

Our Older People's Pledge: Reasons for older people to vote Green

Green Party 2010 general election policy briefing

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1. Introduction

1.1 It is shameful that Britain's state pensioners, 2 million of whom still live in poverty, are effectively penalised for having savings or private pensions. Meanwhile, grandparents who provide childcare worth £3.9 billion a year, many spending three days a week caring for grandchildren, receive no recognition for their contribution to society. To make matters worse, over-complicated, intimidating, and humiliating means testing is so off-putting that pensioners are leaving up to £2.9 billion of council tax benefits unclaimed.

1.2 The other parties have made a few token gestures to older people, but the Green Party alone is committed to making Britain a better place to age in.

1.3 The Green Party wants:

- To end the over complex pension credit system and ensure a decent basic pension for everyone of £170 a week which would be linked to national earnings.
- Free insulation to help fight fuel poverty.
- Free personal and nursing care for all older people.
- Freedom for older people to work.

2. The Green Party's pledge to older people

2.1 The Green Party would end the over-complex pension credit system and ensure a decent basic pension for everyone of £170 a week, which would be linked to national earnings. We would replace the current system with a simple standard rate pension of £170 per week, ensuring no older person falls below the poverty line, and get rid of complex means testing. By linking pensions to real national earnings we would ensure that pensions are kept up to date and do not fall behind the rates of inflation or economic growth.

2.2 For many older people rising fuel costs for heating are a real problem. The Green Party would help fight fuel poverty with a programme of free insulation for every UK home.

2.3 The Green Party would ensure free personal and nursing care for all older people. So many older people are burdened with huge fees to care for themselves or their loved ones. We believe this is unfair, so the Green Party would ensure that the NHS and care services are fully equipped to deal with our ageing population.

2.4 The Green Party would ensure that older people who want or need to work can do so, easily. The Green Party supports a pensionable age of 65, but feels that people ought to have the freedom to go on working and contributing to society if they wish to, free from discrimination on the basis of their age. We would end the default retirement age and ensure

that employment and skills support to allow older workers to cope with the recession was in place.

2.5 The Green Party would make Britain a good place to age in. The Green Party would introduce measures to make everyday life easier for older people at home, and fight for their rights at an international level, pursuing a bill of rights for older people. We would save our much needed local post offices, and work to make the transport system more accessible and easier to use.

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