



**GREENS OF
COLOUR**

OUR COMMITMENT TO PEOPLE OF COLOUR

GREENS OF COLOUR 2019

This Commitment sets out the impact that policies contained in Green Party Manifesto 2019 would have upon People of Colour. It has been prepared by Greens of Colour, a group of Green Party members who campaign for the rights of People of Colour. To find out more about Green Party policies, please refer to the full Green Party Manifesto **here**.



INTRODUCTION

Our system is broken.

It has been for years. And throughout generations, racist institutions and processes have tried to hinder our progress, erase our legacy, and crucial contribution to this country.

It's time that elected politicians speak plainly about our past, shine a light on the current inequalities that continue to affect our communities, and most importantly introduce bold policies that will make a positive difference to our futures.

And the time will be now if you vote for our Green MPs!

We're proud of the policies in the Green Party Manifesto which will rebalance the inequality within society. The Manifesto sets out how and why things need to change for People of Colour in Britain today.

People of Colour represent the global majority but policies that are made in this country are disproportionately affecting our communities.

Our communities both here and abroad deserve social justice. Fighting for social justice is what the Green Party is all about, and so it's time to vote Green.

Out of many we are one – *Jamaican Motto*

People of Colour are the global majority and we will be heard.

DEMOCRACY

Why are so many of our communities not involved in politics?

The political system itself is broken and keeps power and wealth in the hands of a few. We need a political system that we can trust.

People of Colour need and want to be in the corridors of decision making to ensure that our voices and interests are known and pursued, but often barriers prevent them from doing so effectively.

By voting for a Green MP we will ensure that we have a fair voting system in which every vote counts and People of Colour are fairly represented in all areas of political life.

Green MPs would take action on:

Abuse

The disproportionate amount of abuse that PoC in elected positions face is atrocious. Elected women of Colour face 15% more abuse than their white counterparts, and this is a barrier for many who want to serve the country in this way. The police and the CPS should be cracking down on this overt form of racism. Racism is an enforceable crime.

Councillor Salaries

The current councillor allowances can act as a barrier to wider inclusion. Too often we are not involved in decisions on local investment and actions that affect our communities. This is not good enough, we need diversity of thought and experience in these positions so that policies better represent the people they serve. Green MPs would ask the electoral commission to investigate whether allowance levels for Councillors are a barrier to welcoming diverse candidates.

Political job-sharing

Being involved in politics is more attractive to those who are more privileged with time than others, this should not be confined to a few. People should be able to job-share the role of an MP so that politics could be accessible for those currently locked out due to other career responsibilities, or those with precarious work or complicated health conditions.

Green MPs would also:

- > Tackle our toxic political culture, by exploring measures such as new codes of conduct to embed compassion and co-operation in all aspects of public life.
- > Introduce job-sharing, at all levels of government, to make politics more accessible, especially for disabled people and people with caring responsibilities. We will expand the Access to Elected Office Fund to support disabled people to stand for election, and support women, non-binary people and those from minority ethnic backgrounds to stand.

VOTING

Our voting system does not reflect the views of the people. People need to know and believe that their vote matters.

Green MPs would:

- > Introduce a Voting Reform Bill to replace the First Past the Post system for all levels of government with a fair and proportional voting system.

POLITICAL LANGUAGE

Many people feel like they can't relate to politicians and in part this is due to the political language they use.

Green MPs would:

- > Transform how Parliament works with electronic voting, measures to protect against filibustering, steps to promote cross-party and cooperative working, and a systematic overhaul of parliamentary language to make it self-explanatory.

MIGRATION

Britain has a rich and diverse history of migration and has long been a place where migrants can call home. People of colour have contributed to the fabric of British culture and its existence both while living here and abroad.

We will put fairness back into our migration system. We need a migration system that embraces dignity, justice and common sense, and which ensures those fleeing war, persecution and the climate crisis can find safety and security in the UK. We will ensure all migrants feel welcome.

Green MPs would:

- > Reform asylum processes to ensure that there are safe and legal routes into the UK.
- > Bring forward a new humane immigration system with no minimum income rules for visas, full workplace rights for migrants.
- > Allow asylum seekers the right to work
- > End indefinite detention, closing the immigration detention centres and ending the culture of abuse and violence that has prevailed in them.
- > We will immediately suspend all deportation flights and allow refugees to live freely, with a right to work, whilst their applications are considered.

COLONIALISM

The effects of British colonialism, particularly in countries that people of colour may originate from, are still felt and impacted on today. The legacy of slavery and colonialism needs to be addressed by the UK government.

Greens of Colour want to work together with established reparations groups to explore how these issues could be addressed.

WINDRUSH

What the government did and continue to do to the Windrush community is an atrocity and disgrace. We will rectify the wrongs caused by the Government's "hostile environment" agenda that causes racial discrimination, outsources border enforcement into our schools, homes and hospitals, and which caused the Windrush scandal.

