

## Economy Minister announces appointments to the Board of the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland

Economy Minister Conor Murphy has announced the appointment of a new Chair, Deputy Chair and eight members to the Board of the Consumer Council for Northern Ireland.

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## Greens offer route to pay justice for junior doctors

Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer today offered a route to pay justice for junior doctors embarking on another round of strikes in their long-running dispute.

Denyer said:

“The outgoing Conservative government should have come to an agreement with the junior doctors a long time ago. The fact it hasn’t underlines why the Conservatives can’t be trusted with the NHS.

“Unfortunately, Labour, on the brink of government, is offering no solutions either.

“Elected Greens will support the junior doctors’ call for pay justice. It’s foolish and irresponsible to continue to invest hundreds of thousands of pounds in training staff and then paying them so poorly they leave the NHS.

“We need to value junior doctors – and all NHS staff – so they stay in the NHS and make it stronger.

“Pay justice is key to staff recruitment and retention, so we can restore the NHS to have it deliver for all of us who rely on it.”

According to the British Medical Association, it would cost £1.6bn to settle the junior doctors’ dispute.

The Green Party manifesto pledges £4.6bn, specifically to tackle pay injustice, including settling the junior doctors’ dispute and funding a workforce plan designed to recruit and retain staff across the NHS.

Denyer, who is speaking to junior doctors on the picket line in Bristol today, said:

“Greens believe passionately in the NHS. We are the only party being honest with the public that it’s going to cost money to nurse the NHS back to health after 14 years of Conservative damage.

“It costs taxpayers around £200,000 to put a doctor through medical school. Yet, when these talented and highly trained people graduate, we are losing them because the pay and conditions have been worsening for years. The BMA points out that junior doctors’ real-terms pay has been cut by more than a quarter since 2008

“Labour has simply abandoned its responsibility and is opening the door to ever greater privatisation.

“We need a different approach that attracts and keeps staff who are dedicated to a publicly-owned, publicly-funded NHS, free at the point of use.”

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## [Plan for our rivers: Greens say privatise water companies, invest in sewage infrastructure and give regulator real teeth](#)

- Greens highlight poor health of River Wye to argue for “drastic change”
- £12bn infrastructure fund for sewage and water
- £1.5bn boost to environmental regulator Environment Agency
- Cast-iron commitment to renationalise water companies
- Near triple support for farmers for transition towards nature friendly methods

TV personality Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall and the Green Party parliamentary candidate for North Herefordshire, Ellie Chowns, will today be testing the River Wye for phosphate levels alongside a group of local campaigners and wild swimmers. The duo will outline The Green Party plan for rivers that will include the nationalisation of our water companies, investing £12bn into our sewage and water infrastructure and to boost the Environment Agency a £1.5bn boost to better regulate.

The River Wye’s ecological status was recently downgraded by Natural England from “unfavourable-improving” to “unfavourable-declining” – evidence, Greens say, that “drastic change” is needed. [Government figures](#) say that 72-74% of the phosphate pollution in the Wye comes from agriculture. According to [CPRE](#) there over 20 million chickens in the river catchment at any one time.

Phosphates at unnaturally high levels alongside other nutrients in rivers can result in algal blooms and the death of many species in the river including fish, birds, invertebrates and plants that are vital to the river ecosystem.

The Green Party is calling for a Water Protection Zone around the river to give it a fighting chance to recover.

In addition, The Green Party is calling for a £12bn investment in water and sewage infrastructure to prevent sewage being dumped into our rivers and seas, and a cast iron commitment to nationalise water companies.

The Green Party is also committed to almost tripling support for farmers over the next 5-year parliament to support the transition to nature-friendly farming.

