



Labour Party Conference 2023 Fringe Digest



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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Skills and social mobility: How can education, communities and industry secure a brighter, more prosperous future for young people?

13 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Skills and social mobility: How can education, communities and industry secure a brighter, more prosperous future for young people?

PwC / New Statesman

12:00pm, Tuesday October 10, 2023

Panellists:

- Alona Ferber, Senior Editor, New Statesman Spotlight (Chair)
- Barry Fletcher, CEO of Youth Futures Foundation
- Sarah Atkinson, chief exec of Social Mobility Foundation
- Hemione Hudson, Head of Audit and Management Board Member, PwC
- Dan Norris, Mayor, West of England Combined Authority

Overview

This fringe event discussed how the UK could create better prospects for young people by cross collaboration between government, business, charities and community organisations.

Opening Statements

Alona Ferber, Senior Editor of the New Statesman Spotlight, chair, asked the panellists to give a three-minute introduction on this topic. She noted that Brabin had to pull out and that Barry Fletcher had stepped in at short notice.

Barry Fletcher, CEO of Youth Futures Foundation, said it was a tragedy that the UK had so many young people locked outside the employment market, and said that they should be looking at best practice from other countries to address this. He said that they had one third of students that didn't have five to 10 GCSEs, and that was something that needed to change. He said that the UK needed to get the transition between school and work much better, and to keep young people in the labour market.

Sarah Atkinson, Chief Executive of the Social Mobility Foundation, said that often society told children what they ought to do, and what to feel. Often, they weren't asking what FE courses they wanted to attend, but they wanted a greater sense of esteem and security in their lives. Recruiters, she said, often didn't keep track of where their apprentices went after doing one. They could be a great engine for social mobility, but they were currently being under used.

She said there was a real lack of ambition in this sector. Learning while working was a hard thing to balance. She said that they had not heard enough from politicians on this issue, and didn't think just about the mechanics of this sort of support, but thought about the human elements as well.

Hemione Hudson, Head of Audit and Management Board Member at PwC, said that as major employer, skills were essential. She said the UK needed to talk about the role of business in all of this. In her role, as part of a professional services firm, they had a good sense of what businesses wanted. She said they didn't just do this because it was the right thing to do, but because it also made good business sense. She said that there was still a lot more for them to do, and that there was more that needed to be done. She said that the focus on regional investment was huge, and that one of the main programmes that PwC conducted was bringing young people into companies in the business world, and this helped get them used to working.

Dan Norris, Mayor of the West of England, started by talking about the situation of people in his area of the West Midlands. He said that we needed to use all the skills and talents of our people to compete in the world, and we needed a system that didn't leave these people behind. He said that he had great talents of the British people to this end.

On the situation of young people, he talked about how he used to work in youth work, and used to work with hundreds of troubled children. He talked about some of the skills provisions that he had implemented in the East of England Combined Authority.

Working from Home

In response to a question from the chair on home working as part of the mix, Hudson said that at her company they instructed their workforce to come into the office at least two days a week. She said that working in person was an essential aspect of getting used to the world of work.

Atkinson said that the use of soft skills was this essential.

Fletcher said that the exposure to these skills was important. He noted that hybrid skills were important, and that giving more support was important.

Norris said that this illustrated the urge to rush on topics. Via Zoom calls, meetings often had a lot of needless chat, which didn't take into account body language and silences that were important for communication and team bonding. He talked about the fact that many people still didn't even have basic technology, which meant that many people were being left out from this equation.

Q & A

Impact of the Pandemic on Young People's mental health

In response to a question from the floor on the impact of covid on young people's mental health, Hudson talked about initiatives that her company enacted to support young people, including additional training and support. She said that they had seen an uptake in mental health issues among young people, and that this was something that needed to be addressed.

Fletcher said that unfortunately, this was a situation that had been exacerbated by the pandemic, but had already been rising before this time.

Atkinson said that the pandemic had given them some very acute data in terms of skills and attendance.

Norris said that there had been many programmes in his local area that were more about mental health than there were about jobs. He felt that there hadn't been a clear enough distinction in his view, and that there needed to be a greater debate and discussion on this. Referencing his own working-class background, he said that there needed to be greater efforts to inspire and engage young people directly.

Devolved Local Powers

In response to a question on desired powers from a Labour Government, Norris said that his situation was different from other mayors, noting that he was a mayor in a part of the country where Labour was effectively representing a marginal constituency. He said that the Combined Authorities (CA) were set up and involved powers being taken away from local councils and moved upwards to his position, something which he noted had created some resentment amongst the council leaders he dealt with.

Norris raised the example of his attempt to bring in a Spatial Awareness Plan which didn't go through because the Conservative council leader in his Combined Authority didn't support it, and under CA rules there needed to be unanimous support. Norris called for new legislation so that the Combined Authority needed majority support but not unanimity when voting on policies.

Politicians and truth

In response to a question from the floor on why there hadn't more efficiency with taxpayers' money on this issue, Norris said that often there was a difficult issue discussing certain problems. He said that his successor as a local MP, Jacob Rees-Moog, was a good example of this sort of ingrained deference in society, as someone who was in his view extreme but polite, and was therefore able to get away with things.

Atkinson said that there were things that needed more engagement from politicians on.

Fletcher said that if you looked at the investment in skills, there had been a reduction over recent years, and there needed to be more work from employers on this.

Hudson said that she echoed more of these comments, but that there were some things that changed quite quickly, and they were having to change programmes. She raised the case of regenerative AI and how that wasn't a factor for them until 2022. She said if you could measure something you could change it. She said that when she spoke to young people, they were very ambitious and if they pushed government on this then they would move.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Prioritising equality – education policy as a lever to tackling disadvantage and inequalities

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

13 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Prioritising equality – education policy as a lever to tackling disadvantage and inequalities

Education Policy Institute (EPI) and UCL Centre for Education Policy and Equalising Opportunities (CEPEO)

12pm, Tuesday 10 October

Panel:

- David Hughes, CEO, Association of Colleges
- Prof Lindsey Macmillan, founding director, CEPEO
- Dr Sally Burtonshaw, associate director (education), Public First
- Natalie Perera, chief executive, EPI (chair)
- Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England
- Bridget Philipson, Shadow Secretary of State for Education

Widening gaps in attainment

Natalie Perera, Chief Executive of the EPI, said they wanted to explore how a future Labour government could use education as a lever to tackle inequality. She noted that, in the decade leading up to 2017, there had been a positive story in terms of making progress on attainment and narrowing the gap. Academies had been seen to have a proven impact on raising standards, and England had seen gaps closing in the primary phase.

However, from 2017 onwards, she said they'd seen these trends start to slow down, and in the early years in particular, they started to reverse. The gap also began to widen in secondary and primary, so we were already entering a period of the system becoming more fragile even prior to the pandemic.

Evidence-led policy

Prof Lindsey Macmillan, Founding Director of CEPEO, explained that the Centre had been founded four years ago to champion evidence-led education policy. It was for this reason she said it was refreshing to see an education team in Labour who were committed to using the best evidence in its policymaking. In particular, she noted Labour's fifth mission on 'opportunity' reflected much of CEPEO's research. She also said their commitment to look at peoples' life chances on a longer-term framework was vital – while it wasn't a "quick win" it was so important in tackling inequality.

She spoke of their recent policy proposals which provided menu priorities for next government – from early years through to adulthood – and provided options ranging from low investment immediate policies (for example, a campaign on early maths learning directed at parents) to longer term investment to address big issues.

Labour policy thinking

Bridget Philipson, Shadow Education Secretary, thanked CEPEO for its work, saying it had helped inform a lot of their thinking. She said a lot of these issues had been emerging prior to the pandemic but had been exacerbated during this time and made worse by the Government not providing a proper plan for recovery.

She said Labour policy thinking would be shaped by the best available evidence out there so they could ensure that, no matter where someone was from, they could have every chance to get on in life.

The role of schools

Philipson said that, while schools could do a lot, they weren't expecting them to do everything, which is why her team were working closely with Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary Liz Kendall, particularly on addressing child poverty.

Where they were asking schools to do more, she said they were outlining how they would support and resource this. She also said the early years was a personal priority for her and for an incoming Labour government. However, she added they would be inheriting a very constrained fiscal environment, and that hard choices would have to be made.

Attendance crisis

Dr Sally Burtonshaw, Associate Director for Education at Public First, said the attendance crisis was having an impact on efforts to close the attainment gap.

She outlined recent work undertaken by Public First who had focus grouped parents to find out why they thought attendance was down. There was a general feeling that the contract between homes and schools had broken down, as had the relationship between the two. Parents had talked of draconian systems and sanctions not working, she said, and how they wanted to know their school communities cared about them.

Retention crisis

Burtonshaw also said it was only worth having children in school if there were teachers in school. She explained how Public First had been working on a teacher retention commission and, through their engagement with the sector, were hearing that pay and conditions were a real problem. As well as that, teachers wanted to do work that added value. She continued, saying many teachers also wanted to see flexibility, so there was a question around how this could be done to make the profession more attractive.

A tertiary system

David Hughes, CEO of the Association of Colleges (AoC), said there needed to be a “big culture shift” in the system, and argued people had lost sight of the purpose of education – while the Government measured it by salary outcome, he said its purpose should be turning people into lifelong learners, which would benefit both the labour market, and peoples’ lives. He suggested to Philipson that this culture change would be extremely important.

He argued GCSEs weren't working – that there were pronounced class differences and that the menu of GCSEs on offer didn't work. He also said they needed to give more hours to 16 to 19-year-olds. He said it wasn't important to make clear an undergraduate degree wasn't the only path, particularly as many inequalities were baked in here, so it would be important for Labour to think about level 4 and 5. He suggested England needed a tertiary system – not a college, and then university, system – which he noted Wales was already ahead on.

Children's perspective

Dame Rachel de Souza, Children's Commissioner for England, said that through her engagement sessions, visits to schools, and The Big Ask, children had told her they wanted to see the disadvantage gap closed because they didn't believe someone's postcode should control their destiny. She was pleased to hear Philipson talk about having care in education, as well as standards, and that whatever your background you should get the best possible outcomes. She added that, despite a lot of problems in the system, young people were still telling her that they were still ambitious and wanted to achieve.

She said her own theory on why gaps were widening was in part because “education is going along on its own” but children's social care wasn't part of the conversation.

She suggested they needed to look at the data and do the right things to transform the situation but convening all the relevant players to do their part. She also noted she'd spoke recently to Sir Michael Barber, who had said they needed to do twice as much as they ever had done, in order to get standards up.

Speaking about attendance, she said one approach she'd taken recently was to convene all relevant stakeholders in a meeting, and in doing so they realised many important conversations weren't happening locally. She suggested there was a need to fix communication at local and regional levels between key players.

On narrowing the gap, she said they had to “coalesce” around schools, ensuring children's social care and mental health support were wrapped round each child when needed, and that they would have to build the right architecture for this to be achieved. She added she was pleased to see Labour talking about a unique identifier, which she said was needed.

She also suggested the early years mission was critical – she wanted to see government “rocket boost” childminders, get Ofsted out of the way, and based Family Hubs out of schools and community centres.

Measuring outcomes

Perera asked Philipson what Labour would consider to be “good outcomes” for young people after they left education.

Philipson said Hughes was right on how we should value and measure education. She argued assessing universities solely in terms of economic outcomes missed out lots of other things. She said talk of “low value degrees” was also disrespectful and accused ministers of “pulling up the ladder” behind them, after having benefited from university themselves.

Philipson said a key metrics through their mission would be reducing inequality for generations, which required long-term thinking and approach.

Q&A



Youth work

A member of the audience asked about Labour's focus on evidence-led policy, and if this applied to more non-formal learning through the likes of youth work. Another member of the audience also asked how the youth sector could better work with the education sector.

De Souza said she was a fan of youth work and its impact. She suggested the Government's shouldn't have done 'eat out to help out' after the pandemic, but instead 'play out to help out' and had the whole sector get involved. She argued for greater partnerships with schools and a more viable pipeline between the two workforces.

Hughes agreed there should be a greater joining up of the two systems. He noted that Government had recently put out more money for youth centres, but suggested a better investment might have perhaps been to open up schools for youth work.

Curriculum and assessment

A member of the audience asked how teachers could make schools, the curriculum and assessment more interesting to young people.

De Souza said the curriculum was starting to feel like a "straitjacket" and that the sector needed to be brave in getting children and young people involved in its design. While rigour was important, there should also be a focus on what children needed out of the curriculum. She suggested vocational education should be brought back in for aged 14+. She also said she'd like to see Ofsted do a piece of national work on youth voice, as well as an attendance thematic review.

Hughes suggested there should be an option for young people to do weekend college. He also said they needed to provide opportunities to the most disadvantaged that middle class children would often get – for example, across culture and sports.

Philipson said Labour would conduct an expert-led curriculum review. While it needed to happen soon, she said it also needed to happen properly – in the interim, she said they would make sure all pupils had access to sports, drama, and vocational activities.

School food and oracy

A member of the audience asked what impact school food, and oracy, would have on closing the gap.

Philipson said they were committed to providing breakfast clubs, which had proven to be effective. On oracy, she said this would be embedded into the curriculum.

Macmillan said it had been positive to hear Keir Starmer talking about oracy – noting you could often tell at university which of your peers went to a private school, based on how they presented themselves.

Citizenship and political education

A member of the audience from the charity 'I have a voice' asked if there was a role for political education in a future curriculum.

Hughes said this was extremely important and noted that ASCL supported lowering the voting age to 16, which would require greater political education in schools.

De Souza said citizenship and political education were important and there was more work to be done here. She also noted young people had told her they wanted greater PSHE as well. She criticised the “polarised debate” on relationships and sex education (RSE), saying young people just wanted to know if there were ‘normal’ or what a healthy relationship looked like.

Mental health

A member of the audience asked how they could address the mental health crisis among young people.

Philipson said she was working with Wes Stressing and the shadow health team on this and drew attention to Labour’s mental health hubs pledge. Macmillan noted their longitudinal COSMO study had shown poor mental health rising even prior to the pandemic, but it was now increasing drastically, which was feeding into absenteeism, among other things.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Why invest in us? Putting children and young people at the heart of the next government

12 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Why invest in us? Putting children and young people at the heart of the next government

Coalition of Charities

8:00am, Tuesday October 10, 2023

Panellists:

- Jade Azim, Associate Director, WPI Strategy (Chair)
- Lynn Perry, CEO, Barnardo's
- Helen Hayes MP, Shadow Minister for Children and Early Years
- Dr Camilla Kingdon, President, Royal College of Pediatrics and Child Health
- Nick Davies, Programme Director, Institute for Government
- Izzy and Markus, Members, Young People's Board for Change

Overview

An event hosted by a coalition of five leading children's charities: Barnardo's, Action for Children, NSPCC, National Children's Bureau, and The Children's Society. The panel included many representatives of these charities, and leading young voices on the issues affecting them. The aim of the event was to consider what the next government should do to ensure children growing up today and tomorrow were safer, happier, healthier and had more equal access to opportunities.

Introductions

Jade Azim, Associate Director of WPI Strategy, who was chairing the meeting, said that this event was to discuss how to put children and young people first. Azim also talked about postcards to pledge their support.

She then introduced a short video outlining the work of this joint initiative. This advertised the coalition of charities that was advocating for the needs of babies, children and young people which it said should be prioritised by the next government. It called for them to have a 'voice around the table' when decisions were made.

Lynn Perry, CEO of Barnardo's, said it was a privilege to be here today on this initiative, and that they had come together for the first time to make this case. She said that they wanted every government policy to be seen through the lens of addressing children and young people's needs.

Perry talked of there being a 'long tail of covid' that was having a marked impact on the life chances of children and young people that her organisation cared for, and she called for further government intervention on this issue. She said that right now there was a real opportunity to deliver better outcomes for children in the UK, and that the adults owed it to the next generation to do this. She said their key demands were to see more investment in the UK's national wealth in early intervention and prevention; to have a personal pledge from the PM and Chancellor to deal with this crisis; and to have a Cabinet committee especially committed to tackling this situation, and to create an ambitious outcomes framework to implement this.

She then referenced a recent Barnardo's report that found that one in four children in the UK now lived in poverty and one in 10 children had to share beds. This could not be right, and said that as a sector of trust across the country, it was their duty to speak out about it.

She finished by saying that this was the responsibility of their coalition to amplify these voices so that they were heard. These children deserved more, and they deserved better.

The first youth speaker, Izzy, said it was clear that children and young people were being listened to these days. She said that they relied on platforms like this coalition to give young people a voice. She said that the wellbeing of children and young people should be prioritised.

She said that the mental health crisis had hit young people heavily and that the PSHE curriculum was an untapped gem to utilise. If more young people were given mental health help earlier, then more young people would be able to develop better coping mechanisms. She also added that the government should expand opportunities for children's services and the arts.

The second youth speaker, Markus, said that he had talked a lot on the coalition board about the importance of free school meals, and that he would like a Labour government to raise the wage bracket for free school meals. He said he would like the levels to increase, as in recent years with the rising cost of living, it had made this far more difficult. He also called for the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA) to be brought back so that young people could get further support. He called for free breakfasts and free school meals. He criticised the idea that people could work their way out of poverty, noting that once you rose slightly above this threshold you lost crucial support.

Nick Davies, Programme Director of the Institute for Government, said that most of the issues confronting the government were cross-cutting, and the same was the case for child poverty. He said that the single most important factor was political support from senior members of government, such as the Prime Minister and the Chancellor, and if you could get this alignment under the New Labour government, then huge improvements could be made. The key thing was about identifying the key data to develop guidelines for change. This could include targets, where he admitted they had a bad reputation, but felt that they had a place to bring the full weight of government to bear on an issue. He added that Cabinet Committees were a good way of coordinating this, so that cross-cutting issues could be dealt with. Political leadership and support were vital.

Dr Camilla Kingdon, President of the Royal College of Paediatricians and Child Health, said that the foundation of healthcare of any system relied on giving children healthy lives. She said that the UK was not a good place to be a child, as it had some of the worst child health rates in Europe. She noted the very bad asthma rates in the UK. She noted that 15 percent of 15 years olds had a mental health problem, and this disproportionately impacted children on free school meals and with special needs.

Dr Kingdon noted the very high waiting lists for medical appointments for children, as many of these operations had a time critical window to fix medical issues. She noted a recent report from the RCP on the issue.

Helen Hayes MP, Shadow Minister for Children and Early Years, thanked the coalition for all the work and research that they had done on this issue. She said that her ministerial brief covered many of the sections touched upon today, but noted what Davies had said about the cross-cutting nature of this issue. She said that the situation raised today was the consequence of 13 years of Conservative budget. She said that there had been no priority given to them but this was an issue.

She said that the situation with SEND support had been greatly eroded, and this had a material impact on children.

Labour, she said, recognised the scale of this challenge, and noted that Starmer would be addressing this in his speech later today. She said that they remained proud of their achievements in office and said to remain in no doubt that it would be a priority for a future Labour government. She said that the UK currently had one of the most expensive childcare systems in Europe and that the UK needed to break down the barriers.

Labour would start introducing free breakfast clubs to all children. She said that breakfast clubs delivered, and that this would be a key pledge by Labour. Hayes said that they couldn't throw money at a broken system, and so that fixing the childcare system would be a key priority. She said that they would remove profiteering from this sector and would use the money regained to help fund children's services.

Hayes said that Labour would open a 'mental health hub' in every school, saying that these were really powerful interventions so they would be prioritised. She finished by saying that she represented a constituency where many young people were the victims of youth violence (Dulwich). She said that there had been good anti-crime initiatives by the Mayor of London which they would want to see expanded across the country. She noted that they would have many areas to fix, but she assured the audience of the commitments and the political will to fix all this.

Q & A

Young Carers

In response to a question from the floor on the situation facing young carers and who they felt were often ignored, Perry said that it was important that they demonstrated what worked, and this would be something that developed and informed policy. She said that it was important the voices of young people were heard, and that the diversity of lived experience was represented in policymaking.

Migrant Children

In response to a question from the floor on the plight of migrant children, who were often excluded by the system, Hayes said that we needed to sort the broken asylum system, especially the backlog that had been developed under the current government. Hayes said that this wasn't within her portfolio, so she wouldn't make a commitment on this at this stage.

Mechanisms of Government

In response to a question from the floor on the child's rights impact assessments, and their lack of use, and whether this would be used to help inform the policy, Hayes said that they would be looking at ways to improve things all the time. She wouldn't commit to a specific set of measures right now, but this was something they would be looking at in time.

Priorities of a New Government

Azim turned to the youth representatives for final remarks.



Markus said that his main ask for a Labour government would be to introduce free school meals in the UK.

Izzy stressed the benefits of mental health in giving a wholistic approach.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How can Labour deliver world-class teaching for every child and secure the education workforce we need?

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

12 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How can Labour deliver world-class teaching for every child and secure the education workforce we need?

Education Policy Institute (EPI) and Ambition Institute

3pm, Tuesday 10 October

Panel:

- John Camp, president, ASCL;
- Sam Freedman, board vice-chair, Ambition Institute;
- Lucy Heller, chief executive, Ark;
- James Zuccollo, Education Policy Institute (chair);

Success of teacher development

Sam Freedman, board vice-chair at Ambition Institute and former DfE policy advisor, said he took issue with the phrase “world-class” when right now he would settle for achieving “good”. He praised the work done in recent years by the Government on teacher development, saying this has been due to a sustained focus from DfE civil servants.

Freedman said this meant a Labour victory would require them to build on the good work already undertaken, rather than completely redesign the system. He noted the successful introduction of early careers framework (ECF) and redesign of initial teacher training (ITT) and he did not think Labour would want to scrap any of this, though he acknowledged there were still improvements to be made, particularly as many of these are new.

Recruitment and retention

However, Freedman said there was still a “smoking ruin” on recruitment. He noted the sector was on track this year to recruit just 50 percent of secondary teachers required, despite DfE using the only tool left in its arsenal to put up bursaries. There were policies that could help, he said, but they were expensive. Pay and conditions were a driver away from teaching and to deal with that, he said they had to create stronger incentives. One suggestion was that Government could take away the additional loan needed to undertake PGCE, or you could even just pay more.

Of all the issues facing the sector, he said this was going to be the biggest struggle for an incoming Secretary of State – saying Labour would have to make the strong case to the Treasury, even amidst fiscal constraints.

While data was not showing retention to be as big a problem at the moment – figures were still around the same level as before the pandemic – he said there was a data lag, so this could still be

coming down the road. He suggested one factor was the pastoral role of schools having increased, particularly in last few years. He also noted the system was quite good at supporting early career teachers at the moment, but was not doing as much for those later in career.

Funding, focus and flexibility

Lucy Heller, chief executive of Ark, agreed with Freedman, adding that changes to development had been welcome. She spoke about the “three Fs” they would need to tackle in order to address a lot of issues in the sector right now: funding, focus and flexibility.

She explained how the funding pressures schools were under meant everyone felt “weighed down” which was leading to many long-serving teachers leaving in despair. However, she said she was not optimistic that extra funding would be coming.

She said they also had to focus on the basics – schools were left to do everything now, taking on the remnants of what had previously been the role of local authorities. Adding this on top of further curriculum demands was adding further pressure, so she said Labour would have to be really disciplined about what additional responsibilities they placed on schools.

Flexibility was something within the power of schools to implement, she suggested. While she acknowledged it was difficult to implement the sort of flexibility seen in other careers, there were new approaches that could be considered.

Finally, Heller said retention was very much an problem heading their way, reflecting on what she was seeing on the board. There were people really committed to the profession opting out because it had become too hard, she said.

Tackling workload

John Camp, president of ASCL and CEO of Compass Partnership Trust, said policymaking had to be rooted in the teacher lived experience. He suggested a lot of thinking on workload at the moment focused on proxy markers, such as marking and meeting time, when what teachers were focused on was wider barriers to spending time on improving children's outcomes. There needed to be a piece of work on how to strengthen the broader system around the school, he suggested, so that teachers could focus on teaching and learning. Simply focussing on the barriers created by the administrative aspects of teaching left out wider teachers concerns, she argued.

On recruitment, he said they had a job to do on how they sold the profession to potential newcomers. The recent changes to ITT – particularly the reduction of salaried routes into teaching – have had an impact on this, particularly on people changing careers to enter workforce, or on working mothers wanting to join. He cited the Salaried School Direct route as having worked well.

On funding, he said teacher salaries had declined in real terms over the last decade significantly, which meant some may not see it as a career that could help them sustain a family life while teaching.

Q&A

Tailoring training

A member of the audience from the charity Education Support said their research saw lack of flexibility and additional pastoral responsibilities coming through as having a negative impact. On CPD, she said there had been a lot of criticisms around the new frameworks in terms of it needing to feel more tailored to the reality on the ground. She asked how this could be done.

Camp said schools still ran on a timetabled model and there were lots of opportunities for change and flexibility here. He said the national development programmes were fantastic, however there would always need to be a “local flavour”. He added it was important they weren’t seen as the be all and end all, but as part of a wider diet of professional development.

Heller suggested one of the advantages of the Schools Direct programme was that it could be bespoke with its ITT.

Fixing the system

From the audience, Gareth Conyard from Teacher Development Trust asked if the panel thought that these issues could be solved by Labour “getting it right”, or if there was a broader conversation to be had about the system.

Heller said probably not, and there would always be problems. She suggested that, in the battle to get more money into education, the profession had seemed like hell, when actually it was the best job – she suggested perhaps there was some marketing work to be done there.

Freedman said he did not think Labour would fix recruitment and that it was fundamentally broken – in part because you would have to increase pay far beyond what the Treasury would allow to get back to the same levels before. He said he thought there was a chance teaching could become a visa profession, as we had seen with the health service. However, he also said the health service had not dealt with this very well and the sector should try to avoid it happening – but that if it did happen, they should prepare to support it better than in health.

World-class teaching

A member of the audience asked how the panel would define “world-class teaching”.

Freedman said they only had proxy measures through tests, and there were even variables within that, such as parental background. Camp said it was important for all young people to leave education with a sense of agency and engagement in society.

Speech and language

Louisa Reeves, from Speech and Language UK, said they had seen an increase in children struggling to talk or understand words. She asked if the ITT now needed to include support for teachers to teach spoken language in the same way they’re trained to teach written language and maths.

Camp said they had noticed the situation worsening since the pandemic. He said the NELI programme had been shown to make a huge difference. He continued, saying language, vocabulary and words were fundamental in helping to close the disadvantage gap.

Teachers of the D/deaf

A member of the audience from the National Deaf Children’s Society (NDCS) said they had seen a drop in teachers of the D/deaf over the last few years and, while they welcomed the new apprenticeship, it was years away. He asked if the panel felt Labour should be investing in this area of SEND support.

Heller said the neediest children needed the greatest investment.

Freedman said, in general, there was a growth in special schools but there weren’t enough teachers for them. The system hadn’t considered having a rapidly expanding SEND system, so now there was a question around how to train mainstream teachers to provide specialist help.

Camp said one of the schools in his Trust was a special school. He argued they had to expand opportunities for specialist training in ITT.

Retire and return

A former teacher in the audience asked what the panel thought of introducing 'retire and return' mentors, similar to what had been seen in the health service.

Heller said they were doing this in Ark. Camp agreed this was a good idea and suggested there was an opportunity for those who had retired before 60 to come back in part-time.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How should Labour implement its education reforms?

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

12 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How should Labour implement its education reforms?

Education Policy Institute (EPI) and Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

12pm, Monday 9 October

Panel:

- Natalie Perera, CEO, EPI (chair);
- Geoff Barton, general-secretary, ASCL;
- Jason Elsom, CEO, Parentkind;
- Catherine McKinnell MP, Shadow Minister for Schools;
- Paul Whiteman, general-secretary, NAHT;

Opening remarks

Natalie Perera, CEO of the Education Policy Institute, drew guests' attention to their recently published paper on education priorities for the next general election, which set out what the parties needed to address within the sector to bridge attainment gaps. She explained their recent analysis looking back 10 years showed worrying trends – schools with consecutive poor Ofsted ratings often went on to face high teacher leaving rates.

Reforming Ofsted

Geoff Barton, general-secretary of ASCL, said Labour would inherit a good education system, but one that was not good enough for every child from every background. He said Ofsted was critical to this debate on teacher retention, and that there were lots of things in the current system that should be left alone, but Ofsted reform was not one of them.

He said they knew the profession agreed with this proposed reform, which was demonstrated by its popularity on TeacherTapp surveys. He also noted findings from the Times Education Commission which showed that 46 percent of parents did not trust Ofsted gradings at all. He suggested something had shifted in the narrative, and that they had emerged from the pandemic with a different social contract between schools and parents.

Barton said you could not you take something as complex as schools and colleges and condense them into just a one-word result, which was why ASCL would like to see the removal of the grade overall. He said that, where a school was struggling, they wanted to see support and that Ofsted should be part of that support and part of the process.

They would also like to remove safeguarding from the Ofsted inspection and give it a separate audit, he said, adding parents should have a balanced scorecard or dashboard, which identified the areas parents were interested in.

He acknowledged Labour would immediately open itself up to attacks that they were being soft on standards, but argued there was strength in knowing they were on the side of parents, amidst addressing a recruitment and retention crisis, and the need to create a better system.

Involving parents in the conversation

Jason Elsom, CEO of Parentkind, explained how their parent-teacher associations, who had once focused on raising money for sports equipment and cultural activities, were now having to raise funds for basics, such as coats and shoes. This was the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.

He outlined how their research had shown a third of parents struggled to engage with Ofsted reports, two-thirds did not find them useful, and 80 percent did not think safeguarding should be part of it. They also felt reports did not take into account the things that mattered to parents.

Parents were looking for a much broader description of what schools were doing to support their children in a more well-rounded way, he said. The current system was also damaging the workforce and children's outcomes, he argued, saying it required a rethink – and one that included parents in the conversation. He suggested simply changing the list of what Ofsted did without rebranding and shifting perception would not allow parents to engage.

A supportive approach to inspection

Paul Whiteman, general-secretary of the NAHT, said the right decisions on inspections had not been made for quite some time now. He argued the inspection system was a “force for ill” rather than a force for good right now, and that it was tragic that it took the death of Ruth Perry to trigger this conversation.

He described the “mental torture” of waiting in the evening for the call that the inspection was coming the next day. The one-word result was “reductive and dangerous” in his view, with school leaders seeing the grading as a personal one. He also spoke about the impact on volunteers in the sector, such as those in governance positions, who also took the grades to heart.

Whiteman said inspection was of course needed, although the current Ofsted brand was damaged. Schools needed a deeper diagnostic, able to identify excellence, which they hoped would encourage peer-to-peer support. The NAHT were really attracted by what Labour were talking about – the party had been listening to the profession and he believed what they were starting to design began to acknowledge what teachers had been saying.

He cautioned that any change should also avoid a matrix that could easily be abused by the press. He said language was important, suggesting that instead of talking about ‘intervention’, ‘inadequate’ or ‘requires improvement’, they should instead talk about ‘requires support’. He said they should also make sure there were a range of support services schools could access, rather than just a one-off response of putting them into a MAT.

Labour's reforms

Catherine McKinnell, Shadow Schools Minister, said as a North East MP, she cared particularly that excellence and opportunity was accessible to all, and was proud of Labour's mission to break down barriers. She suggested inspections now were not just dreaded, but also ineffective, providing little useful information to parents. She said Labour wanted to work with the sector, in partnership with schools, parents and teachers, to create a system that worked. Their plan for reform focused on improvement – highlighting the areas in which they were doing well, as well as those where they may need support.

She said they wanted to work with experts and would ensure any changes are based on evidence. The headline policy was that they would replace grades with a report card, would bring MATs into the fold, and move to an annual safeguarding, attendance and off-rolling review.

Training inspectors

Perera asked Barton what he meant by taking a “fresh approach” to inspection. Barton suggested the new chief inspector should look at how to incentivise other senior leaders to join the inspectorate – he suggested there could even be room for a professional qualification.

Simpler inspections

Perera asked Whiteman if there was a trade-off between simplicity and nuance.

Whiteman said simplicity should not prevent detail, but the problem at the moment was the system allowed for a lot of variability between inspectors. In at least 10 percent of cases, two inspection teams would come up with different results, he said. A new system required simple measures to prevent the variability.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Schools and teachers at the heart of unlocking opportunity

12 October 2023

Education Policy Institute (EPI) and Teach First

10am, Monday 9 October

- James Zuccollo, Director for School Workforce, EPI (chair);
- Tony McGuinness, Headteacher, All Saints Catholic High School;
- John Noble, Chief Operating Officer, IG Group;
- Catherine McKinnell MP, Shadow Minister for Schools;
- Russell Hobby, CEO, Teach First;
- Gina Cicerone, co-CEO, Fair Education Alliance;

Working with business

John Noble, COO of IG Group, explained that, for them as a financial business, maths and technology education were key. He said being able to recruit and train the next talent, as well as upskilling, was vital to their business, and education was crucial in helping their clients achieve their goals. He explained how they'd been partnering with Teach First since 2020 with great success. He suggested businesses had an important role to play here, in tandem with the public sector.

Recruitment and retention

Russell Hobby, CEO of Teach First, said the number one problem was not having enough teachers – they couldn't consider interventions such as 'maths to 18' without first addressing this. He said the situation was continuing to compound, and the volume of interest in teaching from university students was in decline. He suggested they would need 20 percent of maths graduates to choose to teach if the Government wanted to realise its 'maths to 18' ambition.

Salaries of teachers had fallen significantly behind other professions, he explained, but added it wasn't just salary driving people out of the profession – it was also workload and working conditions, and the scrutiny and accountability frameworks. Teachers were quite prepared to work hard – but it was about whether they felt the work they were doing was leading to good outcomes for pupils. He added that government didn't spend enough time considering the cost of initiatives and interventions, particularly in terms of time taken to administer them.

Priorities for an incoming government

Gina Cicerone, co-CEO of the Fair Education Alliance, explained how they were working in most schools across England through their alliance members, which also included business groups, third sector, and education providers. She said they wanted to see a prioritisation of early years, join-up of local service provision, and a plan to crack teacher recruitment and retention.

She explained that their teachers were telling them their role was “ever-growing and never stopping”, with additional burdens falling on schools, without the recognition or resource. They wanted to see a framework for inspection to recognise and celebrate that work.

Working conditions

Alongside pay, Cicerone suggested there were other levers the sector could pull – for example, the largest group of people leaving were working mothers, as teaching did not accommodate their lifestyle. She said they needed to fund schools to have the infrastructure to offer flexible work and get support in.

She also spoke briefly about inclusion, saying a lot of individuals weren't seeing themselves in the workforce. She suggested the education sector wasn't doing enough on EDI, while the private sector moved ahead.

The impact of Teach First

Tony McGuinness, headteacher of All Saints Catholic High School in Kirkby, said his school had gone from special measures in 2015, to 'Good' in every category following its Ofsted inspection this year. He said they were now oversubscribed in every year group, had seen the best results in the school's history this summer, and that Progress 8 results showed they were heading in the right direction.

After that 2015 judgement, McGuinness explained that good teachers left and there was a low attraction to fill vacancies, compounding all the original problems. However, they then started working with Teach First. He said they'd had 24 participants since 2015 – describing them as quality teachers who complimented other committed colleagues' skills, provided positive role models and were, in general, top graduates. He credited Teach First with the success of his school and turning around their fortunes.

Finally, to Labour, he said if they were serious about tackling inequality, they needed to “get the policies right to end the postcode lottery.”

Labour's approach

Catherine McKinnell, shadow schools minister, said there was a common thread running through everything she'd done in parliament since elected – schools, children, and young people. She also spoke about her time chairing the Petitions Committee and the number of inquiries they'd seen in relation to education.

She said the recruitment and retention crisis was the biggest challenge to Labour's mission to break down barriers of opportunity to every child across the country. Teachers need to be valued and feel valued, she said, and noted Labour had set out its plans for a National Excellence Programme. She said it would be important to bridge skills gaps, give headteachers professional development, and give teachers the time and space for their own CPD. McKinnell said she wanted to be a schools minister who listened to and worked with the sector.

Q&A

A member of audience who used to be a teacher and SENCO in South London said she had left the profession, despite saying she probably had another 10 years in her. She said Ofsted was punitive and not fit for purpose, and it needed to look beyond just results. She pleaded with Labour: “no more new initiatives”.

McKinnell responded that Labour was aware of the issues she'd raised and that they were focused on resetting the relationship with the sector. They were looking at reforming Ofsted to create more holistic and supportive system – but they would work with the sector, changes wouldn't be imposed down on them

Hobby said we only measured narrow parts of the education system and suggested a lot could be done just to readjust what was valued but added that this wouldn't require ripping up the system either.

