

Amelia Womack demands waiving of visas for Ukrainian refugees in final conference speech as deputy leader



Green Party

5 March 2022

- **Amelia Womack calls for a joined-up resettlement program for refugees, with funding for councils and support services**
- **Final speech to Green Party Conference as deputy leader will reiterate that the Green Party provides alternatives to the main parties.**
- **Womack: “This government and opposition has failed at every hurdle, so today I am calling on them both to open the doors and waive the visas”.**

Green Party Deputy Leader Amelia Womack will use her last speech in the role to her party’s conference today to call for the government to ensure that Ukrainian refugees are able to find safety in the UK.

Addressing party members, Womack will call for the UK to match the generosity of European neighbours by waiving visa requirements for refugees fleeing Ukraine.

Womack will support the calls from Green council leaders such as in Brighton and Hove and Lewes to properly fund local councils to facilitate refugee resettlement and support programmes. Earlier this week, Deputy Leader of Brighton and Hove council Hannah Clare warned that unless more funding is forthcoming from the Government, support services, including those provided by voluntary sector organisations, will not be able to cope. [1]

Amelia Womack will highlight the dangerous gaps in policy that are not being addressed by either of the main parties, after the Labour Party refused to support open routes for refugees to reach the UK. [2]

Womack will say: “As a country we must allow refugees to enter the UK and to safety. This government and opposition has failed at every hurdle, so today I

am calling on them both – to you Boris Johnson and to you Keir Starmer – open the doors and waive the visas, open safe and authorised routes to those fleeing war.”

Womack will urge the government to “deliver a joined up resettlement program for refugees, with funding for councils and support services that matches the generosity of our European neighbours.”

Having served for 8 years as the party’s deputy leader, Womack will not stand for re-election as the party’s rules do not allow an individual to serve more than that time in a leadership role. Womack will use her speech to celebrate the successes the party has achieved in her time, including winning council seats and European elections across the country.

She will say: “Over those eight years, we have experienced some highs for the party and for the country, and some real lows. Throughout it all, the Greens have constantly been setting the agenda and from being the party of 16,000 members that we were when I was first elected we are now 51,000 strong and a growing force across the country.

“While oceans and global temperatures have risen, we have raised the alarm – and people have heard our call. Not just because of the almost daily climate catastrophes – floods, wildfires, extreme weather – but because people are seeing that the whole system is rigged against ordinary people and against the natural world. All generations have been coming together to expose how the deep inequality scarring our country is blighting people’s lives.”

Notes

1. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2022/03/02/local-councils-prevented-by-government-from-helping-ukrainian-refugees,-warn-greens/>
2. <https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/labour-ukraine-refugees-welcome-starmer-b2026527.html>

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[Green Party conference condemns invasion of Ukraine and calls for](#)

tougher sanctions



Green Party

4 March 2022

- **Members at Spring Conference vote overwhelmingly to support emergency motion deploring Putin's invasion of Ukraine**
- **Motion wants to see extension of sanctions to include oil and gas**
- **Leader: "People across the world have been shocked to see such horrific images emerge from a country where millions of innocent civilians are now having to flee or risk their lives being put in danger"**

The Green Party has condemned Putin's unprovoked invasion of Ukraine and called for sanctions to include a comprehensive export and import ban, including oil and gas, after an emergency motion was overwhelmingly passed at its Spring Conference today.

The motion, which was passed during the opening plenary of the party's conference, calls on the UK government to waive visa requirements for refugees of all nationalities fleeing Ukraine and to provide them with safe routes to sanctuary.

Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

"The abhorrent and unprovoked attacks we have seen in Ukraine must be condemned in the strongest possible terms. People across the world have been shocked to see such horrific images emerge from a country where millions of innocent civilians are now having to flee or risk their lives being put in danger.

"The least we can do is open our doors to all those who are seeking refuge from this horrific invasion.

"At the same time, the UK government must recognise that it is Europe's addiction to fossil fuels that has been one of the key drivers of our reluctance to challenge the abuses of the Putin regime. We must do everything we can to reduce our reliance on this energy and massively ramp up our installation of renewable energy sources before next winter."

The motion proposer, Michal Chantkowski, Deputy Convenor of the Green Party's International Committee, who is of Polish heritage, said:

“In the face of Vladimir Putin’s aggressive behaviour on the international stage, the UK Government must put an end to Kremlin-linked interference in British politics and must, as a matter of priority, release the full Russia Report and carefully consider its findings, including the impact of Russian interference on the 2016 referendum on EU membership.”

