

Green Party: Government should stop blaming migrants for public service crisis and focus on taxing wealthy



Green Party

27 January 2017

The Green Party has called on the Government to stop blaming migrants for the crises facing public services and focus on making the wealthiest people in society pay their fair share instead.

The party made the call in response to news the public accounts committee has said HMRC is failing to stop rich tax dodgers.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader, said:

“While the Government blames migrants and benefit claimants for the problems our country faces from housing to the NHS, it gives special treatment to tax avoiders.

“If we made sure rich tax dodgers paid their fair share there would be more money to support vital services and build the homes we need. Wealth inequality in Britain has soared on the Tories’ watch. We need action to tackle the tax avoidance industry as well as a wealth tax on the top earners if we are to redress the balance.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-38764923>

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[News story: 2016 corporate and personal insolvency statistics](#)

From:

First published:

27 January 2017

Corporate and personal insolvency statistics for 2016 have been published.

Commenting on the [statistics](#), Insolvency Service chief executive Sarah Albon said:

The underlying trend for company insolvencies was static in 2016. The overall increase for the full year is attributable to a one-off liquidation of a large number of personal service companies following the closure of tax loophole making them unviable.

Personal insolvencies increased last year for the first time since 2010, however the total was still the second lowest number in the last 11 years. It is very distressing to live with unsustainable personal debt so it is important for people to seek advice.

[Press release: Institute for Apprenticeships board members announced](#)

Full details of how the Institute for Apprenticeships will operate have today (27 January 2017) been set out in an [operational plan for consultation](#) alongside the names of 8 members of the board appointed to run the institute.

One of the institute's main jobs when it starts operating in April 2017 will be to support the government's drive to deliver 3 million quality apprenticeships by 2020, and that businesses get the skilled workforce they need to prosper, so it is vital that employers are well represented.

That is why the board will be made up primarily of employers, business

leaders and their representatives.

Apprenticeships and Skills Minister Robert Halfon said:

It is fantastic to see such a diverse board who will bring their varied and high-level experience to the Institute for Apprenticeships to ensure apprenticeships are of the highest quality they can be.

With employer expertise at its heart, the Institute for Apprenticeships will play a crucial role in raising the prestige of apprenticeships and ensuring employers can get the skilled workforce they desperately need.

The operational plan, published for consultation, will set out how the institute will take the lead on a number of ongoing reforms to improve the apprenticeship system. It details how the institute will provide advice to the government on funding and ensure employers get the quality skills that they need from the apprenticeship system.

Following consultation, the plan will set out how the Institute for Apprenticeships will deliver its functions to:

- improve the quality of apprenticeships
- regulate the quality of apprenticeship standards and assessment plans
- provide advice to government on the pricing of apprenticeship standards
- establish how the institute will collaborate with partners to drive quality across the apprenticeships system
- gain more information and insight on how we will lead the reforms to technical education

Shadow Chair for the Institute for Apprenticeships Antony Jenkins said:

I believe this is an excellent, high-calibre board that will help the institute drive up the quality of apprenticeships.

Today's publication of the draft operational plan is the culmination of lots of hard work and engagement over the last 6 months and I am very grateful to all the stakeholders who have helped us prepare it.

The introduction of an apprenticeship levy from April 2017 represents the biggest set of changes to apprenticeship funding since the re-introduction of modern apprenticeships in the mid-1990s.

1) Institute for Apprenticeships Board:

Dr Katherine Barclay:

- Chair of the Life Science and Industrial Sciences Apprenticeship

trailblazer

- currently Pfizer UK lead for academic liaison, with responsibility for delivering apprenticeship reform at a national science industry level and collaborative early talent management strategies at undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate level
- chartered chemical engineer and experienced people manager

Sir Gerry Berragan:

- was a career soldier for 37 years finishing as Adjutant General, responsible for all army personnel matters
- was the army's apprentices ambassador in 2008 to lead the effort to make the army the largest apprenticeships provider in the country, offering more than 45 nationally-recognised training schemes

Bev Robinson:

- has over 20 years' experience in further and higher education colleges
- is on the Lancashire LEP Skills and Employment Board and is non-executive director and chair of the Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Economic Development Company
- Director of the National College for Onshore Oil and Gas
- Principal of Blackpool and the Fylde College and previously member of Lord Sainsbury's panel on technical education

Paul Cadman:

- Human Resources (HR) Director for Walter Smith Fine Foods Limited since 1998
- Walter Smith Fine Foods Limited were chosen as 'Medium Employer of the Year' winner in recognition of their commitment to developing local young people through apprenticeships in the National Apprenticeship Awards ceremony in 2013
- has been one of the government's apprentice ambassadors since 2012 and is chair of 2 trailblazer groups: 'developing butchery apprenticeship standards' and 'learning and development standards'

Dame Fiona Kendrick:

- Chair and CEO of Nestle UK and Ireland since 2012
- she has a passion for the youth employment and skills agenda, and is leading a number of lighthouse projects in this area both inside and outside Nestle
- the Nestle Academy brings together graduate and apprenticeship programmes, direct entry schemes and vocational training in order to deliver more flexible entry points and alternative routes to higher education for people
- she was UK Commissioner for Employment and Skills and played a lead role in supporting the development and delivery of strategies for skills and employment across the 4 UK nations
- she was President of the Food and Drink Federation from January 2015 to December 2016. She previously led the organisation's skills and