Freddie Whittaker, reported from SchoolsWeek, asked how Labour would recruit an additional 6,500 teachers, as promised. He also noted that projections suggested there would be an even bigger recruitment gap, and asked if Labour planned to revise up that figure.

McKinnell said they would work with the sector to solve these issues.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Sustainable and Affordable Homes: How Will Labour Build Better?

12 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Sustainable and Affordable Homes: How Will Labour Build Better?

Thakenham

10:30am, Tuesday October 10, 2023

Panelists:

- John Pienaar, Presenter and Journalist, Times Radio (Chair)
- Meg Hillier MP, Chair of the Public Accounts Committee
- Cllr Emma Taylor-Beal
- Rob Boughton, CEO, Thakeham
- Mark Washer, Chief Executive, SNG

Introduction

John Pienaar, a Presenter and Journalist for Times Radio, who was chairing the meeting, said that this topic touched on one of the key topics in public discourse. Housing, he said, was the top issue for many members of the public, and Starmer would address this in his speech. He said it was interesting that the Prime Minister didn't address this in his speech last week. He said the question was about what the best policies were to deal with this crisis.

Meg Hillier MP, Chair of the Public Accounts Committee, said that a stable secure home was essential to quality of life. She talked about her experience of constituents' struggles with housing in Hackney. She also mentioned the struggles of 'generation rent', and in her work at the Public Accounts Committee, they had published reports stressing that the government had failed to manage housebuilding.

Hillier called this a 'slow crisis' as it would be a crisis that revealed itself over the next few years and decades. She said she was hopeful that Starmer would make some bold announcements shortly in his speech, and that the UK also needed to start looking at modular building to help deal with this crisis. The UK needed to be looking at volume, quality and about place ownership. She also noted Rachel Reeve's comments on international home ownership. Hillier said that need to reach the home ownership target that Keir has outline in his speech later that day, but that council ownership is an important part of the mix to. There should be an emphasis on localism, but that central government should step in when it is necessary.

Councillor Emma Taylor-Beal of Worthing Borough Council said that prior to getting involved in local government, she was heavily involved in climate issues. She noted that housing also contributed to 10 percent to the UK's global emissions, and so reducing this should be a priority. She said that the structure and insulation issues were contributing to overheating. She noted that Worthing was

largely a Conservative until Labour took the council in 2022. She said that they had very little in terms of funding, and that they had to be creative. She said that she was a member of Labour for Council Housing, and that they needed social housing that was not a separate lower tier to market housing. They were now moving to a new stage with this housebuilding programme. As council lead on housing, she had made a constant case on social housing.

Rob Boughton, CEO of Thakeham, said that his company saw this debate as essential to how the country moved forward. He said that they had taken a slightly different stance to other large and medium sized housing developers in the UK, and that they took a more progressive stance on housing delivery. He said that affordable homes were mixed into the housing developments that they built rather than separating them out as others did. He said that they wanted to get the debate going, and that the UK could deliver much better houses and developments than they were currently doing. He said they had a partnership with the Plunket Foundation to deliver facilities to the communities they built houses for. He said that this kind of partnership was important.

Mark Washer, Chief Executive of SNG, a housing provider, said SNG was a newly formed organisation from a merger 10 days ago. He said that they welcomed many of the initiatives brought forward by the shadow cabinet, such as building on brownfield sites and more support for housing associations. He said that he would urge the government to go further on these policies. He said that there was a potential trap for Labour here and said that localism might create problems for them. He said that they had challenges, but that it was in their interest for these new housing communities to endure in the future.

He said that there were over 90 data points that factored into the creation of new homes, 40 of which were about place. Finally, he said that they were struggling to get existing housing organisations to work to their higher standards, and this was something that needed to be worked on.

Q & A

Bricks and Mortar Question

The Chair asked the panel what was possible now to build more sustainable housing.

Boughton said that they were working towards the goal of building their first net zero houses by next year. He said that this technology was available today, and why this wasn't being done now surprised him.

Taylor-Beal said that the gas lobby was powerful, and this had discouraged the adoption of new technology, such as heat pumps. He said they should have been developing new green jobs.

In answer to a follow up from the Chair on the use of brownfield land, Taylor-Beal agreed that this was a challenge, but there were benefits to this.

Hillier said that there had been too much stop/start from the government on housing investment. Companies hadn't wanted to invest while there had been uncertainty over what government policy had been. She said that these were things that didn't need major legislation, and the question was what we could do now. But certainty was the key to instill confidence in the housing sector on this issue.

The decent homes initiative under the last Labour government started in 1999, and it still wasn't finished by the time Labour left office in 2010, so there needed to be a long-term government in order to embed these changes.

Washer said that no one was forcing any of these organisations to implement the standards that they were currently following. He said that they needed a steer from government, and they needed better skills.

Public investment

Pienaar asked the panel about the challenge of public investment.

Hillier said that having a long-term strategy was vital, and there needed to be a lot of 'slow politics' when thinking about this, as it took years for these necessary policy changes to sink in. She didn't want to pre-judge anything that Reeves might announce.

Taylor-Beal said that they had a very low level of existing housing stock in Worthing, as they had a statutory duty to house those who came to them as homeless, which ran up a bill with local hotels that then put pressure on their overall budgets. She felt that there should be a priority for local residents on housing lists.

Boughton said that if they created great housing and communities, then other social costs would go down. He said that they wanted market rents and social rents in the mix.

Washer said that the question about what affordable housing was essential. He said that they needed to think about using more urban intensification.

Land Use

In response to a question from the floor on land use on how brave Labour would be on this issue, Hillier said that she didn't want to pre-empt anything Starmer said, but that there had been a lot of good initiatives on this, and they needed to support many smaller builders in order to get more efficient and diverse housing in the UK. She said that the financials of it must work as well.

Boughton said that they needed to look at how and what was delivered. He noted that Homes England should be breaking down the land that they managed down to smaller housebuilders. They needed more SME builders in the future, but that would be a challenge.

Washer said that there needed to be more support for SME builders.

Existing Homes

In response to a question from the floor on how we could incentivise people to retrofit their homes to make them more efficient and environmentally sustainable, Taylor-Beal said that she was involved in feeding into the net zero sustainability, and a lot of proactive work was being done.

Hillier said that she there had been a failure by the government on this issue but said that there needed to be a volume approach to this.

Washer said that they had to concede that there was a minority of buildings that couldn't be retrofitted and would need to be demolished.

Civil Society Housing Fund

In response to a question from the floor on whether a civil society housing fund would be a way forward on this issue, Hillier said that there were perhaps other ways of doing this through a social fund.

Quality of new Homes

In response to a question from the floor on how they could ensure that there was a transparency in the quality of new homes, Boughton said that there had been more rigorous standards brought in recently. Also, he added that there had been issues in the UK housing sector with systemic skills shortages. He stressed that Thankeham had always built the legal standards, but the sector needed to find a way of more rigorously enforcing this issue.

Taylor-Beal said that there was a need for greater standards.

Hillier said that one of the issues was that the local housing budget had been cut in recent years.

Local Housing Targets

In response to a question from the floor from Brian Wheeler from the BBC about what the panel thought on local housing targets, Taylor-Beal said that any housing targets needed to distinguish between local housing demand and local housing need. She wanted to give a greater emphasis on the need. It needed to be a balance between local and national.

Greenbelt Land

In response to a question from the floor on protecting greenbelt land, Boughton said that housing builders should have a target to approach to housebuilding in selected areas. It should not be totally abandoned, and it should be utilised more.

Carbon pollution in the Atmosphere

In response to a question from the floor on how best to develop carbon natural houses, Boughton said that there had been some failures across the industry on this, but some innovations had been made.

Taylor-Beal said that the UK needed to move to a circular economy.

Washer said that there was a convening role for government on this issue.

Net Zero Announcements

In response to a question from the floor on the Prime Minister's announcement on watering down policies designed to meet the Net Zero target, Hillier said this won't necessarily happen if there was a change of government and Labour were in power, but didn't go into specifics.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: A nature and Climate Crisis: Will Labour use Joined up Thinking to Tackle Both Emergencies?

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

12 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: A nature and Climate Crisis: Will Labour use Joined up Thinking to Tackle Both Emergencies?

Labour's Environment Campaign – SERA

4:45pm, Tuesday October 10, 2023

Panellists:

- Hywel Loyd, SERA Executive (Chair);
- Jennifer Kelly, Head of Sustainability, Chester Zoo;
- Dan Norris, Metro Mayor for the West of England;
- Katie White, Director of Advocacy and Campaigns, WWF;
- Samantha Dixon, Member of Parliament for Chester;
- Ruth Jones, Shadow Environment Minister (arrived for the Q&A);

Overview

The event is about how the next Labour Government could protect and rebuild Britain's local environments.

Introduction

Hywel Loyd, SERA Executive, who was chairing the meeting started by asking those attending to think about what they could do in their local areas to help their environments.

Jennifer Kelly, Head of Sustainability, Chester Zoo, said that they were the biggest tourist attraction outside of London and that they were also passionate about protecting species against extinction. She said that the most powerful thing that they could do would be to connect them to nature. In order to tackle the ecological crises, it had to be done through collaboration. She said that they had an ambitious recovery policy and that this was a core part of their work. She said that giving communities ownership of local green spaces was an important way to engage people. She also added that there had been an encouraging change in tone at Labour conference around the net zero policies, and that this sort of work would play a clear role in this.

Dan Norris, Mayor of the West of England, who arrived later, said that the truth was that politics had moved on in recent years from the top-down structures of the last time Labour were in power, and what he was interested in was developing policies that tied issues together to resolve them. He said that they were in a climate crisis, and that he had developed a 'Birthday Buses' policy, that gives discounted busses for a month to encourage people to use cars less often. He says that if people made a change for 30 days or more people tended to stick to it, so this was about developing

positive change, not being anti-car. It was also about getting congestion down, and for the poorest constituents that would mean up to a twelfth off their travel bills. But doing this, he hoped that this would help improve the lives of his constituents whilst helping reduce environmental pollution.

Katie White, Director of Advocacy and Campaigns, WWF, said that they were looking at how the conservation was a part of the national conversation. The UK loved nature, and yet the UK was one of the most nature-depleted countries in the G7. Since 1970, 69 percent of the UK's nature had been lost. Earlier in the day, they had heard Keir Starmer's call for a 'decade of renewal'; she said that this issue needed to be taken up. She said that land management needed to be included as a key part of this. She said they needed to make sure this was a central part of the mix.

Samantha Dixon, MP for Chester, said as a local councilor she had been heavily involved with Chester Zoo over the years, but she had also been heavily involved in preserving local ecosystems. She said that she thought that climate change was driving this decline. She said that there needed to be a conversation on this issue. When she was elected last December, Dixon campaigned on the dumping of sewage in the River Dee. Sometimes these challenges were systemic, but often they could find local, grassroots solutions to help these issues. She said that there had been many local initiatives to fix and solve these problems. She said that there had been lots of these challenges to fix and solve these environmental challenges at local level. She spoke about her work in the Westminster Hall debates on Bee Populations and that she had also been involved in SWIFTS. She felt therefore that local people could actually get engaged in climate issues if they were led and engaged.

Calls to Action

Lloyd asked each member what their call to action would be.

Dixon said that people should engage with their local representatives and hold them to account on this. She said that devolution was an important factor in this process as well.

Kelly said firstly please come and visit Chester Zoo and engage with the work they were doing. Secondly, this must be a whole social change that they needed to have.

Norris simply said, "vote Labour". On a longer point, he said that devolution was an important step on this, however he did argue devolution needed to be fixed.

Q & A

Mayoral action on environmental issues.

There was a question from the floor on whether Mayors could work together to tackle environmental issues.

Norris said that he agreed with this in principle and that it would be good practice to set up a system where members from each mayor's team engaged with each other on policy.

Housebuilding

There was question from the floor on housebuilding policy and how Labour would protect the green belt.

Norris said that they would in fact need to protect some areas of the green belt, however there needed to be a clearer definition of this. Norris then asked the audience, which 3 countries had

developed the most CO2 over the past 200 years. They guessed USA, China, UK. He said, in fact the UK was statistically the second placed nation. What mattered was the historic aspect of this given the UK's legacy.

Dixon said that housebuilders should comply with Section 106 of the building code and that this needed to be reformed.

White said that there needed to be a radical overhaul of housebuilding, but it needed to be a more balanced approach on housebuilding and planning. She also agreed with Norris's case on the UK's legacy and duty. She also said that she was embarrassed that Rishi Sunak did not attend the UN General Meeting on Climate Change, and she hoped the UK would have a Prime Minister next year that showed moral leadership on this issue.

Kelly said that she agreed with the other speakers on housing and that there was a powerful housing lobby pushing for more developments, and this needed to be something that was countered.

Beaver Releases

There was a question from the floor on whether Labour would back beaver releases, as DEFRA apparently had legislation on this issue.

Jones says that this was a niche issue, and that she would come back to the speaker on this directly.

Climate Action

Question from the floor on whether further legislation was needed.

White said that the Climate Change Act had stopped Sunak from going further on watering down the UK's climate change commitments. She said that the world must look at managing how they deal with global crises.

Norris said that he felt that the best emphasis should be on incentives for businesses who do the right thing on cutting pollution and being environmentally friendly.

Jones says to remember that a climate change emergency had been called due to an opposition debate called by Labour. He said they shamed the Conservatives into this.

Forest Risk Commodities

There was a question from the floor on forest risk commodities

Kelly said that there would be many people who did not want to go through this process, but that it would be an integral part of the mix.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Planning for the Future: Getting Housing, Land Use, and Net-Zero Right for us All

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

12 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Planning for the Future: Getting Housing, Land Use, and Net-Zero Right for us All

SERA/CPRE

12:15pm, 10 October 2023

Panellists:

- Hywel Lloyd, co-founder, Labour Coast and Country;
- Jessica Asato, Labour candidate for Waveney;;
- Roger Matlock, CEO, CPRE;
- Martin Collett, Chief Executive, English Rural Housing Association;;
- Sheila Spencer, Secretary, Labour Housing Group.;

Overview

The panel discussed the challenges of ensuring house building did not damage the environment, and the unique challenges faced by rural communities during the current housing crisis.

Discussion

Jessica Asato, Labour candidate for Waveney, said that it was welcome that Labour had committed to reforming planning.

Roger Matlock, CEO, CPRE, said that in solving the housing crisis, the Government had to balance respect for the natural world. He said that a new approach to housing required four key things.

First, to deliver for the climate and nature. He did not understand why the UK was not building homes with solar panels, as this would only create a future problem. He also said that the UK needed quality homes, where nature could also thrive.

Second, diversification. He said that the housing market was dominated by a small group of large players and too many large projects just created car dependent communities.

Third, housing needed to be affordable, with prices attached to what people could offer rather than market prices.

Fourth, land use needed to address housing and net zero, with a greater focus on energy, nature and forestry.

Sheila Spencer, Secretary, Labour Housing Group, said that there was a need for a rural housing strategy.

Martin Collett, Chief Executive, English Rural Housing Association agreed, and felt there had been a complete lack of rural house building strategy.

Asato said that as a former councillor, she knew that Airbnb lets brought in money to remote communities, and Labour had a plan to license lets rather than a full crack down.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How Could a Labour Government Tackle the Housing Crisis?

12 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How Could a Labour Government Tackle the Housing Crisis?

New Stateman/G15

5pm, 10 October 2023

Panelists:

- John Bernstein, former deputy editor, New Statesman
- Fiona Fletcher-Smith, Chair, G15
- Matthew Pennycook, Shadow Minister, Housing and Planning
- Tom Copley, deputy (London) mayor for housing and residential development
- Vicky Spratt, housing correspondent, The I
- Jennie Daly, CEO, Taylor Wimpey

Overview

The panel discussed the housing crisis and the challenges a Labour government would face in terms of building more affordable housing and supporting private renters.

Discussion

John Bernstein, former deputy editor, New Statesman asked Matthew Pennycook, Shadow Minister, Housing and Planning how Labour could deal with the housing crisis.

Pennycook said that the question was no longer how could, but how would a Labour government deal with the housing crisis.

He said that the crisis was intense and entrenched, he described it as an emergency situation that was hitting a critical point and would be worse by the next general election. He felt that abolishing mandatory housing targets was a mistake made by the current government.

Pennycook said that Labour were preparing to take forward the Renters Reform Act, if it wasn't dealt with in the next 12 months.

He said that today's speech, outlining a new generation of new towns, would need to better use brownfield sites and planning reforms. He made it clear however that Labour were not advocating a revolution in planning.

Tom Copley, deputy (London) mayor for housing and residential development said that housing policy was the most central he had seen it conference in 18 years of attending. It said the current

crisis was impacting private renters, lease holders trapped by the cladding scandal, and those with rising mortgage rates.

Jennie Daly, CEO, Taylor Wimpey said that the UK also had a skills crisis, and needed to bring the workforce with them when meeting housing targets. She called for a national housing strategy that interlinked with environment and transport policy.

Fiona Fletcher-Smith, Chair, G15 highlighted that the UK was spending £7m a day on keeping people in hotels. She said that the LGA had worked out that building 100,000 social homes per year could add £15bn to treasury income, because it would alleviate pressure on other vital services. She said that there was money in the system, and Labour needed to make the most of it.

Vicky Spratt, Housing Correspondent, The I, said that housing allowances were frozen at 2019/20 levels and hadn't kept up with the surge in private rents, this was directly leading to homelessness.

Q&A

An audience member asked the panel if housing should be a human right.

Spratt, said that it already was according to the United Nations. But when talking about the housing 'market' it ignored that housing was a need for all of us.

Fletcher-Smith explained that house building was viewed by the treasury as debt, but it wasn't, it was an asset that needed to be invested in. She wanted to see that treasury orthodoxy change.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Lets Talk About Flex: The Untapped Value of Flexible Working for Frontline Workers

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

12 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Lets Talk About Flex: The Untapped Value of Flexible Working for Frontline Workers

New Statesman / CIPD

11am, 10 October 2023

Panellists:

- Zoe Grunewald, New Statesman, Politics and Policy Correspondent (compere);
- Alison McGovern MP, Shadow Minister for Employment;
- Stephen Timms MP, Chair of Work and Pensions Select Committee;
- Peter Cheese, CIPD, CEO;
- Leigh Lafever-Ayer, HR director, Enterprise Rent a Car.;

Overview

The panel discussed flexible working and the benefits it brought to businesses. They touched on expanding the definition of flexible work, how flexible working could help address labour shortages and how flexibility in employment would help to boost growth.

Discussion

Alison McGovern, Shadow Minister for Employment, said that as Shadow Minister for Employment, she felt there used to be negative connotations around zero-hour contracts and hyper flexible employment. In these cases, the risk of flexibility was all on the employees' side she said, which was not acceptable, especially for those on low pay. McGovern said she had recently spoken to a nurse that could not flexible hours to meet her parental demands.

She said that the debate around flexible working had moved away from employment to shortages. She explained how in a climate of labour shortages, workers should have more power in theory, yet they presently did not. She wanted to see a Labour government differentiate between quality of employment.

Peter Cheese, CIPD, CEO, said that in surveys going back a long time, people had asked for flexible working. He said the pandemic had been instrumental in shifting attitudes and normalising flexible working.

He made it clear that hybrid working, between home and an office, was just one element of flexible working. He said hybrid working also included four-day weeks, compressed hours, alternate shift patterns and part time work.

Cheese said that businesses needed to move away from the culture of 'I wasn't allowed to do it, so why should you be able to'. He also highlighted that from an EDI perspective, flexible working was at the heart of the idea of inclusion.

Leigh Lafever-Ayer, HR director, Enterprise, said that her business had fully embraced flexible working. She stated that research had shown that four out of ten candidates had turned down jobs or a promotion due to lack of flexible working.

Zoe Grunewald, New Statesman, Politics and Policy Correspondent, asked how flexible working could help Labour's growth plan.

McGovern said that people using their time most effectively would aid productivity, and the way to do this was through flexible working, which would ultimately lead to more fulfilling careers.

Stephen Timms MP, Chair of the Work and Pensions Select Committee, highlighted that flexible working could be essential in getting people who are not working, back into work. He thought that would be a huge boost to the economy.

Grunewald asked Lafever-Ayer how flexible working had boosted productivity at Enterprise.

Lafever-Ayer said they had trialed returnships, which were equivalent to apprenticeships for older people who wanted to return to employment. She said that the policy had been successful especially in IT and had been an interesting way to recruit. Enterprise had also trialed four day working weeks which had been very popular, and especially helped those with caring responsibilities.

McGovern stated that if Labour came to power, the Department for Work and Pensions was going to need to collaborate with other departments, in terms of public transport, so people could get to and from jobs at flexible times.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Childcare reform: How the early years workforce can break down barriers to opportunity

12 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Childcare reform: How the early years workforce can break down barriers to opportunity

Early Education and Childcare Coalition

Sunday 8 October, 3:30pm

Panel:

- Sarah Ronan, director, Early Education and Childcare Coalition (EECC)
- June O'Sullivan, chief executive, London Early Years Foundation (LEFY)
- Prof Kate Hardy, associate professor in work and employment relations, University of Leeds
- Neil Leach, chief executive, Early Years Alliance
- Abby Jitendra, principal policy officer, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Anna Burley, policy officer, UNISON
- Stella Creasy, MP for Walthamstow

Opening remarks

Sarah Ronan, director of the Early Education and Childcare Coalition, spoke about challenges to the workforce – about the difficult choices people in the sector were having to make, many of them with strong sense of commitment and vocation, which was keeping them there despite poor pay and conditions.

Causes of recruitment and retention issues

Professor Kate Hardy, of the University of Leeds, spoke about the large-scale research on early years they'd undertaken on behalf of the EECC, which had shown a rising recruitment and retention problem, accelerated by the pandemic. They'd found the main reasons for this to include expanding responsibilities of workers, declining pay compared to other sectors, and lack of recognition as key workers. She said they'd also seen that, where settings were able to stay open, they were doing so at the cost of working conditions.

She said they'd hear from many of those who'd left the profession who say they would return if conditions changed. She explained they were also hearing from workers that there appeared to be significantly more undiagnosed SEND after the pandemic, and practitioners felt under-resourced and under-recognised for their roles in helping here. As for the Government's plan to change ratios, Hardy said respondents told them they can't increase their capacity anyway.



Coordination of services

June O'Sullivan, chief executive of the London Early Years Foundation (LEFY), said that while research rang true, they needed to be careful in how they spoke about the sector and its problems, because there was a risk people wouldn't want to come into the workforce. She urged caution in how they used the data and warned not to be negative about the narrative – they needed to focus on coordinating and connecting better, for positive change.

She suggested there was a lack of coordination between education, planning, housing, and other areas within local authorities. The status of the workforce was also fundamental to this – she spoke about how they had worked throughout the pandemic, but that this went unrecognised.

She cautioned policymakers to talk to people in the sector to avoid making policy with bad consequences – citing the GCSE requirements for practitioners, implemented by Liz Truss as children's minister, which had cost them members of the workforce.

Childcare expansion

Neil Leitch, Chief Executive of the Early Years Alliance, said one of the greatest problems was disrespect towards the sector – their own research had shown the number one reason for leaving the profession was the feeling of being undervalued by the government.

He said there had been nothing in the budget, adding it was “about childcare, but not about children”. He noted the only reference to children and the profession in that speech was to tell the workforce to look after more children. He suggested education ministers had “rolled over and allowed children to become numbers on a Treasury spreadsheet.”

Workforce strategy

Abby Jitendra, Principal Policy Officer at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, talked about the political context – she said the Government were seeking to address one particular problem of middle-class families struggling to afford childcare. However, they hadn't seen the bump in the polls they'd hoped for, which suggested there may still be more room for change. She noted how the Government were now looking at minor regulatory change rather than any form of workforce strategy, which she anticipated wouldn't make any positive difference.

She said the solution was a proper workforce strategy, including better pay, enforced through tighter controls over funding handed over. She said they needed to ensure the poorest could access provision, and argued free hours should be expanded to non-working parents. Finally, she argued Labour couldn't afford to ignore this.

Stella Creasy MP (Lab/Co-op, Walthamstow) said when they spoke about workforce strategies for other sectors, childcare and early education wasn't factored in – for example nearly half of GPs had to leave workforce after having a child. Speaking about the recent government expansion of childcare, she said: “What this government has done is the equivalent of the right to buy scheme – they've pushed up demand without increasing supply.”

Valuing the workforce

Anna Burley, Policy Officer for UNISON, explained how members couldn't go out to work without childcare but that for many the childcare cancelled out their income. She suggested there was a growth potential of mobilising large parts of the workforce not currently active. She noted research which suggested this was more of a retention than a recruitment crisis – people were joining but having a poor experience of working in the sector.

She said it was a question of how we viewed early years within the sector, and how much it was valued – noting that a new practitioner would receive £10,000 a year less on average than a newly-qualified teacher.

Q&A

A member of the audience who worked for the National Children's Bureau (NCB) asked what Labour's priorities should be regarding early years.

Leitch said their position was that if there was a limited pot of money, then they had to focus on where they could get the greatest human capital - and that would be by directing towards the most deprived families.

Jane Harris, Chief Executive of Speech and Language UK, asked what could be done to stop Labour from simply announcing lots of new initiatives that may in fact only impact a small number of children.

Creasy said there was a need for innovative ideas – for example, by incorporating childcare and early education into the workplace.

O'Sullivan challenged this, saying the current market itself was "broken" – if they didn't evaluate the way services were working at the moment, there wouldn't be chance to fix it. This had to be done before things such as incorporating childcare into the workplace.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Making Defence Procurement Work for SMEs

11 October 2023

SME4Labour

4:00, 9 October 2023

Panelists:

- Baroness Ruth Anderson, Shadow Defence Minister;
- John Howie, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Babcock,;
- Emma Panteli, Head of Government Relations and Chief of Staff, Reaction Engines;
- Lord John Woodcock (CB) (Chair);

Overview

The panel discussed some of the barriers SMEs faced in winning defense procurement contracts, they also touched upon why SMEs were so vital for the defense industry ecosystem. The panel also discussed how the war in Ukraine could change attitudes at the MOD toward defense technology.

Discussion

The Chair, Lord John Woodcock (CB), explained how defense performed two vital functions, getting kit on the ground during conflict and creating jobs in advanced manufacturing. He said that the war in Ukraine had highlighted that kit wasn't designed to be sat on a shelf, and that people needed it to fight for their freedom.

Baroness Ruth Anderson, Shadow Defence Minister, had joined the defence team in the Lords a fortnight ago. She said that SMEs were key to the wider supply chain, gave a different tone to political conversations around defence and generated more buy-in from MPs.

John Howie, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Babcock, described defence as an ecosystem that wouldn't survive alone on 'primes', which were the large manufactures with government contracts. He said that SMEs had a valuable role in the ecosystem because they were agile and great at building skills. He told the audience that it was often hard for SMEs to deal directly with government and customers. He wanted to see more help for SMEs, so they didn't have to deal with 60-page contracts.

Emma Panteli, Head of Government Relations and Chief of Staff, Reaction Engines, said that 90% of her workforce were engineers, so they didn't have as much time to contact government and deal with bureaucracy. She said that Reaction Engines had a great relationship with Babcock, Rolls Royce,

and BAE. She said that due to SMEs being agile, large companies knew that partnerships were important.

Q&A

Bureaucracy

An audience member told the panel that he ran a small software firm and had contracts with the US military, US government and NASA but he had no UK clients due to bureaucracy. He felt his business was missing out on British innovation and asked how the situation could be improved.

Howie said that the US government tended to make moral decisions and then invest, defence business culture in the US then viewed it as patriotic to follow. He felt this was very different to the UK.

SME Non-Executive Director Board Members

An audience member suggested to the panel the idea of an SME non-executive director sitting on the boards of defense companies.

Baroness Anderson said she loved the idea of an SME NED and would take it away for consideration.

Panteli said she would love to sit on a 'prime' board.

Cultural Change

The Estonian Ambassador to the UK, asked if Ukraine could be used to leverage cultural change at MoD.

Baroness Anderson said yes, and that new technology would also inevitably create change. She hoped that defense policy would focus on using technology to solve problems rather than buying "shiny new things".

Howie said that Ukraine wasn't the first land war but was one of the first digital wars, and he felt that would trigger cultural change in the MoD.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Putting Britain in the Driving Seat for Battery Manufacturing

11 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Putting Britain in the Driving Seat for Battery Manufacturing

Green Alliance

9am, 10 October 2023

Panellists:

- Megan Kenyon, Sustainability Correspondent, New Statesman
- Helena Bennett, Head of Climate Policy, Green Alliance
- Ian Townsend, worked in the mineral industry, consulted for the Critical Mineral Association
- Martin Dowson, Chief Engineer, Warwick University

Overview

The panelists discussed the challenges the UK will face in meeting the growing demand for electric vehicles and how the battery manufacturing industry needed greater support. They also touched on the difficulty in establishing critical mineral supply.

Discussion

Helena Bennett, Head of Climate Policy at the Green Alliance, said that electrifying the UK car fleet was the single biggest way we could cut emissions in the UK. However, the likelihood of this happening soon had been damaged by the delay to the petrol and diesel car ban. She said that the UK was now lagging behind the US and China. The Green Alliance had interviewed various parts of the battery supply chain, to establish what the barriers were to UK production.

She said that by 2040 a significant number of EVs could be almost completely recycled.

She said that the government needed to take on more risk, using the UK Infrastructure Bank. No certainty and lack of a wider industrial strategy was a common theme from the industry.

She said that British Volt had been a failure but Labour had pledged £2bn for giga factories, if they were in power. She said that the next government needed to focus on ways of scaling up innovation and R&D, to meet the UK's future policy needs.

Martin Dowson, Chief Engineer at Warwick University, worked for a manufacturing catapult, taking innovation to industry scale. He had a diverse background across engineering, in EV and hybrid vehicle design.

He said that batteries were the single biggest value item in an EV, because they replaced both the engine and gear box. He said that there were a lot of technical challenges to get cars to consumers and manage the supply chain, including sourcing critical minerals.

He said that the race was on for anchoring EV supply chains, and if it wasn't started in the UK, the car industry would leave for Europe. Batteries were heavy and weren't ideal for shipping, so manufacturing them domestically was essential.

Ian Townsend defined critical minerals as having a high economic importance and a high supply risk, such as high value steel, or the metals used in medical implants and rocket propulsion.

He stated that critical minerals had to be mined, but production was being aided by recycling. He said that critical mineral mines wouldn't need to be as large as coal mines and globally all grades of ore were decreasing.

He explained the from mine discovery to production took 17 years. He said that mining had a very poor image but was now far better regulated. Those who didn't comply should have finance cut or access to the market restricted.

He highlighted that there had been a renaissance in UK domestic mining, but this wasn't enough to meet demand. Extraction of critical minerals was very energy intensive, and that energy needed to be supplied from renewables.

Q&A

Megan Kenyon, sustainability correspondent at the New Statesman asked what Labour's Green Prosperity Plan needed to do to match the US Inflation Reduction Act.

Dowson said that the UK investment approach must be holistic and energy must be cheap and sustainable for production. Townsend agreed and said that the battery manufacturing industry craved a consistent policy.

Bennett explained how the Green Alliance had done research into IRA tax credits for manufacturing and purchasing, which were equivalent to £64bn and near the cost of HS2. She acknowledged that matching this amount wouldn't be realistic for the next government but reiterated that cash was needed.

Kenyon asked how planning reform may help the battery manufacturing industry.

Dowson suggested creating a centralised planning department for specialist industries which he had seen in other countries, with input from the local authorities projects would impact.

Jack Williamson, Transport Consultant for Dods Political Intelligence, asked what challenges battery technology faced in terms of fueling vehicles that weren't private cars, such as buses, HGVs and freight vehicles.

Dowson explained that when manufacturers scaled up from private use vehicles, electric battery technology needed to be blended with other technology such as hydrogen. He said that this increased the complexity of production, because everyone said that hydrogen was their main solution when electric batteries weren't powerful enough, but then lacked clear answers about application of hydrogen. He said there was even minor tension between electric and hydrogen engineers, but he wanted them to collaborate for the challenges ahead.



Townsend highlighted that some heavy duty mining vehicles in South Africa were now running on hydrogen and hybrid fuel.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Why Labour Needs a Feminist International Development Policy (ActionAid, International Rescue Committee, Plan International, Care International IU) Link

11 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Why Labour Needs a Feminist International Development Policy (ActionAid, International Rescue Committee, Plan International, Care International IU) Link

Event hosts

5:30pm, Monday 9 October 2023

Panelists:

- Lisa Nandy MP, Shadow Minister for International Development
- Preet Gill MP, Shadow Minister Primary Care and Public Health
- Sarah Champion MP, Chair of the HOC International Development Committee
- Stephanie Efram Akumah, Director of Project Development, the Centre of Green Growth (CenGG)
- Sophie Efange, Head of Policy, Gender and Development Network

Overview

Event hosted by several feminist and international development organisations on why Labour needed to develop and adopt a feminist international development policy.

Introductions

Sarah Champion MP, Chair of the House of Commons International Development Committee, who also chaired the event, said that she was glad to have heard about the feminist initiatives from Preet Gill, and that this cause had been echoed by Shadow Foreign Secretary David Lammy. She said that as International Development Committee chair, there was still a quasi-colonial mindset and a sense that nations should be grateful for what we gave them. This she said needs to be changed.

Lisa Nandy, Shadow Minister for International Development, said that she had been in this brief for 28 days and joked that she had gone from the task of levelling up the country to the task of levelling up the world. She talked about a meeting with UNICEF Youth ambassadors and how inspiring she found this. She says that she hadn't considered the disparity there was for the global south before becoming an MP, and she noted Rishi Sunak's refusal to turn up to the UN debates recently.

Nandy thanked the activists in the room for the dedicated work they had done on the issue of a Feminist Development Policy (FDP). And that this had been a difficult time for development organisations after the current government's attitude to aid and the ending of DFID. She said that former Labour International Development Secretary Claire Short reminded her recently of what a different era today was to when Labour came to power in 1997 where nonwestern nations are increasingly dominant. Therefore, Nandy she said FDP advocates have got to show that we understand the plights and the situation in other countries, particularly in the global south. Alongside receiving development aid, Nandy asked why children in nations like Ghana shouldn't also receive support but also develop the technology and the initiatives that made the world a better and fairer place. She said that Labour will use Britain's strengths to build these opportunities and that her political career had been about empowering communities, the people that she had learned this from the most, had been the mothers in her constituency that she had dealt with for austerity for 13 years. In the face of all the challenges they have faced, she asked the audience what it would be like if the system instead of often working against them, actually lifted them up and empowered them. Nandy said that localism and feminism are the same thing to her, and that they would never be divorced again under a Labour government. She finishes by saying that progress is not inevitable, and that FDP advocated the need to remember this, but that feminism will be the silver line that ran through Labour's foreign policy.

Preet Gill, Shadow Primary Care and Public Health Minister, said that while she was no longer doing the Shadow Development brief, she would still be actively involved in international development advocacy and policymaking. She called on the audience to keep pushing Labour on this cause and that that Labour in government passed the equal pay act which showed the difference that Labour in power can make. She said that women's rights organisations had their work cut out for them as there was the converging crisis that are affecting women. Noted a lady in the crowd that she knew had fled Afghanistan last year in the Taliban takeover, who had spoken at several other events. Gill said that feminism is not a global north export, it was about a fight on the ground across the work. There had been too much top-down decision making historically. She was proud to have launched the women-led taskforce. Hopefully the UK would soon have a feminist led development policy.

Sophie Efange, Head of Policy at the Gender and Development Network said that over the past few years there had been a growth of countries adopting a Feminist Foreign Policies (FFP). There were currently 16 countries that had adopted the FFP, she said, and that this proved that this wasn't a pipe dream, and that the bar had been set high. At its core Feminist Development Policy aimed to dismantle structural barriers to gender inequality. She said this aimed to break down barriers of race and class and that when she talked about feminist principles there were three core principles:

Firstly, that it centered on women and girls rights in its foreign policy. Second that it must challenge prevailing power structures, dealing with the legacy of colonialism. Third that it must be strategic, and it also must be accountable, and that funding had to be put behind it.

Efange said on the point of prevailing power structure, the issue of Colonialism had to be put at the heart of this. She then brought up the example of German government's recent adoption of the FFP, and that should form part of Labour's FFP.

