

Greens call for 'reset' of Covid preventative measures to help stem spread of infection



29 November 2021

Greens say the threats posed by the new Omicron variant should serve as a wakeup call to 'reset' preventative measures that will help reduce the spread of Covid this winter. These should include:

- Mask wearing and social distancing extended to all indoor public spaces
- Work from home where possible
- Financial support provided to those in self-isolation
- Fully funded ventilation systems for all schools
- Booster jabs offered immediately to all school staff
- A greater contribution by the UK to fighting the virus globally through vaccination sharing
- UK support for a TRIPS waiver – a temporary suspension of the intellectual property rights used by pharmaceutical corporations to protect their technologies

Green Party co-leader, Carla Denyer, said:

“Infection rates remain stubbornly high across the UK and now there is uncertainty about the threats posed by the new Omicron variant. It’s time for a reset on preventative measures to help stem the spread of all variants this winter. A failure to take swift preventative measures could result in health services becoming overwhelmed and much more stringent measures down the line.”

“The government has finally seen sense on mandatory mask wearing in shops and public transport, but this must go further and include all indoor public spaces. We also need to see the message on the importance of social distancing reinforced, people encouraged to work from home where they can, and financial support provided to those who are self-isolating.

“The emergence of new variants is also a sharp reminder that we can only put this virus behind us by vaccinating the world. Global justice requires rich nations sharing vaccine supplies with low-income countries and backing moves to prevent pharmaceutical corporations using intellectual property rights to block millions having access to vaccines [1].”

Greens are also calling for a particular focus on stronger preventative measures in educational establishments. Vix Lowthion, Green Party spokesperson on education, said:

“Research suggests that high Covid-19 infection rates are being driven by infection in school-aged children [2]. Greens have long called for improved ventilation in schools and colleges, and we now urgently need to see fully funded ventilation systems for all schools. We also need to ensure that all adults working in schools, colleges and Early Years are classed as frontline workers and are offered booster jabs with immediate effect.

“Covid-19 continues to cause chaos in schools with too many children and educators either suffering with the virus or in isolation. We owe it to our teachers, students and society at large, to take a precautionary response and increase protections in all educational establishments.”

Notes

[1] [WTO TRIPS Waiver for COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

[2] [Covid: Infection among pupils leads to record high rate – TES](#)

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[Response from Carla Denyer to Greens on brink of entering coalition government in Germany](#)



24 November 2021

Co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, Carla Denyer, welcomed news that the German Greens will enter into a new coalition government, should members vote to back the agreement [1]. She said:

“This is great news and it seems clear that the Greens in Germany have won some key policy demands as part of the coalition agreement, particularly on a massive boost for renewable energy and bringing forward the phase out of coal

to 2030.

“This is another example of what is becoming a familiar pattern across Europe, as Germany stands to become the 10th European country with Greens in government. From Scotland and Ireland to Finland and Portugal, Greens are in power and exerting a strong influence over policy.

“By ensuring the climate crisis takes centre stage and by pushing policies to tackle inequality such as increasing minimum wages, Greens in government are helping to deliver social and environmental justice.

“Voters here have a growing appetite for the Green Party of England and Wales to join that list of Greens in government. In England, Greens are already in power or power sharing arrangements in 14 local authorities, delivering policies on free bus travel, retrofitting homes to make them warm and tackle fuel poverty, ensuring developers build zero carbon homes, and protecting trees and green spaces. And with polls now consistently ranking us as the third most popular party in the UK, the prospect of Greens in government is becoming increasingly likely.”

Notes

[1]

<https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-spd-fdp-and-greens-unveil-their-governing-coalition-deal/a-59915201>

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[Greens welcome planned announcement of a mandatory system for councils to take in refugee children](#)



23 November 2021

The Home Office is set to announce today that it will become mandatory for local councils to take in their fair share of unaccompanied asylum-seeking children [1]. This follows a Green Party campaign in the summer to make the National Transfer Scheme mandatory to relieve pressure on the handful of councils who were already playing their part. [2]

Responding to the announcement, Green Party Migration and Refugee Support Spokesperson Benali Hamdache said:

“After a Green Party campaign to get all local councils to take in and support refugee children, the Government’s announcement today of a mandatory rota is a big step forward.

“Under the current system, councils like Brighton and Hove are stretching themselves beyond capacity by taking in as many asylum-seeking children as they possibly can, and more, while predominantly Tory councils refuse to play their part.

“Today’s announcement will mean that hundreds of vulnerable children can leave the hotels on the south coast where they have been left stranded and be moved to councils where they can get decent housing, support, and the care they need to restart their lives.

“This is a step forward, but the Government needs to go further and reinstate the laws that mean refugee children can be reunited with their families. That would be a first step to creating a caring asylum policy that seeks to save lives rather than stoke hatred against refugees.”

Hannah Clare, Deputy Leader of Brighton and Hove council, said:

“Children arriving in this country after fleeing persecution and war are in desperate need of support, and in Brighton and Hove we have done all we can to house them. But other councils are choosing to look the other way. This has meant the Home Office has placed vulnerable children in hotels while they wait for local authorities to make secure accommodation available.

