

# Poverty is a political choice: Carla Denyer reacts to Joseph Rowntree Foundation report



# Green Party

**23 January 2024**

Responding to this year's poverty report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which says that it is now 20 years and six prime ministers since there was a sustained fall in poverty [1], co-leader of the Green Party, Carla Denyer, said:

"This latest report from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation makes for grim reading. Over one in five people in the UK were living in poverty in 2021/22. That's almost 14 and a half million people, with over eight million working-age adults and over four million children.

"For years, successive UK governments have allowed poverty to become entrenched and for inequality to widen. The super-rich have seen their incomes soar during a time of increased hardship for millions of people.

"It doesn't have to be this way. Poverty is a political choice.

"There are things that can be done quickly to address the sickening levels of poverty in our society. For example, the Green Party would increase Universal Credit by £40 per week and abolish the two-child benefit cap. A wealth tax on the super-rich, along with tax reforms such as changes to Capital Gains Tax and abolishing "non dom status," could pay for these and other measures to reduce poverty.

"As Labour finalises its manifesto, there's little indication that they will make the right political choices to help the millions enduring grinding poverty. Which is why we so desperately need a group of Green MPs in parliament after the next general election to put pressure on Labour to do the right thing."

## Notes

[1] [Hardship deepens as millions find the poverty line further out of reach | Joseph Rowntree Foundation \(jrf.org.uk\)](https://www.jrf.org.uk/news/2023/12/14/hardship-deepens-as-millions-find-the-poverty-line-further-out-of-reach)

## NHS needs increased funding, not Labour's 'reform and efficiency' savings say Greens



Green Party

**23 January 2024**

Responding to comments by the shadow Health Secretary Wes Streeting that the NHS needs reform and efficiency savings, not extra money [1], Carla Denyer, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“Labour’s fiscal rules are clearly bad for your health. Blaming the Health Service’s ills on inefficiencies rather than on chronic underfunding is an insult to thousands of dedicated and hardworking staff who are underpaid and struggle because they are under-resourced.

“The Green Party would restore the public health budget by increasing spending by £1.4 billion and immediately increase NHS spending by £8 billion, to ensure NHS staff can be paid decently. Reforms to the tax system – including through changes to Capital Gains Tax, National Insurance and the abolition of “non dom status” – could raise the billions needed to properly invest in our health services.

“Successive governments have pointed the finger of blame at ‘inefficiencies.’ It’s regrettable to see Wes Streeting treading this well-worn path rather than pledging to increase funding for the NHS which is so desperately needed.”

### Notes

1. [Wes Streeting says Labour has been too nostalgic about NHS as he argues for reform – UK politics live \(theguardian.com\)](#)

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# Steel jobs cull underscores need for a just move to greening industry



Green Party

**19 January 2024**

The Green Party has called for a green industrial strategy offering a clear road map toward creating sustainable, green jobs following confirmation that Tata is slashing 2,800 jobs at its steelworks in Port Talbot.

Wales Green Party leader Anthony Slaughter said:

“This is devastating news for the local community and beyond. Wales knows only too well what happens when communities are abandoned by government and industries. We saw it with the coal industry and now it is happening again with the steel industry.

“Decarbonisation of industry is vital, but communities and people’s jobs must be protected. That means putting unions and workers at the heart of a just transition.

“The government has provided Tata with £500 million toward the cost of future steel production. It has a responsibility to ensure that money is used to protect Port Talbot and the wider Wales economy.

“Instead, it is allowing the company to ignore viable alternatives to these job losses put forward by the unions. That is unacceptable and must be resisted.”

Green Party deputy leader Zack Polanski, who recently visited Port Talbot with Anthony Slaughter, said:

“The steel industry is a crucial part of the UK’s economy and has been the backbone of communities up and down the country for generations.

“It is simply inexcusable that the government is willing to inflict real damage on this south Wales community, with a deal that will see thousands of jobs lost. This is not the fair transition to a greener future that people across the UK need or deserve.

“What is happening in Port Talbot underscores the need for a green industrial strategy from government, led by trade unions and communities, that provides a clear road map toward creating the sustainable, green jobs of the future.

“It is workers in these industries that have the skills and experience to help lead the industrial conversion.