Stephanie Eyrum Akumah, an activist from Ghana who Sarah Champion noted, had her visa declined, said that women were already experiencing the damaging effects of climate change. Due to climate change, she said, many women were consequentially struggling to feed their children. There was also a challenge with women accessing global financing, and this was where the global north came in. She said that this required greater access of opportunity. There was a great challenge with ineffective bureaucracy when it came to dealing with financing for feminist projects and other schemes to help women on the ground. We needed to develop more financial sources. Addressing

the MPs on the panel directly, she said that Labour in power would need to deal with these issues directly and we would judge them on what they achieved.

Q & A

Feminist Policy

Sarah Champion asked Lisa for a clarification on what Lisa meant by a Feminist Foreign policy.

Lisa backed Gill's great work on feminist foreign policy, and she backed the definition fully. She said that Labour is going to put this at the heart of what they do, and that they would keep doing it and keep at it.

Afghanistan

Question from a woman in the audience who was originally from Afghanistan on how let down she and the women like her were over the West's reaction to aid. The refusal to offer aid support through the Taliban hurt women disproportionately.

Champion addressed this directly saying that more aid and support should be offered, despite the west's understandable reservations about dealing with the Taliban government.

Initiatives to develop Empowerment

Question from the floor on how these initiatives were value for money in line with performance indicators.

Efange pushed back on this being a method of judging these development policies. She said that we should not be looking at these are indicators. Social justice should be the key factor.

Stephan Eyrum Akrumah agreed and said that she agreed, and this financial support should not be judged that way.

Champion pressed and asked whether there was any cause for optimism.

Eyrum Akrumah said that she was an optimist and had hope that change will happen.

Diversity of Perspectives

Question from the floor on how we create a co-created feminist foreign policy that encompasses multiple perspectives.

Efange brought up the German example once, she noted that they know that their feminist foreign policy had to take all these factors into account.

Eyrum Akrumah said that there needed to be a clear definition on who are the marginalized people we were talking about so that this was inclusive. The vulnerable people had a different experience of life from other people. The world had become a global village, she said, and invoked the example of climate change, and this is something that needed to be factored in.

Structural Power

Question from the floor on challenging the structures of power. They asked what should the Labour government do to overcome traditional structures of power.

Efange said that this initiative would have to be looked at in the round, and all these factors would have to be addressed. She said that the FCDO had done some work on addressing these barriers, but much more work needed to be done.

Eyram Akumah said that she would look to finance initiatives to help challenge these structures. She said that women needed to access direct financing. She asked the room rhetorically if any of them needed financing to get to this room.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Ready for the real world: How can applied learning give young people the skills they need for the future? (Young Enterprise)

11 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Ready for the real world: How can applied learning give young people the skills they need for the future?

Young Enterprise

12:00pm, Monday October 9, 2023

Panelists:

- Justine Greening, Chair of the Purpose Coalition and former Education Secretary (Chair)
- Sharon Davies, Young Enterprise Chief Executive
- Natalie, Youth Enterprise Ambassador
- Alycia, Youth Enterprise Ambassador
- Nick Forbes, Engagement Director, Purpose Coalition (former Newcastle City Council Leader)
- Baroness Debbie Wilcox, Shadow Education Spokesperson in the House of Lords

Overview

The event was chaired by former Education Secretary Rt Hon Justine Greening, now Chair of the Purpose Coalition, a cross-party organisation that brought together the UK's leaders, Parliamentarians, and businesses to share and improve solutions to make a positive change. The event also brought together Young Enterprise Chief Executive, Sharon Davies, Shadow Ministers and young people who had taken part in Young Enterprise programmes to explore how a Labour government could futureproof education, putting applied learning at the heart of the classroom.

Opening Statements

Former Education Secretary, Justine Greening, said that applied learning was going to be a key part of skills policy of the next government. She talked about her personal experiences with education, having been educated at a comprehensive school in Rotherham, and how this informed her interest in this to deal with the skills gaps across the education sector.

Natalie, a participant in in Young Enterprise programmes, said that the experience had been a great benefit and enhanced her skills all round. She said, as an example, that they did a business project where they created a business plan for a fingerprint activated bracelet. She was planning to shortly start a Masters in Digital Marketing, and all of this was because of the skills that she had developed the YE.

Greening asked her directly whether Young Enterprises had given her more confidence to speak.

She agreed that this had given her the confidence to put herself out there and network, which had been a crucial life skill.

Alycia, another participant who was currently on the programme, said that the skills she had picked up through Young Enterprise had helped her figure out what she wanted to study. She now knew how to crochet and that the programme had also given her vital communications and presentation skills, which had been a key part of the courses that she took.

Sharon Davies, Young Enterprise Chief Executive, said that the programme was proven to have an impact on educational outcomes, it improves and develops lateral thinking among other things. She said that Natalie and Alicia were some of the best ambassadors.

She said that often she worked to engage in with businesses in the northeast. Skills were an important part of the mix in the employment market, but character was also crucial to. She also brought up the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and how this had had a negative impact on young people heading into the world of work. It had been a shame that there hadn't been further support for young people.

Nick Forbes, Engagement Director for the Purpose Coalition (former Newcastle City Council Leader), said that building greater support for young people was crucial. From his time as a council leader, that was something they were starting to question - what the best way was of instilling these skills at an early enough age to build up these skills. He felt that Young Enterprise provided a key role in this. Many initiatives to help young people were often quite rigid and hierarchical.

Baroness Wilcox, Shadow Education Spokesperson in the House of Lords, said that in her time she had previously worked for some dreadful headteachers. She stressed that in the school that she worked for, both across London and in Newport in Wales, she found that there was more to these places of learning than just this report. She said that she worked with many great education practitioners in Pontypridd, Wales, and that there was a clear strength of purpose to improve the lives of the children they worked with. There needed to more comprehensive careers guidance, and this was something that she hoped Labour in power would work to make this a reality. Talks about one of the people she had worked with who had gone onto have a good career after struggling with education.

Education Policy

In response to a question on whether there should be a renewed national curriculum, Baroness Wilcox, stressed the core mission statement of the Welsh curriculum and said that this was a very comprehensive. This was a debate to be had ahead of the next election.

Davies said that there was an opportunity to enhance the pedagogical approach of applied learning into the education system. We needed to recognise the great work many schools had done on STEM subjects. This was something that the next government should be pursuing.

How to improve the Education System

Forbes said that this was a constant challenge when he ran Newcastle City Council, changing and improving the systems that needed to be changed. He said it was challenging asking people not to do CVs and to look at history-based applications, but it was more about the talents that they had now and in the future. It would be a big tension if Labour won power given the tension between and national and regional approach, this was a conversation that needed to be had if they formed the next government.

Baroness Wilcox agreed that this would be a debate to be had, and the question would come down to what they valued in an educational system. She talked about a student she worked with who did terribly at school, getting grade E's, but then managed to make it to university a few years later. She said that policies at Welsh government level had been overseen by a future Educational Commissioner. She said that she had been working with the Big Issue founder, Lord John Bird, and the Future Education Commission to get one set up for England as well.

How best to Get Change

Davies says that reengagement in learning and attendance, and connection with young people post-18, was also a crucial part of it. She said that she was an optimist and that this was about valuing the power of the profession to change lives for the better.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Ukraine and European Security - The Way Ahead

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

11 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Ukraine and European Security - The Way Ahead

Royal United Services Institute

11:00am, Monday October 9 2023

Panellists:

- Professor Malcolm Chalmers, Royal United Services Institute (Chair);
- John Healy, Shadow Defence Secretary;
- Margaret Beckett MP, Former Foreign Secretary (2006-07);

Overview

The war in Ukraine has far-reaching consequences for European security, for NATO and the EU, and for UK foreign and defence policy. What should Labour's approach be? Featuring John Healy, Shadow Defence Secretary and other panellists.

Intro

Professor Malcolm Chalmers of the Royal United Services Institute, who was chairing the event, said that this was the second half in a series of RUSI events at party conferences. The comments from officials that the Middle East had been quiet for some time had proven to be quite premature. Chalmers then introduced Margaret Beckett, the MP for Derby South, and former Foreign Secretary from 2006-07.

John Healy, Shadow Defence Secretary, who arrived later after the start of the event, gave apologies for this noting that it's a Labour Party conference and so inevitably the previous meeting overran. He noted that this was a conference meeting on Labour's defence policy. He also then paid a tribute to Margaret Beckett, who he noted was also technically the first female Labour Leader for two months in 1994 in an acting capacity.

Relations with Russia

Chalmers asked Beckett for her reflections what it was like to deal with Russia during her time as Foreign Secretary.

Beckett said that things changed in her view around the time of the 2014 Sochi Olympics, when Russia were projecting a successful image out to the world and yet also moving to annex territory in Ukraine. This showed that this state was less interested in international engagement than they had previously been.

She said that when she became Foreign Secretary in 2006, Russia and China were working with the West on the Iranian Nuclear agreement and were, in her view, sincere in their diplomatic

engagement in talks to stop Iran developing nuclear weapons. She noted that the contributions from the Russian side were proactive and constructive, and looking back she wondered if she had missed something in their politics that had led them to where they were now. She said that many other diplomatic figures had also said that they too have had this same experience of not seeing the change from the Russian side coming. She said that in her time in office, it was a very different and a very constructive relationship and that this was a lesson and a warning to always guard against the idea that these things do not change. She ended her point by noting that the poisoning of Alexander Litvinenko did happen under her watch, so perhaps there was a point in the idea that the clues of their current drift into a rogue state were there at the time.

Israel / Palestine situation

There was a question from Chalmers on the Israel / Palestine situation. He asked Beckett whether the recent large attack by Hamas in southern Israel meant that they needed to think differently about the situation on the ground there.

Beckett agreed that it did. She felt that every potential for peace, including in her time as Foreign Secretary, had been squandered. She said that she felt that the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was personally an 'odious' figure who had little interest in bringing peace forward in the region.

Climate Change

There was a question from Chalmers on the role of the Foreign Office in the Climate Change Debate. Chalmers asked, did the Foreign Office have enough clout to make a diplomatic impact on the issue?

Beckett said that there were many initiatives during her time as Foreign Secretary. She said that she worked to try and bring this up for debate at the UN Security Council, and it happened there against disagreements and pushback from the United States diplomatic missions. She added that this was one of the better attended events in the UN that year.

Q & A

Ukraine Weapons

There was a question from the floor on the provision of weapons to Ukraine. They asked, did more need to be done?

Beckett said that she did not have any information on weapons supplied and so could not speak to it directly.

Healy said that the Government had proved incapable of living up to the core tenets of the 2021 Defence and Security Review. The Government should be moving further and faster on this and that would be what a Labour Government, with himself as Defence Secretary, would be doing.

China as a Partner

Question from the floor on whether there would be greater engagement with the state of China in the coming years.

Beckett said that she had a good relationship with her Chinese counterparts during her time as Foreign Secretary. She spoke about how on a diplomatic visit in 2007, she addressed the Central Party School of the Chinese Communist Party, an institution which educated the major elite figures in

the Chinese Communist Party. She noted that, much to her surprise at the time, she was asked by the officials there to give a speech about democracy.

Beckett noted that this was only a decade after the formal handover of Hong Kong, and that from her experience and conversations with officials, that the Chinese Government did not expect for it to happen and were 'astounded' that the United Kingdom actually went through with it. She joked about them being on the front cover of the Communist Party newspaper the China Daily, which was normally something heads of state would have been honored with.

However, Beckett now thought that the situation in China had greatly deteriorated. She spoke about how as a young woman she used to believe that if you could just get the structures of a system right, it would not matter about the character of the people running it. She added that she now no longer believed that this was how the world worked, and that the Chinese Government would not be engaging in good faith for some time.

Smaller EU states

There was a question from the Ambassador of Slovenia to the UK, Simona Leskovar, on how the UK dealt with smaller states. They asked, what would your advice be to the Labour leadership on engaging with smaller EU and non-EU states?

Beckett said that she felt that engagement with small states would be very important in the coming years. She said that the small eastern states in the Baltics and Eastern Europe were proven right on Putin's Russia, while many western nations were prevaricated, and that they should listen and engage more with them going forwards.

British soft Power

Labour Lord Toby Harris (Baron Harris of Haringey) asked a question on whether the consequences of Russia's invasion and events in the Middle East meant they were entering a new era of international turbulence. If so, where would the international leadership come from?

Beckett said that the current Government had badly damaged the UK's international reputation. She said that she had long thought that when the EU set up the commissioner system that it was their hope that this would emulate the British Foreign Office system, which was then held in high regard. She added that there were not many nations in the European Union that were able to emulate this sort of quality, so there was just a UK-shaped hole in terms of foreign policy.

UK / EU Security Policy

There was a question from the floor on developing an enhanced UK / EU security policy.

Healy said that the war in Ukraine would unfortunately likely be a conflict that the next Government would inherit. He said that they had given their fullest support from day one the nation of Ukraine and that this would continue, whoever was in government. He said that they were doing this because the defence of the UK started at Ukraine as they knew what Putin's wider expansionist intentions were on neighboring countries, and that the Ukrainians were fighting for their freedom. He said that one thing that the Ukraine conflict had consequently done was rebalance the defence policy debate in the UK. Small state allies and the EU were a crucial component in the UK defence policy. Labour in government aimed to develop a new defence and security pact with the EU. He hoped that this would be seen as a reset of relations with the between the EU and the UK and not the UK reintegrating with the EU project post-Brexit. He added that the UK needed to build on the existing Lancaster House agreement with France to enhance relations with its immediate neighbours.



Nature of War

There was a question on the floor on the changing nature of war. As Labour would hold a defence and security review in power, would Labour take all this into account?

Healy said that this review would not just be about defence technology and procurement, but also about developing strategic partnerships. He said that the situation for Labour, if it formed the next Government, would be different than that in Beckett's time. There was not a digital dimension to defence policy back then, and the rise of China among other regional nations presented fresh challenges. Back in 2010 the UK was still spending 2.5 percent of GDP, and ratification among active servicemen was at 60 percent, all of which had deteriorated in recent years, so there were a number of things that the Labour Party in Government needed to engage with.

Global South on Ukraine

There was a question from the floor on what John Healy made of India and South Africa's refusal to condemn Russia?

Healy said that if the UK wanted to uphold the rule of law, they were going to have to work a lot harder than in previous eras to make the case internationally and influence nations around the world. This, he said, would be the foreign policy challenge of our time.

Beckett agreed, saying that work needed to be done to make the case to these nations that this was where their interests lay.

Saudi Arabia

There was a question from a Times journalist on arms and fighter jet sales to the Saudi Arabia. They asked, would this still go ahead under a Labour Government?

Healy said that they had a close relationship with the Saudi Airforce, and that he hoped that this would go ahead.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Back in School: An Inclusive Approach to Tackling Exclusions and the School Absence Crisis

11 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Back in School: An Inclusive Approach to Tackling Exclusions and the School Absence Crisis

LabourList and nurtureuk

11:15, Sunday 8 October

Panel:

- Anne Longfield, chair, Commission on Young Lives;
- Lib Peck, director, Mayor of London's Violence Reduction Unit;
- Arti Sharma, CEO, nurtureuk;
- Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Deputy Mayor and cabinet member for education, young people and children's social care, Hackney Council;

Rising exclusions and declining attendance

Opening the session, Anne Longfield, chair of the Commission on Young Lives and former children's commissioner, said this was such an important topic and more current than any other part of education policy in her view. She explained how there were an increasing number of children falling through the cracks – we knew where those gaps were and who the most vulnerable groups were, but they were still being failed. She noted there had been a rise in persistent absence, a rise in suspensions and exclusions, a rise in home schooling and a rise in managed moves.

London's Violence Reduction Unit

Lib Peck, director of the London Mayor's Violence Reduction Unit (VRU), spoke of how they engaged with their young peoples' group and co-produced work with them. She recalled how they had taken a group to meet with DfE and Ofsted officials and how she had seen a disconnect between what the young people were saying they needed, and what officials were hearing.

She asserted that, from the perspective of the VRU, young people were much safer when in school. She noted evidence from Glasgow, where they had reduced exclusions and saw a reduction in violence. She explained they worked with young people in their communities and teamed up with nurtureuk, trying to answer the questions of how you keep a child in school and how you keep them wanting to go back. She said it was critical for them to have a sense of being able to be themselves and have a sense of belonging. They were seeing successes in the 70 schools across London they were working in, and she noted they were running separate sessions for young women and girls as well. One key focus was on primary to secondary transition – a key point at which many can drop off.

"Unless kids feel a belonging, they feel alienated," said Peck, explaining that they wanted to work toward a London-wide inclusion charter, rooted in children's rights while also providing support to teachers. She also drew attention to the Mayor of London's rollout of universal free school meals, which she said would help tackle the issues as there is a proven link between the two.

A nurturing approach

Arti Sharma, CEO of nurtureuk, explained their model was to train teachers with nurturing approaches, helping them to understand the unmet needs of a child. There was a desperate need for an education system that understood and respected children and young people, she asserted, saying that any future framework needed to understand children's social, emotional and mental health. She added that teachers needed to be properly trained and supported and given the time and space to help identify those additional needs.

Interventions

Cllr Anntoinette Bramble, Hackney Council cabinet member for education, said as a former teacher she had also taken part in nurtureuk's training. She said education could only work when children felt loved, respected and happy, and that academic results meant nothing without confident and well-grounded human beings. She asserted this wasn't possible if you undermined children in schools.

She explained how in Hackney they had created the reengagement unit, working with children at risk of exclusion, and that this was proving to be a success and shown how the right intervention at the right time worked. She suggested that any measure of a school's success needed to have health and wellbeing at its core, and that we needed to disrupt the inequality within the system.

Q&A

Asked about risks to children after school, Peck said they knew the most vulnerable times were 3-10pm, particularly with transport.

A member of the audience asked what levers could be pulled to bring multi-academy trusts (MATs) on board, suggesting many did not have inclusive behavioural policies.

Sharma said her experience at nurtureuk had been to show them the results and successes of their work. Peck said persuading people was all about the power of the case – which nurtureuk were providing. She said they also had to talk to young people about what gave them a sense of belonging.

Bramble said there were not many levers, and instead they needed a way of encouraging them to work with local authorities. She noted the majority of Hackney's secondary schools were part of MATs and that this was where the exclusion rates were highest. She suggested they needed some powers for local authorities to roll out plans across their area, while also keen to stress she was not advocating for local authority control of schools.

Asked what the role of youth workers was in this work, Peck suggested more youth workers in schools may be the answer.

Asked about the role of parents, Peck said parents were often neglected, and that it was vital for inclusion to involve families and parents. Young people wanted to know where the parent voice was in this, which was why the VRU funded parenting networks across London.

Asked whether off-rolling remind a problem, Peck suggested it was still ongoing. Bramble said it was difficult to get evidence of it, but added Hackney had strategies for how to approach schools.

Longfield said off-rolling had become more sophisticated, suggesting that the parents of children at risk of exclusion would be told that it would leave a mark on their record, and instead schools would suggest that they wouldn't pursue them if they were to remove them from the roll.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How can Labour make the UK a clean, green superpower?

11 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How can Labour make the UK a clean, green superpower?

SERA and RWE

6:45pm, Sunday 8 October

Panel:

- Cllr Lisa Trickett, co-chair, Labour's Environment Campaign - SERA (chair);
- Ed Miliband MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero;
- Sarah Boyack MSP, Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Just Transition, Scottish Labour;
- Tom Glover, UK country chair, RWE;
- Prof Martin Freer, director, Birmingham Energy Institute;

Labour's plan: clean power by 2030

Ed Miliband, Shadow Energy Secretary, said Labour had devised a plan within its National Policy Forum (NPF) for clean power by 2030, which he said would cut bills for working people by the end of their first term in government. They had a "proper" warm homes plan to insulate 9m homes, and their new GB Energy would partner with companies on projects such as floating wind.

He said it was also about generating jobs, particularly in the places that would not normally benefit from prosperity. He referenced Joe Biden's plan, which ensured jobs went to certain areas, which Labour would replicate. He said the UK had not invested in its ports, which was why it had not seen the offshore wind jobs, and so Labour would bring the biggest port investment. Miliband pledged to break down barriers with the grid, supply chains, and skills - but stressed this had to be a partnership with every person and business, so that communities would most benefit from lean energy.

He referenced the work done to create community energy in Lawrence Weston, saying GB Energy would create thousands of these across the country, so communities could get the dividends from these projects and decide what to do with them. Tackling the climate crisis would be at the heart of the mission of the next Labour government, he said, and they had to show ambition equal to the scale of the emergency faced.

Partnering with business

Tom Glover, RWE UK Country Chair, said his company focused on energy transition and any government needed them to reach net zero. He explained how RWE's targets were in line with the Paris Agreement and they were on track to help the Labour Party get to its environment mission. They were fully committed to help Labour achieve its energy mission, he said, adding that, while RWE

are politically neutral as a company, they preferred the message from Ed to the one they had heard last week from Sunak.

Energy in Scotland

Sarah Boyack MSP, Scottish Shadow Cabinet Secretary for Net Zero, Energy and Just Transition, criticised the ScotWind project for not delivering the investment and skills promised, as well as the SNP's delay in thinking about a green energy strategy. She said the Scottish grid did not have the capacity and they needed to think about infrastructure, particularly on storage. She explained that Labour wanted to retrofit 1.4m Scottish homes, which would reap benefits for jobs. Their climate targets wouldn't be just ambitious, but also deliverable, she asserted.

Role of GB Energy

Professor Martin Freer, director of the Birmingham Energy Institute and also the Energy Research Accelerator, welcomed the passion and ambition from the panel, and spoke about the progress made to date on decarbonising electricity, although he noted transport and heating took up much more of UK's usage.

He suggested any new public body needed to focus on some core principles. The first was that any reform should be "decisive but minimal" and there wasn't enough time left to completely reinvent the system. Similarly, any new organisation needed to be tightly focused and not have a huge portfolio of activities to deliver. In particular, he suggested a state-owned body should focus on parts of the energy problem that the private sector could not solve.

Local energy provided a big opportunity to have the most impact, he said, as did energy storage, which he suggested was where GB Energy could step in. Strategic infrastructure should also be a focus, he continued, saying the UK needed a carbon capture and storage (CCS) pipeline, as well as strategic hydrogen storage.

Freer said the real challenge in the energy system was coordination and the ability to have oversight and high priority for delivery. He suggested the UK needed a national delivery body, potentially with equal status to the Treasury.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: The vision for UK trade policy

11 October 2023

WWF

4:00, 10 October 2023

Panellists:

Peter Foster, Public Policy Editor, Financial Times (Chair)

Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town, Member and Former Chair of Lords International Agreements Committee.

Sophie Hale, Resolution Foundation

Anna Sands, WWF-UK

Ruth Bergan, Transform Trade

Overview

The panel spoke about the future of UK trade considering a range of variables from the role of food security, standards in trade deals and idea of a trade strategy.

Opening remarks

Peter Foster, Public Policy Editor, Financial Times, noted that the world of trade was changing in relation to digitalization, and that there may be a limit to change in the UK's trading relationship with the EU.

Anna Sands, WWF-UK, said that agricultural policy had to be lined up with trade strategy. She commented on how EVs raised questions about where in the supply chain the UK wanted to be in the production of these vehicles. She expressed hope that a future government could provide clarity about what the UK should be trying to achieve from a trade deal. The answer needed to be more than growth; it needed to be coherent with a vision of what UK society should look like.

She predicted that regenerative agriculture would be vulnerable if the trade strategy did not support this vision. She reasoned that the UK had to be able to provide food in a way which did not cost the earth or the planet.

She noted that the food system was not only suffering from climate change but also causing it, driving biodiversity loss and a huge number GHG emissions. Yet countries struggled with agricultural production due to extreme weather events.

She argued that the UK needed a set of core environmental standards which would underpin what was imported. She reasoned this would level up the playing field and provide a set of values which the UK would not negotiate away in trade deals.



She rejected the idea that there was a tradeoff between high environmental standards and what customers wanted. She said that consumers did not want to be faced with that trade off. She reasoned that core standards would help with access to food.

Sophie Hale, Resolution Foundation, reasoned that the UK did not want to rerun the Brexit debate. She said that the UK was a really strong services exporter, the 2nd largest in the world. She said the Government should acknowledge this is a strength, not a weakness.

She explained in terms of post Brexit trade, the trade of goods in the UK was now the worse in the G7, she said that many models showed that the UK is underperforming.

She acknowledged that the success in the export of service is due to the many variables, such as an education export boost due to fees charged to EU students and the role of zoom in facilitating the exchange and communication of services.

She said that evidence suggested that the UK had a strong service sector and that this should be an area of focus for trade deals but that this should not come at the cost of having a bad deal in relation to agriculture.

She argued that free trade agreements were not the best tool for helping the services and that they are not good for the agricultural industry.

She warned that the country risked overplaying the benefits of the net zero manufacturing sector, in relation to employment. She conceded that there could be new green good jobs but warned that this would not be enough to tackle the stagnant growth the UK had experienced since the financial crisis.

She reasoned that the trade environment was “tricky at the moment”, but the UK should not accept it, it should look be prepared to look beyond the short term 1-year goals and develop more long-term beneficial agreements.

Ruth Bergan, Transform Trade, noted that the UK did not have a trade strategy, and expressed disappointment about this. She noted that trade agreements were not just about trade, they were also about food, health, education and medicine. She reasoned that a trade strategy was sensible because the above topics were really important and affected everyone's life. T

She noted that trade rules were binding and enforceable. She said the SDGs and the Paris agreement were not binding. Therefore, anything in the trade space that went against SDG or Paris would undermine these goals. She noted that trade agreements could increase emissions.

She argued that the carbon border adjustment mechanisms violated the idea of common but differentiated responsibility. She warned that the EU version of this would cost Africa about £25bn.

She suggested that Labour had to have a strategy that involved people and countries affected by such policy decisions. She called for a Human Rights and Diligence Act and reasoned that the companies that benefited from these agreements needed to uphold human rights and environmental standards. S

Baroness Hayter of Kentish Town, Member and former chair of Lords International Agreements Committee, noted that Labour did need a comprehensive strategy but reasoned that the Government could not have a strategy without knowing its objectives. The strategy would need to

support foreign interests, environmental interests, workers' rights, regional equality, human rights, and competition. Trade could help deliver these things but there would be conflicts. S

She noted that longstanding commonwealth relationships and said some of them would challenge some labour standards. She warned such conflict would come with the critique of being neo-colonial.

She reasoned that for Labour there were two imperatives, the first to recognise and be transparent about these conflicting demands, rather than pretending these choices do not exist. The second was to decide who to consult with and to ensure all voices were included.

She gave the example of food imports, whereby the Government may need to import fruit with nutrition that could not be produced in the UK from a country with labour standards that did not meet the UK's.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Ending the need for food banks: Labour's missing mission

11 October 2023

The New Statesman; Joseph Rowntree Foundation & Trussel Trust

12:00, 10 October 2023

Panelists:

- Anoosh Chakelian, Britain Editor, The New Statesman
- Steve Humford, food bank volunteer, Trussell Trust
- Katie Schmuecker, principal policy advisor, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Alison McGovern MP, Shadow Minister for Employment
- Amy Hart, influencer and food bank advocate

Overview

Panelists discussed the impact of poverty and hardship across the UK and the consequent use of food banks. Discussion centered around policy proposals to eradicate the reliance on food banks and the Labour Party's plans to reform the social security system.

Opening remarks

Panelists discussed health innovation and the state of clinical research in the UK. The session focused on the barriers to research and the ways to enable innovative medicines in the NHS.

Katie Schmuecker, principal policy advisor, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, said that poverty had been deepening, destitution had been rising and the use of food banks was going up.

She said that worrying whether you would be able to pay your bills was not good for relationships or peoples' mental health. She said that being in poverty and not able to afford foods did not equip children for a good start or be ready to learn each day.

Schmuecker said that these levels of hardship were holding the country back.

Steve Humford, food bank volunteer, trussell trust, talked about his lived experience of falling into hardship after an injury which left him unemployed. He said that he had to go to the food bank in order to buy essentials and after a while he started volunteering at his local food bank.

He said that after he started going to the food bank himself, he realised that a lot of the people using it were just like him. He said some people were in-work, elderly and some were single mothers.

Humford said that there was a focus from the current government on getting people back to work which often meant harsher sanctions and a reduction in benefits. He said that whilst that may force people back into work, they were not well enough to carry out the work and would end up crashing out and ending back in that loop.

Alison McGovern MP, Shadow Minister for Employment, said that a Labour government would reform Universal Credit based on evidence. She said it would repair the relationship between the state and welfare.

She said that whilst she thought food banks did an amazing job, she would like to see an end to emergency food parcels and food banks, telling the meeting that she would like to see MPs turning up to the closure of food banks under a Labour government.

Amy Hart, Influencer and food bank advocate, told the meeting of her experience of working in a food bank and how that had helped her to realise how easy it was for people to fall into hardship and rely on food banks.

She said she wanted to change the narrative around socio economic class discrimination by using her platform.

Hardship research

Schmuecker said that the JRF had been looking at these issues over the last year or so and had been having conversations with voters in key seats across the country. She said that people were deeply concerned and angry about the issue. She said these were not necessarily voters in hardship themselves, but invariably they had personal connections with people who did.

She said voters had expressed that they did not think either party took the issue of hardship seriously enough and handled the topic without compassion or a plan to tackle it.

McGovern said that in 2019 she went around the country talking to different people who had volunteered or used food banks. She said she wanted to understand what the right approach might be to end the use of food banks. She said government needed to examine incomes from salary and welfare and look at public services at what could work to enable these to grow.

Labour's plans

Schmuecker said there was a big opportunity for Labour here to develop a strong and emotive pitch to the electorate. She said that the electorate wanted to hear more about the issue and, in doing so, Labour would then have a mandate on it post-election.

She called for a life essentials guarantee to be built into Universal Credit, linking the basic rate of social security with the cost of life essentials. She said this was supported by a wide range of organisations and 72 percent of the public supported it.

McGovern reflected on Labour's NHS plans, which she said was just as much about supporting people into and within work, noting that lots of working people used food banks. She accepted that the government would need to expand the number of people in work but, she said, it was about more than that, it was about seeing the talent in everyone.

McGovern called for a reform to the Equality Act, to give a more prominent status for discrimination on socio-economic grounds.

Expanded role of food banks



McGovern said that food banks had moved on from only providing food at a lower cost to those experiencing hardship. She said they now had social supermarkets with mentoring and support. She noted how hard it was to get advice about social security now, so there were more services offering more rounded support.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Student Success: What do students need to survive and thrive at university?

11 October 2023

Purpose Coalition and Staffordshire University

2pm, Sunday 8 October

Panel:

- Justine Greening, chair, Purpose Coalition
- Nick Forbes, former leader of Newcastle City Council
- Professor Martin Jones, vice-chancellor, Staffordshire University

Social mobility

Justine Greening, chair of the Purpose Coalition and former education secretary, opened by saying that universities had been the driver of social mobility for the last decade or so, and had been making meaningful change. She said universities should now be pulled in to help on the final bit of pipeline – after having been central to access, then participation – in terms of setting out what happened next.

Students' basic needs

Prof Martin Jones, vice-chancellor of Staffordshire University, spoke about the interconnected complex challenges in terms of how universities were embedded in their local communities. He spoke about the report his university had recently published and explained it must be viewed in the context of the university's location itself – the Stoke-on-Trent campus being a “classic left-behind area” and their own students coming from the surrounding areas that were low on the index of multiple deprivation (IMD).

The report, he said, sought to develop the first UK measure of students' basic needs, across food, housing, and financial insecurity. The survey work uncovered most of their students were worried about cost-of-living, one-in-three would consider themselves ‘just about coping’, and that student finance was insufficient. Students also reported switching off appliances at home and using campus facilities instead. Some had even gone without food for at least one day a month recently. Many had also removed themselves from social activities – he explained this was important because there was a direct link between socialising through societies and sports clubs, and retention and progression.

Universities in the community

Nick Forbes, former leader of Newcastle City Council, said Staffordshire University was showing how you could re-engineer support services around the changing cohorts of different universities – adding it would be interesting to know what the impact was of this cumulative poverty on participation, retention and progression.

Reflecting on Newcastle, he said their universities were so important – not just economically, but also for how people viewed the city from the outside. He said there was an important link between a university and its place. He said if the economic picture was different region to region across the country (as evident in the need for combined authorities), then the skills ecosystem was going to differ – so this wasn't a conversation we could have at a national level. He believed this was the next stage in the devolution discussion, and anchor institutions should be in the room for those.

He said they needed to be mindful of increasing levels part-time employment amongst students, adding it wasn't just about work-life balance, but work-life-study balance, as university was also an experience in growing up and many students would be missing out on this.

Role of local authorities

Greening asked how local councils could support student communities. Forbes said one thing that always concerned him was the “forced ghettoisation” of the student community by some resident groups. He said there was no difference between students and long-term residents of the town or city.

Measuring student outcomes

Greening said the developmental opportunities, including social and career capital, were often missed in the discussion on universities. Jones was critical of the current government rhetoric on “rip-off degrees”. He said the debate focused on the economic outcome of degrees, but that mobility was often left out, despite being just as important.

Forbes said university was often where students stopped being taught and instead “start to learn.” One thing he noted as impressive was, at the annual report of both Newcastle universities, the number of volunteer hours carried out by the students. He said universities were not islands of privilege that people went to for three or four years, without ever having any contact with the local area during that time. While there may be some instances of this, his experience was that it was broadly not the case. Instead, universities were the lifeblood of some towns and cities, particularly culturally.

Helena Vine, of the Quality and Assurance Agency (QAA) asked how the sector could make the argument of decoupling economic outcomes from the whole measure of student outcomes, and place as much weight on the more holistic measures.

Jones said measures could change over time – citing Ofsted's framework change, and the work undertaken by the QAA. Forbes said there was no sense in the viewpoint that increasing access and participation would reduce academic achievement. He argued it was still seen as a “nice to do” in the sector, rather than a “must do”. He suggested it should be something built into funding agreements as an expectation.

Greening noted Treasury had its own set of outcome indicators completely separate to the rest of government, which didn't work – and that the only indicator on HE was employment, which provided only a partial picture, particularly as it provided no context. She said Government should support universities to promote and support entrepreneurship, but any student looking to set up on their own business wouldn't be counted in the Treasury's own figures.

She suggested the contextualisation could be based on the number and quality of opportunities, and drew comparison with introduction of Progress 8, which has helped them get a viewpoint of attainment and progression.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Rebooting levelling up for the next general election

11 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Rebooting levelling up for the next general election

IPPR North; Bright Blue & Power to Change

12:00, 9 October 2023

Panellists:

- Paula Barker MP, Shadow Minister for Devolution and Regions
- Justin Madders MP
- Zoe Billingham
- Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor, Liverpool City Region
- Ryan Shorthouse, Executive Chair, Bright Blue
- Nick Plumb, Associate Director, Power to Change

Overview

Discussion focused around the current government's success on the levelling up agenda. Panellists spoke about Labour's plans ahead of the next election and what further powers could be devolved to local areas.

Opening remarks

Paula Barker MP, Shadow Minister for Devolution and Regions, said that in her role, she would be spending the next few months bottoming out what real devolution looks like for the English regions.

She said that levelling up, as a concept, began in earnest with the Conservatives' plans to devolve power to English city regions. She said that there had been success when the economics came had come hand in hand with the responsibilities.

Barker added that the Tories had failed to make a lasting legacy on levelling up regions and had only further entrenched inequalities in the regions.

Justin Madders MP, Shadow Minister for the Future of Work and Employment Rights and Protections, said that if you wanted to level up you needed to secure business investment and provide security in the workplace.

He said that levelling up had proven to be a slogan without any substance.

Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor, Liverpool City Region, said that levelling up was always just a phrase that Conservatives could use to pretend they were doing something about areas that had been left

behind for so long. Hopefully, he said, we would now see a genuine attempt at rebalancing the country and the economy.

For him, he said, levelling up was about releasing the straight jacket of Whitehall and Westminster. He said this would provide opportunities to unleash the latent potential of those areas. Whitehall, he suggested, would never be nimble enough to respond to demands in local areas.

Ryan Shorthouse, Executive Chair of Bright Blue, said that levelling up was a noble ambition which deserved long-term cross-party commitment. He followed this up by calling on Labour not to scrap some of the Tories' measures, in a similar way to the Conservatives did when they took over from Labour, scrapping children's centres and SureStart.

He noted that these measures often took a long time to make a difference, pointing out that it had taken some time for the Tories to do similar things to the Labour administration, such as FamilyHubs.

