

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



# Green Party

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-calling-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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## [Meet the new candidates](#)

Nominations for General Election candidates closed this week, and the SNP has reselected all sitting SNP MPs – [the hardest working politicians at Westminster](#).

We've also selected five brand new candidates to help protect Scotland from the dangers of an unopposed Tory government at Westminster.

Meet your new SNP candidates.

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## [I've told Britain's property developers: if you won't build houses, the Lib Dems will](#)

The Conservative government has given developers a carte blanche to play the property market at the expense of our citizens. And now the country's in crisis.

Not enough homes. Properties sitting empty. Exorbitant prices. The market is closed and exclusive: a fat cats' game. That's not good for people and it's not good for business.

Today the Lib Dems are laying down the law to developers: **unless you build the homes that Britain needs, we will.**

We're tired of the commercially unsound and short-sighted greed of developers, who buy up local authority land and sit on it until it appreciates. We're tired of absent foreign investors, whose attractive up-front cash is a false economy – contributing nothing to the improvement of the surrounding public realm.

**The Lib Dems are taking decisive action on the housing crisis.**

As a modern, pro-business party, we think commercial sense and social justice go hand in hand. That's why we've put a progressive housing package at the heart of our new manifesto. It will include: building 300,000 homes a year by the end of the next parliament and giving local councils the power to charge absentee landlords up to 200% council tax on empty homes.

**Why prioritise housing?**

Making sure that the housing market is both profitable and socially beneficial is just pure good sense. But I also have personal reasons for standing behind this issue. As a teenager, I was inspired to get into politics by watching *Cathy Come Home* – a heartbreaking film about a couple who were made homeless – and I joined the housing charity Shelter as a result.

As an MP, I've seen first-hand the misery caused not having a proper home. For many people in the next generation, it is virtually impossible to get on the housing ladder. I think they deserve a helping hand.

If you want a government who will fight for everyone's basic human need for shelter, who has the commercial clout to unpack the property monopolies which hold the market in a vice, then add your name here and say you're voting to change Britain's future on Thursday 8th June:

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## [Labour calls for action over NHS cyber-attack](#)

Jonathan

Ashworth, Labour's Shadow Health Secretary, has today written to Jeremy Hunt condemning "the cyber criminals whose flagrant disregard for our health service

has placed patient wellbeing at risk”.

Jonathan  
Ashworth said:

“The  
incident highlights the risk to data security within our modern health  
service  
and reinforces the need for cyber security to be at the heart of government  
planning.

“As  
Secretary of State, I urge you to publicly outline the immediate steps you’ll  
be taking to significantly improve cyber security in our NHS. The public has  
a  
right to know exactly what the Government will do to ensure that such an  
attack  
is never repeated again.”

The  
letter from Labour’s Shadow Health Secretary, calls on the Government to set  
out:

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Why  
NHS organisations failed to act on a critical note from Microsoft two months  
ago?

.  
What  
additional resources are being given to the NHS to bring the situation under  
control as soon as possible?

.  
What  
arrangements are currently in place to protect our NHS, and its sensitive  
data,  
against cyber-attacks?

.  
Whether  
the Government will launch a full, independent inquiry into the events of  
yesterday?

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Reassurance  
for patients that no patient data has been accessed or compromised in  
yesterday’s attack?

**Ends**

**Notes  
to editors:**

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**Please see below for full text of the letter:**

Dear  
Secretary of State,

I am  
writing to ask for urgent clarification regarding yesterday's major  
ransomware  
attack on our NHS. I hope you'll join me in condemning the actions of the  
cyber  
criminals whose flagrant disregard for our health service has placed patient  
wellbeing at risk.

As you  
know, the attack has had a serious impact on services, with some hospitals  
diverting emergency ambulances and cancelling elective operations. A large  
range of IT services have been affected, including pathology test results,  
x-ray imaging systems, phone and bleep systems, and patient administration  
systems.

In total  
more than a third of NHS Trusts have been impacted, and NHS England has  
consequently declared a Major Incident. This is terrible news and a real  
worry  
for vulnerable patients and our hardworking staff.

The  
incident highlights the risk to data security within our modern health  
service  
and reinforces the need for cyber security to be at the heart of government  
planning.

As  
Secretary of State, I therefore urge you to publicly outline the immediate  
steps you'll be taking to significantly improve cyber security in our NHS.  
The  
public has a right to know exactly what the Government will do to ensure that  
such an attack is never repeated again.

However,  
this is not the first time NHS Trusts have been attacked. In February,  
Freedom  
of Information Requests found that 79 English Trusts, more than 33 per cent,  
had suffered ransomware attacks since June 2015.[\[1\]](#)

For  
example, Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust was attacked 19 times in 2016,  
and the Leeds Teaching Hospital faced five attacks in the past year.[\[2\]](#) In  
November, a major ransomware  
attack on the Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Trust affected three hospitals,  
forcing the cancellation of hundreds of routine operations and outpatient

appointments.[\[3\]](#)

As recently as in January, the largest NHS Trust in England, Barts Health Trust, was infected with a ransomware virus affecting thousands of sensitive files.[\[4\]](#)

I am therefore extremely concerned that extensive warning signs appear to have been ignored by yourself and your department.

