

# Greens call for water action now, not more legal squabbling



# Green Party

**12 September 2023**

Reacting to news that the Office for Environmental Protection has found that the government and regulators, Ofwat and the Environment Agency, may have failed in their legal duties to enforce clean water standards on privatised firms [1], Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“The government must stop defending the indefensible and act to enforce the very basic expectations the public have for clean rivers and beaches, and clean water to drink.

“The public are fed up with Ministers claiming that private companies constantly discharging sewage into rivers and onto beaches is unacceptable, but then doing nothing to enforce existing laws.

“We don’t need months more of legal squabbling between the regulators, government and privatised water companies.

“We need action now. That means the government forcing companies to invest rather than pay out shareholder dividends, capping excessive pay to failing water company bosses and bringing our water back into public ownership as soon as possible.”

NOTES

1. <https://www.theoep.org.uk/news/oep-identifies-possible-failures-comply-environmental-law-relation-regulatory-oversight>

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## [Labour market statistics](#)

The labour market statistics were published today by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.

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## [Landlord allowance date approaching](#)

Land & Property Services (LPS) is reminding landlords that their rate bill must be paid in full by Friday 29 September 2023 to secure an allowance on this year's rates.

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## [Hundreds of NHS ambulance staff waiting for driver training despite deadly delays](#)

When there is a real shortage of ambulance drivers and patients suffering in pain and distress, it is staggering that the Government has not tackled the backlog of NHS paramedics waiting for vital training.

The Liberal Democrats submitted a Freedom of Information request to NHS ambulance Trusts across England, asking how many staff are currently waiting to complete C1 and Blue Light driving courses. The data show that more than 700 NHS staff across the country are currently waiting to complete a C1 driving course. 630 staff are on the waiting list to complete a Blue Light driving course.

Ambulance drivers are required to complete C1 training to drive a vehicle up to 7.5 tonnes – these courses can cost around £1,000 and paramedics are required to pay for it themselves in most cases. Paramedics also do a Blue Light training course which is considered the gold standard for emergency response drivers.

This is adding serious pressure on our frontline emergency workers.



The Liberal Democrats are calling for the Government to address the backlog by bringing forward a plan to recruit more specialist driving instructors and assessors, as well as covering the cost of ambulance driver training.

Earlier this year, the Lib Dems revealed that 43,000 people died before an ambulance reached them. Recent figures have also shown almost 500 NHS patients suffered permanent or long-term harm due to emergency response delays.

The Conservatives are asleep at the wheel, while patients struggle to access emergency treatment. **Ministers need to get a grip on the situation**, starting by bringing forward a plan to recruit more specialist driving instructors and assessors, as well as covering the cost of ambulance driver training so that paramedics can jump into action as soon as they graduate.

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[\*\*Green Party calls for a tax on the super-rich in response to effective\*\*](#)

# bankruptcy of Birmingham City Council



# Green Party

## 5 September 2023

Responding to the effective bankruptcy of Labour-run Birmingham City Council [1], Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“This is just the tip of the iceberg. Over the next two years at least 26 councils in some of Britain’s most deprived areas are at risk of going the same way [2] and the Local Government Association has warned councils in England face a funding gap of almost £3 billion just to keep services standing still [3].

“Thirteen years of Tory austerity has left day-to-day local services delivered by councils crumbling. This cannot be fixed without extra revenue.

“This should serve as a wakeup call to Labour. It’s time to tax the super rich who have seen their wealth mushroom in recent years, so as to provide extra money to maintain vital public services.

“Even millionaires themselves have joined economists and politicians from around the world in calling for extra taxes on the richest [4]. Labour needs to play catch-up and pledge to tax the super-rich, or a future Labour government will drag the country into bankruptcy.”

The Green Party Group Leader on Birmingham City Council, Cllr Julien Pritchard, also blamed mismanagement from the local Labour Administration for the crisis. He said:

“Our Labour-run Council has been dealt an awful hand but they have also played it terribly. They have utterly mismanaged an equal pay crisis with awful consequences. Ordinary Brummies shouldn’t have to pay for Labour’s mess.

“The government will need to step in to ensure Birmingham residents don’t suffer – it’s vital this isn’t solved with a fire sale of the city’s assets at knock down prices.

“We need to see solutions that ensure those most in need in our city are protected. This includes tackling the Council’s appalling housing conditions, supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis, and protecting the

vital services our residents rely on.”

## Notes

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/05/birmingham-city-council-financial-distress-budget-section-114>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/aug/28/at-least-26-english-councils-at-risk-of-bankruptcy-in-next-two-years>
3. <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-analysis-councils-face-almost-ps3-billion-funding-gap-over-next-two-years>
4. <https://taxextremewealth.com/>

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