- competitiveness agenda and co-chaired the UK Food and Drink Export Forum
- in the 2015 New Year's Honour's list Fiona was created Dame Commander of the British Empire for services to the food industry and support for the skills and opportunities for young people

Dame Asha Khamka:

- Principal and Chief Executive, West Nottinghamshire College Group since May 2006 – one of the largest colleges in the country
- over 25 years' experience in further education
- on a number of boards, including the Education Honours Committee
- is the founding trustee of the Inspire and Achieve Foundation, whose main objective is to raise aspirations of working-class young people

Robin Millar CBE:

- Chair of Blue Raincoat Chrysalis Group
- enrolled as a music technology apprentice at the age of 24
- an Honorary Professor at the London College of Music, a Fellow of the Association of Professional Recording Services and a member of the UK Human Genetics Commission
- served on the creative Industries Sector Skills Council, National Skills Academy and then as a trustee of the Creative and Cultural Skills between 2006 and 2016
- currently serving on the Industry Steering Group advising the shadow board on setting up the new National College for Creative and Cultural industries

Toby Peyton-Jones:

- started his career as an officer in the Royal Engineers
- after an international career including working in China and Germany he was appointed to the Executive Management Board of Siemens Plc in 2008, heading up HR for Siemens in the UK and now Northern Europe
- throughout his career he has been a passionate international voice championing education and particularly vocational education most recently as a Commissioner for UK Commission for Employment and Skills

2) Read the [consultation](#).

[It is deeply depressing that the Tories have chosen to take money away from schools like this – Angela Rayner](#)

Angela Rayner MP, Labour's Shadow Education Secretary, commenting on

reports that the Treasury has taken back £384 million originally promised for schools in England, said:

“It is astonishing that the Treasury is now clawing money back from the Education budget at the same time as schools spending is being drastically cut.

“There is no better investment a government can make than in education and it is deeply depressing that the Tories have chosen to take money away from schools like this.

“Theresa May needs to answer some serious questions on what this money is now going to be used for if not to help ease the pressure on struggling schools.”

[Welsh Government accepts all Talented Women for a Successful Wales report recommendations and marks the occasion with planned Royal visit](#)

To mark the announcement the Minister has also confirmed she will be hosting a special WISE (Women in Science, Technology and Engineering) event in the Senedd, Cardiff, on 13 March, which is being attended by WISE’s patron, HRH The Princess Royal.

The event will celebrate and promote the value of women in STEM in Wales and build momentum around the report’s recommendations.

Talented Women for a Successful Wales is an independent report which the Welsh Government commissioned and published last year.

Led by Wales’ Chief Scientific Adviser, Professor Julie Williams, the report aims to tackle the critical shortage of women in STEM roles in Wales, and across the rest of the UK. It identifies the need for a sea change of attitude across society to break down existing barriers and create the skilled workforce needed to support the future economic growth of Wales.

It includes 33 recommendations on dealing with the underrepresentation and poor retention of women in STEM in Wales through four major themes of education, recruitment, retention and promotion – all of which have been accepted by the Welsh Government.

While the majority of the recommendations are for schools, universities and STEM businesses in Wales to action with the Welsh Government advising,

encouraging and facilitating where appropriate, there are two actions which are specifically for the Welsh Government to take forward:

1. The Welsh Government should make improved gender balance in STEM a theme in educational policies and programmes for teacher training, curriculum reform, careers advice, apprenticeships and further & higher education funding.
2. The Welsh Government should review its support for childcare and consider how it can further support a wider range of parents with the costs of childcare – with the long-term aim of developing an offer of high-quality early childhood care and education.

It is estimated that increasing the number of women in science across the UK could be worth £2bn to the national economy.

Skills and Science Minister, Julie James, is keen to point out that work is already underway to meet these recommendations and over recent year's the Welsh Government has increased its investment into this important area, saying:

“Science underpins innovation and technology developments and is essential for economic growth and creating high quality jobs. That is why we have already invested more than £100m in recent years to increase Wales’ research capacity and why we are supporting all of the recommendations in this report to encourage more women and girls to pursue STEM skill opportunities.

“Our ‘STEM in Education and Training: A Delivery Plan for Wales’ (2016) already outlines our commitment to improving the participation of girls in STEM and our Education Directorate has made prioritising girls’ progression in maths, physics and computing, and made gender balance in STEM education a condition of grant funding.”

The Minister added:

“While these are all positive developments we recognise more can be done to understand the issues affecting girls’ progression in STEM and how practice in schools can have a positive impact and our programme of education reform aims to address this.”

Plans are also being progressed by the Welsh Government to provide 30 hours of free early education and childcare to working parents of three and four year-olds across Wales for 48 weeks of the year. This is the most generous childcare offer in the UK, giving parents – in particular, women – more choice and a greater ability to have both a family and a career.

The Talented Women for a Successful Wales report can be found [here](#).