Moreover, your own colleague Ben Gummer, the Minister for the Cabinet Office, warned in October that “large quantities of sensitive data” held by the NHS and the Government were being targeted by hackers, with the potential for significant disruption.[\[5\]](#)

Speaking about the threat to the health service, Mr Gummer stated: “The Government has a clear responsibility to ensure its own systems are cyber secure. We hold and the rest of the public sector- including the NHS- hold large quantities of sensitive data and provide online services relied on by the whole country.”[\[6\]](#)

Furthermore, in March a joint report from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and the National Crime Agency (NCA) warned that cyber-criminals could increasingly lock computers, phones and watches to run cyber extortion and blackmail rackets.

At the time, Ian Levy, technical director of the NCSC, warned that the best defence against ransomware was to ensure software on devices was up to date.[\[7\]](#)

However, it appears that many of those hospitals affected by yesterday’s attack had not updated their Windows operating systems to include a security patch. This unacceptable cybersecurity neglect has clearly made the NHS extremely vulnerable to an attack.

NHS Trusts have been running thousands of outdated and unsupported Windows XP machines despite the Government ending its annual £5.5 million deal with Microsoft, which provided ongoing security support for Windows XP, in May 2015.[\[8\]](#)

It effectively means that unless individual Trusts were willing to pay Microsoft

for an extended support deal, since May 2015 their Operating Systems have been extremely vulnerable to being hacked.

Given

your Government's sustained underfunding of our NHS it is of little surprise that many Trusts have reported taking minimum action. Indeed, research through previous FOIs has found that at least seven NHS Trusts, which treat more than two million Britons, spent nothing at all on cyber security infrastructure in 2015. [\[9\]](#)

This is

extremely serious and as Shadow Secretary of State of Health I share the public's concern at these revelations.

Yesterday's

attack is unprecedented in scale, but it is abundantly clear that our NHS should have been better prepared for ransomware attacks.

Therefore,

will you firstly explain why NHS organisations failed to act on a critical note from Microsoft two months ago?

Secondly,

what additional resources are you giving the NHS to bring the situation under control as soon as possible?

Moreover,

will you clarify publicly what arrangements are currently in place to protect our NHS, and its sensitive data, against cyber-attacks? Will you ensure that every single NHS organisation receives an on-site assessment from CareCERT to improve security?

Will you

additionally launch a full, independent inquiry into the events of yesterday?

Finally,

will you reassure patients that no patient data has been accessed or compromised in yesterday's attack?

Secretary

of State, the prevalence and sophistication of cyber-attacks on our NHS is only

set to increase. I therefore urge you to take immediate action so that a crisis

on this scale is never repeated again.

Yours

sincerely,

Jonathan



Ashworth

Shadow  
Secretary of State for Health

[1] <https://www.ft.com/content/e96924f0-3722-11e7-99bd-13beb0903fa3>

[2] <https://www.ft.com/content/b9abf11e-e945-11e6-967b-c88452263daf>

[3] <https://www.ft.com/content/b9abf11e-e945-11e6-967b-c88452263daf>

[4] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/01/13/largest-nhs-trust-hit-cyber-attack/>

[5] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/31/nhs-at-risk-of-cyber-attacks-minister-says-as-he-warns-hackers-a/>

[6] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2016/10/31/nhs-at-risk-of-cyber-attacks-minister-says-as-he-warns-hackers-a/>

[7] <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2017/03/14/smartphones-tvs-watches-could-held-ransom-hackers-cyber-security/>

[8] <http://www.silicon.co.uk/security/nhs-hospitals-data-risk-outdated-windows-xp-201761>

[9] <https://www.ft.com/content/b9abf11e-e945-11e6-967b-c88452263daf>

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## [Flights disrupted by drone at SW China airport](#)

More than 200 flights were disrupted due to an unauthorized drone flying around an airport in southwest China's Chongqing Municipality Friday evening.

Flights to and from Chongqing Jiangbei International Airport were affected from 7:20 p.m. Order was restored at 9:37 p.m., but 34 minutes later the drone appeared again.

More than 40 flights were forced to land at alternative airports, while over 60 were canceled and another 140 were delayed, affecting over 10,000 passengers.

This was the second time an unauthorized drone has caused disruptions at the airport this week. On Tuesday, 12 flights were forced to land elsewhere.

As privately-owned drones have become increasingly popular in China, several airports have experienced flight disruptions due to illegal drone activity, which poses a threat to aviation safety.

In late April, four drones were illegally flown over Chengdu Shuangliu International Airport in southwest China's Sichuan Province, which forced 58 flights to land at alternative airports, four flights to return to their departure airport, and more than 10 to be canceled.

Since February, Kunming Changshui International Airport in Yunnan Province has reported at least seven drone disruptions. Local police have launched investigations.