

Green Party condemns stealth taxes on students



Green Party

10 February 2022

- **Responding to IFS report, Young Greens Co-Chair accuses government of ‘pushing more students into poverty’ and presiding over a system ‘designed to extract money from young people’**

The Green Party has responded angrily to evidence that the government is making stealthy changes to the student funding system that will cost students and universities to the tune of £2.3bn.

According to the IFS, students will see hefty real-terms cuts to the value of maintenance loans, with the parental earnings threshold frozen at £25,000 when it should have risen to £34,000, meaning many students will not be receiving enough to live on.

Kelsey Trevett, Young Greens Co-Chair said:

‘It is disgraceful that at a time of rising inflation that the government has chosen to push more students into poverty by cutting maintenance loans in real terms. Making changes that will particularly penalise young working-class people while simultaneously mouthing platitudes about “levelling up” is dishonest and unjust.’ [1]

‘As well as creating intolerable cost-of-living pressures for current students, the changes will also see even more money clawed back from them during their working lives. The freezing of the student loan repayment threshold is adding to financial pressures on former students.’ [2]

Jane Baston, Co-Chair of Young Greens continued:

‘Our marketised education system of tuition fees and maintenance loans was designed to extract money from young people while leaving them in precarious financial positions during their studies and when they enter the workplace, especially impacting those from working-class backgrounds and traditionally marginalised groups.’

Green Party Deputy Leader Amelia Womack added:

'The Green Party has always opposed the marketisation of higher education. We hold it as a matter of principle that education is a public good and should be funded as a public service. We stand by our policy of abolishing tuition fees and cancelling all existing student debts.'

'We need adequate grant support for current students and to remove the burden of debt from young people as they struggle to gain a foothold in the labour-market.'

Notes

1 The IFS report says the rate at which the level of maintenance loans will be increased – at 2.3% – falls short of both the current level of inflation and predicted levels for the year ahead.

2 The recent government decision to freeze the student loan repayment threshold at £27,295 rather than applying the current rate of inflation means that a graduate earning £30,000 will need to pay £113 more towards their student loan in the next tax year.

3 More details on the IFS report:

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2022/feb/10/ministers-quietly-tighten-financial-screws-on-students-in-england-ifs>

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[Greens call for 'dirty profits tax' as BP announce 'astronomical' profits](#)



Green Party

8 February 2022

Responding to the massive profits announced by BP, which have risen to £9.5bn – the highest level for eight years [1] – the Green Party is calling for an emergency 'dirty profits tax.'

Green spokesperson on Economy and Finance, Molly Scott Cato, said:

“BP’s astronomical profits on the back of soaring energy prices come at a time when millions are being plunged into fuel poverty and we face a climate crisis. This is dirty money. Greens want to see an emergency ‘dirty profits tax’ imposed on companies like BP that make most of their profits out of pollution.

“We say the tax on the profits of oil giants such as BP should rise from its current level of 10% to 35% [2], and the proceeds used to provide an immediate uplift in payments to people qualifying for Income Support schemes [3].

“This will make the polluter pay and is a fair tax, helping those in greatest need at such a difficult time. Ultimately, we need a comprehensive carbon tax which is a key Green Party policy [4].”

Notes

[1] <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-60299886>

[2] In 2011, George Osborne’s 32% windfall tax (“supplementary charge”) on North Sea oil & gas companies raised £2 billion.

If the supplementary charge were increased from the current 10% to 35% this year (only slightly higher than the level set by Osborne in 2011), the additional £3,725,000,000 this would raise (on Wood Mackenzie’s profits forecast of £14.9 billion) equate to £1,164 per household if this were distributed to the 3.2 million households estimated to be in fuel poverty in 2019.

A higher number of households will be facing fuel poverty this year than in 2019, so the actual “dividend” per household will be lower. But the amount raised by a windfall tax set at this level would, even without other measures, go a very long way toward closing the fuel poverty gap for households in fuel poverty – and help them to meet the much higher costs of other basic essentials.

