

Greens call for universal basic income as government prepares to wind down furlough scheme



Green Party

31 July 2021

The Green Party has reiterated its calls for a universal basic income to offer protection for all, as the government risks the livelihoods of millions of people by further winding down the furlough scheme tomorrow [Sunday 1 August].

The Greens have warned that by cutting its contribution the government will lay more of the costs onto the employers in sectors that are already struggling to recover.

Professor Catherine Rowett, Green Party work, employment and social security spokesperson and former MEP, said:

“The furlough scheme has offered a vital lifeline to workers and employers up and down the country during this awful pandemic. Asking the employers to bear more of the burden will be the last straw for many businesses who are barely making ends meet.

“Latest figures show that nearly 2 million people were still on the furlough scheme at the end of June [1]. It is extremely irresponsible of this government to cut its contribution when we know that certain sectors, in particular those in the arts and entertainment, are still struggling to operate properly, and poised at a moment that could make or break them. [2]

“The government seems to be willing to throw the lives of millions into uncertainty, yet much of this anxiety and uncertainty could have been saved if a generous package of universal basic income had been introduced at the start of the pandemic, as a permanent measure to make sure that nobody is left high and dry.

“It would ensure that freelance workers are no worse off than those in regular employment, and that every single one of us has enough to meet our basic needs, to give us all a fairer chance of weathering this storm together.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/numbers-on-furlough-fall-to-lowest-level-since-start-of-pandemic>

2

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2021/jul/29/number-of-uk-workers-on-furlough-drops-by-590000-as-taper-kicks-in>

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