Shothouse bemoaned that the levelling up agenda so far had mainly been targets or "missions" with only pockets of funding.

Dedicated Funds

Madders said that to announce a fund that hundreds of towns had not been able to access at all went against the premise of levelling up. He said it felt like the funds had been aimed at places that might vote for the Conservatives at the next election.

He said a lot of local authorities had put in a lot of time and resources preparing a bid for the levelling up fund and were not successful in their application.

Madders called for an end to the awarding of money which the national government then dictated where it can be spent. He said this was not efficient, nor was it truly levelling up.

Shorthouse said there had been some positives lately, including the endowment fund for 55 towns, which he said was less politicised than the levelling up fund. He said there had also been positives around attainment, although the attainment gap had widened because of the pandemic. Ultimately, though, there had not been substantial progress on levelling up.

Devolution deals

Madders bemoaned that, unless there was an elected mayor, there were no devolution deals on the table which, he said, would allow places to have their own bus and public transport services. He suggested there should be a ground-up approach where local areas were able to ask for responsibilities that had already been devolved in other areas of the country.

Rotheram told the meeting that the best bodies to respond to those demands needed to be bigger than local authorities but smaller than regional areas. So, he reasoned, combined authorities would be the ideal size to deal with those demands.

What could Labour do?

Shorthouse reflected on the measures Labour could take to achieve levelling up. He said there should be an investment in the talent to lead local initiatives and ventures. This included considering supplements for key workers to work and stay in those deprived areas, as well as localising the accelerator schemes across the country.

Nick Plumb, Associate Director for Power to Change, said that levelling up should be community driven. He suggested that Labour should introduce a Community Power Act. He said this should be aimed at enabling communities at a local level to have control over their public services and public spaces and the new legislation should give them new rights to do that.

In terms of leveraging local investment, he called for the introduction of a new British high street investment vehicle to support those community businesses that were filling vacant high street shops. He said that with some government investment, groups could continue to provide that service.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Beyond Brexit: How Can a Labour Government Reduce Technical Barriers to UK/EU Trade

11 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Beyond Brexit: How Can a Labour Government Reduce Technical Barriers to UK/EU Trade

UKAS

7:30pm, Sunday October 8, 2023

Panellists:

- Andy Sawford, Managing Partner and co-owner of the Connect Group
- Stephen Doughty, Shadow Minister for Europe and the Americas
- Richard Collin External Affairs Director, UKAS
- Sally Jones Partner, Trade Policy and Strategy, Ernst & Young
- Fillipo Pollara Senior Public Affairs Advisor, Federation of Small Businesses

Overview

Expert voices from the fields of business, trade and regulation joined the United Kingdom Accreditation Service in examining how the next Labour government could reduce technical barriers to trade between the UK and the EU.

Intros

Andy Sawford, Managing Partner of the Connect Group, who was chairing the event, said his organisation worked with businesses to help them connect and engage with the Labour Party. He added that the Labour Party would take a different approach to Europe, and that the point of this event was to debate and discuss what businesses wanted out of a Labour government on regulations and technical barriers on the EU. He introduced all the speakers and asked Stephen Doughty how Labour would improve the UK's trade with the EU.

Shadow Europe and the Americas Minister, Stephen Doughty, said that he had just come from a reception with European Union officials, where he said that he felt a far warmer tone in the room than in recent years. This showed that things had moved on from the years immediately following the Brexit referendum and the UK's protracted exit from the European Union. He then reemphasised Labour's policy of ruling out seeking UK membership of the Single Market or the Customs Union, but he stressed that they intended to deepen relationships with the EU, noting the collaborations over Northern Ireland and the Windsor Framework as a model for this. He also mentioned the importance of access to Horizon, as he said he had seen firsthand as a constituency MP the impact that has had in the research and development sector.

He emphasised four key priorities when negotiating with the EU: tearing down the business barriers; supporting world leading services and research; developing a clear foreign and security relationship with the EU alongside the NATO framework; and a green investment deal across the UK and EU. He said that they have had informal discussions with their European counterparts on this sort of action. He said that a Labour government would need to find a way forward from Brexit, and there was much more that could be made from the TCA agreement when it came up for discussion again in 2025, and that was what a Labour government would pursue.

Richard Collin, External Affairs Director at UKAS, said that UKAS had been appointed by the government to manage technical certifications. Behind it there was a whole load of real-life complications. He said that behind all jobs such as water quality, energy standards, trading goods and services, they were the organisations that managed all these standards - 'We check the checkers'. He said that Brexit had caused some barriers in terms of duplicating the level of verifications that needed to be done. The latest announcements of various stopgaps and unilateral recognitions had stopped there being a lot of extra checks, but the issue was that in the long term this would weaken the UK competitiveness in the EU market. We had mutual recognition agreements in the Switzerland and the Australia and New Zealand trade deals, so this was something that we should be doing with the EU in future. He said that we needed to acknowledge the barriers that Brexit threw up, and that we needed to be honest with those and see how we could do to improve those moving forward.

Fillipo Pollara, Senior Public Affairs Advisor at the Federation of Small Businesses, said that his organisations' members were currently seeing a 25 percent fall in trade with the EU, and all the paperwork and additional verification checks this had necessitated has made this an additional burden. He emphasised for clarity that burden is the key word to describe it as far as he and his members would describe it. He said that there had been some welcome progress in terms of the Horizon programme, but he added that the tone was important in all this.

Fillipo said that there was a pragmatic and a not so pragmatic side to the current government on EU policy and that there was an opportunity for Labour to rebuild trust. However, he felt that the mooted changes to the EU TCA seemed quite surface level to him at the moment. He would advocate for a new small businesses chapter to the EU-TCA that would help his sector of British industry to thrive better than it was currently doing. He said that while Labour was not interested in going back to the Single Market or the Customs Union, there were many aspects where the EU would be interested in doing sectoral deals and arrangements.

He finished by saying that Labour had a huge opportunity to change the tone around trade with the EU, and if there was a change of government to improve things for the small businesses that he represented.

Sally Jones Partner, Trade Policy and Strategy lead at Ernst & Young, said that she was delighted that veterinary checks would improve under a Labour government. She noted a client of her organization that exports Nematode Worms, where they now needed to secure a Veterinary Certificate for each individual worm, while has proved understandably costly and cumbersome. She said that we are in a new world with higher trade barriers, but there are things that the UK can do to improve things. She noted that there were technical working groups enshrined in the EU TCA, but that many of them had met little or not at all, so the UK should be working to get these groups functioning properly when it got into government. She said that they should also work more closely with the EU on standards policy, and that the lack of decisive action from the UK government was as bad as additional barriers. She finished by saying that trust was a crucial factor in all future negotiations with the EU over trade.

Q & A

Meaningful conversation with the EU

In response to a question from the chair about what a meaningful conversation with the EU on standards looked like, Doughty said that people should not underestimate just how bad the relationships got under Johnson's premiership, which he said deteriorated because their EU engagement was about solving a problem within the Conservative Party rather than the country. All these standards and verifications would be dealt with directly and that this would take a while to deal with and work through. He added that Labour was in listening mode on this issue, and that they wanted as much feedback and input as possible on this issue from effect organisations.

Re-joining the EU Debate

In response to a question from the audience about what Stephen would say to the proportion of the electorate that wanted to re-join the EU, Doughty said that he had been Shadow Europe minister for three years and had seen several EU ministers in that time. He said that he could assure the audience that Keir and his team would be a serious team that would work constructively with the EU.

Divergence from the EU

In response to a question from the audience to Richard Collin about the purpose of divergence of the EU and if there had been any value in this, Collin said that they needed to work more closely with other countries on accreditation standards. He referenced the Canada trade deal, which had meant better mutual recognition for EU countries.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: The Future of Foreign Policy

11 October 2023

Tony Blair Institute for Global Change

3:30, October 9, 2023

Panelists:

- Anne McElvoy, Journalist (Chair);
- David Lammy, Shadow Foreign Secretary;
- Anton Spisak, Head of Political Leadership, Tony Blair Institute;

Overview

Event discussing the foreign policy challenges under a Labour Government.

Intro

Journalist, Anne McElvoy, who was chairing the event, said that this was in many ways a fortuitous time to discuss foreign policy given the recent and ongoing events in Israel. She asked both speakers to make a statement on the situation in Israel and then on foreign policy in general.

Shadow Foreign Secretary, David Lammy, started by saying that they were gathering at a turbulent time given the situation in Israel/Palestine. Waking up to the attacks yesterday, he said that his phone was constantly ringing about the situation, and this immediately brought home to him how dire the situation was. He stated that Israel had the right to defend itself, and that Hamas was a terrorist organisation. He stressed Labour's commitment to a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, though admitted that this seemed a distant hope at this time.

Lammy then moved on to Labour's foreign policy more broadly. He said that the key geo-political priorities were the UK's relations with its European partners and the United States. He criticized the Government on having no meaningful foreign policy in relation to Europe, singling out Liz Truss's 'friend or foe' remark on Emmanuel Macron as a particular low point. He then said that Labour would look at enhancing the trade deal with the EU in 2025, adding that the war in Ukraine showed that the UK needs to have closer security cooperation with the EU.

Lammy said that the UK needed to connect more with the global community and enhance its international aid commitments. He finished by saying that the UK also needed to engage more with rising nations like India and Singapore.

Anton Spisak, Head of Political Leadership at the Tony Blair Institute said in a comment on the Israel/Palestine situation that it was a horrific attack that couldn't be justified, it was also unprecedented in its scale and in the failure of the Israeli security apparatus to detect it before it happened.

On foreign policy, he said that the UK was in now a new world following Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The rise of China and other BRICS countries poses a challenge to the established order dominated by the West.

Spisak referenced David Miliband's remarks of an 'age of impunity' where nations didn't feel bound by global norms, saying that this was a possibility if countries such as the UK didn't act now. He also added that climate change would pose an existential threat to society, as well as technology and global security which would also be major factors.

Further Israel/Palestine Comments

McElvoy asked Lammy if the Israeli response was proportionate. He suggested that many Labour activists might not be all that supportive.

Lammy said that if there were rockets attacking cities such as Brighton or Exeter, the Government would be discussing justification. He noted that this attack was more akin to the attacks during the wars between Israel and neighbouring Arab states 50 years ago. He also noted the high death rate among Palestinians in the last year as being unacceptably high, and that he wanted a peace dialogue between the two sides to start as soon as possible.

Pressed further on whether Hamas should be described as terrorists rather than militants, he restated that it was a prescribed terrorist organisation.

Spisak said that there was a risk of the situation causing further regional conflicts if not stabilised.

Asked by McElvoy what relations would be like between a UK Labour government and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Lammy says that they would have deep disagreements but that the Middle East situation was not something to be partisan about.

Ukraine Funding

McElvoy asked Spisak what the nature of support was like in the west now.

Spisak says that there were risks of resolve weakening, noting the election in Slovakia, which now gave Victor Orban of Hungary an ally in the European Council in vetoing and stymying EU efforts to help Ukraine. He said there was a lively debate on integrating Ukraine in the EU.

Defence Spending

McElvoy asks Lammy whether Defence spending would increase under a Labour government.

Lammy said that the Conservative Government has mishandled the defence situation, with troop numbers at the lowest level since the Napoleonic era, he said that when Labour left office defence spending was at 2.5 percent of GDP. Labour would work to build up the defence sector again.

McElvoy asked if he would advocate for higher defence spending as Foreign Secretary.

Lammy said that they will look at this in the round, but that they can't make a statement at this time.

Spisak said that there was an opportunity for a Labour Government to increase defence engagement with the EU going forwards.

Brexit and EU

McElvoy asked Lammy what Labour's policy on engagement with the EU would look like and if they would rejoin the EU.

Lammy said that the UK had just gone through a very bitter divorce with the EU, which arguably only ended with the Windsor Framework. He felt that there were areas where the UK could engage with the EU, such as veterinary agreements and defence.

China

McElvoy asked Spisak for his opinion on the Government's China policy.

Spisak said that it had been inconsistent, and that China was a strategic competitor to the West. In some areas China would be an important partner, he highlighted climate change and trade.

Lammy said China engagement was necessary, but Labour would be more consistent than the Government. He noted David Cameron's position and the so-called "golden relationship" with China, Theresa May's China policy following the Huawei and Nuclear Energy scandals, and well as Liz Truss's and Rishi Sunak's policies. Lammy said that there needed to be a dialogue with China on technology as well.

Q & A

Ukraine

A Ukrainian MP asked what the UK's policy would be if the US election brought new isolationism, and if Labour would extend NATO membership to Ukraine.

Lammy said the UK stood in complete solidarity with the people of Ukraine and that he would be reaffirming this in his conference speak tomorrow. He said that he and the Shadow Defence Secretary John Healey had met with many defence and political figures in Washington D.C. recently on a fact-finding trip and said that it was a good thing that in the UK this issue had not become a political football as it had become in the United States. He said that he engaged with many Republican Senators and Congressmen as well as Democratic members. Lammy said that he believed that currently stalled US war aid for Ukraine would eventually make it through Congress, and that Ukraine should have a path to joining NATO.

McElvoy asked what happened if Labour needed to deal with a new Trump administration.

Lammy said that there had always been ups and downs, but that the special relationship was deep and integral to UK foreign policy above and beyond the current occupant of the White House.

Uyghurs

A question was asked on what Labour's policy would be on the persecution of the Uyghur minority by the Chinese government, given that many NGOs and international organisations said that what was being done in Xinjiang Province amounted to genocide.

Lammy said that the situation there was a tragedy, and that fundamentally politics was about values. He said it was very bad when countries get into a “pick and mix policy” on human rights. He said that the UK would not be leaving the European Court of Human rights, for instance and that was the wrong message to send to the world.

Further Israel Question

The journalist, Paul Mason, asked whether the British government should sanction UK action to rescue civilians abducted by Hamas.

Lammy said he wouldn't want to speculation on this but that there needed to be international engagement on this situation.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: A Plan for Ending Youth Homelessness

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: A Plan for Ending Youth Homelessness

Centrepoint

5:00pm, October 9, 2023

Panellists:

- Seyi Obakin, CEO of Centrepoint (Chair);
- Mike Amesbury, Shadow Minister for Homeless and Rought Sleeping;
- Cllr Simon Jeal, Leader of Bromley Labour Group;
- Alicia Walker, Head of Policy and Research at Centrepoint;
- Laurie Holding, Independent Living Programme (Centrepoint run initiative);
- [Video recording was also played of 'Amy', who was previously a young homeless person and who currently works for Centrepoint];

Overview

This was a discussion about how a Labour Government could end youth homelessness. This session covered what must be done now to help vulnerable and homeless young people, and what steps could be taken to prevent young people from becoming homeless in the future.

Centerpoint CEO Seyi Obakin shared that they had recently launched a report, homelessness, on the impact of youth homelessness. He said that the report found that half of 16 to 21 years olds regularly went hungry. In the UK, 129,000 children had been reported as homeless since 2021. 54,000 of these were assessed but then "dumped by the system." The cost of this to the UK was an annual 8.5 billion pounds. He finished by saying that he had been speaking for 4 minutes, and in that time statistically another child had become homeless. This, he said, should focus minds on this problem.

Intros

Mike Amesbury, Shadow Minister for Homeless and Rought Sleeping, said that he had previously worked as Shadow Housing Minister and Employment Minister, and in a previous life he was a connections advisor and employment adviser working with young people. He felt that this was the experience that he brought to the role. He felt that that there needed to be a new strategy to deal with youth homelessness.

Amesbury spoke about the Rough Sleepers Initiative under the last Labour Government, which reduced homelessness. He also spoke about the example during the COVID-19 pandemic where the homeless were housed in hotels. When the political will is there, change can happen. He says that the key aspects of this change were political leadership with a cross-department approach, with key

interventions and support as early as possible to get homeless young people off the streets. Reports such as Centrepoint's played a key role in guiding policy on this issue, and that organisations and groups like these should hold his feet to the fire in a future Labour Government on this issue.

Cllr Simon Jeal, Leader of Bromley Labour Group, relayed some experiences of a family eviction in his neighboring borough of Bexley near his council of Bromley. He said that the young adult in the family ended up having to travel to his college in Gravesend from Penge, which is a two hour round trip, which put a great strain on this education. Cllr Jeal said that that Bromley had 3,000 homelessness representations a year, but this did not cover the actual hidden numbers within the borough. He said that they regularly saw young people often with no place to turn, with many employment opportunities closed to them due to being homeless. Cllr Jeal then talked about the closure of Wilko recently, and how someone he knew had their teenage child lose their first job there. He said that the affordability of housing was a key part of this crisis, there also needed to be an increase in young person's pay.

Centrepoint's Alicia Walker said that a key aspect of youth homelessness was family breakdown. She asked if the Government wouldn't step in to help these young people, then who would? These children, she said, were at the sharp end of the cost-of-living crisis, and they would struggle to deal with doing day to day activities. She added that given that there had been no less than 8 homelessness ministers in the last 3 years, there was a sense that this was an issue that had not been given much Government attention. She highlighted some of the key findings of the Centrepoint report, itemising the various costs that this incurs on various public sector organisations. She said that not building more houses and dealing with youth homelessness incurred a higher social cost. She added that what the next Government should do would be to put initiatives to tackle homelessness on a statutory footing to tackle youth homelessness. The next Government should also increase the level of Universal Credit. She finished by saying that if they worked together, the next Government could be the Government that ended youth homelessness.

Laurie Holding of the Independent Living Programme said that her organisation had been fully funded by Centrepoint. They worked across London and Manchester with plans to expand further. She said that the way it worked was that all their young homeless people were referred to them by Centrepoint. They were then housed in flats called 'right size homes' where they then worked with them for a period, on average about 2 years. They worked with them over a period to ensure that they had the skills and security to function in society. They worked to develop money and engagement skills. With that confidence that they built up, they could then move on to their forever home, with the aim of breaking that cycle that many young homeless people fell into.

Amy from the case study then spoke via a video recording. She said that her time at Centrelink had been a great benefit to her and to developing her qualifications. She now worked in the financial department of Centrepoint. She said it was not enough to only provide a place to sleep; there needed to be a wholistic approach that built their skills and development.

Q & A

Immigration Restrictions

There was a question from the floor on the impact of immigration restrictions. They asked, would the shadow minister commit to support rights for EU and international young migrants to have recourse to claim hardship funds.

Amesbury said that he saw on a daily basis the consequences of people struggling to get leave to remain. Addressing the point directly, he said that he could be a champion and an advocate on this issue, but that it was not something that he could commit to here and now.



Threshold for Priority Needs

Question from the floor regarding whether the threshold for priority support should be lowered from 18 to 14?

Amesbury says that his wife is a director of children's services, and that there was an importance in dealing priority needs at the current level.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Supercharging the Clean Energy Transition

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Supercharging the Clean Energy Transition

Event hosts: IPPR and Siemens Energy

10AM, 10 October 2023

Panellists:

- Luke Murphy, Associate Director for Energy, Climate, Housing and Infrastructure, IPPR (Chair)
- Jeff Smith MP, Shadow Minister for Clean Power and Consumers.
- Catherine Raw, Managing Director, SSE Thermal.
- Steve Scrimshaw, Vice President, UK and Ireland, Siemens Energy.
- Emma Gatten, Environment Editor, the Telegraph.

Overview

This session considered the advantages of the Clean Energy Transition and what the barriers were to achieving it.

Opening Statements

Luke Murphy, Associate Director for Energy for Climate, Housing and Infrastructure at the IPPR, reasoned that it was exciting times for clean energy given the labour target to deliver clean energy by 2030. He described it as a stretch target, but an important one for energy security and tackling the climate crisis.

Jeff Smith MP, Shadow Minister for Clean Power and Consumers, acknowledged that, given he had been in the job for 4 weeks, he was keen to listen to experts, as was the Labour party more generally. He noted that Labour were forming policy around the social tariff. He said they faced four crisis climate crisis, job crisis, energy security crisis and cost of living crisis. He spoke about the importance of GB Energy which would champion investment in homegrown renewables. He reasoned that it would inspire confidence on behalf of the private sector, and said it could inspire investment in industrial storage and hydrogen factories and giga factories.

He reasoned that once you started to retrofit homes, you increased economic inactivity and improved peoples' houses making energy bills cheaper, so it paid for itself in the medium term.

He acknowledged that the National Grid was the biggest challenge. He said we had to tackle barriers to speed up decisions.

He reasoned that the UK had natural advantages for green energy, given the geographical conditions of our windy island and history of industrial innovation.

He acknowledged that we had to do this as there was no alternative and the sooner we did it, the cheaper it would be due to the costs being spread over a great time period.

Catherine Raw, Managing Director of SSE Thermal, noted an intention from SSE to invest and build the largest offshore wind farm in the world. She said a clean, stable, and secure power system must account for back up options and flexibility, and said we had to know what would give you confidence that you had power when you switched the lights on.

She said that we needed the confidence that there was proper understanding of how the power system worked. Secondly, they needed the government to have confidence in the role of CCUS and hydrogen, and thirdly they needed confidence that the government had an understanding of the steps to reach their 2030 target. Fourthly, she reasoned we had to know that the transition is fair on those communities.

Steve Scrimshaw, Vice President of the UK and Ireland at Siemens Energy, spoke about the technological barriers to achieving net zero. He reasoned that these barriers were not strong. He expressed concern that regulation, legislation and business model barriers were more likely to hold society back from achieving net zero as opposed to tech barriers.

He expressed confidence that the Labour party were taking net zero seriously. He said we had to accelerate the pace and scale of the development of clean energy tech. He said this would provide clarity to investors and suppliers, and would allow the UK to get the first move advantage in creating new industries. He said changing targets and goal post created fundamental uncertainties and weaknesses that harmed the UK's place on the global stage. He reasoned that net zero was too important to be a partisan issue.

He also reasoned that net zero was the growth opportunity of the 21st century, and welcomed that it was in mainstream consciousness. He welcomed Labour's pledge to make Britain a clean energy superpower, but said it was more than just cables and planning to do this, even though they were necessary steps in the journey.

He said offshore wind was struggling, and the pace and scale had to increase significantly if the UK was going to meet the targets. He said the CFD allocation mechanisms had to be changed to ensure AR5 did not happen again.

He reasoned that other countries had been much faster at supporting large scale hydrogen projects.

He said there was no energy transition without transmission, and that the grid had to be fit for purpose.

Emma Gatten, Environment Editor at the Telegraph, focused on consumer politics. She acknowledged that polling showed that people cared about net zero, however, they did not want to bear extra costs. She said people do not want to pay to fix a problem that they perceived as being out of their control. She said the story so far was that it was an opportunity not a cost. She said that had been a story to tell up to now. She reasoned that we had reached the end of the road of easy action. She asked how a Labour government could get the support for building the huge infrastructure that was required, such as new nuclear.

She said the Tories had not been able to do this, and were offering people cheaper bills, which was not sufficient. She noted the change in consumer behaviour, such as using energy at different times, requiring a new way of thinking. She said that people are not yet persuaded to invest in installation.

She warned that moving faster than people were willing to had risks of not bring people with you. She asked what happened in 2029 if we realised this was a big project that we could not meet. She asked if Labour had worked out the risks of this target and if they were worth it.

Offshore wind investment

Scrimshaw argued that many other industries had benefited from the investment offshore wind.

Raw reasoned that when looking at building wind farms there had to be added value, if you wanted a cheaper wind farm you did not build in the UK, therefore projects have to added value beyond simply cost. She reasoned that the energy charter treaty was used as an excuse by members of industry to not perform certain actions.

Gatten reasoned that people were confused because they supported net zero but did not know what it meant to get there. It was not obvious what people should be doing to achieve net zero and how they were meant to be able to afford it. She reasoned that there was not enough information about what we were trying to do and how to do it.

Smith reasoned that was a mission like the vaccine taskforce, we needed industry and government to come to gather. "In order for the public to come along with us we need to explain it". He hypothesised that framing it as a solution to the four challenges might help, it would make bills cheaper, it would produce jobs, it was the economic opportunity of the 21 century. In terms of energy and security and the climate crisis they had witnessed firsthand our vulnerability, so thye had to make clear this was the way to address it. He reasoned that Sunak was out of touch on this, saying that the focus on ULEZ had made Sunak miss the big picture of public concern about the wider problem of the climate challenge.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Delivering Development in Partnership: How Local Authorities & Developers can Work Together to Drive Positive Local Development

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Delivering Development in Partnership: How Local Authorities & Developers can Work Together to Drive Positive Local Development

Vistry Group/Planning Futures

9am, 9 October 2023

Panellists:

- Tom Copley, Deputy (London) Mayor for Housing and Residential Development;
- Andrew Taylor, Planning Director, Vistry Group;
- Hannah David, Director, Planning Futures;
- Cllr Grace Williams, Waltham Forest;;
- Victoria Hills, Chief Executive, MRTPI.;

Overview

The panellists discussed the need to reform the planning system, and the tensions between councils and developers in delivering affordable housing.

Discussion

Tom Copley, Deputy (London) Mayor for Housing and Residential Development, said it was great to be on such a distinguished panel. He said that the devolved arrangement in London allowed him to build strong relationships with both councils and developers.

He said that his favorite project was 'Barking Riverside', which he sat on the board of and which would build thousands of homes. A new tube station had also been opened in Barking that had transformed accessibility to the area.

Victoria Hills, Chief Executive, MRTPI, said that her organisation was sometimes referred to as a trade body, but they were not, they were a professional institute and also a charity. Hills listed the essential ingredients for partnerships in planning. She felt that a strong plan and certainty was what partners wanted.

Hills said that getting planning permission was only a base plan, and that getting things delivered uniformly was what the UK struggled with. She said she had worked with developers that had not even built anything at all.

Hills felt political leadership was needed at local and regional level, to improve planning. The community also needed to be brought into the growth journey, so they could understand how plans would improve their children's lives.

Cllr Grace Williams, Waltham Forest, said that many councils were already working with developers to improve plans. She said that 52 percent of affordable homes built in her borough had gone to people who had been on the waiting list for longer than three years.

She said her council had adopted a mixed economy approach, including using their own developer, 'Sixty Bricks', as well as others. It had been a pluralistic approach to house building. It wasn't just about housing; they wanted to regenerate parks and leisure centers also.

Williams explained how the economic situation was impacting developers, due to rising costs and stagnating house values, which made maintaining planning partnerships difficult. In 2022, she said that construction costs had increased by 22 percent.

She said it was a fact of life that councils and developers had different interests, so they needed a clear vision from the government to outline what the UK wanted from affordable housing.

Andrew Taylor, Planning Director, Vistry Group, said that everyone involved in planning wanted to deliver a quality scheme and he wanted to learn from previous schemes, so he could improve in his role.

He felt that a clear local plan provided certainty for investors. As a developer he knew one day they would leave a site, and he wanted to take responsibility for the area by providing open spaces, facilities and infrastructure.

Q&A

An employee from the Battersea Power Station Project asked if the remit for planning had become too broad and encompassed too much.

Williams thought he was completely right, but she felt they would never get back to the point where planning just focused on housing.

Taylor agreed and felt more areas could come under building regulations.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Breaking Down Barriers to Apprenticeships

10 October 2023

UCAS, Youth Futures Foundation

09:30AM, 10 October 2023

Panellists:

- Ayesha Hazarika, Broadcaster and commentator
- Alison Scowen, Head of Public Affairs (Life Services) Campaigns, the Cooperative
- Seema Malhotra MP, Shadow Minister for Skills
- Barry Fletcher, Chief Executive, Youth Futures Foundation
- Sander Kristel, Interim Chief Executive, UCAS
- George Greaves, former apprentice and young Non-Executive Director, Youth Futures Foundation

Overview

The panellists discussed the benefits of apprenticeships and how accessible they were for young people. They also spoke about the apprenticeship levy, which they concluded needs work because it was stifling the uptake of apprenticeships.

Discussion

Ayesha Hazarika said they hadn't quite cracked the code for apprenticeships. She said it was important to make sure young people were properly skilled for the labour market, especially now that less people were considering university.

Seema Malhotra said there was a shift in the way young people were thinking about apprenticeships, with different ways in which people were working. She cited one of Labour's five missions, 'break down the barriers to opportunity', explaining how this relates to apprenticeships.

Malhotra referred to the growth mission; she said that opportunity was key for growth in the country because businesses needed to fill jobs but couldn't do so without the talent. She continued that there was an increasing demand for apprenticeships amongst young people, but despite this the number of apprenticeships has fallen. The Labour Party would have to address the challenge of the apprenticeship levy, as it was not working. They had to look into the flexibility that people wanted, alongside twenty-five percent of the apprenticeship levy would go into the growth levy that would focus on instilling confidence into people who completed apprenticeships.

Labour wanted to invest in more career advisors, so that young people could recognise there were multiple pathways into the world of work. They also wanted to restore the two weeks of work experience, that was scrapped under David Cameron.

A central part of how Labour would join up education institutions and industry would be investment in skills in communities. People needed a stable foundation for a good life, alongside the opportunity to learn and work in their local area.

For George Greaves' career path, the golden thread was traineeship, which led to an apprenticeship. Prior to the apprenticeship, he could have gone down the wrong path, but it opened doors for him and changed his life.

Small and Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs) were worse off with the apprenticeship levy, because less people took them up. Incentive payments need to be worked on with SMEs.

Alison Scowen stated that the Cooperative had always been committed to apprenticeships and training. They currently held 750 apprentices. The apprenticeship levy had acted as a break on their ambition, without this they could have employed forty percent more apprentices. The Cooperative wanted more opportunities for levy transfers, especially for smaller businesses, as they could not claim the costs they incurred through hiring apprentices, e.g. travel, accommodation, etc.

Scowen found apprenticeship funding "murky", as they could not see where the money was going with unspent money disappearing back to the Treasury. The Cooperative would like to know where the money was going and wanted a Labour Government to be more open.

Barry Fletcher believed that apprenticeships made a real difference and the evidence for them was strong. Whilst there was a significant reduction in the number of people doing apprenticeships, there had been an improvement in the quality of apprenticeships. Fletcher hoped for a high number of high-quality apprenticeships.

There were rising numbers of NEETs (young people not in education, employment or training), whilst there were also large numbers of apprenticeship spaces. Fletcher wanted to determine how to make the connection between the two. There was not a definitive support structure for pre-apprenticeship situations, for instance those who have not acquired five GCSEs, which would make any apprenticeship more challenging to apply to.

Sander Kristel argued that the demand for apprenticeships was there, as demonstrated by the number of UCAS applicants interested in apprenticeships. Kristel furthered that apprenticeships were not well advertised, especially in classrooms; finding and applying to apprenticeships was "really chaotic" at present.

Although UCAS was investing in making apprenticeships a priority choice when using the website, which they were very passionate about, the problem was if the supply was not there.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How Does Labour Solve the Housing Crisis?

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How Does Labour Solve the Housing Crisis?

LabourList & The Joseph Rowntree Foundation

11:15, 10 October 2023

Panelists:

- Tom Belger, Editor, LabourList (Chair)
- Darren Baxter, Principal Policy Adviser, Joseph Rowntree Foundation
- Vicky Spratt, the i paper, Housing Correspondent
- Matthew Pennycock MP, Shadow Minister for Housing and Planning
- Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor of London for Housing

Overview

The event focused on housing, particularly the aims and reforms required to improve the housing stock in the UK.

Subheading

Darren Baxter, Principal Policy Adviser at the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, warned that rates of building houses were down compared to a few years ago and the cost of mortgages was up. He reasoned that an incoming government should increase house building and supply, and this should go across all scales from small builders to big builders, and the project could be as big as building new towns. He welcomed Labour's ambition to build new towns.

He said the question was how to start to develop these towns and projects. He pointed to the importance of planning reform and land purchasing powers and he said councils were unlikely to do this because they have not built for a long time. He said we need to regulate renting to make it more secure.

He also reasoned that the housing crisis was worse for those at the sharpest end of it. He reasoned that a new government would have to make sure housing support from universal credit were reconnected to the cost of rent. He noted that the proportion of renting had not changed that much over recent decades, what had changed was the proportion of renting from the private sector.

Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor of London for Housing, argued that fixing the housing crisis was a fundamental task for the next government to fix economic growth via building new homes and making homes healthier for people so that people were taking fewer sick days. He reasoned that this was essential to the Labour agenda.

He noted that almost every council was delivering council housing in London, due to decisions made at City Hall and funding allocation and political leadership in those boroughs. He reasoned that with a Labour government, London could turbo charge the projects it had been doing within London. He reasoned that the GLA had a role to play as a master developer due to the amount of land it owned in London.

Matthew Pennycock MP, Shadow Minister for Housing and Planning, warned that Labour's early plan had to be deliverable. He reasoned that was central to how they would deliver on Labour's economic mission, and deal with net zero and health outcomes. He reasoned that the housing crisis was at emergency levels.

He argued that the Tory party policy of removing mandatory house building rates had made Labour's position poor from the start. He said Labour was committed to reform the leaseholder system, and if the government did not do that, the Labour party would. He reasoned that socially affordable housing had to be built. He said there had to be a rescue package for the local planning system, and he said this was essential to being able to improve the supply of housing.

He said we had to improve the capacity within the system, and we needed to be bold and build large scale housing projects. He reasoned that this new generation of towns showed that Labour was ambitious to tackle social issues, including housing. He reasoned that they were prepared to take on NIBMYS.

Vicky Spratt, Housing Correspondent of the i paper, reasoned that housing was front and center of this conference, and said this was striking to the landscape at the Tory conference. She speculated that Labour sounded like they were doing Development Cooperation, such as those in the post war years. However, she feared there would be financial barriers to that, coupled with the skills shortage. She said everyone generally agreed that this was an excellent package of housing policies.

She warned that homes could not be built quickly, and expressed concerns that renting needed to be reformed. She warned that renters were spending the highest proportion of their income on rent in history of the UK. She expressed concern about how that could be fixed.

Renters Reform Bill

Pennycock said that the Renters Reform Bill had to be strengthened and reformed, such as how to build with unreasonable rent rises. He said we had to have a mortgage guarantee scheme to help first time buyers get new developments first.

He also confirmed that a Labour government would not consider renting controls.

Tom Copley, Deputy Mayor of London for Housing, reasoned that the Renters Reform Bill had struggled to pass through Parliament due to the resistance from backbenchers. He also warned that some people would oppose development independent of how beautiful the buildings were.

Baxter reasoned that it was important to get buy-in from the local community about the benefits of building of housing locally. He reasoned that framing it as being important to health and happiness as opposed to purely economic might also help get buy-in from some communities.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Skills Revolution Now!

10 October 2023

TUC;

14:30, 9 October 2023

Panelists:

- Kate bell (chair) TUC
- David Blunkett, Chair or Council of skills advisers, Former Education Secretary
- Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor, Liverpool City Region
- Bridget Phillipson MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education
- Kevin Rowan, Head of Organising, Services and Learning, TUC
- Praful Nargund, Member, Council of skills advisers

Overview

Panellists discussed health innovation and the state of clinical research in the UK. The session focused on the barriers to research and the ways to enable innovative medicines in the NHS.

Opening remarks

Steve Rotheram, Metro Mayor, Liverpool City Region, began the session by saying that what Labour did in power to raise aspirations for young people was really formative. He said that, with devolution, he wanted to do some of the things and learn some of the lessons from when Labour was in power.

He said that in Liverpool City region they had developed some areas of best practice to encourage people into the right stream of education. He said there were people from the community were going in and encouraging people to take on courses.

David Blunkett, Chair or Council of skills advisers, Former Education Secretary, said that the future government could learn from history, from what the government he was a part of got wrong and what it got right. He said that the measures they had initiated had been wiped out by the Tories since.

He said there was money about, but it was about how it was used. He said there was millions being top-sliced by the Treasury and then, on top of that, the Department of Education underfunds.

Praful Nargund, Member, Council of skills advisers, said that if people did not have the opportunities to go on skills courses, the country was potentially missing out on lots of talent. It was not just about what the individual was missing, but what about the businesses and the economy missing out, too.

He said that the principle of working earning and learning could be transformative for the country, noting that there were fewer apprenticeships now than 10 years ago and less SMEs were taking on apprenticeships.

Nargund called for lifting the cap on the levy so that big companies could transfer that to their supply chain and an increase of the minimum wage for apprentices.

Kevin Rowan, Head of Organising, Services and Learning, TUC, congratulated the party for the focus on skills. He said it showed the level of interest, engagement, and concern about how the skills system was working in the UK.

He said this was system failure on industrial scale and there was no part that anyone said worked well.

Rowan said the impact on individuals was phenomenal. Not just in their careers, he said, but also on a human level. He added that people felt better about themselves, and their self-esteem improved.

