

Green Party's Larry Sanders: Britain can afford to fund the NHS



Green Party

4 January 2018

The Green Party has responded to the winter crisis gripping the NHS [1], calling on the Government to reverse cuts, end privatisation and give the NHS the funding it needs.

Larry Sanders, Green Party health spokesperson and brother to US Senator Bernie Sanders, said the hard work of front line staff is being undermined by the Government's refusal to properly fund the NHS.

Larry Sanders, Green Party health spokesperson, said:

"News this week of thousands of cancelled operations and record numbers of patients waiting in ambulances has confirmed what we already knew – the NHS is on its knees. Front line staff are working incredibly hard to care for people, but their efforts are being undermined on a daily basis by the Government's refusal to give the NHS the funding it so desperately needs.

"Jeremy Hunt's hollow apology for the cancelled operations fixes nothing. We need him to reverse the cuts, fund our health service properly and end privatisation.

"The UK spends a smaller percentage of its GDP on health than countries like France and Germany. Instead of wasting billions on Trident we could be looking after people who need health and social care. It's time for the Government to acknowledge that we can afford to fund health and social care if it makes the right political choices."

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jan/04/16900-people-in-a-week-kept-in-nhs-ambulances-waiting-for-hospital-care>

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Greens call for sanitary products to be made available to all those in need



Green Party

4 January 2018

Deputy Leader of the Green Party Amelia Womack has called for sanitary products to be made available free to any vulnerable person who needs them.

Womack's intervention comes after the Independent Custody Visiting Association (ICVA) found that police were, in the ICVA's words, "routinely ignoring" the needs of women detainees who are on their periods [1]. She added that the government should work with ethical companies to ensure green sanitary products can be made available.

Womack said:

"I cannot begin to imagine the trauma these women are going through – put away in prison and denied their basic rights to sanitation. And while the ICVA's report is welcome and revelatory, we have to be honest that this is a problem not only found in Britain's prisons. Women struggling on a low income also regularly have to find free alternatives – from paper towels to newspapers – to sanitary products. It cannot go on. That's why the Green Party is calling for a national fund to be created that gives vulnerable women – those who are homeless, on a low income, or in prison – free access to sanitary products. It's what a decent society would do."

Notes

[1] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-42556384>

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Greens call for 10:1 pay ratio on Fat Cat Day



Green Party

4 January 2018

The Green Party has called for a 10:1 pay ratio between chief executives and their workers after news top bosses still earn 120 times more than the average worker.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, made the call on Fat Cat Day (Thursday 4 January), the day top bosses will have already made more than the typical full-time worker in the UK will earn in a year [1].

Bartley branded a fall in FTSE 100 chief executive pay, from a ratio of 122:1 last year, “a drop in the ocean” in the face of the inequality facing workers.

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“It’s not right that company bosses take home fat cat salaries while their workers struggle to make ends meet. It’s good to see chief executive pay falling but this is a drop in the ocean when compared to the scale of inequality with workers. Lower pay ratios benefit companies and their workers. We need a 10:1 ratio to readdress inequality and create a world of work where everyone has a stake.”

Notes:

1. <http://highpaycentre.org/blog/its-fat-cat-day-thursday-jan-4-2018>

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Gove must end agricultural land being used as a tax haven say Greens



Green Party

3 January 2018

Green Party MEP, Molly Scott Cato, is this week laying down a challenge to the Environment Secretary, Michael Gove, to end the use of agricultural land as a tax haven and tax shelter.

Molly, who sits on the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, will speak at the Oxford Real Farming Conference (ORFC) this week [1], which will also be attended by Mr Gove. He will be the first Defra secretary to take to the stage at this alternative farming event which runs parallel to the long-established Oxford Farming Conference (OFC) [2].

Ahead of her speech at ORFC [4], Molly Scott Cato said:

"Gove must call time on the UKs largest land owners who are using agricultural land to hide and shelter their wealth. Agricultural land offers generous tax breaks as it is exempt from inheritance tax after two years if it is actively farmed. The fact that the sale of a farming asset can be rolled over into a new business or acquisition offers further tax relief."

Last summer Michael Gove said that post-Brexit farm subsidies will be based on measures to protect the environment and enhance rural life, rather than on the amount of land farmers own [3]. But Dr Scott Cato says the Environment Secretary must go much further:

"Using land as a tax shelter undermines its productive use. Land banking and earning an income from land assets also encourages a rentier economy and stifles innovation. If Michael Gove is to bring about genuine radical reform he will need to challenge the large land owners. Nobody can seriously suggest that we should be subsidising set ups like that of international racehorse breeders Juddmonte Farms which is owned by Prince Khalid Abdullah of Saudi Arabia.

"Significant taxation of estates and the abolition of inheritance relief could bring more land back into the market, reduce concentration of ownership and make land available to those who want to farm. We also need to take back control of our land so it can perform vital social and environmental functions especially to act as a carbon sink and to decrease the threat of

flooding.”

Notes

[1] <http://orfc.org.uk/>

[2] <https://www.ofc.org.uk/>

[3] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-40673559>

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Greens: We need a “rail fare revolution”



Green Party

2 January 2018

***Co-Leader brands fare increases a “modern-day great train robbery”**

***Party unveils package of reforms to bring down rail fares**

The Green Party has announced a package of reforms that they say would bring down the cost of rail travel.

The launch comes as thousands of rail commuters are hit by the annual increase in ticket prices. Fares have gone up by 3.4% for 2018, the biggest increase in five years [1].

Under Green Party plans, fares would be reduced through a number of policies including:

*The creation of a National Railcard offering discounts on rail tickets

*A new scheme providing reduced ticket prices for low income travellers

*A National system which entitles people to travel on all public transport networks

The party would also bring the railways back into public ownership – a move they say would pump far more investment into the infrastructure and bring down fares.

Co-Leader of the Green Party Jonathan Bartley said:

“Very few workers will be going back to the office with a higher salary this week – but every one of them that commutes by train will be paying a higher price for their rail fares.

“While the cost of motoring has fallen the cost of rail travel has increased. This is a modern day great train robbery.

“It makes no sense for major public services to be broken up into disconnected monopolies, driven not to provide the best possible service but to deliver profits to shareholders. That’s why the Green Party is calling for railways to be brought back into public hands to create a connected, efficient, and reliable service that delivers for customers. And it is why we are calling for new action to immediately bring down the cost of fares to ensure that everyone – no matter what their income or where they live – can access an affordable, reliable, and quality rail service.”

Notes

[1] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-42234488>

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