

Equality, prosperity and cohesion: Green Party policies for Black and Minority Ethnic people

Green Party 2010 general election policy briefing

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1. Employment

1.1 Minority ethnic groups, along with lone parents and those without formal qualifications, have an unemployment rate of double that for the total working-age population. The Greens would:

- i) radically increase the amounts people on benefits can earn before their benefits are withdrawn
- ii) introduce a National “Living” Wage of £8.10ph, that would raise a significant number of BME citizens living on minimum wage above the poverty line
- iii) re-introduce the 10% tax band and the 22p basic rate.

1.2 We would allow asylum seekers the right to work pending a judgement on their status, in order to prevent the poverty that can be caused through leaving them in stasis.

1.3 Membership of those traditionally under-represented in unions minorities, will be encouraged, as well as those under-represented as union representatives. This includes BME workers.

2. Culture, Citizenship and Immigration

2.1 We will undertake a thorough review of UK immigration practices and the UK Immigration Service to ensure that racist features are removed and immigration officers receive sufficient suitable training. We will encourage greater ethnic minority participation in the Immigration Service.

2.2 The Green Party recognises that Gypsies and other Travellers are sections of society which are greatly disadvantaged and discriminated against. We recognise also that the travelling people have ancient, valuable and valid lifestyles and cultures, and have a right to preserve these. The Green Party will broaden existing racial discrimination legislation to incorporate a specific clause preventing discriminatory practices against Travellers.

2.3 Reform British nationality law to ensure an even-handed treatment of all people wishing to live in the UK - removing the current systemic bias that favours white non-residents over black.

2.4 British nationality should be automatically available prior to their 18th birthday to all children of British nationals born overseas but now normally resident in the UK. Evidence of such residence would be required.

3. Education

3.1 The Green Party has pledged to reduce class sizes to 20 pupils per class by the end of the next parliament. This would allow teachers more time with individual students and would greatly increasing the timeframe for integration of pupils whose first language is not English.

4. Privacy

4.1 Limit the information on the national DNA database, which disproportionately effects members of the BME communities given the higher stop and search rates for Black and Asian people. The system would be changed in line with the Scottish model. The Green Party would also scrap the needlessly expensive and intrusive ID cards scheme.

5. Political Reform

5.1 BME communities are still under-represented in parliament (there were 15 BME MPs between 2005-09. On a per-capita basis, it should have been closer to 60). The Green Party supports the introduction of a truly proportional voting system, which would increase not just the size of BME voter participation but also the number of local and national BME candidates and politicians.