He said that employees had found it harder and harder to take time out to train and retrain. He said the cost of training was too high. He added that it was difficult to find the right source of good quality advice.

Bridget Phillipson MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, said that a whole generation of young people were being failed and denied the opportunities to get on in life.

She said that a Labour government would ensure there were good pathways no matter where someone was from or what their background was. She added that people should have choices around apprenticeships, further education and university.

Council of Skills Advisers recommendations

Blunkett reflected on the recommendations of the Council of Skills Advisers, which suggested a levy, which had been labelled a "growth and skills levy", and a national body, labelled Skills England.

He said that a lot of those recommendations had been included in the Party's commitments but said that the policy forum process was very clunky and it meant leaving out part of the document including the Union Learning Fund.

Rowan said that the key principle of Skills England was that people who had skin in the game needed to have a voice in the room.

Phillipson said the Labour Party were pleased they could build on the recommendations to use Skills England to bring together employers, local authority and government to work in partnership to address the skills gaps.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Further Education: The Key to a Fairer and Greener Britain?

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Further Education: The Key to a Fairer and Greener Britain?

University and College Union (UCU)

1:15PM, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Jo Grady, University and College Union
- Mika Minio-Paluello, Trades Union Congress (TUC)
- Emma Rose, President, National Education Union
- Jenny Sherrard, Head of Equality, UCU
- Lee Pearle, National Officer, UNISON
- Scarlet Westbrooke, Teach the Future

Overview

Panelists discussed the importance of further education in the green transition. The spoke about FE funding, green skills bottleneck and Labour's plan for FE in the context of the green skills revolution.

Opening Statements

Jenny Sherrard, Head of Equality at the UCU, started by stating that they were concerned about recent proposals in the education sector, such as introducing Advanced British Standard exams. She added that she did not think that Labour was not being bold enough in their thinking.

Jo Grady from the University and College Union said that the lack of speed and change at which they were addressing the climate was frightening. There was no greater emergency facing us, yet there was a discussion around "weird, fringe" issues. She said that further education could offer a real change. FE was a space where everyday people could get education and therefore had the ability to be a place where they could genuinely train people for jobs in a green economy, as opposed to throwing money at fossil fuels.

Grady continued that colleges did transform lives and broaden horizons. They were at the heart of communities, and delivered high level skills.

She said that it was crime shame that colleges had been underfunded in recent decades. They had seen a decline in staff, and staff had been chronically overworking to keep the system working. College staff were paid less than sixth form staff for the same courses. The UCU would soon announce if they were to take strike action over pay.

She continued that FE was consistently ignored by governments. She said they needed proper funding so that people didn't leave further education. If the top priority for the government was net zero, then they needed to work at a quicker rate than they currently were. They needed to have a green skills revolution.

Grady said that the UCU recommended embedding education for sustainability across the curriculum, and there was a real worry that the current Labour leadership was paralysed by fear, in fear of saying what was needed in terms of money and funding for certain things, especially FE.

Mika Minio-Paluello from the Trades Union Congress (TUC) said that the TUC thought they needed to accelerate the climate transition, and it needed to be fair and just. To get the accelerate transition and make sure it was just, they needed a very active state as businesses alone would not get them there.

They needed to see a key industrial strategy, similar to the one put out by the Biden administration in the US. Climate transition was going to be a lot of work, but it should create new jobs and also transform current jobs.

Though new jobs were good, those new jobs would require new training, and what they were already seeing was a skills bottleneck, as there was not enough government funding behind it. For example, there were enough heat pumps for homes, but there were not enough people with skills to install heat pumps to make the change effective.

There was a skills bottleneck in a range of sectors, and part of the reason for this was that it was demand/employer-led. The issue was that the training needed to happen now in order for these things to come to fruition in a year or two. They needed a much more needs and forecast-led way of thinking.

The green jobs taskforce realised that FE was going to do a lot of the heavy lifting for the green skills revolution. It therefore needed to grow and be resourced appropriately, as well as guaranteed funding. FE wasn't "shiny" from the government, unlike things in tech, which could easily be boosted. FE would also need funding. Without, they would not get a competent transition. Resourcing FE was part of having a green industrial strategy.

Lee Pearle, National Officer at UNISON, said it was very important as they moved to a green economy, that they considered all staff, they needed to take everyone with them. If they looked at a lot of the problems over the past decades, a lot of them were down to not everyone being brought along.

She continued that in a lot of plans that she had seen for green futures did not include how it would be done fairly. Staff in FE did not feel treated fairly, as funding levels had been low and it had been overlooked.

One of the big changes they needed to see was to train people who were already working in the industry and reskill them. Adult education had seen cuts of around 15 percent, as a result, they had seen a fall in people taking part in adult education.

They needed to look at how they could green the whole of the economy. In colleges, it was about giving everyone those skills. They needed to see equality of opportunity, and the transition being done fairly.

Emma Rose, President of the National Education Union, said that anything discussed at conference did not matter if the planet was not secure. They needed to think about creating an education sector

that was for the future that they needed. FE had a huge role to play in changing the world and in a just transition.

She thought they needed people throughout the education system who needed to be bold and speak up when needed. She wanted to see more education funding and furthering the system, so that people could access the system. Education did not have to be about earning money, she wanted to see it become more about critical thinking and challenging narratives.

Scarlet Westbrooke from Teach the Future said that she had written a climate education bill, which would ensure that teachers are learning and teaching about the climate crisis. There was a disparity between what teachers were trained to teach, what students were learning and what people wanted to learn about.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Not Enough Teachers: How Could a Labour Government Fix the Recruitment and Retention Crisis in Education?

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Not Enough Teachers: How Could a Labour Government Fix the Recruitment and Retention Crisis in Education?

National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), National Education Union (NEU), Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

5:30pm, 9th October 2023

Panellists:

- Bridget Philipson MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Education;
- Paul Whiteman, General Secretary, NAHT;
- Daniel Kebede, General Secretary, NEU;
- Laura McInerney, Teacher Tapp;
- Emma Knights, Co-Chief Executive, NGA.;

Overview

Panellists discussed the issue with teacher recruitment and retention and how teachers were being treated by the Government. Shadow Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Philipson, tried to reassure teachers that a Labour government would work with teachers' best interests at heart.

Teacher recruitment and retention

Laura McInerney, Teacher Tapp started off by stating that the government had missed teacher recruitment targets year on year.

Paul Whiteman, General Secretary, NAHT, said that the Government had missed its recruitment targets again this year. Retention rates were declining, and they were losing more teachers than ever before. They were also losing teachers before their time.

Pay was not the first thing that teachers and headteachers spoke about, and that allowed the Government to "get away with it" for far too long. Other issues members spoke about was a 58-hour working week, driven by burdensome inspections and accountability measures. These were becoming a "tick box exercise".

The overall state of the profession was not positive, as conditions within the profession were not good. Politicians were willing to give teachers a "kicking" when they found themselves in a not so good spot.

Regarding pay, teachers were not able to pay their own basic bills, and sometimes had to get second jobs. The pay was not high enough to attract new talent. Whiteman spoke of the strike action that took place over the summer, stating that it was when they got to talking a bit of “common sense”.

Daniel Kebede, General Secretary, NEU, said that the Government was very out of touch and did not deal with the reality of the sector at the moment. Schools were in crisis, and the Government did not want to deal with it. They had 1m children being taught in classes 31 or more, the largest class sizes in Europe.

The crisis in recruitment and retention was created by a number of factors, namely Ofsted, which gave colleagues “nightmares” at night. A huge difference that could be made would be the removal of one-word judgements, which Kebede was glad to see that Labour said they would work on.

They were in a negative spiral, where the workload was high, so people left the profession, and there were not enough staff. Pay was also a huge issue, and he referenced an NFER report which stated they needed a 16.5 percent revision of teacher pay.

They needed a greater investment in education, with investment falling under the Conservative government, compared to the last Labour government. He hoped he could see education investment rising.

The public cared about strong public service, and education was creeping up the public’s list of concerns, alongside the NHS.

Emma Knights, Co-Chief Executive, NGA, said staff needed more time to do other things, whether it be preparation, training or working collaboratively. Regarding teacher team leaders, she questioned the amount of training they provided to those who were promoted to those roles.

Bridget Philipson, Shadow Secretary of State for Education, said that it had been a tough time and the pandemic had caused strains, but that was not the only factor. The mental health crisis and cost of living crisis were factors as well.

She continued that if she was Secretary of State, she would reset the relationship between the sector and government. It had to be done on the basis of partnership, mutual respect and prioritising education. She joked that Gillian Keegan was making such a contribution to the Labour cause, which spoke to a wider problem of respect from the Government.

Working class kids were the ones that lost out when they did not have a government that valued them.

They needed to make teaching more attractive, which could not happen overnight. There needed to be conversations about flexibility both in the sector and within government. School leaders needed to be able to focus on leading schools and driving up the standards.

Philipson listed Labour’s priorities in for schools if they were to be in government:

- 1. They would put mental health professionals in secondary schools.;**
- 2. They would reform Ofsted to remove one-word judgements to help schools know what they have done well and what they could do to improve. There was a need for independent scrutiny, but they had to get the balance right.;**
- 3. Deliver breakfast clubs in every primary school, which would be fully costed.;**

4. Labour Would ensure that school support staff had a seat at the table and had a voice and would be integrated into the school system. She said there would be help available to enable them to progress.;

Whiteman said that single word judgements by Ofsted were redundant, and the impacts of a poor judgement were adverse. They needed to do something about it and very quickly.

On Ofsted, Kebede said that the visits impacted the entire school, and resetting the relationship between profession and government was vital.

Philipson said that they needed to get the economy in a healthier state in order to invest in schools. They would end the tax breaks that private schools enjoyed and reinvest the money in state schools.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Essential innovation: The importance and value of clinical trials

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Essential innovation: The importance and value of clinical trials

Roche & UCB

13:00, 9 October 2023

Panellist:

- Dr Jennifer Harris, Director of Research and Development Policy, ABPI;
- Steve McCabe, Member, Access to Medicines and Medical Devices APPG;
- Claire Braiding, Managing Director UK & Ireland, UCB;
- Dr Owen Jackson, Director of Policy, Cancer Research UK;

Overview

Panellists discussed health innovation and the state of clinical research in the UK. The session focused on the barriers to research and the ways to enable innovative medicines in the NHS.

Opening remarks

Dr Owen Jackson, Director of Policy at Cancer Research UK, began the session by telling the meeting that life sciences was clearly a stand-out sector for the UK. He said there had been a golden age for cancer research, highlighting that they had nearly doubled the ten-year cancer survival rate, whilst the number of people dying from cancer was down 10 percent this decade.

Jackson said that health was one of the defining issues of our lifetime and presented a huge and existential crisis.

Claire Braiding, Managing Director UK & Ireland at UCB, said that the fact the UK had the life sciences vision showed it had the aspiration as a country. She said the quality of science and research was really world class and called for the need to keep investing in that. She pointed to the success from the vaccine taskforce that all the systems worked together and called for the return to those ways of working.

Steve McCabe MP, Member of the Access to Medicines and Medical Devices APPG, said he was interested in the new precision health accelerator being built in Birmingham. One thing often overlooked about west midlands, he said, was that it had the most diverse and stable population in the country which made it a perfect place for trials.

McCabe said the agenda should be about developing new medicines and technologies and bringing them online much faster. He said the pandemic showed the UK could do that when there was determination.

Research

Jackson said the UK infrastructure presented good opportunities in terms of translating research into practice, highlighting that the access to patients in the NHS and the data this provided meant that researchers had test-beds to carry out their work.

However, Jackson noted that two thirds of clinicians did not have the time to turn the research into new treatments and called for dedicated time to research.

Jackson said that this field was now a global game, and the UK was competing for talent. He questioned how to attract and retain the best researchers and their teams. He suggested that costs needed to be reduced, highlighting those charges such as the health surcharge meant that it was between £13-16,000 before they had even started any research, whereas in other countries that cost was spread over their time in the country.

He added that policymakers should ensure clinicians and cancer nurses had some time dedicated to research and focus on giving the workforce the time for research.

Clinical trials

Braiding said there had been challenges with clinical trials in the UK recently and said that her organisation believed that whatever happens in the election, the Government needed to take forward the findings of the O'Shaughnessy review.

She said that the MHRA needed to recognise the approval certificates of other countries, which she said could make the pathway to approval in the UK smoother.

Braiding added that the UK had a slower uptake of new medicines against other comparable countries and said the UK needed to do something about that if it wanted to call itself a superpower.

She added that the tax burden on investors was putting them off investing in the UK and wanted that they would vote with their feet if they were forced to do so.

Jackson said that there needed to be a focus on streamlining the regulatory process and shortening the time between innovation find and patient outcome.

McCabe said he did not want to see endless repetitive trials and that the MHRA had a chance to reconfigure itself given the changes the country had experienced. He said he would like to see much more effort in the areas where there was already a lead to get the technology to patients as soon as possible and this meant there was a need for flexible MHRA.

He added that the UK should be using NHS data for research. He said data was the key to good clinical trials. He said that the NHS had access to the largest amount of data in the world and it should be working hand in glove with the research companies to ensure they had the data to drive forward innovation.

Diversity

Braiding said that the need for diversity in clinical trials was very clear. She said UCB had been training staff to improve diversity in their clinical trials and how to get to underrepresented groups to partake in more trials.

She pointed to social listening pieces and how to take trials to people's homes if they could not get to centres.

Jackson said that the data on inequalities in healthcare was still quite poor. On access to trials, he said there were a few vital things that were quite clear: the non-wealthy struggled to get to the trials. Transport to appointments, he said, was as much of a problem in trials as it was in treatment.

Funding

Jackson said it was a problem that so much research funding was focused in the south-east. He said Cancer Research UK's role was to fund excellence. He added that the UK was now competing to stay at the top table globally, which meant investing in world-leading research across the UK.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Skills, Growth and Secure economics: Can Technical Education Propel the UK to the Top of the G7?

10 October 2023

Airbus, WorldSkills UK

12:30, 10th October 2023

Panelists:

- Ben Blackledge, Chief Executive, WorldSkills UK;
- Oriel Petry, SVP Head of Public Affairs UK, Airbus;
- Lynne Matthews, Talent and Workplace Development Specialist, EDF Energy;
- Sarder Kristel, Interim Chief Executive, UCAS;
- Irena Grugulis, Chair in Work and Skills, Leeds University;

Overview

Panelists discussed how the skills sector could be better serviced. They also spoke about how an industrial strategy would benefit their industries and what it could do for skills.

Summary

Irena Grugulis, Chair of Work and Skills, Leeds University, said that the world of skills was in a broken state and there was a long way to go to fix it.

Ben Blackledge, Chief Executive, WorldSkills UK said there needed to be a place where the industry could talk about what skills meant for the economy and the sector. Skills were important to economic growth. WorldSkills UK had the opportunity to look at the situation in other countries.

Skills were important to growth to give homegrown businesses the opportunity to compete on an international market. 3 of 5 of global firms would relocate out of the UK if they could not find the skills they needed.

In the manufacturing industry, over half of firms were struggling to find a skilled workforce. This was also true in other key industries. If they wanted to attract new investment, then they needed to look at their approach to skills.

On the importance of people within the skills system, the issue was how they invested in the skills workforce and on how they retained and recruited. In other countries, there was a prestige around technical education that wasn't present in the UK. She asked how the UK could bring international best practice back into the sector.

Oriel Petry, SVP Head of Public Affairs UK, Airbus, said that skills were at the heart of their workforce and recruitment. For Airbus to remain competitive on the world stage, they needed a reform of skills and access to a skilled workforce.

She identified two challenges that Airbus faced:

- 1. Their order book was full till the end of the decade and would have to become even more productive. Skills were needed for this boost in productivity.;**
- 2. They needed to decarbonize flight. They had committed by 2035 to have a hydrogen fueled aircraft flying. Requiring a pivot in how they thought about skills;**

Skills were absolutely critical and there needed to be a long-term focus. With the approach that the Labour was setting out they could strengthen the triangle of partnership.

Lynne Matthews, Talent and Workplace Development Specialist, EDF Energy, said that EDF had worked with their local college to fill the positions they needed for certain technical jobs. They needed a national and industrial strategy to look at demand and how education could align with the critical skills needed.

Sarder Kristel, Interim Chief Executive, UCAS, said that UCAS was helping people find and choose apprenticeships as a priority choice. There were 800,000 NEETs, and it was projected that by 2030, they would see 1m applicants wanting to go into higher education.

UCAS believed that apprenticeships were part of the picture that they needed to see over the next few years. Higher education also had a real appeal amongst applicants. Higher education also attracted a lot of international applicants.

He concluded that it was a challenge but also a huge opportunity for employers.

When asked how an industrial strategy would help and what they would be able to do differently, Petry said that an industrial and national strategy would have a benefit of being a “north star”, that would go beyond individual interests, building hubs to attract investments. They would be able to leverage businesses coming behind to support upskilling.

Matthews said that she agreed, and the challenge in their supply chain was that a lack of strategy did not instill confidence. Being able to give some guarantees that if they put those training courses in place, there would be an inflow of people taking the courses would be a goal for them.

There was currently a risk pipeline as apprenticeships were expensive for businesses. If there was a strategy, then the supply chain could come behind it confidently.

Blackledge said that an industrial and skills strategy should link up.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Cancer Screening: Using Innovation to Help the NHS, Tackle Inequalities and Save More Lives

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Cancer Screening: Using Innovation to Help the NHS, Tackle Inequalities and Save More Lives

Bowel Cancer UK, Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, Prostate Cancer UK, Breast Cancer Now, Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust

3:30PM, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Baroness Merron, Shadow Health Spokesperson
- Chiara De Biase, Director of Support & Influencing, Prostate Cancer UK
- Genevieve Edwards, CEO, Bowel Cancer UK
- Baroness Morgan, CEO, Breast Cancer Now
- Sinead Hughes, Jo's Cervical Cancer Trust

Overview

Panelists discussed the reasons as to why various cancer screenings were low in numbers, as well as the mortality rate of cancers caught at different stages, where screening earlier would've helped. They also discussed what Labour planned to increase uptake of cancer screenings.

Subheading

Baroness Morgan, CEO, Breast Cancer Now, said that breast cancer screening was now at its lowest level ever, which is a byproduct of the pandemic. There were other issues, such as accessibility to screenings in deprived areas, as well as stigma.

Sinead Hughes, said that cervical screenings were important. They knew that it was a difficult thing to do, and in 1 in 3 women did not attend when invited to a screening, and in some areas, it went down to 1 in 2. There were many contributing factors to this, such as accessibility, as well as cultural/language barriers and stigma. They did not know to what extent it was a problem as ethnicity data was not paired up with screening data.

Chiara De Biase said that their current scientific guidelines were based on historical data based on pathways that they just did not have in the NHS anymore, such as ones that would inflict harm on those going for screenings, such as unnecessary biopsies.

There were multiple factors as to why some men may be diagnosed too late for a cure, such as living in less affluent areas. Their biggest message was around risk awareness, and they had to not wait for symptoms, as early stages do not present symptoms. They had targeted screenings for black men over 45 and men with a family history of cancer. More than half of men thought that they would be called for prostate cancer screening. De Biase said that they were not doing well by those men.

Baroness Merron said that the backdrop to the question of what they were going to do was that a record number of people were on waiting lists for hospital treatment. They also knew that they had to move away from being an NHS that was focused on late-stage treatment, to one that detected and treated as soon as possible. That was crucial.

They also had to challenge the biggest killers, as too many lives were lost to avoidable conditions. If they had a health system working as it should be, they would lose less people. If Labour was in government, they would be working to improve survival rates, via setting targets for waiting times, and they would do so within 5 years.

She said that Labour had made the following commitments which would assist with screening uptake:

1. Increase physical capacity by investing in equipment. This would be done through ringfence money.
2. Through money secured through abolishing Non-Dom status, 2m+ appts every year, making workforce NHS capacity more available, asking workers to volunteer on nights and weekends (they would be paid) to increase appointments available.
3. Commit to harnessing new technology – she conceded that this may be a challenge as existing IT provisions and training can't cope with new tech at the moment. They will work on a new strategy that brings together NHS, industry and patients to work on new technology, including AI to deliver better services.
4. Workforce – ensuring that they do deliver the workforce plan. They need the whole team, so they had to make sure they had people trained, retained and recruited.

Genevieve Edwards said that Bowel cancer was preventable, treatable and curable if diagnosed early. 1 in 10 cases were diagnosed through screening, whilst 25 percent of people were currently diagnosed in A&E, and the prognosis was not positive for them.

She said that there was a lot of work to do in terms of Bowel Cancer screening, and bowel cancer statistics were dragging the statistics as a whole down. 9 out of 10 people would survive bowel cancer if diagnosed at stage 1.

She said that there were 3 things they could do to increase the impact of bowel cancer screening programme:

1. Uptake – look at lots of innovative ways to increase.
2. Optimise the screening programmes in the 4 nations, as they are done differently in all 4, in terms of ages and sensitivities. If England did what Scotland was doing, that could detect up to 1,000 more cancers a year.
3. Health inequalities. Deprived areas are less likely to take up screenings. They needed to find ways to equal the field and make it so that all areas were serviced the same.

They could save 16,000 lives a year by optimizing the programme and give people more opportunities to live their lives.

When asked what Sweden and Australia were doing better than the UK, Hughes said government commitment and investment was key.

When asked about their thoughts on getting the basics right, Baroness Morgan said that these problems could be addressed, as some areas did really well with take up, so it was not like it was not possible. She said she felt optimistic as there was some “low hanging fruit” in sorting out the basics.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: The Future of Skills and Schools – What Changes Do We Need to See?

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: The Future of Skills and Schools – What Changes Do We Need to See?

Edge Foundation

11am, 10th October 2023

Panellists:

- Lord Blunkett;
- Faiza Khan, Executive Director City and Guilds;
- Liz Robinson, CEO, Big Education;
- Ife Obasa, Member, Edge Foundation's youth voice network;
- Olly Newton, Executive Director, Edge Foundation.;

Overview

Panellists discussed how skills could be better incorporated into the education system, and how the education system could better serve young people by concentrating on what skills they would need in later life.

Summary

Lord Blunkett said that none of the changes Labour proposed could be done without skilling or reskilling. He said they had to prepare both the way in which they taught and what they taught to take AI into account. If they did not do this, they would be overtaken rapidly. He was pleased that the Shadow Education Secretary had committed to a radical rethink of the national curriculum.

Lord Blunkett said they needed to address critical thinking and teamworking, all the way through to how they reshaped some of the qualifications, so that young people could genuinely succeed. He gave the example of Maths GCSE, stating that it needed reform to better serve young people.

Faiza Khan, Executive Director City and Guilds, said they needed to think about how skills applied across many sectors. The UK was lagging behind other countries in how they used skills, and now was the time to change that. She focused on people, productivity and place, and she looked forward to picking that up more in debates.

Liz Robinson, CEO, Big Education, said that the skills agenda had been about 16–19-year-olds and they needed to talk about skills with younger children too. Most answers to most problems in the sector was found in early years classrooms. Children were assessed against a very broad range of criteria. After that, it narrowed heavily and they were measured against a subset of academia.

Universities and employers were constantly saying that people did not have the skills they needed, so they needed to start from there. They needed to look at what they wanted young people to be like and what they were required to do, and how they could build an education system around that.

Ife Obasa, Member, Edge Foundation's youth voice network, said that the skills shortage gap needed to be addressed. They needed to foster collaboration between Government, employers, schools and young people. However, young people were not being addressed or consulted. There was still a high level of youth unemployment, which needed to be addressed. A lot of young people were prepared for exams, but not for life.

Olly Newton, Executive Director, Edge Foundation, asked for Blunkett's thoughts on the Advanced British Standard (ABS). Blunkett said that it would not serve young people well.

Lord Blunkett said that a Labour government would have to pick up the pieces, to stop the defunding of BTECs and to make sure that if they had an overarching matriculation for 18–19-year-olds, it had to be made easier.

He continued that they needed a radical reform of the curriculum so that they addressed what young people wanted to learn and needed to learn for the future.

Obasa said that the education system did not embrace creativity. To reform assessments, they could bring in creative aspects, such as digital skills.

Robinson said that in primary schools, children were seen as a whole person, and teachers attended to the holistic requirements of them as a whole person. Secondary school teachers tended to just be teachers of their subject. Teachers had been hyper skilled on one type of teaching, and that was only one approach to teaching. He said that teaching should be an exciting profession.

Khan questioned what the skills system did for those who did not excel in traditional schooling systems.

On collaboration between the further education system and schools, Khan said that the whole system approach was breaking down and they were operating in silos.

Robinson said that Ofsted needed to be reformed as an absolute priority.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Defence: Securing Britain's Future

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Defence: Securing Britain's Future

Labour Together, Capita

2pm, 9 October 2023

Panelists:

- Rt Hon Jon Healy MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Defence;
- Richard Holyroyd, Managing Director and Client Partner for Defence and Security, Capita;
- Grace Cassy, Co-Founder, CyLon;
- Andrew van der Lem, Head of the Defence Team Facility Science Ltd;
- Sir Simon Fraser, Managing Partner, Flint Global.

Overview

Panelists discussed current issues facing the defence sector, such as procurement and defence threats. The audience heard about what Labour planned to do regarding defence if they were to win the next general election.

Summary

Simon Fraser, Managing Partner, Flint Global, said that there was a strategic shift happening in geopolitics. There were a number of issues impacting the country's approach to security and defence. Advances in technology and climate change were also reasons to change the approach to security.

John Healy, Shadow Secretary of State for Defence, said that for every nation, security was at the heart of their national interest. With an election looming, they had to accept that Britain was now weaker in the world than 13 years ago.

Allies were their strategic strength, and the way Britain had been led recently had damaged its relationship with allies. With threats to breach international law, Britain's reputation was weaker.

There should be no complacency. With the state of the economy, it was now smaller and producing less, and this added to the impact of last year's mini budget. Their starting point for the next government would be tough.

Healy stated that there were four hallmarks of Labour's approach:

1. There would be no change to Britain's resolve to defend Ukraine.

2. Britain would be better defended with Labour: first, they would review and reinforce protections for overseas territories and UK homeland. They would also ensure that Britain met its NATO obligations in full. They would recognise the truth that Ukraine reminded them of about their alliances. Labour would deepen and develop Indo-Pacific partnerships, form new defence pacts with Germany, rebuild pacts with France, and establish pacts with the EU.
3. Renew the country's moral covenant with those who serve and their families. He said there would be an independent champion for armed forces.
4. For the next Government, the top priority would be to drive deep defence procurement reform.

These hallmarks would make Britain more secure at home and stronger abroad.

When asked about how he would perfect the balance between defence priorities and other economic priorities, Healy said that when Labour last left office in 2010, defence spending was higher.

Defence was an area where access to basic information and data to make good policy judgements was not available. In year 1 they would undertake a defence and security strategic review to identify what would need fixing.

Challenges to defence policy

Fraser asked the panel what they saw as the biggest challenge facing defence policy.

Richard Holyroyd, Managing Director and Client Partner for Defence and Security, Capita, said that being able to react to the threat at pace, and to adjust and meet that threat, took a proper end-to-end approach. They needed to get better at that.

While the Armed Forces had been hollowed out, the defence industrial base had been weaker than it had been for some time. The base needed support, as well as clarity and assurance.

Grace Cassy, Co-Founder, CyLon, said that bridging the gap between their stated aspirations and the reality of what they were able to achieve in terms of money and capacity in the realm of defence was key. Cassy said that the Integrated Review and its refresh made a lot of statements. Her concern was that, working with the companies that were working at the cutting edge, they did not see the ambition and aspiration turn into reality. She wanted them to look into that gap.

Andrew van der Lem, Head of the Defence Team Facility Science Ltd, said that, as an AI company working in defence, they were conscious of the slow-moving procurement system. There needed to be an ability to work at pace. Two other issues included:

1. Data – who owned data, the importance of keeping data British instead of exporting important assets to other countries and;
2. Keeping ahead of the ethical debate. New tech should be brought in safely so they could maintain a moral high ground and standard in how they carry out defence.

Healy said that what underpinned it was a frustration about the relationship between the Government and MoD with industry. The next defence secretary needed to make procurement reform their top priority. Healy said there was a lack of a strategic view currently. Healy said they had not been driving the hard bargain on behalf of the public that they needed to. This was not just about public investment; it was also about where the leverage was in how they did that.

Fraser asked Healy what worried him in terms of international defence.

Healy said that too often, ambition was not matched by reality. He criticised the 2021 Integrated Review and wanted a NATO first policy. He named Russia's invasion of Ukraine and climate change as two things that should be prioritised.

Van der Lem said that as technology changed, the cost of being a bad actor changed. It was becoming easier to acquire worrying technology.

Cassy said there needed to be more focus on the maritime domain. She said the UK was an island nation and the UK had its waters and allies' waters to worry about. The UK had the opportunity to invest further in that domain.

Holyroyd said that NATO first was "entirely right". He added that it was impossible to do everything everywhere, and they needed to plan intelligence capability to know what was coming next. Efficiency in the MoD at the moment meant to make cuts. Instead, it should be about getting more from the same.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: A Vision for Justice: How Can Labour Deliver a System That Works for All?

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: A Vision for Justice: How Can Labour Deliver a System That Works for All?

Society of Labour Lawyers, The Bar Council, The Law Society

6pm, 8th October 2023

Panellists:

- Catherine Atkinson, Society of Labour Lawyers;
- Shabana Mahmood MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice;
- Emily Thornberry MP, Shadow Attorney General;
- Nick Emmerson, Vice President of the Law Society of England and Wales;
- Nick Vineall KC, Chair of the Bar Council.;

Overview

Panellists discussed the current faults in the justice system, including a backlog, lack of funding and overcrowding in prisons.

Summary

Emily Thornberry, Shadow Attorney General, said that if Labour were in Government after the next election, they would inherit a broken justice system that was close to “complete collapse”. They had to fix the holes in the system. Before they could do anything, they would have to do a repair job that would take a lot of time. All the work they needed to do would be necessary before they could do any work of their own.

On legal aid, they would love to close the gaps, but the hollowing out of legal expertise in various sectors meant that even if they did have the money, the capacity was not there to plug all the gaps that existed. Their immediate priority would be to address the ones that needed urgent care.

She said that ending the backlog in the courts would have to be their immediate priority.

Thornberry said they would all like to turn prisons into safe, secure and controlled environments, but they had to prioritise ensuring that there were enough spaces available in prisons. She said that clearing up the mess that Conservatives made was not an excuse, but it was a reason for the delay. She said it was imperative that once this Government’s term ends, whatever record Labour inherited should not be treated as a new benchmark for these services, and they had to reckon with the fact that it was unacceptable. The next Government must be committed to repairing the damage done.

Thornberry said that a Government in charge of the system must be relied on to uphold the rule of law.

Nick Vineall, Chair of the Bar Council, said that the good news was the country had a good and strong judiciary. Exports of the English legal system were strong and the legal system was a big contributor to the economy. He said they also needed some help from the economy. Youth justice had changed over the years, as few people under the age of 18 were being detained. There had been a lot of inappropriate criticism of lawyers.

Vineall added that there was not enough capacity in prisons for a variety of reasons, one of which being covid, which he described as 20 percent of the reason. The other 80 percent was budget cuts to the system.

How could things get better? Vineall said that because the essential problem was a lack of money, the only solution could be more money. He said that there were lots of people working hard to improve the crown courts system, but to little avail.

He suggested 6 things to think about

1. Do they have the right number of people in prison for the right amount of time?;
2. Criminal legal aid must be at an overall level, which meant it was sustainable for solicitors to have a practice that was publicly funded. They must also spend the money on criminal defence legal aid in a way which encouraged what the courts wanted to encourage in practice.;
3. On civil legal aid, he suggested that it was frontline advice that was key to this. It was a mistake for the policy to think about regulated providers. There had traditionally been “fabulous” advice provided from people who may not be fully qualified lawyers but had expertise elsewhere.;
4. There had to be a proper tone to debate.;
5. He said they had to think about the next economy of provision they had in the legal sector. It was important that governments did not abdicate their responsibility to the regulators.;
6. On the international rules-based order, there should be a rules-based order as that was important.;

Nick Emmerson, Vice President of the Law Society of England and Wales, said that the justice system needed to be world leading. Legal services were a global champion for the economy. The success of this was built on the foundations of a wider justice system.

He also drew attention to the fact that court infrastructure was crumbling, and backlogs were growing. Across the country, legal aid deserts were marching on, with parts of the country not having access to a housing legal aid advisor.

Since 2017, 1,700 people had left the sector, leading to delays in cases and victims being forced away from justice. The system had reached a point where it needed funding and political attention. If £11m were to be invested in civil legal aid, this would keep the system alive. £13m for criminal legal aid was needed. Long term, the only way they were going to address the crisis was through a holistic approach, that understood that when they invested in the courts, they were investing in society.

Emmerson noted that the Law Society was taking the Government to court to make them implement their own review on legal aid rates.

Shabana Mahmood, Shadow Secretary of State for Justice, said that her role was important because people expected that if they came into contact with the justice system, it would be there to uphold people's rights and that justice would be done. Collective safety and security was the bedrock upon which opportunities were built.

She continued that the rule of law did not just apply to citizens. They also had to hold the Government to the highest standard. She said she would never allow the judiciary or the system to be scapegoated for doing the job upon which democracy depends. She said it was a threat to rule of law when a “flailing” Government hit out against lawyers.

She made no apology for the fact that Labour spoke about crime and criminal justice a lot and named some of their pledges. She said that Labour was the party of law and order. She said she was working on a Victims Package to give victims the help and justice they needed, and so they did not feel as harmed by the justice process as they did by the initial crime itself.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Facing the Future Together: The Road Ahead to Net Zero

10 October 2023

Road Haulage Association (RHA)

11:00, 8th October 2023

Panelists:

- Dame Nia Griffith, Shadow Minister, Cabinet Office;
- Chris Ashley, Head of Policy, Environment, RHA;
- Rhian Hughes-Hodgkinson, Earl Transport;

Overview

Panelists discussed fuel alternatives and their drawbacks. They concluded that more education and cohesiveness was needed on the road to net zero, but they also agreed that the targets should not be pushed back and that a plan was needed to successfully reach net zero in the near future.

Summary

Dame Nia Griffith said that road haulage and transport was key during the pandemic, and questioned how the sectors could decarbonize. She said that firstly, the UK needed an industrial strategy. A plan by the Government interlinking and having an industrial council on a statutory footing.

R&D was also important. She gave an example of green hydrogen being thought about in the aerospace industry.

There were several lower carbon fuels available, and they needed to be working closely on how they would mesh with different sectors. Added to that was a huge demand for electricity for several reasons. That was why Labour had put at the heart of their programme a massive rollout of renewables. They could not be competitive unless they brought the price of renewables down. They had to get much cheaper electricity available.

Labour had also made a commitment to investing in 8 gigafactories, as well as a binding target on the rollout of charging points. She hesitated to link charging points with the HGVs as charging could take up too much time, so they had to think how they could make the industry more efficient.

Chris Ashley said the RHA supported net zero and their approach was pragmatic and practical. There were no simple solutions on how to decarbonize HGVs and that sector. He said of Sunak's speech on net zero, that they were at an interesting time in the debate, and realities were beginning to hit home on how they decarbonize. They had to think about how they would make it work, including in terms of cost.

There were also technical barriers, such as the fact that the UK didn't have the infrastructure in place to power the vehicles. Considering Sunak's speech, he said that it was not a good idea for the targets to be pushed back. He supported the initial targets as having them in place attracted the investments needed so it would be beneficial down the line. What the RHA felt had been missing from the Governments approach was a plan on how to get the industrial strategy in place. He added that there may need to be exemptions for the targets, such as for long-distance haulage or coach operations.

Rhian Hughes-Hodgkinson said to achieve net zero, much more needed to be done. She said that the current infrastructure made it harder for Earl Transport's fleet to become electric.

The Chair asked Ashley what the alternative fuels were. Ashley said there were 3 categories: electric, hydrogen and low carbon fuels. Even with the hydrogen debate, there was an alternative with hydrogen combustion, however it still gave its fair share of emissions. With low carbon fuels, they were also not zero emission, but they were remarkably lower. They had to be honest and say that these two fuels must have a role in helping lorry fleets decarbonize.

He continued that saving carbon with lower emissions now would be better than continuing with diesel fleets, in hope of zero emissions down the road. He concluded that there was a lot of innovation and investment to solve these problems.