Green MPs would:

- > Scrap the Home Office, and end its decades-long creation of a hostile environment for Black Minority Ethnic (BME) and other minority communities. We will instead create a Ministry for Sanctuary and a Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry Green Party Manifesto 2019 Growing Democracy 39 for Sanctuary will be responsible for enforcing migration rules with compassion, and due regard for human rights, as well as providing recompense for those affected by the Windrush scandal. One of the Ministry of Sanctuary's first acts will be to abolish income requirements for people wishing to come to the UK to join a loved one – no families should be separated because of how much someone earns. The Ministry of the Interior will oversee domestic security with full regard to human rights and the needs of diverse communities.

- > Make a 'Windrush Day' bank holiday, to celebrate the contribution that migration has made to our society

What greens have already done

Bristol Green Councillor Cleo Lake started the #JAMnesty petition in April 2018 to stop the deportation threats to the children of the Windrush generation and other UK residents from the Commonwealth that received over 20,000 signatures and highlighted the Windrush Scandal.



RACISM

Racism, is still prevalent in the UK and people of colour are tired of talking about racism. We want positive action and effective systemic change now.

Green MPs would:

- > Create a new Ministry for the Interior that will be fully committed to upholding human rights, and will address the racism in our criminal justice system, including the racial profiling that is all too often the basis for using stop and search powers.
- > Implement an independent review of our Criminal Justice System, to improve trust in the system, challenge sentencing biases and improve diversity of magistrates.
- > Strengthen hate–crime legislation to ensure people who commit acts of violence against diverse communities are brought to justice.
- > Replace “Prevent” with community cohesive policing which engages rather than antagonises communities of colour.
- > Establish an effective press regulatory regime that allows diverse communities to make formal complaints about media coverage that is racist or xenophobic.
- > The Greens of Colour recognise that there are existing and emerging policing tactics that continue to perpetuate racial profiling from the police and the new facial recognition technology is heading in that vein. Sian Berry whilst on the London Assembly has continued to challenge and campaign against the introduction of this technology.

EDUCATION

Education should be about nurturing potential and inspiring a love of learning. Yet all too often it can feel like a production line, manufacturing children—shaped pieces to fit gaps in the workplace.

The freedom to let children play, flourish and grow has been replaced with endless testing, and measuring. It demoralises teachers and adds yet more pressure on young people. And we have turned further and higher education into a commodity, when it should be a basic right. We need to build an education system on the principles that learning must be lifelong, liberating and accessible to all.

It's time our education system included diverse narratives of the past to truly reflect British history. Our present is inspired by so many faiths, cultures and a spectrum of social experiences and should be taught. The future is bright for many young people so the images and information that is presented in education should represent that hope for everyone.

Green MPs would:

- > Confront racism, antisemitism and prejudice, including from an early age through a broader and decolonialised curriculum in school, focussing on histories and role models from a diverse range of ethnicities and religions.
- > By addressing the systemic racism and prejudice within the country Greens of Colour will work hard to ensure that schools tackle exclusion and off-rolling that disproportionately affect children of colour.

School

- > Focus funding to reduce class sizes down to under 20 in the long term, to make pupils feel more at ease and to help teachers focus on individual pupil needs.
- > Free schools from centrally imposed testing regimes, OFSTED inspections, rigid national curriculum and league tables. Teachers will be trusted to plan their lessons and assess progress according to the needs of their pupils, not to meet one-size-fits-all measurements that currently cause huge stress to pupils and teachers alike.
- > Formal education will start at 6 years, to allow young children to develop at their own pace.
- > Create a fully inclusive education system, where children with special education needs are able to access their local school and are fully supported in that school. This means ensuring accessible buildings, an inclusive curriculum and the provision of specially trained teachers across the school system. Specialist schools will be retained, for when children and parents would prefer that option.
- > Invest in youth services and centres to help young people thrive
- > Scrap university tuition fees, fund full student grants, and greater public investment in further and higher education.
- > Write off existing debt for former students who studied under the £9k tuition fee regime.

What greens have already done

Azzees Minott and Sian Berry wrote the London's Lost Youth Services report in 2018 that highlighted the cuts to youth services across London and continued to campaign until they saw change – in May 2019 the Mayor of London announced £15 million of new funding for London's youth services.

ECONOMY

The Green New Deal proposes transformational change to our whole society. At the core of it, is how we change our economic system. The economic system does not serve us all, it seeks to keep the rich, rich and the poor, poor.

Our Green plan to simplify tax will shine a light on the corners of the economy where the richest stash their wealth.