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[Government energy loans will increase household fuel debt to £7.2bn, Green co-leaders warn](#)



Green Party

4 March 2022

- Co-leaders Carla Denyer and Adrian Ramsay reveal cost of government scheme to households as part of keynote speech to Spring Conference 2022
- Green Party would use fossil fuel profits to ease energy crisis for all by restoring £20 uplift and doubling it £40, as well as Winter Fuel Payment for all
- Ramsay: “As millions of people are left not knowing how they’re going to afford to get through the year, the government’s response is to simply burden them with more debt”
- Denyer: “It is time the government implements a ‘Dirty Profits Tax’ on the excessive profits from UK oil and gas extraction, and uses this money to provide proper support for every household, and particularly those who need it most”

The Green Party co-leaders will today [Friday 4 April] urge the government to cancel its proposed energy loan scheme which will burden households with £7.2 billion debt to energy companies, in a keynote speech to the party’s 2022 Spring Conference.

Using new figures, Carla Denyer and Adrian Ramsay will reveal that the government's loan scheme to help people through the energy crisis will increase fuel debt by 338% across households in Great Britain [1]. They will call on the government to use a tax on the profits of fossil fuel companies to restore the £20 Universal Credit uplift and double it to £40, as well as reiterating their call for a £320 winter fuel payment for all.

Adrian Ramsay will say:

"As millions of people are left not knowing how they're going to afford to get through the year, the government's response is to simply burden them with more debt. All in a bid to protect the interests of the fossil fuel industry.

"This is not just reckless, it is a cruel and dangerous approach which puts the interests of polluting big business ahead of the basic needs of households up and down the country."

Carla Denyer will say:

"That's why today the Green party is calling for this energy loan scheme to be cancelled – and instead for the government to provide households with true support – grants, not loans – in line with our own five point plan. All of this funded by a tax on dirty fossil fuel profits.

"This would include a raft of measures such restoring the £20 Universal Credit uplift and doubling it to £40, extending a Winter Fuel Payment of £320 to all, and providing an emergency grant to homeowners, landlords and councils to fund immediate insulation improvements to those at risk of fuel poverty.

"It is time the government implements a 'Dirty Profits Tax' on the excessive profits from UK oil and gas extraction, and uses this money to provide proper support for every household, and particularly those who need it most."

Latest Ofgem figures suggest total current household debt to energy companies is £1.6bn. The Conservative government's plan to offer £200 to households, to be paid back in subsequent years, will create £5.6bn new fuel debt, making a total of £7.2bn debt.

In the midst of a cost of living crisis, the Green leaders have said it is unacceptable for government policy to be adding to people's burden of debt, particularly for those that are least able to pay it back.

They have now urged the government to implement the Green Party's five point plan to tackle the rising energy costs crisis, which would:

1 – Restore the £20 uplift to Universal Credit and double it to £40

2 – Extend winter fuel payments to all by providing each household with an additional £320 to help them pay for spiralling energy costs and avoid fuel poverty

3 – Make the polluters pay by introducing an emergency Dirty Profits Tax on

North Sea oil and gas company profits [2] and a longer-term policy of a carbon tax

4 – Provide an emergency grant to homeowners, landlords and councils to fund immediate insulation improvements to those at risk of fuel poverty

5 – Invest in domestic energy security by massively ramping up onshore and offshore wind and solar and move the green levies from electricity to gas bills

Adrian Ramsay will say:

“Our proposal is an emergency measure made necessary because of decades of delay in getting to grips with the climate crisis. People need the money now.

“But this is also a moment to say ‘enough is enough’. We do not have to live this way. A truly Green society would not be facing this crisis – and with action now we can make sure we don’t have to face it again.

“Building and upgrading to the kind of homes that people really want to live in isn’t a priority for our government because while people freeze in their homes, this government is warm and cosy in bed with dirty energy companies who are making record profits from the misery of millions.

“We say – let’s put people first. Let’s aspire to a future where energy bills are virtually non-existent.”

ENDS

Notes

1

Using [latest Ofgem figures](#), the Green Party calculates that the total current household debt to energy companies is £1.659 billion.

Total number of households in debt

Electricity – 1.6m

Gas – 1.3m

Average debt where there is a repayment arrangement

Elec (847k households): £430

Gas (662k households): £352

Average debt where there is no repayment arrangement

Elec (778k households): £834

Gas (628k households): £660

Total current debt: £1.659bn

Electricity: £1.012bn (£364m with repayment plan + £648m with no plan)

Gas: £647m (£233m with plan + £414m with no plan)

[The Conservative government's plan to offer £200 to every household](#), to be paid back in subsequent years, will create a total of £5.6bn new fuel debt. This combined with the £1.6bn of current debt will create a total of £7.2bn – a 338% increase in fuel debt across all households.

