

Green Party warns government's pledge to resettle Afghan refugees is "empty PR"



Green Party

18 August 2021

The Green Party has criticised the government for not doing enough after it promised to resettle up to 20,000 Afghan refugees, with only 5,000 to be welcomed in the first year. [1]

Benali Hamdache, Green Party migration and refugee support spokesperson, said:

"Offering refuge to those fleeing violence and persecution from the Taliban should be a fundamental part of who we are as a country, but unfortunately this is more empty PR from Boris Johnson.

"While Canada is taking in 20,000 refugees immediately, the UK's insistence that it can only accept 5,000 in the first year will leave thousands of people in extreme danger. Canada and the UK both had soldiers on the ground in Afghanistan. Both were part of the attempts to build a new government. But only one part of the coalition is living up to their responsibilities.

"At the same time, the UK government should be providing local authorities with more funds to be able to support refugee children. The cost of resettlement should be fully borne by the national government, with the money transferred to councils so they can provide the services so desperately needed.

"After 20 years of involvement in Afghanistan, the UK shares responsibility for this crisis. We must act now in order to make people safe and show both Afghans and the rest of the world that we are a leader on human rights and compassion.

"Instead, these current plans make us out to be a populist island, cutting itself off from the rest of the world and failing to live up to our responsibilities."

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-58250211>

2

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/08/17/green-party-urges-local-authorities-to-take-in-fair-share-of-child-refugees/>

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Hydrogen Strategy Must Not be Cover for Continuing Subsidies to Fossil Fuels



Green Party

17 August 2021

Government hydrogen strategy 'not a route to net zero' says Green Party

The Green Party has criticised the government's hydrogen strategy this morning saying subsidies for the creation of 'dirty hydrogen' are an outrage.

Blue hydrogen is created primarily from fossil fuels and is included in the government plans. The Greens are clear that only green hydrogen, produced using renewable electricity and with almost no CO2 emissions, would genuinely play a role in reaching net zero. [1]

Green Party Green New Deal spokesperson and Leader of Lewes District Council [2] Zoe Nicholson said: "This is a typical government move to try and make it look as if they are making some kind of positive shift away from fossil fuels, when in fact the reality is nothing of the kind.

"Creating dirty hydrogen from fossil fuels doesn't help make any progress

towards net zero and instead takes investment away from actual sustainable energy options.

“It looks like yet again the government is putting the interests of its friends in the gas industry ahead of the environment.”

On the government’s announcement that there will be a decision made on whether to use hydrogen for heating homes by 2026 Nicholson continued:

“The idea that we can wait another five years to look at the energy we use to heat our homes is frankly ludicrous. There needs to be a focus right now on insulating homes and installing heat pumps which would both go a long way in making homes warmer and cheaper to run as well as cutting emissions right now.

“Truly green hydrogen and derived fuels will play an important role in our sustainable future, primarily for transport like HGVs and ships, industry and balancing the electricity supply and demand.”

ENDS

Notes

[1]<https://royalsociety.org/topics-policy/projects/low-carbon-energy-programme/hydrogen-production/>

[2] Lewes District Council is in partnership with private and public sector bodies supporting the creation of a Sussex-wide green hydrogen hub:
<http://www.hydrogensussex.org>

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[Green Party urges local authorities to take in fair share of child refugees](#)



Green Party

In response to the crisis in Afghanistan, the Green Party has written to every local authority in England to urge them to join forces and volunteer to take in more child refugees.

Benali Hamdache, Green Party migration and refugee support spokesperson, has sent letters to the leaders of every council, to remind them of the woeful provision currently provided to child refugees. [1]

It calls on the local authorities to work together in order to take their fair share of children as people flee the Taliban in Afghanistan, as well as those seeking refuge from other parts of the world.

Hamdache said:

“We have all looked on in horror as the Taliban advanced across Afghanistan, leaving millions of people trying to flee violence and persecution.

“Councils in England can make a huge difference to the lives of some of these people. Unfortunately, the provision for child refugees in this country is already woefully inadequate, with young people being left in unsuitable locations, often without the support they need. [2]

“If we want to be able to help those in Afghanistan who deserve a better future, then we need to sort out the crisis already in this country and get local authorities to take their fair share of child refugees.”

