

Labour will lift £38 billion debt burden from students' shoulders

400,000 university students will be freed from an average of around £27,000 debt this autumn if Labour is elected next month, Leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, and Shadow Education Secretary, Angela Rayner, will announce today.

Tuition fees will be abolished from 2018 under a Labour Government. But Labour is also pledging to write off the first year of fees for students planning to start university this September.

Abolishing tuition fees will lift a total £38 billion in debt from fees over the course of the next parliament, before a penny of interest is added.

This will give 18-year-olds sitting their A levels this summer yet another reason to register to vote before tonight's (22 May) midnight deadline and to vote Labour on 8th June.

Tuition fees have trebled to over £9,000 a year since 2012 and graduates are being held back by starting their working lives saddled with debts averaging almost £45,000.

As well as abolishing university tuition fees, Labour will restore the maintenance grants the Conservatives abolished in 2016 and, under its transformative plan for a free National Education Service, will scrap college fees for adult learners.

Jeremy Corbyn, Leader of the Labour Party, said:

"The Conservatives have held students back for too long, saddling them with debt that blights the start of their working lives. Labour will lift this cloud of debt and make education free for all as part of our plan for a richer Britain for the many not the few.

"We will scrap tuition fees and ensure universities have the resources they need to continue to provide a world-class education. Students will benefit from having more money in their pockets, and we will all benefit from the engineers, doctors, teachers and scientists that our universities produce."

Angela Rayner, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State for Education, said:

"Labour believes everyone should have the chance to further their studies, not just those that can afford it, and we will restore the principle that

education

is free. No one should be put off from getting an education through a lack of money or fear of debt.

“The Tories trebled tuition fees and students now rack up an average £45,000 debt. A Labour Government will stop that. If students sitting their A levels now want a say on their future they need to register to vote before tonight’s deadline and vote Labour on 8 June.”

Ends

Notes to editors:

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Labour will abolish tuition fees for home students in England studying standard undergraduate first degrees at established universities and further education colleges from the academic year starting in 2018 – the earliest it will be possible to pass the legislation through parliament. (University is already free for EU students in Scottish universities)

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To discourage students who are planning to start university this September from deferring until after tuition fees are removed, we will guarantee to immediately write off their first year of fees.

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Students part way through their degree will not have to pay fees for the remainder of their course. Part-time students will be covered for the cost of their first undergraduate degree.

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Students who have already graduated will be protected from above inflation interest rate rises on existing debt. And we will look for ways to ameliorate this debt burden in future.

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We will seek to provide free tuition for EU students and seek reciprocal arrangements at EU universities as part of the Brexit negotiations.

We will remove EU and international students from the net migration figures and preserve the current system of fees for non-EU students.

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The average student leaves university with almost £45,000 worth of debt, which they would pay off through their lifetime. Under our plans this will be reduced by an average of more £27,000 for students who don’t qualify for a maintenance grant, and to zero for students who do.

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We have costed the abolition of tuition fees at £9.5 billion annually in 2021/22 prices (the £11.2 billion figure for higher education listed in our Grey Book published alongside the manifesto also included £1.7

billion for maintenance grants). Over four years (from 2018/19 academic year, this is £38 billion). It will be paid for by increasing income tax for the top

5 per cent of earners and reversing the Conservatives' cuts to corporation tax.

The £9.5 billion is an estimate of the actual revenues currently being paid to

universities through fees, and this money will all go directly back into universities so they will not lose out.

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In 2015/16 there were 365,700 full-time first year students studying their first undergraduate degrees in England (Higher Education Statistics Agency). In 2014/15 there were 38,600 part-time students studying their first undergraduate degree (own calculations). Assuming student numbers stay roughly constant, approximately 400,000 students will benefit each year.

[Media Advisory on the meeting of the Libya Quartet in Brussels o](#)

The HR/VP will host a meeting of the European Union, the United Nations, the African Union and the League of Arab States (Libya Quartet) in Brussels on Tuesday 23 May 2017.

Media Advisory:

- The Quartet meeting will take place from 13:30 to 16:00 in the EEAS building
- 13:30: Photo opportunity ahead of the meeting, EEAS building
- 16:00: Statements to the press by EU HR/VP Ms Federica Mogherini, UN Special Representative for Libya Mr Martin Kobler, AU High Representative for Libya Mr Jakaya Kikwete, and Secretary General of the League of Arab States Mr Ahmed Aboul Gheit, EEAS press corner
- Images will be available on [EbS](#).

Journalists who wish to cover the press events need to register with Mr. [Simone Levati](#) by **23 May April 2017 10:00 CET**.

Dundee Design Festival 2017



From Dundee Design Festival 2017 :

This year's Dundee Design Festival runs from 24th to 29th May. The theme for this year's festival is Factory Floor through which we celebrate and explore makers, machines, and the future of manufacturing.

We've drawn inspiration from Dundee's illustrious yet complex industrial heritage and the extraordinary festival venue itself to describe what making means now. Across three enormous galleries, we present a programme of design-inspired exhibitions, talks, film screenings, live performances and family events.