“Planned transition is possible. By 2030, the European Union is expected to be home to nearly 50 green and low-carbon steel projects, facilitated by governments working together to deliver a planned strategy to move away from fossil fuels. [1]

“However, we have a government that simply doesn’t care about the enormous and exciting possibilities for people that the green industrial revolution we are undergoing offers. It seems happy to see jobs and communities go to the wall rather than plan to protect Port Talbot, its people and the planet.

“Neither the Conservatives nor Labour have faced up to the need to future-proof our economy and ensure we are able to transition to a greener, more sustainable future while protecting people and communities.

“We know transitioning to a green economy could create up to a million jobs. If the government had invested in the transition over the last few decades, we could have avoided the potentially devastating consequences we are seeing in Port Talbot today.”

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NOTES TO EDITORS

[1] [Green Steel Is Coming. Europe Is Leading the Charge Thanks to New Carbon Taxes. – WSJ](#)

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**[Greens challenge Labour on wealth tax](#)**



Green Party

## 16 January 2024

As shadow chancellor Rachel Reeves arrives at the World Economic Forum in Davos, the Green Party is challenging Labour to commit to a wealth tax.

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“When she attends the World Economic Forum in Davos today, Rachel Reeves will be rubbing shoulders with the super-rich who are seeing their wealth mushroom while billions around the world get poorer. Since 2020 the five richest men have added around £11 million per hour to their wealth [1] while seven out of ten of the world’s biggest corporations have a billionaire CEO or a billionaire as their principal shareholder [2].

“Labour have been hesitant to challenge the grotesque levels of wealth of the super-rich. The Green Party has a clear message for the World Economic Forum: we are proud to be the Party willing to tackle inequality and implement the policies needed to create a fairer greener planet. That’s why we support the introduction of a wealth tax on the super-rich and we challenge Labour to use the platform they have at Davos to commit to the same.”

### Notes

[1] [World’s 5 Richest Men Have Added \\$14M to Their Wealth Every Hour Since 2020 | Truthout](#)

[2] [Inequality Inc.: How corporate power divides our world and the need for a new era of public action](#)

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**[Green Party call on government and Labour to use Davos super-rich summit to back wealth tax](#)**



Green Party

# 15 January 2024

As the World Economic Forum begins in Davos, the Green Party has repeated calls for a wealth tax.

To coincide with the Davos summit, Oxfam has released a report raising the alarm on growing global inequality, saying the world's five richest men have more than doubled their fortunes since 2020, while the world's poorest 60% – almost 5 billion people – have become poorer [1].

Greens also point to the fact that the world's wealthiest 1% are having a hugely disproportionate impact on the climate crisis, producing carbon emissions equal to those of the poorest two-thirds of humanity [2].

Adrian Ramsay, co-leader of the Green Party said:

“As the super-rich rub shoulders with global leaders at the World Economic Forum in Davos, policy makers need to make clear that the increasing wealth of a super-rich elite while billions of people see their incomes shrink, is grotesque.

“While the five richest men in the world have seen their fortunes more than double since 2020, almost five billion people have become poorer. The super-rich are also driving the climate crisis, with the carbon emissions of the richest 1% globally equalling those of the poorest two-thirds of humanity.

“Such obscene inequality is a political choice. The gathering of the world's richest in Davos is the ideal opportunity for the UK government and Labour opposition to declare that this growing gulf between a super-rich elite and the rest of humanity cannot be allowed to continue.

“That's why we challenge the Conservatives and Labour to back our call for a wealth tax, with the potential £16bn a year proceeds used to invest in renewable energy and home insulation. This will bring down household energy bills and climate wrecking carbon emissions for good.”

## Notes

[1] [Inequality: How corporate power divides our world and the need for a new era of public action](#)

[2] [World's wealthiest 'at heart of climate problem' – BBC News](#)

[3] Green Party proposed wealth tax:

- Starting rate would be 1% for wealth in excess of £10m
- This would rise to 2% above £1bn
- It would cover wealth in all forms, valued at current market value and assessed on all UK resident taxpayers by an extension to the self-assessment tax return
- A wealth tax would raise an estimated £16bn per year to address inequality and tackle the climate crisis by funding investment in

renewable energy and home insulation to bring down household energy bills for good

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