In the letter, Hamdache has asked each local authority if they:

- Are currently supporting the required 0.07% of UASC children as a portion of their child population?
- Plans to participate in the National Transfer Scheme rota and if so, when are they next expecting to take more UASCs?
- Will commit to supporting the large numbers of UASCs currently in hotels in Kent and Brighton & Hove waiting for local authorities to offer them a placement?

Hamdache has also urged councils to join the Green Party’s call on the UK government to provide more funds to local authorities to support refugee children.

Hamdache said:

“It’s also time for the government to step up and deliver on the obligations it has to help those around the world who need it. It needs to create specific funding to support councils help those in need.”

Councillor Hannah Clare, Brighton and Hove’s Lead Councillor for Childrens’ Services, said:

“It is clear that the Government’s inability to act and introduce a mandatory rota for local authorities has failed. Many councils across England are simply looking the other way and the Government is allowing them to do so. As councils, we must do better.

“Right now in Brighton and Hove and in Kent there are young people being placed in a hotel by the Home Office waiting for councils to offer them a secure, permanent home. And the refugee crisis we face will only get worse. Councils must act now to provide a place for these vulnerable children.”

ENDS

Notes

1

A full version of the letter [can be seen here](#)

2

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/home-office-sends-lone-child-migrants-to-hotels-f5nlr23rd>

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[Green Party urges UK government to support Afghan refugees as Taliban enter Kabul](#)



Green Party

15 August 2021

The Green Party has urged the UK government to do all it can to support Afghan refugees fleeing the Taliban advance and to urge the international community, including at the UN Security Council, to hold the Taliban to standards of international and humanitarian law as a condition of future cooperation.

Carne Ross, Green Party global solidarity spokesperson, said:

“The Taliban’s advance in Afghanistan is nothing short of a tragedy. Millions

of people are now left with the prospect of fleeing their homes to avoid violence and persecution. The international community has a responsibility to do all it can to offer these people refuge and protection.

“After 20 years of being in Afghanistan, the UK has a major and continuing responsibility to support the Afghan people. It is clear that by leaving without a peace deal being agreed, we have broken the promises we made to Afghan citizens, offering them a brighter future based on human rights and the rule of law.

“Through its shameful cut in aid to the country at the same time as withdrawing military support [1], the UK government has reneged on the promises it made to Afghans to stay and help build a safe and functioning country.

“At some point, a period of reflection will be required in the West about how 20 years of an international presence in Afghanistan has resulted in this disaster. But for now, the priority has to be ensuring we offer protection to those who need it most.

“We have a duty to those who worked with UK forces in Afghanistan and we’ve got a duty to help support refugees and the countries on the border with Afghanistan.

“At the same time, the international community must now make it clear that the Taliban will be held responsible for any war crimes or human rights abuses committed in the current violence, and will be held to international standards to protect human rights if they’re going to have constructive relations with the rest of the world.”

Notes

1

<https://inews.co.uk/news/politics/uk-cuts-direct-aid-to-afghanistan-by-78-at-same-time-as-withdrawing-military-support-amid-taliban-advance-1117084>

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[Catch-up funds should be given to GCSE students for further studies and](#)

resources, say Greens



Green Party

12 August 2021

The Green Party has called on the government to provide students who received their GCSE results today with the “catch up” funds promised to support them in further study or finding jobs now they have finished school.

Last month, the government offered funding for schools to provide “catch up” sessions over the summer for students who had missed time at school due to the pandemic. However, it has been reported that many schools did not offer the extra provision due to concerns over the wellbeing of staff and students. [1]

Today, the Green Party has congratulated all those students across England and Wales who will receive their GCSE grades, but also called on the government to provide the unused funding to help young people in the next stage of their lives.

Vix Lowthion, Green Party Lifelong Education Spokesperson and a teacher on the Isle of Wight, said:

“This year group, many of whom have missed more than six months of teaching time for these GCSEs, deserve every ounce of admiration and compassion we can offer for persevering with their studies in the middle of a pandemic.

“It is without doubt that this government has seriously failed these young people. It seems that they learned absolutely nothing from the chaos of the previous year, and have simply allowed these students to be left without the proper resources and teaching time they deserve.

“To recompense these students for the time they have missed due to the government’s mishandling of the pandemic, Gavin Williamson should now provide the unused catch-up funds to these students now to help facilitate further study or resources for their next step in life.

“We owe these students at least this much after all the challenges they have faced at such an important time.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/education/2021/jul/13/schools-in-england-to-eschew-summer-catch-up-and-put-health-first>

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