You can expect to experience an assembly line of creative activity at West Ward Works. Try out new techniques at one of our many drop-in and ticketed workshops, including plaster casting, ceramic mould making, and carving jewellery. This year's festival is all about making, so we invite you to don a smock, roll up your sleeves and try something new.

Find out more [here](#).

Recording of the week: Amy Johnson and the race to Australia

This week's selection comes from Cheryl Tipp, Curator of Wildlife and Environmental Sounds.

On 24th May 1930, a worn and weathered de Havilland Gipsy Moth named *Jason* crashlanded into the dusty red soil of Australia's Northern Territory. On board was the English aviator Amy Johnson who had just made history by becoming the first female pilot to fly solo from England to Australia. The 11,000 mile journey had been a gruelling one; desert sandstorms, monsoons, strong winds and extreme heat had tested both the plane and its 26 year old pilot. Johnson's original goal had been to break the record of Bert Hinkler, a pioneer Australian pilot who made the same journey 2 years earlier in just 15 1/2 days. While the odds were definitely in Johnson's favour for the first leg of the journey, bad weather and mechanical failures over Asia scuppered any chances of her breaking Hinkler's record.



Amy Johnson photographed in 1930

Though she failed by only 4 days to best Hinkler's record, Johnson's achievement was hailed around the world as an overwhelming success. A few weeks after arriving in Australia, Johnson recorded this [short memoir](#) of her perilous journey which was published by Columbia Records.

[The Story of my Flight_Amy Johnson \(1CS0028898\)](#)

Johnson would go on to break many more records before her untimely death in 1941. It was this heroic journey however that secured her position in the aviation hall of fame.

Follow [@CherylTipp](#) and [@soundarchive](#) for all the latest news.

[Protecting youth from online suicide game](#)

Chinese police have extended surveillance of social media, after the recent spread of the "Blue Whale" suicide game targeting the country's youth.

Drawing a blue whale on a piece of paper, or carving it onto your body, and watching horror movies are just part of the game, which began in Russia. It demands players complete 50 tasks in 50 days, with the last task to commit suicide.

"If I carve a blue whale on my arm, will it leave a scar? Can I still become a police officer with that scar?" a primary school student in Wenzhou, east China's Zhejiang Province, asked his mother.

He told her his classmates were talking about a game called Blue Whale, which "sounded cool."

The alarmed mother contacted police. Their investigations into the game found a group on instant messaging service Tencent QQ inviting people to take part.

"Those who would like to join in the game must get up 4:20 a.m. tomorrow. I will send you a horror movie and you must watch it alone, or face the consequences," wrote the group's founder Xiao Yang (pseudonym).

Xiao, who called himself vice president of Blue Whale's China bureau, listed 50 tasks, including "cut your arm along the vein with a razor," "stab your hand with a needle repeatedly," "go to the roof and sit on the edge dangling your legs," "don't talk to anyone all day" and "accept the date of your death."

In Ningbo, also Zhejiang Province, 12-year-old Han Jing (pseudonym) founded a similar group last Saturday, and uploaded three photos of her self-harming.

When asked why, she replied: "I am not good at school, and don't have friends. I feel frustrated."

Chen Long from Zhejiang police's cyber security team told Xinhua that the spread of the game has been unprecedented, "in some ways like a cult." There are currently no legal means for direct conviction and punishment of game organizers and players, he said.

Police shut down Xiao's QQ group, and made him sign a declaration that he would not reopen it.

Han Jing and her parents have been receiving psychological counseling.

Zhang Zhihua from China Communications University, said prior to the spread of the game, at risk youth could meet others via the Internet and encourage or assist each other to commit suicide.

"But the game adds a level of sensory experience. Players gain attention by posting evidence of self-harming. In a sense, Blue Whale is like a step-by-step suicide guide for teenagers," said Zhang.

"Teenagers need psychological support, especially when faced with the pressures of study, society and family obligations. Otherwise, they can feel life is overwhelming and meaningless," he said.

The Beijing office of the Cyberspace Administration of China has confirmed that while Blue Whale is spread online, it is effectively an offline game.

Zhu Wei from China University of Political Science and Law has attended the office's briefing on the game as a legal consultant.

"I don't think it is a game. It is organized like a cult. It gives adolescents an excuse to do extreme things and show off," he said.

Zhu said measures have been taken on to stop its spread. Police are monitoring any mention of the game of live-streaming sites and message boards. Once messages or discussions concerning the game are detected they are immediately removed.

"Websites have been very cooperative as it concerns the lives and mental health of Chinese youth," he said.

In Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang, the education authority has issued a notice to all primary and middle schools asking them to inform parents about the game.

If schools find their students are taking part they must report this to local police. They should also open a hotline to provide psychological counseling for both students and parents, the authority said.

Zhu said that authorities should be aware of what games and activities are popular among teenagers as the Internet allows these things to spread rapidly. "Measures must be taken as soon as harmful messages appear," he said.