Hughes-Hodgkinson said that they had trialed electric vehicles, which was 18tn but with the battery, was 20tn. That presented problems, with weight restrictions on bridges for example, where the limit was 18tn. There was also an increase in cost and their customers were not willing to pay more for the same service.

The Chair asked Griffith how they traded off giving the industry confidence and developing the technology. Griffith said the industry wanted certainty. They had to have a plan that offered flexibility for the transition. She backed the idea of getting a clear plan, but they could not have a lot of chopping and changing.



Ashley said the National Grid was a key player, and they had done a lot of analysis into the investment they needed to make in the electricity grid. When they took him through all their modeling analysis, the National Grid asked him to help them validate their modelling assumptions. They would now work with their members and feed back to the National Grid so that they could make the necessary investments.

He reiterated that they were at the start of their journey and there was education needed. They also needed to work together with many stakeholders.

Ashley said that renewables could be unreliable and said that nuclear would have a role to provide that constant base power and asked Griffiths of her thoughts.

Griffiths said that it was on their list, and they had written about it.

Hughes-Hodgkinson said they were quite excited to decarbonize, but they needed upskilling and educating on how to do it.

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Labour Conference - 2023 In Conversation With David Lammy

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases - Dods Group

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: In conversation with David Lammy and Lisa Nandy

Coalition for Global Prosperity, Labour Campaign for International Development & Labour Foreign Policy Group

12:00, 9 October 2023

Panelists:

- David Lammy MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary
- Lisa Nandy MP, Shadow Minister for International Development

Overview

Panelists spoke about the current state of the UK's foreign and international development policy. Discussion centered around their experiences and how a Labour Government might look to re-engage globally if it were to win the next election.

Attacks on Israel

David Lammy MP, Shadow Foreign Secretary, began the session by focusing on the recent attacks in Israel. He said that waking up to seeing young people fleeing from a rave, taken hostage, and murdered reminded people of the importance that Hamas was a terrorist organisation. He stressed the importance of the two-state solution, and that the world had to hold on to that ambition, although it never felt more distant.

Lammy said it was "hugely important" that those hostages were released.

Lisa Nandy MP, Shadow Minister for International Development, said it was absolutely right that the Labour Party stood as one movement when it stood against terrorism.

Lammy said that nobody wanted to see increased bloodshed on both sides. He said he understood that there had to be an operation to rescue hostages away from their homes and their families. He added, though, that had to be proportionate and within international law.

He said there had been an appalling loss of life of both Israelis and Palestinians and added that Britain had a role to play in bringing that peace.

Top priorities

Lammy said his central message was that the UK had to reconnect with the international community, which meant reconnecting with friends and allies in Europe. He said Europe played a huge role in international development. He clarified that this was not just France and Macron leading the way on rules to do with climate finance. He suggested that the UK needed to reconnect with the global

south in a period where it had slashed the foreign aid budget and were using what was left to house people in hotels in the UK.

Lammy said he would be leading, or at least be present, during the debates on climate emergencies and finance. He called for a change to the rules on debt to benefit people in poverty across the world.

Nandy reflected on her recent trip to the UN, where she said people had gathered to discuss how to make the world a better place, whilst some world leaders were not there. Not only was Sunak not there, but she also said he was back in the UK rolling back on the net zero commitments the government had made.

She noted that the last few years had been difficult for the poorest people, while she condemned the government's reduction of the foreign aid budget and comments that Department for International Development was a giant cash point in the sky.

Nandy said the people she met at the UN wanted Labour to bring the same energy and commitment to this agenda as it did in 1997. She said they wanted the UK to respect the contribution they had to make, as they were the ones who knew the solutions to make a difference. She said they needed a seat at the table when decisions are made.

International engagement

Lammy said we lived in a time when countries were turning their back on people in extreme poverty across the world. He said that the conditions had changed since 1997. He said China was playing an outside role in this and the truth was inflation, and the cost-of-living increases were real. He called for the Labour party to step up and show the leadership we saw from Blair and Brown.

He said what was happening to the aid budget was a scandal and was why his team had to work in such close partnership with Yvette Cooper in the Home Office to attempt to fix the Government's botched way of processing visas and ensure they were no longer spending that money on hotel bills.

Lammy said the Labour Party would bring the Department of International Development back and said that they wanted the same agenda for people across the world that they did domestically – growth.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: High Streets: Heart of the Everyday Economy

10 October 2023

Association of Convenience Stores

10:30, 9 October 2023

Panelists:

- Sarah Owen MP, Shadow Minister for Communities and Local Government
- Paddy Lillis, General Secretary, USDAW
- Richard Fleetwood, Postmaster, Post Office
- James Lowman, Chief Executive, Association of Convenience Stores
- Ryan Wayne, Executive Director, Tony Blair Institute

Overview

Panelists discussed the health of the high street post-covid and during a cost of living crisis. Topics included business rates reform, cost of living, the role of convenience stores and post offices in local communities, and retail crime.

Summary

James Lowman, Chief Executive of the Association of Convenience Stores, introduced the ACS' community barometer report. He stated that the reach convenience stores had in community was greater than any other physical sector. They looked into talking to consumers about the services they valued the most, which were post offices, pharmacies and convenience stores. Many convenience stores also included post offices. People wanted the rich ecosystem of pubs, cafes etc.

They also asked which parts of their local area they thought needed the most investment, they heard back that it was in their local, smaller areas that they wanted the priority.

He spoke about the services offered in convenience stores, such as Post Offices, bill payments, free to use ATMs, delivery to customers' homes and prescription collections. There were dozens of services offered through convenience stores.

On investment and change, he said that people wanted things that were relevant to them for the future. One of the ways they brought forward future thinking was by promoting investing, tailoring offers for the business needs of the community.

On covid, he said that it had made it more obvious to have that breadth of service provision. People relied on the diversity of retail outlets, as well as the value of the role played by people who worked and ran those stores.

Ryan Wayne, Executive Director of the Tony Blair Institute, said that 40 percent of banks had closed since the pandemic. We had not fully recovered or grappled with the effects of covid.

Sarah Owen, Shadow Minister for Communities and Local Government, said that this was something that affected all of us and there was nothing more telling about how the levelling up agenda had failed, than looking at the high street sector. She emphasised that this had impacted her constituency, as there were pockets of convenience stores that made their town thrive.

She said that businesses had suffered from covid and the mini budget from last year. One of the big things was around business rates, Labour had committed to review the business rates, to which they would work with the sector and local government. This was having an impact on entire towns and cities and left high streets with vacant shops. This had a domino effect, not just on the economy but in the area in regards to anti-social behaviour.

She said that there would be a new social contract where people respect the communities where people had their businesses, and reduce ASB.

She continued that people needed more money in their pockets, and when they did, they would spend it in their local communities. With their take back control act, people would see a transfer of power from Whitehall to townhalls and put power back in the hands of local communities.

She said there was despair among businesses when they saw the discrepancies between online retailers vs brick and mortar businesses. There had been a huge amount of over centralisation, and that was what the take back control act would signify.

Paddy Lillis, General Secretary of USDAW, said that the high street was USDAW's "bread and butter". Over the past decade, the high street had been facing significant challenges. He gave the example of Woolworths, Wilko, Debenhams etc. and said that many retailers were forced to cut jobs and close stores, and the government were having to pick up redundancies as retailers couldn't, and this was bad for the economy.

Convenience stores acted as a community hub, which was highlighted in the ACS report. USDAW were proposing a comprehensive plan for the future of retail. It was well thought out from their research department. It was clear the current economic framework was not working for retailers and there needed to be a reform of business rates to level the playing field between physical and online retailers.

In the past year, retail theft had shot up. Retail crime was not a victimless crime, he said. Retail shop workers were having to wear stab vests. Police resources were limited, with a large number of reports not getting a response from police. They needed proper enforcement and proper laws to protect retailers and their workers.

Wayne said they needed to speak to people who worked on the frontline and asked Richard Fleetwood to expand.

Fleetwood said that in the past few months, they had a number of serious crime incidents happening in their shops. It was a huge challenge for retail, and they worked as hard as they could to support their teams. People were struggling with the cost of living in some areas of the North East.

On business rates, he said it was one of the weirdest taxes, as it was a flat rate and was effectively a second rent. He said it should be made a local authority tax so it could give back to the communities.



Wayne asked what they had done with the banking hub to bring it back into the community after it was moved mostly online.

Fleetwood said that some of it was done through government agencies. There was a lot that local and national governments could do to bring footfall back to high street. They were also bringing banks back to the high street. They also had a financial services office where any of the big five banks could have a face-to-face day once a week. People wanted to be able to access physical government service and interact with humans, as opposed to chatbots.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Why the Wildlife Protection and Animal Welfare Vote Matters at the Next Election

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Why the Wildlife Protection and Animal Welfare Vote Matters at the Next Election

Born Free, Humane Society International, League Against Cruel Sports, International Fund for Animal Welfare and Four Paws

4:30, 9th October 2023

Panelists:

- Dominic Dyer, Chair of Nature 2030 (Chair);
- Dr Mark Jones, Born Free;
- Will Morton, League Against Cruel Sports;
- Claire Bass, Humane Society International;
- Sonul Badiani-Hammett, Four Paws;
- Frances Goodrum, International Fund for Animal Welfare;
- Daniel Zeichner, Shadow Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs;
- Baroness Hayman, shadow spokesperson for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.;

Overview

This panel considered what animal welfare issues Labour should focus on in the next election and the electoral benefits of doing so.

Debate

Dominic Dyer, Chair of Nature 2030, reasoned that Labour needed to think about how to take on people's concern about wildlife and animal protection. He reasoned that the current government had not delivered on their commitments, so what would the Labour party do? He reasoned that those issues which drove young people to the polls in 2017 were fox hunting and ivory trade. He reasoned that this swung seats and that it cannot be ignored.

Dr Mark Jones, Born Free, focused on the badger cull. He noted that according to government figures, more than 210,000 badgers have been killed under the cull. He predicted it would 250,000 soon. He said evidence about the impact of the cull on reducing bovine TB in cattle was doubtful. He reasoned that the bovine TB had also decreased in Wales due to the Wales government focusing on testing and other control measures to prevent the spread of the disease. He cited academic research which showed no relation between badger culling and the decline in TB.

He noted public support for ending the cull was strong, with it getting over two thirds of support among different ages groups and voting groups. He reminded the room that Britain was one of most nature depleted places in the world, therefore they could not afford to play politics on this issue.

Baroness Hayman, explained that she had been looking at how the 2019 manifesto should be updated to account for the government dropping the Kept Animals Welfare Bill and the likely collapse of the Hunting Ban Bill. She reasoned that Labour had to be better than the Tories at delivering promises on animal welfare. She cited a document called a Better Life for Animals which built on work done by the party in 1997 and updated the commitments from 2019. She noted that there was no money, so they had to develop expectations which were not costly. She noted that it was important to ensure that animal welfare was included in international trade agreements.

She expressed regret that the Hunting Bill had effectively been filibustered by the Lords. She reasoned this would be a broken promise by the Lords, and that this broken promise was due to the government not being willing to take on their own Lords.

Daniel Zeichner, Shadow Minister for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, reasoned that the animal welfare vote matters as an issue of voting, but also as an issue on its own merit. He reasoned that the Conservatives had realised that it was an important electoral issue. He said they should not disrespect that there was an ambition. He emphasised saying that Therese Coffey and Mark Spencer were not as ambitious as George Eustice and Victoria Prentis. He said whilst the Conservatives were starting to make the case of being the party on animal welfare, they had now left that. He says the Kept Animals Bill was ready to pass, and then the Government dropped it because the party had a change of heart. He said Labour would address the key animal welfare issues and engage with loopholes in the Hunting Act.

He acknowledged that bovine TB had been traumatic for farmers. He noted that the Godfray review concluded that the science was not clear on the issue which meant that it was a political issue to cull badgers.

He said that everyone agreed that England should be bovine TB free by 2038. He warned that data accounting and reporting of stats created confusion about the process.

He warned about Conservatives who thought it was acceptable to import cheap meat with low standards.

Claire Bass, Humane Society International, warned that £100bn worth of animals were killed every year for their fur. She warned that despite the ban on fur farming, the UK imported around 1 million animals worth of fur. She said this was simple to address by banning the sale and import of products with animal fur. She noted that such farms also had bad environmental impacts and were a time bomb for human health in regard to disease. She noted that the Government had a call for evidence on fur with over 30,000 respondents, which was still yet to be published. She reasoned that this gave Labour an easy policy to ban fur import and sales.

Frances Goodrum, International Fund for Animal Welfare, noted that crimes against animals were not characterised as serious crimes, and were not considered to be a core policing issue, despite the link with wildlife crime and other types of crime. She called on the Government to protect wildlife by making more wildlife crimes notable. She noted that by making these events notable this should help with the enforcement and prosecution of such crime. She said the crime should account for biodiversity harm and account for frequency.

Sonul Badiani-Hammett, Four Paws, noted that the trophy hunting bill had significant support from the shadow cabinet. She reasoned that this did not cost anything and was deliverable, therefore it

should be a priority for the next government. She reasoned it was as simple as banning the import and sale of fur. She argued that the Government had created an open goal due to their failure to deliver on this issue.

Will Morton, League Against Cruel Sports, warned that the Hunting Act was not working effectively and that hunting was still happening in practice. He said that act was weak and failing. He argued that making legislative changes would address this. He noted that 78 percent of the British public wanted to strengthen the hunting ban and over 80 percent of Labour voters did also.

Q & A

Will Morton, League Against Cruel Sports, argued that for illegal hunting there should be custodial sentencing available. He noted that if people were prosecuted for hunting and killing mammal, fines were the only legal penalty they could receive. He reasoned this showed that the issue was not taken as seriously as other wildlife crime and crime more generally

Frances Goodrum, International Fund for Animal Welfare, cited research that by protecting against wildlife crime they were protecting people, due to the correlation between crime against animals and other violent crime.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Empowering the workforce of tomorrow

10 October 2023

Duke of Edinburgh Award

2:00pm, Monday October 9 2023

Panelists:

- Mark Smith, senior Government and Public Affairs Manager, Amoy (Chair)
- Ian Byrne, MP for Liverpool West Derby
- Derin Adebyl, External Affairs Manager, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE)
- Anne Longfield, Chair of the Commission on Young People's Lives
- Chris Russell, Senior Policy Manager, Federation of Small Businesses (FSB)
- Alexie-Mae Harrington, DoE Youth Ambassador

Overview

The event covered the work the DoE did with young people to improve their life chances, and discussed initiatives and best practice to empower this workforce in the future.

Investment

Ian Byrne, MP for Liverpool West Derby, said that in his view the austerity measures imposed since 2010 had made the situation with youth provision much worse than it would otherwise have been. He said that youth schemes and initiatives should never be seen as a cost but an investment, and that the UK could not afford not to put more funding and support into these schemes. The language around the cost of these initiatives needed to change. He added that the UK should be one of the most advised countries in the world on this front, but to do this the sector needed investment.

Byrne said that he would be pushing the Labour Party on this should they form the next government. He then talked about how he himself had previously been a 'tear away' teenager, but he was personally helped by some youth workers and had since moved on in life. The fact was, he said, this kind of action would save money in the long term and that the UK couldn't have a situation like they did over the past 13 years with fewer and fewer funds.

Q&A

Skills Based Recruitment

In answer to a question from the floor on how they could encourage employers to adopt more skills-based recruitment practices, recognising that these were important to life outcomes, Chris Russell, of the Federation of Small Businesses said that many companies unfortunately didn't provide this, as often they just wanted to get someone in as quickly as possible. He said that the way to combat this

was to form a consistent message around this to companies hiring prospective members so that this became another part of the job culture. He said it was just about having a consistent message on this.

Anna Longfield, Chair of the Commission on Young People's Lives, says that as there were currently shortages, people were going to have to recruit outside these guidelines. But this was something that should be looked at going forwards.

Mark Smith, senior Government and Public Affairs Manager at Amoy, the Chair, said that his manufacturing company were already looking for initiatives in its engineering sector to help combat this.

Civil society and enrichment outside of the classroom

In answer to a question from the floor about whether there should be more investment on activities outside the classroom, Byrne said that it was about 'smashing the class ceiling'. He said that it was about fundamentally re-wiring society. It would have to be a long-term strategy of a Labour government. He says that those in the youth initiative sector needed to be making their case directly to Jonathan Reynolds (Shadow Business Secretary) and Bridget Phillipson (Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury) about the benefits of this work. He added that the more noise they made on this, the better their case would be heard. He added that there had been too much short-termism in this policy making, and so that was what it would be advocating for.

Longfield said that there were many troubled young adults that were being moved around the system, and there should now be more devolved activities to offer youth skills and training. We should look at models that were emerging in different places and looked for devolved models for progress.

Relationships with Business

In answer to a question from the floor on the pathways into these schemes and what they looked for in terms of a relationship with business, Derin Adebiyi, External Affairs Manager of The Duke of Edinburgh's Award (DoE), said that the schemes that he'd worked on were a fantastic opportunity that should be built on and enhanced further. He said that these schemes built confidence among their young people, and businesses should see the work they did as a great asset for them to utilize.

Waiting List challenges

In answer to a question from the floor about getting further opportunities for young people when their initiatives were oversubscribed, Longfield said that there needed to be the initiatives need to be big and bold, but there are sometimes barriers for organisations to respond to these rises in demand.

Adeblyl said that last year they saw record numbers of volunteering, but that often volunteering was seen as the poor cousin of interning, and there should be more parity of esteem on this.

Byrne cautioned about increased volunteering being a return to the Big Society, which replaced many more comprehensive initiatives with more voluntary action. These initiatives should be an add-on to existing initiatives, but it should not replace them.

School Volunteering and engagement

In answer to a question from the floor about whether these sorts of initiatives should do more engagement schools, Adebyl talked about his personal experiences coming up through the DoE and said that initiatives had a parity of esteem.

Alexie-Mae Harrington, DoE Youth Ambassador, said that it was important to have access to these sorts of initiatives. She talked about the various aspects of the DOE programme that she had benefited from.

Donations Structures and competitive funding

In answer to a question from the floor about what the best balance was between national and global levels, Longfield said that they had been developing a national framework with local decision-making on how it was implemented. She said that many local organisations were working on this. There needed to be more work on this that allowed more localism in these programmes.

Byrne said that the funding model had meant that it was a disincentive to innovative thinking. He said that this was something that the government really needed to be looking at if he became a minister in the next Labour government.

Russell said that it was a difficult issue, and that there was the potential, but we needed more information from Skills England on this.

Kickstarter course

In answer to a question from the floor on what the best ways were to make the case for getting young people onto courses.

Harrington said that communication was very important and talked about her experiences coming up through the DoE Award. She felt that this had really enhanced her communication skills.

Byrne said that it was very important that we looked at the long term value. He said that it was important to look at these.

Adebyl said that there needed to be a better pathway to link up these courses.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Sustainable Development Goals - What will a Labour Government Do to Restore the UK's International Reputation

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Sustainable Development Goals: What will a Labour Government Do to Restore the UK's International Reputation

Event hosts: Labour's environment campaign

10:30-11:30, 09/10/2023

Panelists:

Chair: Anna Gelderd, LCID Executive member

Speaker:

Geoff Sinclair, Camco Management Ltd

Luke Burras, Mobile Power

Hugh Goulbourne, CO2sense

Helena Horton, The Guardian

James Murray MP, Shadow Financial Secretary to the Treasury

Overview

This panel considered the challenges of achieving the SDGs with a particular focus on the role of UK climate leadership.

Debate

Chair: Anna Gelderd, LCID Executive member, outlined the interconnected nature of the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs). She explained that they raised questions which were much broader than that of just aid, it was also a question of trade and subsidies. She reasoned that the UK had a lot to offer in technical and financial expertise to developing countries. She expressed disappointment that the PM did not go to the UN technical assembly. She said the problems which these goals seek to address cannot be addressed by any one nation acting independently of others.

She reasoned that this was not a question of do we have enough money, due to there being too much risk if we did not act.

James Murray MP, Shadow Financial Secretary to the Treasury, hypothesized that this discussion was one of leadership. He reasoned that the UK's international reputation was contingent upon the UK having its own house in order. He argued that removing the 2030 EV target was bad for business and bad for consumers, due to it disincentivizing investment and not making things cheaper for

consumers. Labour would reinstate the 2030 target, because businesses would only invest to their full potential within a stable environment.

He said that UK businesses must be able to export overseas, he said Labour would create climate export hubs which works with universities and businesses to export UK climate innovations around the world. He reasoned that the challenge of trade is that of balancing domestic resilience alongside having benefits of global trade with allies which would ensure secure supply chains.

Geoff Sinclair, Camco Management Ltd, reasoned that we were off track to achieve the SDGs and that is in part due to recent government decisions. He said the decline in the UK's reputation has made it hard for firms to win capital investment related to the SDGs. He spoke of the virtues of blended finance whereby the government took the risk out of finance so that private capital could be used to invest in SDGs related projects. He noted that this had been used to expand access to clean energy in developing countries and that it attracted significantly more private capital.

He reasoned that this approach was different to most development banks which he argued was incentivized to crowd out the private sector due to the asset staying on the banks' balance sheet for the duration of its life.

He noted the telecoms and digital sectors were not easy to invest in the early days, but they learned a lesson in showing how industries could change if given appropriate early support.

Luke Burras, Mobile Power, argued that the poorest people paid significantly more for energy. He reasoned that people paid so much for energy, despite the price due to the essential role that energy played in development.

Helena Horton, The Guardian, reasoned that this country could not be trusted if it did not keep its promises. She provided the example of the UK promising increases in climate finance, that the UK would not keep. She asked why any country would do what we asked them to do if we did not lead by example.

She noted that within the Conservative party there was an argument that we did not need to decarbonize anymore because we only emitted 1% of global emissions, she reasoned that such an argument would remove any hope of the UK having a position of climate leadership and neglected the historic role the UK has played as a large emitter. She expressed hope that if we did take domestic climate action we would be able to restore our climate reputation.

Hugh Goulbourne, CO2sense, argued that we need significantly more investment in climate change action due to a history of underinvestment in the sector. He also expressed support for blended finance. He reasoned that we needed models to allow investment to happen that meant the risk levels were acceptable for the UK. EH also argued that business required long term certainty. He also spoke about the importance of SME's and how they must not be forgotten by a future Labour government.

James Murray MP, Shadow Financial Secretary to the Treasury, reiterated the importance of stability in relation to targets and support for businesses, and expressed regret about HS2 and the EV targets being scrapped/ changed.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Essential skills for work

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Essential skills for work

The WEA

3pm, 9th October 2023

Panelists:

- Simon Parkinson, CEO, WEA (Chair);
- Naomi Phillips, Learning & Work Institute;
- Laura Jane Rawlings , Youth Employment UK;
- Alexa Knight, Mental Health Foundation;
- Emily Andrews, Centre for Ageing Better;
- Andrew Phillips , Demos;

Overview

This panel session looked at how adult learning can be a key part of skills strategies and how community-based approaches support those furthest from the labour market to gain essential skills which employers value.

Adult learning

Simon Parkinson, CEO, WEA, emphasised that looking at different areas of adult learning would give a different perspective from businesses at first glance.

Naomi Phillips, Learning & Work Institute, noted that people could now be expected to work into their 70s if they were healthy. She emphasised the importance of them having the skills to enjoy jobs at that age. She noted that they were becoming sicker and that this is an obstacle to working to this age. She warned that there had been a decline in investment in skills and training. She attributed the relatively weak economic recovery of the UK in the G7 down to a lack of investment in skills. She reasoned that there were people who wished to work but did not have the relevant support and information.

She warned that the pandemic had an impact on the ability of some people to work, due to the impact on their mental health and confidence to work. She warned that people were becoming sick in feminised low paid professions. She warned that 9 million people in the UK lacked basic numeracy or literacy skills, which would have enabled people to follow instructions.

She noted that a lot of people engaged online during the pandemic and reasoned that they needed to consider whether they continued to do that. She said there were inequalities in who engaged with learning.

Laura Jane Rawlings, Youth Employment UK, noted that the youth voice census. She noted that some of challenges that were flagged, such as loneliness and lack of work experience. She warned that the younger generation without social capital and who needed mental health support were about to enter the economy, and reasoned that employers were not yet ready to meet young people where they were. She noted that businesses wanted young people who were ready to work, but she said the system was not designed for that. She warned that there was no policy to address the needs of young people to help them enter the workplace.

Emily Andrews, Centre for Ageing Better, warned that disadvantages compounded over one's working life, which showed why it was so important to get it right for those who were young. She warned that employment data showed a decline when people reached 50. This decline covered employment, happiness and skills development. She warned that older people had less support to access the workplace. She warned that people who were older were more likely to face the challenges of being a carer and this created challenges for them to return to the workplace. She noted that retirement age was rising and that meant that people in their 60s needed support to retrain and upskill to return to work. She said training needed to be de-risked for people 50+, in order for them to engage with skills. She reasoned that employer engagement was essential, so the person knew that they would not be penalised on the grounds of age. She warned that some sectors such as tech tended to be ageist, so older people were unlikely to learn code.

She encouraged skills providers to get curious about their provisions to 50+.

Alexa Knight, Mental Health Foundation, warned that we are in a mental health crisis across all age groups. She noted that mental illness accounted for nearly half the cases of people not being at work. She emphasised the importance of supporting people with mental illness return to work. She said it was essential that the workplace becomes supportive as a place for those with mental health issues. She said line managers had to be trained on how to interact with mental health, to spot signs of stress and support their employees. She argued that work had to support mental health, by providing security, a good living wage, flexibility and protection from harassment. She reasoned that these underpinned the ability of people to live well and enjoy the workplace.

Andrew Phillips, Demos, noted that Labour were very focused on growth, and reasoned that skills and participation in the labour market were essential to this. He reasoned that increasing labour force participation was essential to encourage growth. He reasoned that devolution was not enough alone to improve the services provided to citizens. He reasoned that in a devolved setting it was still hard for employers and citizens to understand the support available. He reasoned that there was a place for the devolution of power here and acknowledged that England was yet to see genuine devolution of powers related to skills and education.

Q & A

Phillips noted that there was a case for reform spending so that the money available focused on those most in need.

Parkinson reasoned that the money needed to have truly impactful change. She said it was a question of tens of millions, not hundreds of millions.

Emily Andrews, Centre for Ageing Better, reasoned that a better local infrastructure needed to be in place to allow employers to engage with the system to identify the skills that region required.

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The Role of Health and Care in a Winning Labour manifesto

10 October 2023

Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: The role of health and care in a winning Labour manifesto

Health Foundation

3pm, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Anoosh Chakelian, Editor, New Statesmen
- Wes Streeting, Shadow Health Secretary
- Mathews Taylor, Managing Director of the NHS Confederation
- Ed Dorell, Director, Public First
- Anita Charlesworth, Director, Health Foundation

Overview

The panelists laid out their priorities for the NHS under a Labour government, before discussing the impact of strikes and how technology could revolutionize the health service.

Discussion

Wes Streeting

, Shadow Health Secretary said that health was one of the two great crises affecting the UK, along with the cost-of-living crisis.

Streeting stated that health of the public and economy were linked, and Labour needed health to be seen as an

economic policy. He said that the NHS was personal for many people, and he owed his life to the NHS as he had previously had kidney cancer.

Streeting said he wanted to break the sentimentality around the NHS, he declared that it wasn't a religion but a public service.

He felt the Government had broken a fundamental promise of the NHS, it being there when we needed it. Without reform he felt the future of the health service was in doubt.

In comparison to other health care services around the world, Streeting felt that the UK did far too much late-stage diagnosis and we needed to refocus on public health and social care. He told the audience that it was going to take time, and it would be a ten-year plan.

Anita Charlesworth, Director, Health Foundation, said that a consensus had emerged, that ten years was needed to fix issues.

She said that due to the pandemic and low funding, spending on prevention had been cut, as well as capital investment and spending on workforce. She said that spending on GPs had also fallen as a percent of total spend. Charlesworth said she had campaigned for an improved prevention plan and a plan for social care.

She concluded by saying that in a constrained economic environment what could be achieved would be constrained. Money and staff were going in, but without clear improvements to care, the UK needed to do something different.

Ed Dorell, Director, Public First said the NHS had four paradoxes.

The first, everyone loves it, but has a story of being let down.

The second, everyone knows it needs reform, but no one can conceptualise what that reform would look like.

Third, everyone believes it needs funding, but no one believes extra funding would solve all the problems.

The fourth was universality of service, with people becoming unsure on migrant access or fines for attending appointments.

Dorrell stated that public opinion also held up in favour of the NHS strikes. He wanted Labour to focus on key policy areas rather than just trying reforming the whole service. He said that his focus groups had fed back that improving communication was key and launching a sophisticated app for all NHS services, would be very popular. Charlesworth agreed.

Mathews Taylor, Managing Director of the NHS Confederation, admitted that the strikes had impacted on the service, and the NHS needed money in the autumn statement.

Taylor said that a new NHS needed 5 key elements.

The first, moving toward a complete health policy not just NHS policy. He said that the smoking ban was a good example of this.

Second, investment in workforce, because he felt the loose consensus around the NHS workforce plan was already fraying.

Third, he wanted to see a shift of resources into communities and embrace community care.

Fourth, he wanted to invert the NHS pyramid. So that a bottom-up system empowered staff at each level. He felt that too many parts of the NHS were concerned with budgets from more senior department's rather than helping each up.

Fifth, he wanted to see a new contract between the public and NHS.

Taylor turned to end of life care and said the health service needed a new policy for the last 1000 days of people's lives to avoid them having to attend A&E.

Anoosh Chakelian, Editor, New Statesmen asked Streeter about technology in health care and Labour's future bio science plans.

Streeting, highlighted the success of the NHS app during the pandemic and how all the momentum had been lost, in terms of integrating tech into people's use of the NHS. Streeting was astounded that the public organised their lives on a phone but could not perform basic NHS tasks. Streeting wanted to end the culture of technology being an everyday benefit to doctors' lives, except when they entered the workplace.

He said that tech didn't need to be groundbreaking, a lot of NHS staff just wanted computers to function. He also highlighted improving back-office productivity, which wasn't an attractive campaign topic but was desired by NHS staff and needed to be priority.

The final thing he said, was that at the start of this year he had spoken more to tech companies than frontlines services, as he felt this was the future. He felt that technology in the NHS could be revolutionary, but the UK was a long way from this.

Streeting was reluctant to accept that the next general election was a forgone conclusion and told the room that the challenge Labour would face, would be more difficult than in 1997.

Taylor said that Streeting would be at an advantage because he wasn't promising a root and branch reform of the NHS, like the disastrous one attempted by former Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, in 2010.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Clean Energy Superpower: How Unions and Industry Can Work Together to Deliver Good, Green British Jobs

10 October 2023

Event hosts: Prospect, Ørsted

12:30, 9 October 2023

Panelists:

- Cllr Lisa Trickett, Co-Chair, Labour's Environment Campaign - SERA Executive (Chair)
- Sarah Jones MP, Shadow Minister for Industry and Decarbonisation (joint with Energy Security and Net Zero)
- Sue Ferns, Deputy General Secretary, Prospect Union
- Duncan Clarke, Ørsted UK

Overview:

The panel considered the changes required to the labour force, for Britain to be a clean energy superpower, whilst accounting for considerations of just transition and the needs of business.

Opening Statements

Cllr Lisa Trickett, Co-Chair of Labour's Environment Campaign - SERA Executive, emphasised the importance of knowing where the jobs would be and how they could be created. She argued that previous transitions had made certain groups suffer. She argued that the Tories were aiming for people who had suffered from changes in the past to scare them about this possible future change. He reasoned it was essential that Labour have a plan for green jobs.

Sue Ferns, Deputy General Secretary of Prospect Union, argued that clean energy jobs had to be good jobs and unionised jobs. She reasoned that this would maximise the opportunities from the net zero transition. She cited research which showed that citizens were not familiar with green jobs, people did not think they were in the energy sector, and they did not think they had the skills for them. People were not opposed to green jobs, but they were more concerned about creating good jobs.

She reasoned that politicians had to be able to create quality jobs, as opposed to focusing too much on the quantity of jobs.

She reasoned that there were barriers to creating good green jobs, and noted that pay was an issue for some people in the renewable sector, as well as health and safety, however she said the availability of the right skills was most important. She said the energy sector was in competition with other sectors for good engineers and project managers. She also cited a lack of diversity in the workforce.

She reasoned that Labour had a range of tools available to them, but they needed to support public and private investment. Her organisation supported Great British Energy (Labour's plan). They needed a plan to unlock private investment by having a strategic approach to network upgrades and making the planning process easier to allow relevant investment. They believed there should be a clean energy workforce strategy, and that these shortages would not be solved by the private sector alone.

She expressed a desire for working people to have access to unions if they were not already unionised to explain how unions could support them.

Duncan Clarke from Ørsted expressed a desire to help create green jobs by working with unions and the government. He argued that we had to invest in skills in order to create a supply chain that was available to the green transition. He reasoned that an industrial strategy was essential if that was going to happen.

Sarah Jones MP, Shadow Minister for Industry and Decarbonisation (joint with Energy Security and Net Zero), explained that her brief linked DBT to DESNZ. She explained that it was because business had an essential role in net zero, and business needed to focus on net zero. She argued there was a vacuum of industrial strategy by the government. She emphasised that a Labour government would ensure that there was fiscal discipline to provide the conditions of stability for investment. She expressed a desire to work with all stakeholders in net zero, and said that partnership with business and unions was necessary if net zero was going to be achieved.

She reasoned that the apprenticeship levy needed to be changed to be less clunky so that people could be skilled in the right jobs that we needed.

She reasoned that the difference between Labour and the Conservative was obvious, given Labour had ambitions to achieve a net zero transition.

Language of the transition

Ferns reasoned that everyone knew the language of the just transition, however, they were yet to see the practice of it. She said that one of the issues was that sometimes the skills gap was not as big as people thought, however it was perceived to be big due to the different language used by different stakeholders in different industries.

Clarke said the omission of an overarching view that went across sectors, which connected it at a regional level, was a problem. He reasoned that you simply needed to bring all the stakeholders on a regional bases to build plans to close the gaps within the regions. He also noted the importance of legacy learning from old industries.

The Minister noted that the Labour party would proactively provide incentives to businesses to create green energy businesses in places which had a history of engaging with coal, oil and gas. She reasoned that many of the barriers, such as the national grid, planning permission and attracting financial investment, could be broken down.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Making Britain Work - Modern Universities and the Public Sector Workforce

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

9 October 2023

MillionPlus

1pm, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Rachel Hewitt, CEO, MillionPlus;
- Andrew Gwynne, Shadow Minister for Social Care;
- Jane Peckham, General Secretary, NASUWT;
- Professor Graham Baldwin, Vice-Chancellor University of Central Lancashire, Chair of MillionPlus;
- Kate green, Deputy Mayor Greater Manchester, Former Shadow Education Secretary;
- Crystal Oldman, Managing Director, Queens Nursing Institute;

Overview

The panelists discussed the workforce crisis in the public sector and the important role universities played in training the next generation of public sector workers. The conversation predominately focused on the recruitment, training and retention of teachers and nurses, with panelists discussing why these vital sectors had become less attractive career paths.

Discussion

Andrew Gwynne, Shadow Minister for Social Care, said that if Labour won the next election his most immediate concern was getting a grip on the workforce crisis, which he would work closely with Angela Rayner on.

He said that pay terms and conditions for frontline care staff was outrageous and they needed better support for negotiating better terms. He wanted to make social care a more attractive career path and for employees to have greater opportunity for development.

He said he was keen to engage with the sector on challenges and opportunities faced by the social care workforce. He highlighted the NHS workforce and how universities played a crucial role in supplying NHS workers. He said rebuilding the NHS and social care was a huge task, and universities would be crucial in meeting that ambition.

Professor Graham Baldwin, Vice-Chancellor University of Central Lancashire, Chair of MillionPlus, said that modern universities were directly responsible for training public sector staff, and this was apparent during the pandemic. Baldwin thanked Gwynne for attending the meeting.

He said that at the heart of MillionPlus was training the next generation of public sector workers, including teachers, NHS staff and social care workers. He said no one would go through life without using these vital services.

Baldwin said he was proud of local people attending his universities and then working in the local area.

He said that 68 percent of MillionPlus university graduates were loyal to their region and were working in the area after 15 months after graduating. He called them 'regional loyals'.

Baldwin said that the issues around public sector work force issues were long term, and he was disappointed to see that his nursing courses had vacancies for the first time this year. People studying nursing and teaching was down, especially in the mature category.