Green MPs would:

- > Merge Employees National Insurance, Capital Gains Tax, Inheritance Tax, Dividend Tax and Income Tax into a single Consolidated Income Tax. This closing of loopholes will bring in an estimated £20 billion extra per year into the public purse. It will mean that all income is treated the same way for tax purposes.
- > Move away from consumption and Gross Domestic Product as key measures of economic success and towards indicators that measure human and ecological wellbeing, such as work/life balance and quality of life.
- > Create a new government department to oversee the implementation of the Green New Deal, led by a Carbon Chancellor, based at number 11 Downing Street to put the just transition to a net zero economy right at the heart of government. The Carbon Chancellor will set a yearly Carbon Budget, which will drive the decarbonisation of the economy. We will create a fossil fuel free politics, with vested interests who depend on continued fossil fuel use banished from positions of influence.
- > Too many people of colour face barriers getting into work, discrimination in the workplace, and unequal pay. This is completely unacceptable and a LOT more needs to do more to rebalance the current status quo.

We will seek to end the oppression of marginalised groups in the workplace and create more opportunities to thrive.

FUTURE CAREERS

Through the investment from the Green New Deal we will create millions of new jobs in renewable energy, transport, land management and other sectors transformed by the transition to a net zero carbon economy.

Greens MPs will

- > Invest £2 billion a year in training and skills (including new apprenticeships), to help people access the new, decent jobs created through the transition to a low carbon economy.

Applying for the job

- > Support the use of anonymised CVs in businesses bigger than 50 employees so fewer female and PoC candidates are screened out before the interview stage.

Holding companies to account

- > Encourage all public bodies to publish annual ethnicity pay statistics
- > Reduce tribunal fees so that workers facing discrimination at work can afford to seek justice and recompense
- > We will ensure that those who freelance work or have short-term contracts always receive at least the current minimum wage, and have job security, sick leave, holiday pay and pension provision

Wages

- Increasing the Living Wage to £12 and extending it to workers aged between 16 and 21.
- Ensure the maximum wage paid to any member of staff in an organisation should not exceed ten times that paid (pro rata) to the lowest paid worker in the same organisation.
- Ensure that employers breaching minimum wage law are brought to justice, as a means to challenge the BME pay gap.

Example

In 2016 Green London Assembly Sian Berry successfully campaigned for the Mayor to introduce name-blind shortlisting into the GLA recruitment process.



SMALL BUSINESSES

More people of colour today are becoming entrepreneurs and starting their own businesses. It's important the government recognises the increase of the micro and small businesses and does all it can to support and not hinder their growth.

Green MPs would:

- > Encourage greater energy efficiency across the economy, including by providing energy efficiency training for businesses and public bodies, emphasising the need for behavioural change – we all need to value energy as we value money. Small businesses and co-ops will receive this training for free.
- > Grant 15% of government contracts to small and micro businesses. We will revise the government contract application process, to remove the current barriers for entry to small business. We will encourage local authorities to adopt this model with their own contracts.
- > Create new support for entrepreneurs and small business owners who are People of Colour.

Many of our communities may have come to reside in the UK to support great institutions like the NHS. To see how it has been underfunded and inadequately supported is a great tragedy.

Green MPs would:

- > Provide an additional £4.5 billion a year to fund councils to provide free social care to people over 65 who need support in their own homes.
- > Increase funding for the NHS by at least £6 billion per year and roll back privatisation of the NHS, through repealing the Health and Social Care Act 2012.
- > Focus funding to enable major improvements to mental health care. We will ensure that tailored and specific provision is readily available for the particular needs of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans, Intersex, Queer and Asexual (LGBTIQA+) and Black Minority Ethnic (BME) communities, children and adolescents, and older people.

DRUGS

Too many people of colour are in prison or have a criminal record for drug related offences. It's time we have a mature policy about how the UK intends to move forward and support people who need help and end the illegal operation.

Green MPs would:

- > Pardon and expunge the criminal records of all individuals previously convicted for possession and small-scale supply of drugs
- > End the war on drugs and replace the current system of prohibition with an evidence-based, legalised, regulated system of drug control

HOUSING

Everyone should have a safe, affordable, secure and warm place to call home. Unfortunately statistics show that diverse communities are more likely to live in some of the worst housing conditions in the UK.

Many buildings in this country are draughty and poorly insulated. This means that they lose a lot of heat, consume a lot of energy and contribute to the UK's carbon emissions.

We will insulate our existing building stock and bring it up to scratch. Inefficient, old fashioned heating systems will be phased out and will be replaced with more effective, cleaner ways of keeping buildings warm.

We will tackle the causes of the housing crisis: giving renters get a fair deal, making social housing widely available and bringing the housing market under control.

Green MPs would:

- > Introduce a living rent for all through rent controls
- > A major programme to build affordable homes, including 100,000 social rented homes a year.
- > Scrap Right to Buy Abolish the cruel and unfair bedroom tax
- > Roll out, in parallel with the insulation and retrofitting programme, solar panels and other forms of renewable domestic energy generation in homes so they are cheaper for residents.
- > Support the establishment and growth of BAME specialist Housing Associations and Community led housing organisations



**IMMIGRANTS MAKE
BRITAIN GREAT**



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