is use this as an opportunity to talk about the kind of Scotland we want to see, the kind of politics we want to see, and I’m hopeful we can agree to say let’s back the candidates who offer those kinds of views and that kind of outlook for Scotland. I don’t see us standing in seats in areas where we lost deposits last time.....I’ve always advocated political co-operation. I think it’s an important element of how we do politics as Greens and this is possibly an opportunity for us to put this belief into practice, to work with it to make sure we see a more forward and outward-looking representation for people.’ (*The National*, 19 April 2017, [link](#)).
- **Patrick Harvie said that the Greens had to ‘weigh up’ reducing the number of Scottish Conservative MPs and staying true to their ‘principles’ and ‘the reasons we’re in politics at all’.** ‘The question of course for independence supporters is how the cause can be advanced in the context of this snap election... Few people would wager a pint of beer against the SNP winning most of Scotland’s constituencies in June, but I dare say not many would bet heavy on them winning 50 per cent of the vote single-handed... So as all our parties approach an election we didn’t expect, we have a lot to weigh up. How to minimise the Tory presence in all our lives, and the reach of their odious policies. How to successfully reassert the mandate for an independence vote. And how to stay true to our principles and the reasons we’re in politics at all’ (*The National*, 20 April 2017, [link](#)).
- **The SNP have ordered the Greens to not split ‘the pro-Yes vote’ and to stop ‘targeting’ SNP marginals.** Tommy Sheppard said: ‘I know the Greens will want to stand some candidates but I also know they have never stood everywhere. So they are going to have to choose. They will want to stand some candidates as they are a national party and will want to put their case to their base, but in deciding which seats to contest and not to contest I think they should be mindful of not splitting the pro-Yes vote and certainly not splitting the anti-Tory vote.’ Referring to Edinburgh South particularly he said ‘It’s not a four way marginal with the Greens, it’s a three way marginal and in those circumstances I don’t think the Greens should be targeting that sort of seat.’ (*The National*, 26 April 2017, [link](#)).
- **Patrick Harvie has recently said that the Greens could enter into a formal coalition with the SNP in the Scottish Parliament.** ‘Absolutely. I think the idea of remaining in opposition for all time isn’t one that’s attractive to any political party. If you believe in proportional

representation you believe in a fair balance of political parties across parliament and coalition is the most likely way for a government to form a majority. The previous session, where there was a single party majority, was, I think, an aberration, and I don't think it's likely to happen again.' (*Daily Record*, 18 April 2017, [link](#)).

- **In the 2015 General Election the Scottish Greens stood candidates in a record 31 constituencies.** However, they were only able to save their deposit in three Edinburgh East, Edinburgh North and Leith and Glasgow North (*Scottish Greens*, 22 February 2015, [link](#)).

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## Dugdale: Brexit just as bad as independence

26 Apr 2017



Labour's leader in Scotland has been again criticised for her weakness on Scotland's place in the UK, after saying Brexit was just as bad as independence.

Speaking at the STUC conference in Aviemore, Kezia Dugdale compared the two scenarios, even though Scotland's trade with the rest of the UK is four times greater than with the EU.

She said: "Threatening to walk away from the EU without a deal is no worse than Nicola Sturgeon's threat to walk away from the UK with independence."

It's the latest indication that Labour are prepared to sell-out pro-UK Scots in a post-election deal with the SNP.

Last week, sources within Labour said they wanted a "progressive alliance" with the nationalists to keep the Conservatives out of Downing Street.

And just days ago, it was revealed that two SNP MPs stated they needed such a pact with Labour to act as a "midwife" for independence.

**Scottish Conservative candidate for Edinburgh South West Miles Briggs said:**

"This shows you exactly where Kezia Dugdale's priorities lie.

"For her to say Brexit – which was backed by more than a million Scots – would be as bad as the SNP's break-up plan is beyond belief.

"Scotland's relationship with the rest of Britain is four times more important than its trading links with Europe.

“Scots want to move on and make the best of Brexit, with Scotland remaining as a key part of the UK.

“Instead, Labour want to continue moaning from the sidelines, revealing they have no interest in standing up for Scotland’s place in the UK in the process.”

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Kezia Dugdale was speaking at the STUC conference in Aviemore today.

Earlier this week, two SNP MPs wrote an alliance with Labour would act as a “midwife” for independence:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/04/snp-says-it-wants-corbyn-alliance-to-act-as-midwife-for-independence/>

Before that, Labour sources agreed they were pursuing a post-election pact with the SNP:

<http://www.scottishconservatives.com/2017/04/reports-state-labour-will-pursue-election-deal-with-snp/>

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## **Avian Influenza Prevention Zone to end on 30 April**

The Cabinet Secretary has taken this decision based on an updated veterinary risk assessment conducted by the Animal and Plant Health Agency (APHA). However, the temporary suspension on gatherings of some species of birds will remain as additional evidence is considered.

The Cabinet Secretary said:

“Last December I declared the whole of Wales an Avian Influenza Prevention Zone in response to Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N8 outbreaks being reported across Europe, North Africa and the Middle East. This was a precautionary measure to minimise the risk of poultry and other captive birds being infected by wild birds.

“We have been closely monitoring this situation and APHA has been preparing updated outbreak risk assessments. The most recent evidence-based veterinary risk assessment concluded there remains a Low – Medium risk of resident wild waterfowl being infected with H5N8. Meanwhile, the exposure assessment risk for poultry farms is Low, but heightened, and will depend on the biosecurity measures on each farm. This level is consistent with November 2016, when disease was present across Europe in sporadic outbreaks and

occasional wild bird findings were being reported.

“Therefore, I am pleased to announce, following the expiry of the current Avian Influenza Prevention Zone on 30 April, this will not be replaced. Whilst I am sure this is welcome news it is important to remember avian influenza remains a constant and real threat to our poultry and other captive birds.”

The Chief Veterinary Officer for Wales, Christianne Glossop added:

“I would like to stress the need for all keepers of poultry and other domestic captive birds to remain alert for signs of the disease and to contact their private veterinarians if they have any concerns. If anyone suspects disease they should contact the Animal and Plant Health Agency immediately.

“It is essential all keepers maintain effective biosecurity practices, such as considering and updating self assessment forms, cleansing and disinfecting all clothing, equipment and vehicles (using approved disinfectants) and implementing effective pest control measures to minimise the opportunities of contact between their birds and wild birds and wild life.

“We can all play a part in supporting the ongoing surveillance by reporting any findings of dead wild birds to the GB helpline on 03459 335577. In particular, any wild ducks, wild geese, swans, gulls or birds of prey and where more than five birds of any species are found dead in the same location. We must also ensure we all comply and respect the biosecurity measures put in place by poultry or other captive bird keepers.

“I would also like to take this opportunity to remind all poultry keepers with 50 birds or more they must register their flocks on the Poultry Register and strongly encourage all poultry keepers, including those with fewer than 50 birds, to register. This will ensure they can be contacted immediately, via email or text update, in an avian disease outbreak enabling them to protect their flock at the earliest opportunity.

“If poultry or other captive birds are being let outside after a prolonged period of being housed I would recommend keepers consult their private veterinarian on the health impacts.”