He said that he hoped a future Labour government would look at strategic planning for bursaries and placements.

Jane Peckham, General Secretary, NASUWT, said that the conclusion of a 2018 PAC enquiry stated that the government had missed their teacher recruitment targets every year.

She said that her union's recent survey of members said that 66 percent were considering leaving the sector soon. One of the reasons was teacher working hours remained excessive at 60 hours per work.

She said that teaching used to be a role people aspired to but pay and workload were putting off graduates. There was also an issue with demographics, where teachers did not reflect the communities they taught. She said that teachers from minority backgrounds statistically faced higher work pressure.

She said that the 6.5 percent pay increase was a start, but her union were still at action short of a strike and was the only union still in an industrial dispute. These actions were designed to be pupil and parent friendly. She said that in Scotland, her union, had campaigned for a 35-hour working week.

Kate Green, Deputy Mayor for Greater Manchester, said from her Greater Manchester perspective that workforce shortages were across the public sector, but the public sector could not be salary competitive to attract the skills they needed. She felt fortunate to work for a devolved body and said they created their own education ecosystem.

Green said they needed to be mindful that GCSE decisions were likely to predetermine university degrees and career paths. She believed in a broader post-16 education. She touched on the Manchester Baccalaureate, which covered English and Maths but also creative, digital and tech skills.

Crystal Oldman, Managing Director, Queens Nursing Institute, said she had been a registered nurse for 42 years. She stated that nursing was a science-based degree and was a safety critical sector. She said nursing applications had declined by 20 percent this year by Sept 2023, and that 25 percent dropped out during the course.

She said that nursing needed to be portrayed in a different way, because 50 percent actually worked in communities rather than hospitals. She said that nursing education used to be free, but now required a loan and racked up debt. She said that the UK also needed to embrace overseas nurses who wanted to work in the UK.

Attractiveness of public sector jobs

Hewitt asked the panel how they would address the decline in popularity of teaching and nursing.

Baldwin said that media coverage was not attractive, especially post pandemic and in the cost-of-living crisis. He said he wanted to look at fee forgiveness for those that stayed a long time in the public sector.

Peckham said that the impact of the pandemic had not been fully grasped and the impact on young people was profound. Young people had a phobia of school, said Peckham.

She hoped that teaching courses had more school-based experience and had better training for behavior and mental health, because other services had been cut and teachers were relied upon more. Peckham worried that the sector may hit a point where it could not recover.

Green said the media had not given helpful coverage, but they also needed a government that respected public sector workers. She said that a more diverse workforce was also crucial to the effectiveness of services.

Oldman cautioned against large reform to nursing from a Labour government. The workforce needed to listen more. Oldman said they needed less 'shiny and new ideas' because the job had not changed, it just needed proper support.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: The Rail Interview

9 October 2023

Rail Partners, HSRG, RIA

5:30pm, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Toby Perkins, Shadow Minister for Nature and Rural Affairs;
- Christian Wolmar, Rail Author and Presenter of 'calling at all stations' podcast;
- Ben Clatworthy, Transport Correspondent, the Times;

Overview

Ben Clatworthy from The Times interviewed two guests on the topic of British rail. They touched on HS2, nationalization, a Labour approach, Mark Harpers record, GBR and Network North.

Discussion

Ben Clatworthy, Transport Correspondent, The Times, asked Perkins what he made of the past two weeks, in relation to the HS2 announcement at Conservative conference.

Toby Perkins, Shadow Minister for Nature and Rural Affairs, said he was upset by the HS2 news, and that the government had done a poor job over the past 13 years. He had never seen so much money spent with such little enthusiasm. He said his constituents were not aware of the benefits of HS2 and it was sad that a project with so much cross-party consensus had been canned on a whim.

Perkins highlighted that the public had been presented with statistics about train times to London being cut, rather than improving capacity. Inter-city trains shouldn't be stuck behind stopping trains, he said. Perkins also questioned the logic of calling it 'high speed 2' as it misrepresented the benefits.

Perkins concluded by saying there never should have been a choice between HS2 and northern/west midland rail investment.

Clatworthy touched on reports that Network North had been cooked up last minute and asked Perkins if it was repackaged money or a new announcement.

Perkins said that by the time Network North could even come to pass, there would be a Labour government.

Clatworthy asked what Labour had made of the policy document.

Perkins said that Network North contained road funding for the southeast, and many proposals that had already been discussed, which he couldn't believe. He suspected that when any final decisions were eventually made, Sunak would already have left politics.

Perkins feared that the government could do tremendous damage over the next 12 months, and he couldn't remember a good decision made by Transport Secretary, Mark Harper. Perkins felt it had been important that HS2 was supported by both parties and would surpass any single parliamentary term.

Christian Wolmar, Rail Author, had been an opponent of HS2 and had felt the money was better spent elsewhere. However, he also believed that the project needed finishing and tunnels couldn't be left incomplete in the Chilterns. He felt that the HS2 cancellation may have got Labour off the hook as they could turn to other projects.

Wolmar sympathized with Labour's inconsistency on HS2 policy, given that the project had been cancelled.

Clatworthy highlighted that Labour lacked a clear strategy on nationalization, and often responded by attacking the Tories instead.

Wolmar wanted to start seeing positive rail policy from Labour. He felt it could be a catalyst of Labour industrial strategy. A policy that excited him was capping all trips at £100, he felt fares were an important issue and underpinned a lot of reform.

Wolmar felt Great British Railways wasn't needed as it would add bureaucracy to the current system and he highlighted that £250m had been spent on a transition team that produced nothing, yet Mark Harper still didn't think GBR needed reforming legislation.

Wolmar was asked if the opportunity cost of not finishing HS2 was too great.

He said he was an old school Keynesian economist and the income tax generated from HS2 and spending forgone on benefits, for example, should have been brought into conversation around the HS2 spend.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Green Prosperity: Unlocking the Benefits of Nature Friendly Farming

9 October 2023

Event hosts: National Trust and Green Alliance

3pm, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Chair: Helena Horton, The Guardian
- Toby Perkins, Shadow Minister for Rural Affairs
- Dustin Benton, Green Alliance
- Hilary McGrady, Chair, National Trust
- Susan Twining, Country Land and Business Association

Overview

Hilary McGrady, Chair of the National Trust, explained that the National Trust was set up to ensure everyone could benefit from nature rich spaces. She said the plan for public money to deliver public goods was very ambitious and it was a moment of hope. She noted that in the last year that ambition has been watered down and argued that would be a tragedy.

She expressed hope that when a new government came to power that the ambitions could be recovered. She argued that ELMs, as they were originally conceived, should be implemented, as this meant more money and more advice for farmers, and more people to be on the high schemes. She said this needed to be underpinned by a fair baseline. She said supply chains needed to support farmers to do more for nature, and said trade deals should not be an obstacle to this. She said that the UK needed a land use framework to understand where we could make the greatest difference for nature.

Dustin Benton from the Green Alliance argued that the UK needed change. He reasoned that nature was in decline due to how we farmed the land, and noted that we were significantly likely to miss the carbon budget. He reasoned that change was possible, and noted that land could be of very different quality.

He argued that the majority of small farmers did not produce much food and had terrible incomes. He reasoned that for many farmers their land was very well placed for nature improvements. He said that we could pay farmers to store carbon. He reasoned that if farmers were paid £42-43k a year to store carbon and improve nature, then the economic model would be viable.

Susan Twining from the Country Land and Business Association reasoned that the farming community was very keen for support to have nature friendly farming practices. She noted that the supply chain was also placing demands on farmers.

She argued that ELMs were a very good starting point to turn things around, and she warned against narrow definitions of sustainability. She noted that we had to remember that no two farms were the same. She also warned that it was difficult to see measures having an environmental impact at a level which made sense of farm. She argued that farm businesses needed time to adapt. She argued that farmers did not seek out to do environmental harm. She argued that the UK needed farmers to be more competitive on imports and exports.

Toby Perkins, Shadow Minister for Rural Affairs, noted that when he was asked to take the role, he noted that the Labour leadership wanted a strong offering on nature. He said it was vital to combine food security with nature friendly practices.

He acknowledged that industry had fears about the financial sustainability of farming. He said supermarkets had to be part of the discourse given the pressure they put on farmers to drive down costs. He expressed an understanding that farmers and food producers felt let down by the current government.

He reasoned that nature friendly practices could help provide economic stability for farms by making them more adaptable to the impacts of extreme events.

He noted that Labour's green prosperity plan set out to create high skilled jobs whilst protecting rural communities. He emphasised the importance that rural communities were not left behind in the development of green skills. He reasoned that ELMs started in a positive place, but that the implementation was in danger of undermining its original potential. He expressed a desire to hear what phase 2 of ELMs should look like under a Labour government. He reasoned that farmers wanted to be a part of helping the country transition to a nature friendly country. He said that a Labour government wanted all 50 percent purchased in the public sector to be local to meet high environmental standards.

ELMs budget

McGrady cited research which showed that ELM's budget needed to be £1bn higher. She said this money had to be combined with consistency, so that farmers knew what they would be paid for doing. She expressed strong concern about the deadline perpetually being delayed.

Benton expressed concern about how the money in the ELM's budget was being spent. He argued that the system currently focused on laggards, and neglected leaders. He said a Labour government should provide those leaders to show the way.

Twining echoed calls for another £1bn for ELMs. She argued there needed to be investment in capital and innovation to allow sustainable farming to happen. She said an increased budget for productivity was required given the decline in BPS.

The Shadow Minister noted that every fringe event would think their topic required more money. He said this was in part an indicator of neglect on many fronts by the last government. He said he had heard what had been said by the other panelists and asked what needs to change with the money currently there. He answered by arguing that there needed to be sufficient nuance to ensure the subsidies paid for things that made a difference, whilst ensuring that the system was not too complicated for farmers, so they did not lose time on forums.

Right to Roam

The Minister said we needed to tread carefully but we certainly wanted to increase access to nature and work collectively with farmers.



Twining argued that there were already 140,000 miles of right to roam land in England and Wales. She said people did not support a right to roam, instead they wanted paths and wanted to know where to walk without damaging nature.

Benton argued that people had to be able to access nature. He reasoned that they supported access to national parks and greenbelts.

McGrady expressed support for accessing the countryside. She noted that the biggest deficient was in the ability of people in urban areas to access nature.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: How Can Labour Help Businesses Restore Trust With Consumers

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

9 October 2023

Progressive Britain, Energy Ombudsman

1pm, 08/10/2023

Panelists:

- Dame Margret Hodge, Labour MP for Barking;
- Lucy Rigby, PPC for Northampton North;
- Ed Dodman, Business Unit Director and Chief Ombudsman, Energy Ombudsman;
- Stephen Roberts, FTI consulting;
- Professor Chris Hodges, OBE, Supernumerary fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford University.;

Overview

In light of some businesses making “healthy profits” whilst consumers face a period of high living costs, the panel explored whether this was eroding consumer trust in business. The panel particularly focused on the energy market and where net zero would require changes for the consumers.

Debate

Dame Margret Hodge (Lab, Barking) reasoned that in light of talking to her constituents, trust was at an all-time low in the energy sector, in part due to profits being very high, and the amount of pay chief executives were receiving also being very high. Despite this, the prices to the consumer have rocketed. She reasoned that was why the country was in a period of instability. She said this was not helped by debtors pursuing customers too vigorously.

She said that half of people in Britain did not trust their energy companies.

She asked, did there need to be smarter regulation? Was there sufficient transparency? Was enforcement vigorous and was there proper accountability for customers?

Lucy Rigby, PPC for Northampton North, reasoned that consumer confidence was essential for growth and that growth was Labour’s number one priority. She contextualised that the increase was one of many costs for consumers, such as car insurance and the price of mobile phone contracts. She reasoned that when prices were seen as exploitative, consumer confidence declined. She reasoned that prices were more likely to be exploitative when they did not correlate to the quality of the services. She cited drip pricing and administration fees as examples of prices which eroded consumer trust, difficulties in switching providers and misleading advertising as things which eroded consumer trust.

She reasoned that they had to create the conditions of economic growth, which would result in lower prices. She argued that Labour had policy to tackle some of these costs, such as the plan to insulate homes which would bring down energy bills. She also argued that businesses needed to make consumers aware of the support which was available to them. She reasoned that competition was essential to an industrial strategy, due to competition driving efficiency which produced lower prices.

Ed Dodman, Business Unit Director and Chief Ombudsman, Energy Ombudsman, argued that an outcome trust was a good measure of whether consumers thought the market was working for them. He also reasoned that trust was an enabler for people to make decisions. He reasoned that people would make very different choices depending on how much they trusted the sector. He noted that in light of the changes that needed to happen for net zero, the absence of trust would make these changes harder to convey.

He noted that ombudsman now dealt with twice the number of complaints than they did prior to the energy crisis. He reasoned that this showed the lack of trust, he noted that they upheld the complaint in part at least 75 percent of the time.

He argued that they needed to recognise that the energy market had changed, and that they needed communication between consumers and business for trust to be built from the consumers with their suppliers.

Stephen Roberts, FTI consulting, reasoned that part of Labour's pitch was fixing things which were perceived as broken. To do this, he said they needed a regulatory regime which was robust. However there also needed to be support for companies to make innovations to improve the services for their consumers and solving net zero. He cited retail market reform as an opportunity for huge improvements to be made. He agreed that trust from the consumer was essential for them to make the changes for net zero to be achieved.

Professor Chris Hodges, OBE, Supernumerary fellow of Wolfson College, Oxford University, stated that the ombudsman the UK had was very good as a dispute regulation system. He said they were data controllers which enabled them to build big pictures about company behaviour and where problems were. He noted that the aggregated data was published which was useful from the perspective of transparency.

He argued that they needed a change in regulatory delivery and emphasised the need of intervention rather than enforcement. He argued that they needed to be clever with how they engaged, and if a conversation would fix things, then they needed to have that conversation. He argued that the effectiveness varied across . Human beings achieved more when they collaborate. He argued that legislation did not require regulators to state outcomes, and by doing so they missed something important.

He argued that people collaborated when they trusted each other, so it was important to build the conditions of trust between business and regulators. He reasoned that in the absence of trust that enforcement was appropriate.

He reasoned that they could ask businesses to produce evidence that they were trustworthy.

He argued the mutual trust approach was done really well in aviation and safety, for reasons which were obvious due to the collective interest in the system working. He said they needed to build comparable trust within the energy sector

Q & A



Dodman reasoned that competition had the potential to produce many benefits but people could not see the benefits because the price was the same across companies. In light of this, people struggled to see the benefits of competition.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Ending Child Poverty – How And By When?

9 October 2023

Event Hosts: Child Poverty Action Group

11:00am, 9th October 2023

Panelists:

- Polly Toynbee, The Guardian (Chair)
- Alison McGovern MP, Shadow Minister for Employment
- Jo Barker-Marsh, Changing Realities
- John McTernan, Political Adviser
- Alison Garnham, Child Poverty Action Group
- Shabna Begum, Runnymede Trust
- Andrew Harrop, Fabian Society

Overview

The panel discussed what the strategy for ending child poverty should be under a Labour government. Highlighting the systemic problems under the current government and identifying strategies to improve the situation.

Opening Remarks

Guardian Columnist Polly Toynbee, who was chairing the event, noted everyone was keen to hear more from Labour on the issue of child poverty. She also noted that there had been some work on this from the National Policy Forum, but more needed to be done in her view.

CEO of the Runnymede Trust, Shabna Begum, said that in every region in the UK children from ethnic minority backgrounds were more likely to be in child poverty than their white counterparts. She said that she felt that this often wasn't reflected in the child poverty statistics.

Begum referenced her experience of this situation in the borough of Tower Hamlets. She said that since that the government denied the existence of institutional racism, this compounded these inequalities. From the perspective of the Runnymede Trust, the Labour Party needed to develop

policies that tackled this directly. She said that ethnic minority families and households were disproportionately working in low paying and insecure employment which trapped them in these cycles of poverty. Begum added that she was until recently a teacher in Hackney and noted that teachers were buying care packages for their students with their own money. This, she said, was happening across the country. She said that therefore they wanted to see a Labour Party that changes the narrative around this issue and gives better funding provision to children in poverty.

Political adviser John McTernan started by saying that he had been a long-time supporter of Child Poverty Action Group and noted that Liz Kendall had been appointed as Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, which he felt would enhance Labour's policy offer on tackling child poverty.

On the key question of where Labour should be on child poverty, he stressed the importance of being in power to affect this kind of change. He said that Labour in 2019 suffered its worst defeat since the 1930s and that given how fast things had moved electorally in recent years Labour would need a comprehensive plan on child poverty if they formed the next government. He said that Keir Starmer's mission statement for government marked the end of neoliberalism.

He said that the whole Universal Credit system needed to be reformed, and that Child Poverty was in many ways a subset of working poverty.

Jo Barker-Marsh of Changing Realities started by giving her personal background as a single mum as a child with special needs. She said that she was a single parent, and that they survived on universal credit and had no form of familial support. She said that people in her situation, and the families that she talked to through the Changing Realities organization, looked for politicians to directly address and help their situation but that she felt there was little that directly addressed her experience and that of other families dealing with the consequences of child poverty.

This current government, she said, had always focused more on support of big business. She said that she felt that they needed a government that supported the people she talked to every day, and that they need to be listened to as they were an important part of the solution.

General Secretary of the Fabian Society, Andrew Harrop, started by referencing the context for this meeting following the National Policy Forum statement on Child Poverty and said that this was a move to enhance Labour's policy statement that would be voted on in at conference later.

Harrop then highlighted a recent Fabian pamphlet on Child poverty, and said that it defined the nature of the problem and aimed to develop a consensus on fixing child poverty. He said that tackling child poverty would need to be a project over the course of 10 years and potentially over two terms of a Labour government. She said that Labour in government should look to be bold over the first term in tackling the issue, that they needed to make sure that the jobs market worked better for people in in-work poverty.

Harrop added that Labour also needed to deal with the cost-of-living crisis, which meant directly tackling the high cost of utilities such as gas and electricity

Shadow Employment Minister Alison McGovern, said that she wanted to start with bringing people's lived experience into forming government policymaking on child poverty. She said one of the worst things about the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) in recent years had been the lack of engagement with the groups negatively affected by its policies. She said that this needed to change and that if she were in government at the DWP she would engage directly with people's lived experience of the benefits system and to react and engage with these challenges.

McGovern added that that Labour would want to have a comprehensive childcare strategy across the levels of government.

She said that reform of the DWP is needed and highlighted the Equality Act as something that needed to be brought into the DWP's mission statement to deal with class and race inequality in the welfare system.

Alison Garnham of Child Poverty Action Group said that it was good news that Labour had made a commitment to child poverty again and gave some statistics on the last Labour government's record on this, saying that the research showed that with supportive policies you could tackle this problem. Garnham said that child poverty in the UK was proven to be policy responsive, and if you enacted the right policies then it started to come down.

She said the Government should adopt the UN Convention on the rights of a Child into UK law.

Q & A

Shared Prosperity Funding

A question from the floor asked about the ineffective nature of project funding and if there were any plans to improve this.

McGovern said that it had been a mess by the current government, and that people didn't realise how much EU funding originally went on these projects. Labour's plans on this support, she said, would be to reform this and create a regional aspect to this.

Child Maintenance Support

A question was asked on what Labour's plans were for Child Maintenance Support.

McGovern said that she had been shocked how bad this system had become and that the government needed to work to develop a new strategy on this.

Child Trauma and mortality linked to poverty

A question was asked on the link between child poverty and child mortality.

Jo Barker-Marsh said that it couldn't just be the responsibility of one doctor or social worker, it needed to be support from across the system.

Two Child Benefit Cap

Toynbee brought up the two-child benefit cap and asked McGovern for her thoughts on this.



McGovern said that Labour voted against the two-child policy when the government first brought it to a vote, but that economic stability was a first priority of the next government.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Fit for the future: How UK life sciences can drive growth and improve the health of the nation

9 October 2023

Event hosts: Tony Blair institute

4:45pm, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Chair, Paul Blakely, Life Science Senior Policy Adviser
- Chi Onwurah, Shadow Minister for Science, Research and Innovation
- Dr Richard Torbett, Chief Executive, ABPI
- Hannah Davies, Health Inequalities Lead, Northern Health Science Alliance

Overview

The panel focused on the vital role played by life sciences to the UK economy and the importance of every region of the UK supporting this sector.

Subheading

Paul Blakely, Life Science Senior Policy Adviser, reasoned that the life science sector in the UK was now seeing a number of challenges due to increased competition in the sector due to increased investment in other countries during the pandemic. He also noted the NHS was in trouble which made the adoption of innovation difficult. He said the question was how could it be ensured that the UK maintained a competitive edge in life sciences.

Chi Onwurah, Shadow Minister for Science, Research and Innovation, expressed her belief that science and innovation were key to our economy, growth, and to improving our quality of life. She reasoned they were therefore key to Labour's missions, such as achieving the highest sustained growth in the G7. She noted that the UK had 139 weeks without being in Horizon Europe and that the life sciences sector had suffered as a result. She reasoned that the government had a role to play empowering researchers and innovators, and that Labour would seek to invest in universities to make the most advantages we have. She noted that medicine technology was an area where science could be transformative and that was what the next Labour would be seeking to unlock.

Dr Richard Torbett, Chief Executive of the ABPI, credited the previous Labour government for sowing the seeds of great life science knowledge due to their investment in the sector. He said the life science sector was one of the jewels in the UK's economy. He said that the pharmaceutical industry was the largest investor in R&D in the UK. He emphasised that the life science sector had a public part as well such as relationships with regulators.

He warned that the UK had a danger of losing its competitive edge. He cited that growth in R&D had flatlined whilst it had increased significantly in other countries. He reasoned that the UK had to do more stimulate clinical research.

Hannah Davies, Health Inequalities Lead at the Northern Health Science Alliance, argued that the UK had to grow all parts of the country on the science front if we wanted to be a Science Superpower again.

She argued that given the North of England's world class universities, the lack of investment as holding back potential, and reasoned the same was true for the Midlands and Scotland. She reasoned that we needed more "glue" to help things operate in the north of England, giving examples of investment in business managers, clinical trial managers and researchers. She reasoned that health was much worse in the North of England and simply investing would help combat that.

Q & A

When asked a question regarding the key challenges that the life science sector needed to address, Onwurah spoke about the importance of the NHS being able to do its day job properly so that it could be in a place to play its part in leading innovation. She argued the NHS was currently spending all its time to try to meet current health needs, so it had no capacity to explore innovation which would ultimately make things easier for the NHS.

She also reasoned that people needed to see what a government could do to make patient experience better via ideas such as using data for the public good.

She also reasoned that one of big challenges was supporting university regions turbo charge growth, and cited that she had visited MIT and Berkley to learn from the best practices of universities doing this. She also expressed hope that integration would improve learning best practices.

Dr Torbett argued that patients got better healthcare outcomes in a research setting, and this pointed to the importance of getting research up to international standards across all four nations of the UK.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Tackling the Climate-Nature crisis: achieving Labour's Joined up Plan

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

9 October 2023

Zero Hour

10:30, 8th October 2023

Panelists:

- Olivia Blake, Labour MP for Sheffield, Hallam;
- Kerry McCarthy, Shadow Minister for Climate Change;;
- Ruth Jones, Shadow Minister for the Environment.;
- Prof Nathalie Pettorelli, Zoological Society of London.;
- Dr George McGavin, entomologist, author, academic, television presenter and explorer.;

Overview

This session explored why climate and ecology was important and more broadly considered Labour's environmental and climate policy.

Opening remarks

Olivia Blake (Lab, Sheffield, Hallam), host of the panel, argued that this bill would seek to protect nature recovery and ensure that the UK cuts its emissions in a way which was consistent with 1.5 degrees and which protected the just transition. She noted that the bill had support across parties including 74 Labour MPs. She reasoned that this bill had an essential place in cleaning up rivers and creating jobs in clean energy and nature recovery sector.

Ruth Jones, Shadow Minister for the Environment, reminded the room that the UK was one of the most nature depleted countries in the world. She said that reversing this was the biggest challenge of our time due to the impact that this loss has on human health. She said that they could not afford to miss the 30 by 30 agenda. Furthermore, she reasoned that this target was too low. She argued that nature underpinned our collective prosperity.

She reasoned that climate and ecological crisis was both a global and local problem. She said the Labour government would help make the UK a zero-emission economy by insulating millions of homes. She also said that if Labour became the government, they would implement a proper windfall tax on oil and gas companies. She also acknowledged the inequalities in impact of climate change, noting that poorer people often had less access to nature. She expressed a desire for a healthy nature, of which there would be equitable access to.

She said Labour had pledged to create secure, green jobs across the UK underpinned by science. She noted that climate action must be nature positive. She said the Climate and Ecology Bill would be a very important part in achieving this aim.

Kerry McCarthy, Shadow Minister for Climate Change, said it was important that there was a bill that people could rally around. She expressed disappointment that Sunak had declared “war on net zero.” She said Labour had a choice about whether they would fight for the right thing or not. She argued that the green prosperity plan and the aim of having clean energy by 2030 were signs that Labour were prepared to do the right thing. She gave the example of Joe Biden’s climate plan which showed how you could have a just transition to green industry.

She noted that the goal was to stick to the 1.5 degrees target but reasoned that it would be harder in light of current government failure and noted the CCC condemning the government for not taking enough action, and that the UK was not on track to meet the next carbon budget which makes things harder.

She said it was really ambitious to have clean energy by 2030. She said grid connection was essential but not a fun idea for many people. She noted that a balance was needed in the planning system, where local people did have power but one that allows wind turbines to be built and solar.

She noted that skills were essential so that people could undertake retrofitting. She said businesses needed to know this so they could attract the right skills.

She noted the importance of blue carbon and peatlands, reasoning that it was much more than just planting trees.

She said carbon offsetting should only be used if companies could not reduce their carbon.

She expressed a desire for carbon markets independent of green washing.

Dr George McGavin, entomologist, author, academic, television presenter and explorer, explained that he had a lifetime of anxiety as he witnessed the decline of natural world. He reasoned that humanity became the dominant force on earth since humans developed agriculture.

He noted that in 2020, the mass of human made stuff, plastic, steel etc., exceeded total world biomass. Therefore, humans had produced more than what was alive on earth.

He reasoned that there was a huge tension between those who seek to profit from the free market and those who knew about the climate emergency, and he said that you cannot have both.

He warned that in the next one to four years that we might exceed 1.5 degrees according to a UN report. He said that this was symptom of a world in overshoot.

He argued that people did not tend to deny climate change, but the new form of denialism was delayism.

He called for a “war cabinet” of opposing political parties to work together and do the best job they could. He said they need not worry about those who will complain.

He argued that the Climate and Ecology Bill was the only bill which proposed a joint approach to join the crisis that we face.

Prof Nathalie Pettorelli, Zoological Society of London, said that the Climate and Ecology Bill was written by scientists. She argued that the climate and nature were interlinked, because when one loses nature they accelerated climate change. Because when one loses nature they emit carbon, but

nature was also very cost effective to store carbon. She also warned that climate change made things worse for nature by disrupting the behaviour of species. She argued that we do not think of nature enough in the context of CC adaptation. She argued that we cannot be techno optimist about scientists providing a techno answer. And such answers would not have same co-benefits as those produced by nature.

She said the bill would provide stability which was essential for businesses to engage with the climate change transition.

She reasoned that a virtue of the bill was climate assembly which would allow citizens to express their concerns.

She said this was a problem for all and could not be handled by one department; it should not just be DEFRA or a levelling up problem. She noted that scientists would not ideally be writing bills, but that fact they have showed the urgency of this bill.

Q & A

McCarthy said that this was not yet in the manifesto because it does not exist yet. She explained that once an election was called there was a meeting to develop the manifesto. She said that the Labour Party was absolutely committed to play its part in limiting warming to 1.5 degrees. She predicted that the next election would be the net zero election. She noted the new Labour Climate and Environment Forum, which said 1.5 was a popular figure but that the public needed help getting there. She noted that they wanted to retrofit 1.9m homes within a decade.

She reasoned that Labour Party did work across parties and that there were Conservative Party MPs who were not happy with their own party's position. She expressed a willingness to work with the Conservatives on this issue.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Fit for the future: How can we build an NHS that meets the future healthcare needs of the UK's population?

9 October 2023

RCEM; British Geriatrics Society; Parkinson's UK

15:15, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Laura Silver (Chair), Editor, Politics Home
- Dr Adrian Boyle, President, RCEM
- Professor Adam Gordon, President, British Geriatrics Society
- Carla Thomas, Deputy Portfolio Manager, Metro Mayor, Liverpool
- Juliet Tizzard, Director of External Relations, Parkinson's UK

Overview

Panelists discussed the pressures on the A&E system in the UK and what measures could be introduced to prevent them. There was a focus on care for people with long-term conditions and how to ensure the efficient discharge of older patients into the social care system.

Opening remarks

Dr Adrian Boyle, President of the RCEM, began the session by telling the meeting that far too many people were spending too long in A&E and not being admitted. He said that people were spending as long as 24 hours in A&E. He said these were not time-wasters, they were sick and they needed to be treated.

Boyle said that some people were experiencing stays of over 72 hours, the numbers of which had grown from 1 in 12, to now being 1 in 3. He said this was typically older people, with over 80s spending an average of 15 hours per patient, and this was making people sicker. He said they were spending time on trolleys, which made the process even worse when they sought elderly care.

Professor Adam Gordon, President of the British Geriatrics Society, said the situation of people receiving care in corridors was "very real". He said that the pressures seen in A&E were due to stresses elsewhere in the chain.

Gordon added that rehabilitation departments could no longer guarantee that you would return to your pre-illness levels of health. He said there was an exit block in hospitals and called for investment in capacity in community-based domiciliary care and investment in rehabilitation to speed up discharges.

He added that investment in geriatricians in hospitals would help the NHS get through this winter and could build out future capacity from there.

Juliet Tizzard, Director of External Relations at Parkinson's UK, said that when the health system got things right for people with Parkinson's, they would be getting things right for people with all sorts of conditions.

She said that people with Parkinson's needed access to multi-disciplinary teams. However, she said that just 17 percent of people had that sort of access. She also said that people on those multi-disciplinary teams needed technology to support them to do their job well.

She added that when people with Parkinson's were admitted, things could often go wrong. She said that only 42 percent of people with Parkinson's received their medication on time, which meant they could often end up staying in hospital much longer. She said this was avoidable and that time critical medication was an important point for people with other conditions as well.

Number of beds

Boyle said that the UK had the lowest number of beds per member of the population of any country in Europe except Sweden. He said that the UK compared poorly in terms of spend in GDP or even in raw numbers.

He said there was a need to increase the number of beds, telling the room that the ideal rate for maximum efficiency should be a bed occupancy rate of 85 percent.

Social care

Boyle said that fundamental to solving this issue was fixing the problems with social care. He said the problems in emergency departments were best seen as a problem of whole system stress.

Prevention

Tizzard said that people with Parkinson's had often lived with symptoms for a long time before they were diagnosed. She said diagnosis was horrendous in Northern Ireland and pretty bad in England. She said there were hardly any neurologists, and the UK was nearly bottom of the European league, so referral can be quite a long wait.

Boyle said that investment in emergency medicine should not mean investment should not go into prevention. He said the first contact was the best contact and said that 111 could work better if they improved the amount of clinical advice. He told the meeting that clinicians should be taking those first calls and navigating people effectively.

Dentistry

Carla Thomas, Deputy Portfolio Manager to the Metro Mayor of Liverpool, said the UK needed a policy approach and reform for patients who could not get an NHS dentist at all, which was the same for GP referrals.

Smoking ban

Boyle said it was right to try and stop smoking. He said, though, there were other prevention opportunities, such as alcohol consumption and young people's mental health.



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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Putting innovation at the heart of the NHS

9 October 2023

Labour Together & ABPI

12:00, 9 October 2023

Panelists:

- Kirsty Innes (Chair), Director of Technology Policy, Labour Together
- Wes Streeting MP, Shadow Secretary of State, Department of Health and Social Care
- Dr Richard Torbett, Chief Executive, ABPI
- Shaun Walsh, Head of Public Affairs and Campaigns, Cancer Research UK

Overview

The session highlighted the developments that technology had already enabled in the health system and the areas of the system which innovation could support in the future. There were significant contributions on the role of research in the NHS and how government could enable further research.

Opening remarks

Wes Streeting MP, Shadow Secretary of State at the Department of Health and Social Care, said that everyone had stories and experiences of the NHS, including his own two years ago. He told the meeting that he had tried to break some of the sentimentality about the NHS and speak openly and honestly about the state it was currently in. He said he thought the system was going through the worst crisis in its history.

Streeting said that compared to its international comparators, the differences came down to the fact the UK had a system that is based on late-stage diagnosis and treatment, which provides greater challenges, worse outcomes and a more expensive health service.

He added that the current threats facing the NHS include the demographic changes and an aging population.

Streeting called for a shift from: focusing on hospitals to providing help and support in the community; analogue to digital; and from a sickness service to one that is focused on prevention and maintaining good health.

Streeting pointed out that science, technology and innovation enabled all three of those shifts.

He praised the pace of the revolutionary change in the understanding of disease and the deployment of AI to develop personalised healthcare, clinical efficiencies and robotic surgery. He

also highlighted the "game-changing use of genomics" to not just treat quickly but diagnose illnesses before they even emerged.

Despite all of these opportunities, he said he had talked to entrepreneurs, technologists and data scientists and had heard the recurring theme of a lack of consistency of approach and stability from the UK government has threatened the life sciences industry.

He said that new start-ups had found it hard to get through the front door of the NHS. He told the meeting that even when the new entrants to the market had proved their concept and were ready to sell into another Trust, they found they could not because they had to go over the same processes over and over again.

Streeter highlighted Labour's pledge of £171m per year to double the number of MRI and CT scanners and questioned why the current government was failing to provide scanners to get people onto treatment pathways quicker.

Dr Richard Torbett, Chief Executive of the ABPI, said that it was clear in most developed countries with aging populations, their health systems would struggle unless there was a rethink on the prevention agenda and think carefully about the role of technology within that.

He said that precision medicine was incredibly important and ought to deliver better patient outcomes and efficiency in the NHS. He said these innovations needed to be joined up to support better decision making.

Torbett said the Government needed to think more and more about how to regulate these new technologies and the data it shared in an appropriate way to ensure the NHS was able to handle these things in confidence.

Torbett added that it needed partnership between the multiple players in the system: government charities, industry and regulators. He highlighted the vaccine taskforce as a good example of this during the pandemic, but that was unusual and it had snapped back into the normal ways since.

Shaun Walsh, Head of Public Affairs and Campaigns at Cancer Research UK, said that developments in the UK had ensured they had more than doubled survival from cancer over the last 40 years. However, he said they had hit a bit of a wall since and that improvement had slowed. Other countries, he added, were leading us on this.

On diagnosis, Walsh told the meeting that only 52 percent of cancers were found at an early stage, whereas it was much higher than this in Australia where they were leading the way.

Walsh said that an NHS fit for the future needed to be fit for everyone. He said there were huge inequalities across the country. He noted that smoking mapped onto deprivation heavily. He welcomed the smoking ban proposals from conservative conference.

Research

Streeter said the NHS had to see research, science and innovation as core business and that many clinicians would like to see it as such.

He said he had been reflecting on this with striking doctors who had been complaining about the conditions they are working in, and told the meeting that they were keen to keep up their clinical research but did not have time and capacity to do this. He suggested that research time should be built into their conditions at work.

Streeting accepted that there was a snuffiness about private research in the NHS and said "we need to break through that."

Streeting said there was a wider flourishing life sciences industry in the UK and Labour would like to pull together the private public and charity sectors. He said this also included data. He said that people were up for sharing their data, as long as there was a promise that it will be used securely and ethically.

Torbett said that research was motivating factor in the NHS, highlighting that where there was research there were better outcomes.

Torbett pointed out that during the pandemic, the recovery trial was an amazing achievement, because it connected all the data rapidly from everyone admitted into hospital which gave real-time data on what helped people to recover quicker. However, what we had seen since was very patchy.

He highlighted that the NHS had seen a big drop off in the larger commercial studies as it was not able to attract as many clinical studies as it did in the past. He said this was a big loss of income to the NHS as the funding for commercial trials was £15,000 per person.

He noted that global research organisations wanted to sign a single set of terms across the NHS rather than on a Trust-by-Trust basis.

Walsh said that clinicians did not have the time for research nor the time to discuss treatment trial options with patients.

