

# Northern Ireland Economic Output Statistics

The economic output statistics were published today by the Northern Ireland Statistics & Research Agency (NISRA).

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## O'Neill and Little-Pengelly praise 'positive impact' of Ireland Funds

The First Minister and deputy First Minister have paid tribute to Ireland Funds for its critical role in promoting and supporting peace.

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## Greens respond to Frank Hester's remarks on Diane Abbot



# Green Party

**12 March 2024**

The Green Party has accused the Conservative Party of being funded by racists and have challenged them to donate the £10m received from Frank Hester to anti-racism and domestic violence charities [1].

Green Party spokesperson for Policing and Domestic Safety, Amanda Onwuemene, said:

“It’s clear that racists are funding the Tory Party to the tune of millions of pounds. No wonder they fail to call this out for what it is – a vile racist and misogynist attack on a woman who made history by becoming

Britain's first Black woman MP and who has had a remarkable political career.

"The Green Party stands in solidarity with Diane Abbott and all Black women. Nobody should have to face the abuse and threats she is subject to.

"Labour wants the Conservative Party to return the £10m donation – to a man guilty of racism and misogyny. As Greens we challenge the Conservative Party to donate the sum it has received from Hester to some of the many anti-racism and domestic violence campaigns around the country that are doing such valuable work. That would demonstrate the Tories are genuinely concerned about fighting racism and misogyny."

## Notes

1. [Biggest Tory donor said looking at Diane Abbott makes you 'want to hate all black women' | The Guardian](#)

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# Ed Davey's International Women's Day Message 2024

Today marks International Women's Day—a moment to honour women's achievements, acknowledge their invaluable contributions, and reflect on the journey towards gender equality that still lies ahead.

Over the years, the Liberal Democrats have been at the forefront of delivering that progress.

Of course, having women at the table is a key part in delivering that. I'm proud that for the first time ever heading into a general election, women constitute the majority of our party in the House of Commons. This landmark achievement is a testament to the unwavering efforts of our campaign for gender balance.

As we celebrate International Women's Day, we honour the extraordinary women who have led us to this point, those who continue to fight for equality, and those who will drive us forward.

Reflecting this year's theme of Investing in Women, I'm particularly thrilled with the steps our party has taken this year to address the economic barriers that disproportionately affect women. From our campaign to end period poverty across the UK, to our revolutionary new parental leave policy.

I'd like to also recognise the crucial work of Wendy Chamberlain, Liberal

Democrat MP for North East Fife. Her Carer's Leave Bill, set to become law, grants 2.4 million unpaid carers, predominantly women, the right to five days of unpaid leave annually. It will profoundly impact carers' lives, allowing them more time to manage their caregiving responsibilities without the added stress of work commitments. These are the types of initiatives that we will always push for, changes that prioritise people and their needs in a way that truly makes a difference.

While we celebrate our achievements as a party, we recognise that the journey towards full equality continues, demanding our relentless dedication and continued efforts going forward.

Our commitment to gender equality is a key part of what makes us Liberal Democrats. Fundamentally, we are driven by the belief that a fairer society benefits everyone. We are passionate about shaping a future free from discrimination and inequality. It is this passion that will take us further in the years to come.

For more on our work to support women, [read remarks from Christine Jardine](#)

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## [Reflecting on International Women's Day 2024](#)

Although we have made great strides towards gender equality in the UK, women are too often an afterthought when it comes to economic empowerment.

Time and again, the extra barriers women face in the workplace are ignored while we are left without the support we deserve.

Just look at how menopause is treated. Fawcett Society research has shown that 1 in 10 women leave a job because of symptoms of the menopause. Yet still, the Conservative Government refuses to pilot a trial on menopause leave. And they have missed an opportunity to make a splash with their Women's Health Strategy, where their work to support women in the workplace has frustratingly gone silent.

Not to mention the extra costs women shoulder simply because of the fact we are women.

From the pink tax, to the 'motherhood penalty' and gender pay gap, there is a laundry list of extra economic disadvantages that women face.

Heartbreakingly, the financial barriers become worse for survivors of domestic violence, many of whom have to make the impossible choice between remaining in an unsafe home or facing destitution.

These failings hurt everyone – women, our society, and our economy. Despite this, the Chancellor didn't mention women a single time in his Budget this week.

Women deserve an ambitious vision from political parties. I'm proud that Liberal Democrats have a credible plan to smash through these economic barriers disproportionately facing women.

We brought forward new policies to end period poverty across the UK just this year, responding to the cost of living crisis which meant that a further 1 million women couldn't afford the period products they need.

My colleague Munira Wilson MP, has spearheaded a revolutionary new parental leave and childcare policy – helping more mothers return to the workplace should they want to, and fighting against the gender pay gap.

These new policies are only the beginning. As Liberal Democrats, we will keep doing everything we can to fight for gender equality. Our country cannot afford to avoid investing in women any longer.

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