“It is a huge relief that other councils will now be forced to play their part and it will not just be left to a handful of councils to care for these vulnerable children. Spreading responsibility more evenly will mean thousands of children can be given the vital support they need.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/nov/23/home-office-tells-councils-to-take-unaccompanied-migrant-children>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/08/17/green-party-urges-local-authorities-to-take-in-fair-share-of-child-refugees/>

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[Green Party co-leader to be key MP](#)

candidate for next General Election



19 November 2021

- Urban voters not Greens' only target, as Adrian Ramsay begins campaign for a seat in Conservative heartlands.
- Co-leader Carla Denyer is already the MP candidate for a seat in Bristol.
- Greens are the main challenger to both Conservative seats and Labour ones
- Announcement comes as party support continues to rise

The Green Party has demonstrated its ambition to win seats in traditionally Conservative rural constituencies as well as in cities as the Party's co-leader Adrian Ramsay has today announced he will be the Green parliamentary candidate in North Suffolk for the next General Election.

Adrian Ramsay joins his co-leader Carla Denyer in standing for a high-profile constituency campaign, with Denyer aiming to win an MP seat in Bristol.

Adrian said: "The 'Blue Wall' of Conservative power in the countryside is not as strong as Conservative politicians would have us believe. Greens are already the main opposition to the Conservatives on Suffolk County Council, and nationally, the Green Party is polling above the Liberal Democrats. Our clear ambition to win a seat in Suffolk, as well as winning in Bristol, demonstrates the Greens' confidence that we can take seats in all areas of the country and from both main parties."

At the launch of the constituency campaign in North Suffolk today, Adrian Ramsay will highlight the issues affecting rural communities, including concerns about unsustainable development that is damaging the countryside and putting strain on local infrastructure.

Adrian Ramsay will be calling for greater local say over planning policy in rural areas like Suffolk, and for investment in public transport, especially buses.

Adrian said: "This Government has taken people in the countryside for granted. As a result of this, the blue wall is crumbling, as we've seen from recent by-election wins by the Greens, including one at Aldeburgh and Leiston. As an MP for this area, I would be able to take their concerns – about housing and transport for example – to the heart of Westminster.

"The Green Party has always had a vision to empower local communities and revitalise rural economies, and this is ever more important as we work to tackle the climate emergency and prioritise local well-being.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

- North Suffolk Constituency is the constituency proposed by the Boundary Commission which should come into force by June 2023 for the next scheduled General Election. It covers an area from Bungay in the north East to Framlingham in the South East, Rattlesden in the South West and Bardwell in the North West. If there is an earlier General Election called under the current boundaries, Adrian will be the candidate for Bury St Edmunds constituency.
- Adrian Ramsay, 40, is a prominent figure in local politics, having been a leading spokesperson for the party in the East for much of the last two decades. In 2003 he became one of the youngest councillors in Britain when he was elected to Norwich City Council. He led the rapid growth of the party in Norwich, becoming leader of the opposition to the Labour council there. He was Deputy Leader of the Green Party from 2008-2012, and was part of the team that co-organised the successful election of Caroline Lucas as Britain's first Green MP in 2010. Since his previous time in politics, Adrian has been chief executive of two national environmental charities. He has also worked as a senior lecturer in environmental politics and economics. Adrian returned to front line politics last month when he was elected as Co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, alongside Bristol councillor Carla Denyer.
- Green Party councillors have 12 seats on Mid Suffolk District Council making them the main opposition to Conservatives there, together with the 5 LibDem councillors they equal the 17 Conservative councillors.
- Across Suffolk there are 22 Green District Councillors and 9 Green county councillors.
- In the December 2019 General Election, Bury St Edmunds constituency, Suffolk, had the highest Green vote share in the country against a Conservative incumbent (16%). This was also the fourth highest Green vote of all constituencies.
- The nine Green Suffolk County Councillors make the Greens the second largest group to the Conservatives: more Green councillors than any other county council and the only county in the UK where Greens are the main opposition to the Conservatives.
- The Green Party has for several months been frequently at third place in national opinion polls.

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[Government's railway plans are not "levelling up", say Greens](#)



17 November 2021

Greens say the Government's announcements on rail for the North and Midlands, expected tomorrow, demonstrate a lack of strategic planning on public transport.

In response to indications that the eastern leg of HS2 from Birmingham to Leeds will be scrapped in favour of upgrading existing lines, Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said,

"The Green Party has opposed the expensive HS2 project, while calling for investment in local and regional transport infrastructure, particularly in the North, Midlands and South West of England.[1]

"It now looks like the UK is being left with the expensive and most ecologically damaging first phase of HS2, which risks turning Birmingham into part of the London commuter belt, without any of the originally touted benefits of providing better connections in the North of England. I am worried that this announcement is the worst of both worlds."

At the same time as announcing upgrades to existing lines, the Government is expected to scrap Northern Powerhouse Rail, backtracking on promises made for cities and towns in the North.

Bradford Green Party councillor Matt Edwards said, "The effective cancellation of Northern Powerhouse Rail means that our cities in the North, especially places like Bradford, Liverpool, and Hull are getting left behind again. This isn't leveling up, it is another betrayal of people in the North."

Greens are now calling for the improvements to existing local railway lines that will replace the eastern leg of HS2 to be integrated into a wider strategy for transport in this climate emergency.

Carla Denyer added,

"Greens have long called for improvements to journey times, frequencies and capacity of rail services in all regions of England and in Wales. [1] But a transport revolution to tackle the climate crisis and air pollution must also focus on less glamorous localised investments, particularly in infrastructure to make cycling and walking safer and more convenient, and in frequent and affordable local bus services."

ENDS

Notes

[1] The Green Party's 2019 manifesto states: 'Creating a new golden age of train by opening new rail connections that remove bottlenecks, increase rail freight capacity, improve journey times and frequencies, enhance capacity in the South West, Midlands and North, and connect currently unconnected urban areas.'

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