[3] Income Support schemes such as Universal Credit, Pension Credit, Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Support for Mortgage Interest.

[4] <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/10/13/greens-call-on-government-to-bring-in-carbon-tax-at-cop26/>

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Government's response to energy crisis creates future risk rather than future proofing, Greens warn



Green Party

3 February 2022

The Green Party has warned the Treasury's announcement today aimed at easing the cost of living crisis will only cause further damage to both households and the environment in the future.

Responding to the Chancellor's announcement of £200 discount on all electricity bills from October – which will later be repaid – and a £150 council tax rebate for those in bands A to D, Councillor Zoe Nicholson, leader of Lewes District Council and Green Party Green New Deal spokesperson, said:

“At a time when millions of people across the country are facing unprecedented rises in energy prices, the government's solution fails to respond to the seriousness of either the cost of living crisis or the climate crisis

“In October, the Green Party proposed a £320 winter fuel payment to all as an immediate measure to help people survive through the winter. This would also have acted as a bridge towards future-proofing the country through a mass retrofit scheme and roll-out of renewable energy.

“Regrettably, the Chancellor has today opted to do the opposite of future-proofing households from further economic pain.

“Instead of a simple and effective payment to everybody as we suggested, he has put forward a buy-now pay-later scheme which will create an additional burden for those on the lowest incomes further down the line.

“At the same time he has done nothing to help reduce bills and reduce carbon emissions by insulating people's homes, and instead opted to prop up the fossil fuel companies whose profits are sky-rocketing at the expense of all of us as well as the environment.”

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[Caroline Lucas MP response to Ofgem announcement on energy price cap](#)



Green Party

3 February 2022

Ofgem is expected to announce a rise in the energy price cap which will add about £600 a year to the average household energy bill.

In response, Green Party MP Caroline Lucas said:

“The day after the Government unveils its “levelling up” plan, struggling families learn that they’ll be hit with a huge rise in their fuel bills while energy companies resemble “cash machines” with huge pay-outs for shareholders. Some levelling up.

“This is a crisis which impacts communities across our country and it’s one that the Government has just watched unfolding.

“Its belated reported proposal to extend loans to energy companies is a short-term sticking plaster which does nothing to tackle the root causes of the problem – our dependence on international gas prices rather than increasing sources of home-grown publicly owned renewables – together with some of the leakiest housing stock in western Europe.

“We are all paying the price for the short-sightedness of previous Tory governments who sat on their hands, slowing down the essential transition away from fossil fuels and scrapping energy-efficiency measures like insulation which would cut demand.

“The solution lies not in a rapid U-turn to the fossil fuel era as demanded by some Tory MPs but in rapidly speeding up the transition to renewable energy so we address the climate emergency AND make ourselves less vulnerable to global price rises.

“Ministers should support the growing calls for a windfall tax on the huge profits of the energy companies, together with measures that treat energy as an essential public good.

“Most urgently of all, we need a nationwide home insulation programme to give people warm homes, cut energy use and create thousands of good, green jobs across the country.

“High gas prices will be with us for some time. We need to leave fossil fuels behind us and in the ground as soon as possible, and create an energy system fit for the future.”

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[Carla Denyer reacts to Bristol Airport Expansion ruling](#)



Green Party

Reacting to today’s news that Bristol Airport has won its appeal to the planning inspectorate, meaning that they will have permission to expand the airport capacity [1], Green Party co-leader and councillor in Bristol Carla Denyer said,

“Allowing Bristol Airport to expand – more than doubling its capacity – is an outrageous decision that is totally incompatible with the climate emergency. Aviation, especially the frequent flights taken by a wealthy minority, is one of the fastest growing sources of carbon emissions and causes incredible amounts of pollution both globally and locally in Bristol and North Somerset.

“The Government’s intervention on the side of the Airport goes against the wishes of local people, councils and elected representatives and contradicts the advice of their own Climate Change Committee. It risks setting the UK’s progress on climate change back by years.”

Notes

1 <https://youtu.be/5DEu1SbCqFo>

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