**Ellie Chowns, the Green Party Parliamentary Candidate for North Herefordshire** will today say that:

“We are reminded of just how much this shared resource means to the community and why drastic change is needed. The decline in the Wye’s ecological status is a stark warning that has been ignored for too long. The river has no voice, but it does have a political manifesto that puts its priorities front and centre. We are here both demand a Water Protection Zone around the River Wye and to put forward a bold vision for how we can protect all of Britain’s rivers. We need to tackle sewage pollution through real investment in water infrastructure and putting people before profit by taking water companies back into public hands. And we need to tackle agricultural pollution through proper support for farmers to transition to nature-friendly farming, plus giving the Environment Agency the funding and teeth it needs to enforce the polluter pays principle. With these measures, we can restore our rivers back to health.”

**Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall will add:**

“Ellie and I are clear that the only way to end the scandal of our filthy water is to tackle the pollution at source. For the Wye this means addressing the factory farmed elephant in the room, and working closely with farmers to give them the support they need to grow food locally, and in a way that protects the environment. Nationally we need to be bold, and bring to an end the disastrous and unfair experiment with privatisation of a basic human right – clean water. We cannot allow shareholders to profit by extracting money from these disgraceful businesses which completely fail to deliver their obligations to society. And so I fully support the Green Party policy of bringing the water companies back into public ownership.”

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## Greens pledge to end 'dental deserts' with £3bn for new NHS contract

The Green Party has vowed to end Britain's 'dental deserts' by restoring full access to NHS dentistry after years of cuts that left millions unable to get affordable dental treatment.

Elected Greens will push for a new contract for NHS dentists that ensures everybody who needs an NHS dentist has access to one, backed by an additional £3bn for the dentistry budget by 2030.

This will begin to reverse more than a decade of real terms spending cuts and begin to restore the incomes of dentists providing NHS services.

Co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

"In many parts of the country it is now impossible to register with an NHS dentist, and many dentists are de-registering NHS patients to avoid treating them at a loss.

"Too many of us are feeling the consequences: dropping from regular preventative dental visits to only going when we have a problem that needs treatment. Prevention is so much better than treatment, and it's a national outrage that tooth decay is now the top reason for child hospital admissions.

"Our Green plan for dentists will put the billions into the NHS needed to turn around fourteen years of Conservative failure, and ensure every person in every community will have access to an affordable NHS dentist.

"Green MPs will commit to meeting with the British Dental Association as soon as possible after the election, so that we can pile the pressure on the next government to fix dentistry as a matter of urgency."

The announcement comes after the British Dental Association (BDA) reviewed the dental policies in each party's manifesto. (1)

The BDA stated that "meaningful reform needs to go hand in hand with fair funding" and noted the "multi-billion-pound promises" made in the Green Party manifesto.

By contrast, the BDA noted a "modest pot of new money from Labour for 700,000 urgent appointments", but that Labour's wider promises on dentistry "have yet to be priced in and will likely hinge on future negotiations."

Elected Greens are also committed to pushing for all children to have a daily free school meal, made from nutritious ingredients and based on local and organic or sustainable produce. The BDA supports universal free school meals, "to fight the severe impact child hunger and poor nutrition are having on children's dental health." (2)

## NOTES TO EDITORS

1. BDA review of the parties' manifestos: *"Meaningful reform needs to go hand in hand with fair funding. We've seen multi-billion-pound promises from both the Greens and Lib Dems for the NHS. There is a modest pot of new money from Labour for 700,000 urgent appointments, but pledges on reform – "a shift to focusing on prevention and the retention of NHS dentists" have yet to be priced in and will likely hinge on future negotiations."*

<https://www.bda.org/news-and-opinion/blog/nhs-dentistry-where-we-go-beyond-election-day>

2. BDA manifesto supports free school meals: *"Extend free school meals to every primary school child in England to fight the severe impact child hunger and poor nutrition are having on children's dental health."*

<https://www.bda.org/what-we-do/campaigns-and-advocacy/general-election-2024/manifesto>

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## [Givan welcomes Trade Unions' response to EA Pay and Grading Review](#)

Education Minister Paul Givan has welcomed confirmation from support staff unions that they will consult their members on the proposed Pay and Grading Review resolution.