2

This will be via change to [Supplementary Charge](#) or rates for [Ring Fence Corporation Tax](#) which covers only domestic oil and gas profits, however estimates of yield are conservative since the corporation tax yield from oil and gas companies general profits will also be higher due to their higher profits

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[Local councils prevented by government from helping Ukrainian refugees, warn Greens](#)



Green Party

2 March 2022

Local councils who want to help Ukrainian refugees are being prevented from doing so by the Government's failure to adequately fund support services, the Green Party has warned.

Green Party councillors in Brighton and Hove and in Lewes District Council say they are desperate to provide refuge for Ukrainians fleeing the Russian invasion but unless the Government provides funding for affordable housing and resettlement of refugees then those seeking asylum will be forced to live

in unacceptable conditions.

The Government is offering to take in 200,000 people fleeing Ukraine [1], but the Greens warn that there could be a repeat of the catastrophic handling of the Afghan refugee crisis last year. [2]

The Greens have repeatedly warned over the last year that refugees and asylum seekers, including children, are being accommodated in overcrowded and unsuitable hotels due to the lack of appropriate housing. [3] They have also warned that the lack of funding for fostering and children's services is leaving children without the support they need to recover from trauma.

The Green Party is calling on the Government to provide the funding that is needed for local councils to resettle refugees in secure accommodation where they can restart their lives.

Green Party Migration and Refugee Support Spokesperson Benali Hamdache said, "Councils all over the country are ready to step up for Ukrainian refugees, just like they were for Afghan refugees. But the biggest barrier is this Conservative government.

"We need to match the generosity of our European neighbours by waiving visa requirements for refugees fleeing war and we need money unlocked to provide decent accommodation and adequately fund support services. Councils with support can provide housing by repurposing empty homes, partnering with private landlords and building affordable new homes."

Green Deputy Leader of Brighton and Hove Council and lead member for children's services Hannah Clare said, "The Conservative government seems to have no conception of the urgency or the scale of what is needed to save lives now. Councils are doing all they can to support the most vulnerable, including those who are now fleeing the horrific events in Ukraine.

"But we are stretched to breaking point and unless the Government steps up its funding, support services including those provided by voluntary sector organisations will not be able to cope.

"As a City of Sanctuary, we proudly welcome refugees and continue to commit to doing all we can to help those fleeing conflict and persecution. The Government's chaotic response is insufficient."

Green Leader of Lewes District Council Zoe Nicholson said, "Councils are giving all they can to help people in desperate situations, but unless the government ensures that councils have the resources to help then refugees will be left stranded and without support. Commitments to take in more refugees have to be backed with the support services that these people need."

Notes

1

<https://uk.news.yahoo.com/uk-could-over-200-000-130221772.html>

2

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/08/18/green-party-warns-government%E2%80%99s-pledge-to-resettle-afghan-refugees-is-%E2%80%9Cempty-pr%E2%80%9D/>

3

<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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[Greens call for UK to follow EU leadership on asylum for Ukrainians](#)



Green Party

28 February 2022

The Green Party has called for the UK to follow the lead taken by European leaders in response to Ukrainians seeking sanctuary from war and Ukrainian resistance to Russian aggression. Greens are calling for all Ukrainians to be granted asylum and for the establishment of safe routes for people to come to the UK.

Green spokesperson on Migration and Refugee Support, Benali Hamdache, said:

“The government response to those fleeing war in Ukraine and seeking sanctuary is not the compassionate response the crisis requires. Priti Patel’s announcement that ‘immediate family members’ will be allowed to come to the UK will still close the door to many Ukrainians in need of sanctuary [1].

“Greens are the party of compassion – refugees are welcome here. We demand the UK follow the EU’s lead and grant asylum to all Ukrainians, open safe routes for people to come to the UK and join the EU wide plan for resettling refugees. The Nationality and Borders Bill, which would criminalise Ukraine’s refugees, also needs to be shelved.

Green Party Global Solidarity spokesperson, Carne Ross, added:

“We welcome the support given to brave Ukrainian resistance fighters by EU and NATO partners. In the absence of the multilateral security frameworks that Greens across Europe have long argued for, we cannot allow Ukraine to face Russian aggression alone.”

Notes

[1] <https://www.politicshome.com/news/article/priti-patel-home-office-ukraine-refugees>

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