

DISABILITY

Instead of helping disadvantaged people, the Coalition has scapegoated and isolated them. Private firms assess people on the verge of death as fit for work. The 'bedroom tax' plays havoc with any person who is disabled and needs an extra room for equipment or a carer. Austerity has brought cuts to disability benefits, harming the most vulnerable in our society.

The Green Party is committed to the social model of disability. People who are disabled have a right to participate fully in society.

We will:

- Support the principles of, and enforce the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.
- End the pernicious system whereby an external contractor assesses whether people are *fit for work* and return to the system of relying on the judgement of GPs or other health professionals.
- Increase the budget for *Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments* by around £1 billion a year.
- Retain the *Independent Living Fund*, which enables over 18,000 severely disabled people to stay in their home instead of being in residential care, costing around £300 million a year.
- Provide a further £0.5 billion for *free social care* for adults aged 18–65 who have a proven care need.
- *Increase the Carer's Allowance* by 50%, costing £1.2 billion a year (6.5 million carers save the state £119 billion), and provide carers with a legal right to 5–10 days paid annual leave.
- Raise the profile of the *Access to Work* scheme among smaller firms and under-served disabled people, with far greater transparency over how the scheme is administered.
- Provide older *carers* with more generous and consistent support through a Citizen's Pension.
- Integrate health and care services so as to *look after carers* as well as those they care for.
- Recognise the rights of *children who are disabled*, and their families, in education, in the transition to adult life, in childcare, in healthcare and in the benefits system.
- Recognise fully the *housing needs* of people who are disabled, including support with planning and obtaining housing.
- Make it a licensing condition for *taxis* that drivers have Disability Awareness Training.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people face very practical immediate problems with getting a good start in life. Decent jobs, jobs with a future and training, are hard to come by. The lucky few can get an internship or take advantage of good connections, but overall social mobility is in reverse. You can go to university, but only if you are prepared to saddle yourself with a huge debt. Affordable housing is scarce. And threats such as climate change and ever-rising levels of inequality will have a far greater impact on future generations.

Young people must be supported outside school as well as in it; online and offline. They need places they can call their own, where they can safely play and explore. This means playgroups for toddlers, safe streets for kids to play in, and youth centres for teenagers. The Green Party would:

- Ensure that the UK's child protection systems are effective at tackling *child neglect and abuse* early on, including changing the law so that emotional abuse is treated on a par with physical abuse and giving police and child protection professionals clear guidance to help them work effectively.
- Set clear targets for *ending child poverty*, including ways to measure it and fund local authorities properly so they can focus on early support to help children, young people and their families.
- Increase the current investment in *young people's services*, providing a comprehensive and inclusive youth service, including youth clubs, youth councils and non-curricular education and training, costing an extra £1.1 billion a year.
- Extend *free local public transport to young people* and students, spending up to £4 billion a year. This would encourage the habit of using public transport among young people early on, with a view to making this a behaviour for life.
- Support *20 mph zones*, cycle schemes and public transport to make our *streets* safe and useful for young people.
- Raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14.
- Lower the *voting age* to 16.
- Reform the judicial system to create a strong statutory *presumption against the imprisonment* of young offenders.
- Restrict police use of random *stop and search powers*, which especially damage police relationships with young people.
- Make *higher education* free and end the student loan system.