

# CHAPTER 5

## EQUALITIES

More equal societies almost always do better than unequal ones – and that’s true for the well-off as well as for the poor. Almost every modern social and environmental problem – ill health, lack of community life, violence, drugs, obesity, mental illness, long working hours, big prison populations – is more likely to occur in a less equal society. Imagine a world in which everyone is respected whatever their ethnicity, gender, age, religious belief or non-belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, class, size, disability or other status. Imagine a world in which no one earns more than ten times what anyone else earns. We’d all be healthier, happier and more confident. This could be the real world the Green Party creates.

The Green Party is opposed to inequality not just because it is wrong in itself and because more equal societies are happier societies, but because it fosters inappropriate growth. We are encouraged to measure our prosperity by comparing it with the material conditions of others. Celebrity culture and the lifestyles of the rich create a climate of envy and a desire to match them. This fuels consumption that satisfies pointless wants for some rather than vital needs for all.

Growth justifies inequality. It is claimed that:

- If the economy gets bigger some benefit will ‘trickle down’ to the poor and vulnerable;
- A rising tide floats all boats – forgetting that not everyone has a boat.

However, recent research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) confirms that this theory is just wrong. In a resource-constrained world, equality makes much more sense than inequality. Our taxation, pay and social security plans will make the UK a materially more equal society.

### EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Equality is a matter not just of material goods but of treating people fairly – celebrating diversity rather than punishing it. The Green Party aims to treat everyone equally and fairly.

We will:

- Reinstatement of the funding for the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Make *equality and diversity lessons mandatory in all schools*, from the first year of primary education onwards, to combat all forms of prejudice and bullying, to promote understanding and acceptance of difference and to ensure community cohesion.
- Continue to tackle *institutional racism in the police force* and the wider criminal justice system.
- Require all *police forces* to have equality and diversity liaison officers whose remit is to tackle and take preventive action on crimes originating in discrimination against any group, and to treat crimes arising from such discrimination on a par with racist crimes.
- Implement a UK-wide strategy to tackle *violence against women*, including domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse, female genital mutilation and trafficking.
- Ensure that effective action is taken to prevent discrimination against *people with disabilities*.