Walsh added there was an opportunity to look into automation and AI where authorities could lift the burden of administration from clinicians. He said there was a percentage of GP work that could be taken away and handled by digital technologies.

He said that researchers were looking at ways that could better to detect cancers which were less invasive on patients. Although, he pointed out, some innovations are simpler: non-technological ways of testing for cancers, away from the hospital setting and at home.

Cost of innovative medicines

Torbett said that many people thought that innovative medicines were one of the biggest expenses in the UK health system, but told the meeting that just 9 percent of the NHS budget was spent on innovative medicines in the UK.

He said that most of the massive increased use of innovative technologies since the pandemic were on devices that had been given to the NHS for free. He said that the stagnant spend on innovative medicines was because of the lack of economic growth. He said that investment in this area could increase innovation, increase exports and bring the tax receipts back into the economy to drive that growth.

International investment in life sciences

Streeting said that life sciences was central to this agenda. He said it was embarrassing and a source of regret that people just looked at the current government and thought that it was a "basket case". He suggested that industry was scared of making investments because there was no stability or consistency. He said investors were scared of having the rug pulled from beneath their feet.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: The health and care interview

9 October 2023

Roche & UCB

17:30, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Laura Silver (Chair), Editor, Politics Home
- Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive, NHS Confederation

Overview

The interview focused on Matthew Taylor's opinions on the current state of the health service and the areas of improvement. Much of the session centered on the run-up to a general election and how the Labour Party should frame the conversation around the NHS and social care.

Opening remarks

Matthew Taylor, Chief Executive of NHS Confederation, began the session by reflecting on Labour's chances at the upcoming election. He told the meeting that if the poll lead remained over 15 percent, he could not see there being an election until the very last moment. Unless it shortened, or there was a sense of momentum, it would be later rather than sooner.

He said the public did not have Blair-like enthusiasm for Starmer, but they also did not have Kinnock-like fear.

Taylor questioned what the Government's strategy would be on the NHS in the run-up to the election; whether it would be to promise change or defend its record.

Labour's health commitments

Taylor said they needed to look at each announcement on its merits. He said he had a strong view that one of the biggest problems was the centralised solutions to the health problems. He also pointed out that another big problem was political short-termism.

He said he welcomed Labour's commitment to providing money to double the number of scanners. However, he suggested that, in the end, it should be local systems and trusts that determine what their spending priorities were.

He said that committing to a 7-day-week NHS to reduce the backlog was "very hard." He suggested it was not necessarily the best way to use staff.

NHS diversity

The health service would collapse without diversity of its staff. They had published a staff companion on trans allyship. The law only helped you so far and required people to treat each other respectfully.

First 100 days

Taylor said the most important thing for any incoming Labour government would be to learn from the past. He suggested that Wes Streeting had a huge advantage because he would not have gone into power having promised to reorganise the NHS.

He said there needed to be a grown-up conversation with the public and that Streeting might be able to say more to the public about the NHS after the election compared to before one.

Taylor told the meeting that it was important to own reform, noting that the public supported reform of the health service and said Streeting was having that conversation in a consistent way.

Social care

Taylor said he believed there was a systematic underinvestment in primary care. He said there needed to be more money put into primary care, community care and social care.

He said social care was absolutely vital in ensuring the NHS was fit for the future. The health service, he said, was working with local government closer than ever before and that health leaders were concerned their local authorities were going bankrupt.

Taylor said that the NHS Confederation had consistently said that the number one priority was social care. He added that every acute leader recognised that investment in social care is the long-term solution.

He said both parties had been afraid to talk about social care because it always came down to how to pay for it. Labour, he added, had important policies around the social care workforce, but whichever Party won the election needed to move quickly to bring in reforms so as to not make it an issue at the following election.

Strikes

Taylor said there had been moments of hope in the consultants' dispute, so he had some confidence an agreement could be found. He said the BMA had made movement in the last few days.

On Junior Doctors, though, he said the two sides seem further apart. He said if there was no movement on the dispute, the NHS would have to pull back services in the middle of a winter crisis. He highlighted the cost was now over £1.3bn with over 1,000 cancellations.

He said the public knew all the arguments; that doctor pay had fallen in real terms; moral; and conditions. He said the public also knew that the government only had a certain amount of money and was trying to fight inflation. He told the meeting that the NHS Confederation had told both sides that nobody was listening anymore, they just wanted it to end.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Sustainable housing for the future: Achieving net zero emissions – A dialogue on home building, innovation, and environmental stewardship.

9 October 2023

SME4Labour

09:00, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Cllr Margaret Mullane (Chair), Labour PPC, Dagenham and Rainham
- Jack Abbott, Labour PPC for Ipswich
- Olivia Blake MP (Lab, Sheffield Hallam)
- Louise Hutchins, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Green Building

Overview

The session focused on the energy efficiency of homes across the UK. Panelists called for the retrofitting of insulation and the development of passive standards to which housebuilders should be held accountable to.

Housing emissions

Olivia Blake MP (Lab, Sheffield Hallam), said that that if Labour were to form the next Government, it will inherit a crisis.

She said that too few homes were being built, whilst, at the same time, there were too many being built to low environmental standards.

Blake said that housing was one of the largest contributors to carbon emissions, from heating homes to building new developments.

Jack Abbott, Labour PPC for Ipswich, said that the idea of reducing consumption had come under inaccurate scrutiny, but reiterated that it was about reducing energy bills and increasing efficiency.

Cllr Margaret Mullane (Chair), Labour PPC, Dagenham and Rainham, said that Labour's mission was about ensuring that all new homes were built to new standards on energy efficiency and said that the cost of doing so pales into insignificance against the cost of retrofitting homes.

Jobs

Blake said it was time to usher in a green jobs revolution, to heat homes through Green GB Energy. She said it must be Labour's priority to upgrade the energy efficiency of homes throughout the country. For this, Blake said, the country needed a coherent industrial strategy.

Blake said the Government could unlock the potential of young people by ensuring they have the skills for the future.

Louise Hutchins, Head of Policy and Public Affairs, Green Building, said her organisation were calling for a ten-year mission to upgrade the network, introduce new standards and upskill people around the country.

Mullane said there were plans to decarbonise, but to succeed in those, it must be accompanied by upskilling the workforce.

Affordability

Hutchins said that what Sunak had been saying was not true that the country could not afford to make the transition to low carbon energy.

She highlighted the investment an innovation of SMEs, which she noted had started producing greener alternatives.

Abbott said this winter would be totally unaffordable for lots of families, and had lost another year where they should have been insulating homes.

Mullane said there was innovation in the sector and highlighted cases where there were doing so in Dagenham but said there were challenges such as the cost of £65,000 to retrofit per unit on an estate in Dagenham.

Hutchins told the meeting that Labour's ideas would come under assault in the current political climate as we approached a general election. She particularly pointed out that Labour's £60bn of investment in green ideas would come under scrutiny over the next few months.

Energy security

Abbott said the UK had been disproportionately affected by the war in Ukraine because of the decisions successive Conservative governments had made, not least the insulation of housing stock. He added that every time the Conservatives said there was nothing we can do about this worldwide shock, it was because they had "set the country up to fail."

On battery storage, he said that if the Government did not get this right, they would lose not only a new market but lose another way of heating homes.

Local government involvement

Blake told the meeting that Labour councils around the country were leading the way in passive house standards.

She said that the new homes grant was a missed opportunity to give councils the powers they needed to implement such frameworks and standards.

She said there were councils trying to do the right thing, but without the requisite funding and accompanying plans to ensure councils could retrofit homes, it would never happen.

Hutchins said that local and devolved governments had a huge role to play, because they were so much more trusted by the public.

Hutchins said it would be brilliant if every local authority had retrofit officers to implement an area-by-area approach with supply chains and ensuring the local population had the required skillset. She said it would be brilliant if local authorities could implement and uphold standards.

Abbott said that Ipswich Borough Council did a great job in retrofitting homes, and it made a big difference to the energy efficiency of the housing stock. However, he bemoaned that there were no such ways to get private landlords to retrofit in the same way and it was costing renters.

Abbott pointed out that local government had been gutted and that without the accompanying funding alongside the standards and powers, local government would find it hard to implement such standards.

Hutchins highlighted that the government had just scrapped the implementation of new standards to which they could hold landlords to.

She said the sector needed a national legal framework to implement standards.

Hutchins also said it would be brilliant if local government had the powers and support from central government to fight the decline of nature in their area.

Carbon negative construction

On carbon neutral buildings, Hutchins said there needed to be legislation to require house builders to measure the amount of carbon they were producing and then to go and reduce that.

Blake said that affordability had to come hand in hand with this. She said, we've "built rubbish housing stock" that people have to then pay through the teeth for the energy they consume within them.

She said house prices were already way too high, because affordable housing definition is "a joke". She added that for new efficient homes the focus should not be on home ownership.

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Labour Conference 2023 Fringe: Creating Better, Smarter Transport Networks Throughout the UK

9 October 2023

Worldline

10:30am, 8 October 2023

Panelists:

- Dan Norris, Metro Mayor for the West of England
- Clare Moody, PCC candidate for Avon and Somerset Police
- Tom Belger, Editor, Labour List
- Stephen Morgan MP, Shadow Minister for Rail
- James Bain, Rail Supply Group, Chair
- Luke Raikes, the Fabian Society, Research Director

Overview

The panel reacted to news of HS2's cancellation and proposed ideas for how they would spend the money on other projects. The discussion covered how the UK could improve long term planning and investment in transport projects, safety on transport and the early priorities for a Labour government.

Discussion

Tom Belger, Editor of Labour List, asked the panel, if they had a large sum of cash, what transport projects would they prioritise.

Stephen Morgan MP, Shadow Minister for Rail, said that the past few weeks had been a disaster, and the HS2 cancellation was a symbol of thirteen years of failure. He felt that communities were tied of broken promises.

Morgan said that Labour would have to look at the implications for HS2 going forward because the project had been blown up by the current government. He said Labour would meet industry experts to establish what Britain needed.

Luke Raikes, Research Director at the Fabian Society, said he would avoid giving any cash to central government departments. He said transport decision making was fundamentally broken and devolving budgets regionally was a good model he would like to see explored.

He continued to say that central government needed to reform to properly devolve transport. Raikes used the German model as an example of a great way to deliver new projects. Raikes said there were no quick wins, and that both the HS2 cancellation and Network North were frustrating announcements.

Raikes suggested that by the end of first parliament, he felt an improvement could be made on buses, as they were simpler to implement. He highlighted that Liverpool's buses were now going to be in local control. He concluded by saying that lessons from HS2 needed to be applied to Northern Powerhouse Rail.

James Bain, Chair of the Rail Supply Group, said that investment in transport should be treated as a national asset, rather than a cost. In terms of rail capacity, he said that government needed to think in terms of space, such as concrete and steel, rather than just seats.

He said he was pushing government to consider widening the definition of investment, so that the UK could improve transport access for younger generations. He felt that the world we were leaving today for children was worse than it was in the 20th century.

Moody said that if she had a pot of money, she would take a strategic approach, with a national strategy implemented locally.

She said that transport usage patterns for women were different with multiple journeys being taken across multiple modes of transport, for example needing a bus to connect to a train. She said that the safety of young people also needed to be considered. She said that women preferred to see people on transport, whereas men were happier with CCTV. Safety was an overlooked priority, she felt.

Dan Norris, Metro Mayor for the West of England, said that Labour were improving the way they formed policy. Norris had introduced birthday buses in his region, giving people free bus travel for their birthday month. He said that it helped deal with the cost of living crisis, congestion and pollution. The data collected was also incredibly useful, and he wanted to use the policy as a learning curve not a solution.

Norris said the timeframe had been set as a month, because it allowed people thirty days to get used to the policy, and the change in behaviour was therefore more likely to be sustained.

Bain said that completing HS2 would have cost more than £100bn, which was only £1bn per year across a century, which he felt was affordable. He said that data, like that gathered on the birthday buses scheme, could be used for new projects so they were planned using supply and demand.

He believed young people should have free access to transport when in education, and this would improve GDP. He said there were too many vested interests in transport. His business ran travel in Germany and France and highlighted the success of the nine-euro fare in Germany.

Morgan said that Rachel Reeves would "throw him in the Mersey" if he made unfunded spending commitments but he said he would look at Bains' report, launched today.

Morgan said he was astounded that the UK still had Victorian infrastructure, but he was keen to talk to stakeholders and learn as much as possible.

Raikes said he had used the nine-euro fare and it changed his mind set for three weeks when travelling last year in Germany. He said that the UK needed depth and resilience in its transport network, so that if rail failed, we still had buses and trams.

Moody also thought the nine-euro scheme was very successful. She said that people in rural communities often didn't have buses, which prevented them connecting to other transport links, such as rail.

Belger asked the panel why transport wasn't in Labour's Top 5 missions.

Norris, said there were so many pressing issues in the country, and transport was still very important.

He asked for clear funding from a Labour government over a sustained period of time, so he could plan well. He wanted clear investment time frames to avoid inefficiency and waste.

Moody said that transport was part of Labour's 'Safe communities mission'. She agreed with Keir Starmer's cross departmental approach, and wanted to greater connection between DfT and HMT to ensure sensible decision making.

Bain said that he completely agreed with Norris and Moody, he felt from experience that the private sector weren't being given any certainty, and there funding was too insecure for long term transport projects.

Bain urged Labour to look beyond a five term and move on from current procurement processes.

Raikes agreed with everything that had been said. He urged Labour to start quickly in govt, and also make long term plans.

Q&A

An audience member asked if any of the rail lines closed by the Beeching Report would be reopened. Norris said that some Beeching lines would be reopened in his region.

An audience member asked why transport infrastructure in the UK was so expensive and how the UK could bring costs down. Raikes highlighted the benefits of greater fiscal devolution as a solution for cheaper transport projects.

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Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Labour's Opportunity Mission: How to smash the class ceiling

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

13 October 2023

Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Labour's Opportunity Mission: How to smash the class ceiling

PLMR Policy Hub & Social Mobility Foundation

14:30, Tuesday 10 October

- Sarah Atkinson, CEO, Social Mobility Foundation
- Shirine Khoury-Haq, CEO, Co-op Group
- Carl Cullinane, Director of Research and Policy, Sutton Trust
- Aimee Shields, KCL Law student
- Jim McMahon MP

Summary

A discussion of the barriers faced by those from lower socio-economic backgrounds in access to schooling, opportunities, resources and employment and what employers and charities can do to overcome these.

Drivers of inequality

Director of Research and Policy at the Sutton Trust look, Carl Cullinane called for social mobility to be looked at holistically, starting off in early years right through to higher education and entering the workplace. He said that many of the inequalities seen in outcomes stemmed from inequalities in the schooling system and that the attainment gap had increased by over a decade due to the pandemic and cost of living crisis. Cullinane called for evidence-based interventions like reassessing free schools meal eligibility and tutoring schemes to be rolled out across the board to even the playing field. He also spoke about the issues of social segregation within the schooling system. Good schools in wealthy areas had more affluent student intakes and attracting better teachers and getting better grades, at the other end of the spectrum there were a lot of challenged schools who missed out on these opportunities. We needed to ensure a better social mixing of schools to lessen the inequalities this created.

Cullinane then spoke about apprenticeships, saying that the perception of apprenticeships had improved in recent years but that opportunities for apprenticeships were limited. He stated that most contracts were being awarded to those already employed by companies and that 70 percent of apprentices were over 25 years old. He highlighted that this approach would not deliver new opportunities and that employers needed to be incentivising to take on new, young apprentices which would require investment.

An employer lead approach

CEO of the Co-op Group, Shirine Khoury-Haq spoke about the steps that her organisation had taken to address social mobility barrier in the workplace. She stated that people from poorer backgrounds are two thirds more likely to get lower-paying jobs compared to wealthier colleagues. She said that social mobility is about fairness, where you start should not define where you end up.

Khoury-Haq acknowledged that there were much more employers could do to create pathways to the top. She said that businesses had the ability to influence the narrative around social mobility, encourage engagement from other employers to be inclusive of socio-economic data in EDI strategies. Khoury-Haq highlighted the Co-Op's campaign to get socio-economic background recognised at the tenth protected characteristic in The Equalities Act.

A student's perspective

Law student Aimee Shields spoke about her experience of facing social mobility barriers. She said that access to opportunities were scarce unless you were very proactive and that she was discouraged from pursuing certain careers or applying to elite universities from a young age due to her socio-economic background. She said that without the careers support she received from social mobility charities she would not have known how to progress. She commented that to smash the class ceiling, politicians needed to spread opportunity equally across the country.

Jim McMahon said that it was the responsibility of government to support those, who through no fault of their own, do not start life in the right place. He commented that working class people do not want a handout, but they want a hand up.

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Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Halving VAWG in a decade- what does it look like and how do we get there?

13 October 2023

Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Halving VAWG in a decade- what does it look like and how do we get there?

Women's Aid

12:30 pm, Monday 9th October

- Farah Nazeer, CEO of Women's Aid;
- Jess Phillips MP, Shadow Domestic Violence and Safeguarding Minister;
- Cllr Jas Atwal, Leader of Redbridge Council;
- Jasmine Mohammad, Director of Safety4sisters;
- Alice Living, Women's Aid Ambassador;
- Tom McNeil, Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands;

Summary

A discussion around the multifaceted approach that it will take for VAWG to be halved in a decade.

What would success look like?

CEO of Women's Aid, Farah Nazeer, highlighted the devastating impact of domestic violence in the UK, 1.7m women were affected by domestic violence every year. She commented that violence against women and girls (VAWG) had spiked in the past couple of years due to the failure of meaningful policy. Nazeer advocated for a whole systems approach to tackle VAWG, this would bring organisation and agencies together to create meaningful change. She also spoke about funding; services were only funded halfway, and it would take £423m to fully fund domestic violence services for survivors and children.

Policy implementation on the ground

Shadow Domestic Violence and Safeguarding Minister, Jess Phillips advocated for a survivor centred approach and a move towards a prevention model for VAWG to prevent what was happening in the workplace and education settings from happening in the future. She also commented that trust in the system was crucial, that when victims come forward, they receive the appropriate support, and the services were working together to provide this. Phillips stressed that the only way to combat VAWG was for every institution to be clear that it was their responsibility to do so.

Root causes of VAWG

Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner for the West Midlands, Tom McNeil, said that misogyny and VAWG were the root causes of lots of other forms of societal violence. McNeil commented that boys and young men needed to be taught about misogyny in a way that resonated with them using role models. That we need a new era of pastoral support in schools, one centred around empowering women. Tackling VAWG started in a school environment but that there were institutional barriers to expanding the work. He acknowledged that the causes of crime were well understood, but if perpetrators are not dealt with in a way that intersects the other issues they face that these causes would not be dealt with.

By and for services

Director of Safety4sisters, Jasmine Mohammad, said that specialist services were core to tackling VAWG and that minority women with lived experience would feel more comfortable disclosing experiences through these organisations. Mohammad went on to say that voluntary services could respond more quickly than local authorities and took an intersectional approach to support. She then spoke about the challenges faced by migrant women with no recourse to public funds. The current policy, she said, created two categories based on immigration status, those who can access safety and support and those who cannot. Mohammad implored that specialist services needed more funding as specialist community services were operating by a shoestring.

Local authority perspective

Leader of Redbridge Council, Jas Atwal, said that local councils were on the front-end of responding to domestic violence when other services did not take a joined-up approach. Councils played a key role in supporting victims and survivors. Atwal stated that domestic violence was a curse on our society. He said that support was fragmented and short-term and there was a lack of training, expertise confidence in the police to deal with VAWG. He echoed calls for a whole systems approach to bring domestic violence to an end.

A cultural shift

Women's Aid Ambassador, Alice Living, said that to see a dramatic drop in cases, a cultural shift was needed in the response towards VAWG. A zero-tolerance approach to VAWG across society and the recognition that abuse can come in many forms. She commented that educating young people about VAWG was important, reaching out to children to tell them what abuse is and how to call it out. Living also said that prevention was key with the rise of toxic masculinity and men and boys being radicalised towards VAWG.

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Labour Party 2023 Fringe: What is the role of business in supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse

13 October 2023

Labour Party 2023 Fringe: What is the role of business in supporting victims and survivors of domestic abuse

The New Statesman & TSB

11:00 am, Tuesday 10th October

- Jess Phillips MP, Shadow Safeguarding and Domestic Violence Minister;
- Farah Nazeer, CEO Women's Aid;
- Kate Osiadacz, Head of Responsible Business TSB;
- Nicola Sharp-Jeffs, CEO Surviving Economic Abuse;

Summary

A discussion on how business can provide innovative solutions to support victims and prevent domestic abuse.

A business lead approach

Shadow Safeguarding and Domestic Violence Minister, Jess Phillips, said that businesses had a role to play in tackling domestic violence and that the financial sector had been the most reactive to implementing change on the issue.

CEO of Women's Aid, Farah Nazeer said domestic violence victims and survivors interacted with businesses on a daily basis, they were fundamental to living a safer life. She also said that businesses had a key role to play in changing the culture toward domestic violence as they can innovate more easily with less risk and more boldness.

Nicola Sharp-Jeffs, CEO Surviving Economic Abuse commented that 95 percent of domestic violence victims experienced economic abuse. She said that employers and businesses could make a massive difference in supporting domestic violence survivors and that financial services sector were already ahead.

Supporting victims and survivors

Kate Osiadacz, Head of Responsible Business at TSB said that signposting and awareness raising in business was impactful but not enough. TSB has been proactive in working with domestic violence charities. Osiadacz highlighted that TSB had launched their Emergency Flee Fund in December 2022 to give women recourse to money to allow them to escape abusive situations.

Phillips then commented that it was challenging to address issues around perpetrators in the workplace. She said that it was a massive problem across the board as cultural we are more comfortable protecting victims.



Osiadacz highlighted some examples of financial abuse the bank had encountered like sending penny payments via bank transfers with triggering reference. She said to tackle this they deployed a profanity filter which flagged 25,000 payments and stopped 8000 going through.

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Labour Party 2023 Fringe: A manifesto for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: A whole-society approach

13 October 2023

Labour Party 2023 Fringe: A manifesto for Ending Violence Against Women and Girls: A whole-society approach

End Violence Against Coalition

08:45 am, Tuesday 10th October

- Andrea Simon, Director EAWG Coalition;
- Farah Nazeer, CEO Woman's Aid;
- Caroline Bernard, Head of Influence, Respect;
- Kevin Brennan MP, Shadow Minister for Victims and Sentencing;
- Gisella Valle, Director Latin American Woman's Rights Service;
- Bell Riberio-Addy MP, Woman and Equalities Committee Member;

Summary

A discussion on the reform and collaboration that would be needed to tackle VAWG cross society and prioritise the safety of women and girls in an intersection, whole-society way.

Moving away from a criminal justice approach

Shadow Minister for Victims and Sentencing. Kevin Brennan said that achieving the Labour Party's commitment to halving violence against women and girls (VAWG) will require pulling all the levers in government to make it happen.

Bell Riberio-Addy commented that discussion around VAWG often focused on the criminal justice system, which was in dire need of reform, highlighting that in 2021, 110 women were killed by men, but only 79 were found guilty. Riberio-Addy said that addressing VAWG will take more than adjusting sentencing, the culture of misogyny that perpetuates VAWG needed to be confronted, requiring social, political, and cultural change. She highlighted the importance of education in tackling VAWG and of regulating the online content young people see. Without looking at online content, the root causes of VAWG will not be addressed.

The experience of minority women

Director Latin American Woman's Rights Service, Gisella Valle, said that migrant women were not seen as worthy of protection. No recourse to public funds restriction made it almost impossible for migrant women in dangerous situations to seek protection and redress, allowing perpetrators to act with impunity. She called for a whole-society approach to end the hostile environment and repeal the "no recourse to public funds" policy. She commented that for women to report safely, the

asylum system needed to be built on compassion and support and that an intersectional approach was needed to offer solutions outside the criminal justice system.

A whole society approach

Head of Influence at Respect, Caroline Bernard, said that a whole society approach was crucial to tackling domestic violence, alongside a strong criminal justice system. Bernard said that services were not funded properly and there was an urgent need for long-term funding. She noted that a multitude of issues were needed to tackle domestic violence, so policies must be holistic. She commented that the number of perpetrators who face criminal justice was low and that building on the strong foundations in place would help to address the root causes of abuse.

Funding services

CEO of Woman's Aid, Farah Nazeer, highlighted that crimes of VAWG were prevalent and underinvested in. She said that awareness had grown around VAWG in the wake of the high-profile cases in policing that had happened in the last couple of years. Nazeer commented that services were depleted and shutting down due to a lack of funding and poor conditions. She said that for organisations to working together would take a whole-systems approach, and for the many touchpoints survivors encountered to be functioning well and properly funded.

Brennan noted that the figures around sexual violence had remained unchanged over the past few years. He said that women should feel safe on the street or in their homes, and that men were needed in conversation around VAWG.

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Labour Party 2023 Fringe: The right to seek sanctuary: A vision for a fair asylum system

13 October 2023

Amnesty International & Refugee Action

19:00, Sunday 8th October

- Stephen Kinnock, Shadow Immigration Minister;
- Tim Naor Hilton, Director of Refugee action;
- Heather Staff, Councillor, Islington Council;
- Oliva Blake MP, Principal at RAMP;
- Sacha Deshmukh, CEO of Amnesty International UK;

Summary

A discussion over the failure of asylum and migration policy in the UK and how the debate around migrants can be detoxified and humanised.

Shortfalls of the system

Shadow Immigration Minister, Stephen Kinnock spoke on the weaponisation of immigration and asylum. He said that asylum system should be based on two guiding principles: compassion and control, if you lost control of the system, you eroded compassion.

He also raised concerns over the effectiveness of the Government's Rwanda policy and the dehumanisation of vulnerable people fleeing violence and persecution.

Kinnock highlighted the critical issues in the asylum system, with thousands waiting for their claims to be processed and stuck in temporary accommodation.

He also spoke of the importance of getting resettlement schemes functioning effectively, citing the failure of the Afghan resettlement scheme and stating that the nationality crossing the channel in highest number were Afghan due to the collapse of the scheme.

He highlighted the importance of addressing issues causing migration at source, using development aid and humanitarian intervention effectively.

Tackling toxic and racialized debate on refugees and the asylum system

Kinnock called the debate dehumanising and alienating. He said that asylum system needed to better integrate of refugees and the government departments like the Home Office, DLUHC and local authorities needed to work together to achieve this.

Olivia Blake MP, Principal at RAMP, called for the far-right rhetoric being used in politics to be spoken out against and for a humanitarian approach towards migration to be used in its place.

She also spoke about LGBT based migration claims making up 1-2 percent of asylum claims and highlighted that a majority of those who came to the UK were not aware that it was an issue you could claim asylum for.

Islington Councillor, Heather Staff, said that the people who fled were doing so at great personal risk, and the UK needed to correct the tone and debate being had around the issue. She called on Labour to be bolder to call it out.

She went on to say that the asylum system was in a dire state and that Labour must build a fair and just asylum system.

Staff commented that if you did not believe in the right to claim asylum then your immigration system and the Home Office would reflect that. She said that joined up thinking across government was needed to make the system work effectively.

CEO of Amnesty International UK, Sacha Deshmukh said the Government was shying away from its responsibilities to uphold the international laws and frameworks that the UK helped to create. The failure of asylum policy and management of the system was leaving people stranded in an ineffective system with no recourse to a positive outcome.

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Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Halving violence against women and girls: technology's contribution to Labour's crime mission

13 October 2023

Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Halving violence against women and girls: technology's contribution to Labour's crime mission

Progressive Britain & Forensic Analytics

16:30 pm, Sunday 8th October

- Jess Phillips MP, Shadow Safeguarding and Domestic Violence Minister;
- Andrew Fahey, Director Forensic Analytics;
- Clare Moody, Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner Candidate;
- Dr Kath Fannon, Former West Midlands Police Detective;

Summary

A discussion on how tech can be used to tackle VAWG in public sectors, private sector, policy and regulation.

What is the role of Tech in tackling VAWG

Director of Forensic Analytics, Andrew Fahey, commented that technology presented a huge opportunity for the investigation and prosecution of VAWG crimes, but that more work was needed on prevention. He spoke about issues in policing, the recruitment drive, he said, had replenished officer numbers, but forces were inexperienced and needed training and resources they were not getting. He cited research by Refuge stating that tech-related crimes had risen 366 percent. Fahey said the ability to perpetrate tech-related crime had never been greater, but the expertise was not there in many police forces to address it. He advocated that forces take a digital approach to tackling VAWG but police practices were not where they should be to make this approach best practice.

Current policy challenges and where the debate is going

Shadow Safeguarding and Domestic Violence Minister, Jess Phillips said that with public services in their current state that tech would be vital to addressing VAWG in a decade. She highlighted that looking at the available data on dangerous and violent perpetrators would inform a risk reduction and prevention investigations. Phillips commented that taking it would be innovative to take a similar approach of that used to combat terrorism and use a similar approach to combat VAWG using AI and data. She called for no more sticking plaster solutions to repeat offenses of VAWG and for an incoming Labour government to be held to account on their measurable target of halving VAWG in a decade.

What are the challenges to deliver on the target?

Former West Midlands Police Detective, Kath Fannon, commented that crimes of VAWG were seen as a distraction from tackling other, more serious crime. Saying that police and support services were floundering and did not have sufficient funding.

Role of PCCs and how they use their power on the ground

Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner Candidate, Clare Moody, said that a Labour government would be game-changing for tackling VAWG. Moody said that it would be the role of PCCs to take up the implementation of tackling VAWG on the ground. She commented that using tech against perpetrators and data to analyse trends would be critical to tackling VAWG. She went on to talk about the lack of trust in policing from women. Women needed to trust that going to the police would result in something happening to address the offence. On the prevention side, there needed to be a cultural change in policing, building respect into prevention from a young age.

Q & A

What can tech do to tackle misogyny in boys from a young age?

Fannon acknowledged the enormity of the issue, calling for a coordinated approach from schools and parents to teach young people that online content is not real life.

Fahey said that schools had an important role to play in tackling misogyny and that addressing it needed to be on the curriculum. He also commented that the rest of the tech sector needed to buy into behind tackling tech-enabled abuse. With policy influencing their behaviour in support of the cause.

Phillips said that schools cannot be expected do everything, you need specialist to speak to children about SRE.

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Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Breaking down barriers in the professions: creating diverse and inclusive workplaces

13 October 2023

Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Breaking down barriers in the professions: creating diverse and inclusive workplaces

The New Statesman & Solicitors Regulation Authority

10:00 am, Monday 9 October

- Anneliese Dodds, Shadow Secretary for Women and Equalities
- Anna Bradley, Chair of the Solicitors Regulation Authority
- Alona Ferber, Senior Editor, New Statesman spotlight
- Bell Ribeiro-Addy, Woman and Equalities Committee Member
- Anna Thomas, Director, Institute for the Future of Work.

Summary

A discussion around how to make workplaces more inclusive and the benefits to organisations who value diversity.

Inclusive workplaces

Shadow Secretary for Women and Equalities, Anneliese Dodds said there had been a marked change in attitudes at the top levels of professions, with far greater commitment to removing barriers and promoting EDI. She said that barriers for progression should be removed as early as possible to incentivise growth and that companies should see where their blockages were for growth and progression. Workplaces needed to be accessible for everyone and action plans would help to address specific needs like menopause symptoms to incentivise economic participation. Dodds also addressed actions on workplace harassment, stating that employers had a duty to take it seriously. She called for the promotion of genuine diversity across the economy to foster fair growth.

Lack of diversity in the workforce

Bell Ribeiro-Addy noted that diversity was on the rise but was not mirrored in the workforce. She said that targets alone were not sufficient to promote EDI, attraction and retention issues stemmed from putting people into unwelcoming and unsupportive environments. Ribeiro-Addy reinforced that change should not be optional but should be sanctioned and enforceable and that until people come to the moral imperative, to change legislation was needed to enforce it.

Driving EDI

Institute for the future of work Director, Anna Thomas said that a more diverse workplace was not only the right thing to do but they got better work outcomes and led to better innovation and growth. Thomas commented that there was an opportunity to change ingrained bias through innovation readiness and high levels of involvement at firm level. She went on to say that promoting diversity in the workplace should go further than those with protected characteristics and be inclusive of all experiences. However, to achieve this regulators need be empowered beyond their EHRC commitments.

Chair of the Solicitors Regulation Authority, Anna Bradley noted that the conversations around EDI in the workplace had come a long way by the fact that it was now a regulatory issue. She said that regulators had a significant role but could not solve all the problems. Bradley stressed the importance of collecting data on the issue and of setting standards and expectations around behaviour in the workplace.

Q & A

Ribeiro-Addy answered a question on changing workplace culture. She said change came from the top and leaders had a responsibility to manage their rhetoric. She also said that diversity training should be mandatory for organisation and that it needed to be of high quality to ensure it was effective.

Ribeiro-Addy then answered another question on employers meaningfully engaging with EDI. She said that understanding an employee's perspective was crucial. Disclosing an EDI need could be seen a negative impact on progression, however employers needed to understand the benefits of having a diverse workforce, it was good for business.

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Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Securing our future: How to End Violence Towards Women and Girls

12 October 2023

Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Securing our future: How to End Violence Towards Women and Girls

Tony Blair Institute

14:00 pm, Sunday 8 October

Panellists

- Emma McNicholas, Head of Political Delivery at the Tony Blair Institute
- Jess Phillips, Shadow Minister for Domestic Violence and Safeguarding
- Harvey Redgrave, Senior policy advisor at the Tony Blair Institute
- Andrea Simon, Director Ending Violence Against Women UK
- Betsy Stanko, Academic Advisory on Home Office Operation Soteria Bluestone

Summary

This fringe was a discussion on the complexities of ending VAWG and the different approaches needed to ensure that victims got justice and perpetrators were effectively held accountable.

How to end VAWG

Shadow Minister for Domestic Violence and Safeguarding, Jess Phillips, stated that violence against women and girls (VAWG) should be a top priority. She also raised the question of if the issue should sit within the Home Office as interventions most often took place in a healthcare setting.

Academic Advisory on Home Office Operation Soteria Bluestone, Betsy Stanko, commented that public services needed to strengthen their engagement on tackling VAWG and work more effectively across all agencies.

Director of Ending Violence Against Women UK, Andrea Simon, said prevention was the most important aspect of combatting VAWG but was often overlooked and under-resourced. Simon stressed the importance of addressing the causes of VAWG, not just the symptoms, and to look for solutions beyond the criminal justice system, as most victims or survivors did not report to it.

Senior policy advisor at the Tony Blair Institute, Harvey Redgrave, said that a cross-government, national effort was necessary to be serious about ending VAWG. He said that the recent Casey Review and scandals in the Metropolitan Police force highlighted a crisis of confidence in the police. There was an issue of VAWG not being properly resourced and level of experience in the forces being quite low.

Was the Labour commitment of halving VAWG in a decade achievable?

Phillips said it would be a hard target to meet as the challenge was to prevent crimes of VAWG from being repeated. She said it would take a combined effort by policing, children's social care and justice services to look at how the repetition of VAWG is deterred.

Phillips also highlighted that improving conviction rates of rape and sexual violence would be key to this; the legalisation needed to be properly enforced on the ground.

Stanko spoke about the importance of data, stating that one in four rape offenses were repeat offences and that 60 percent of perpetrators had a previous criminal history. She highlighted the importance of joining up information and data on VAWG to effectively measure it.

Stanko also asked to what extent ending VAWG was the responsibility of public services like courts, police, prisons, healthcare, and social services.

Simon called VAWG an epidemic but conceded that it was possible to end it, but it would be challenging to address as the abuse came in many different forms of violence. She commented that culture norms needed to shift around VAWG and that negative attitudes were prevalent in the criminal justice system.

Simon spoke about the need to have an intersectional understanding of VAWG, taking a closer look at the structures and societal factors that perpetuated it.

Harvey said that VAWG crimes were high harm and high values offenses, stating that domestic violence alone made up one fifth of total crime. He spoke about the importance of improving policing and the charge rates for VAWG, and looking at toughening the laws around it.

Specialist services and strategies to tackle VAWG

Phillips stated that legislation was useless without proper implementation on the ground. She noted that over the last decade, the country had united over the issue of VAWG, but this had not translated into policy. There was a serious issue of underfunding, especially in policing where budget commitments towards tackling VAWG were barely 5 percent in forces nationally.

Stanko commented that specialist services made a huge difference, especially being inclusive of a victim's experiences and looking at prevention in different settings, especially with boys and young men. Stanko spoke of the high levels of peer-on-peer sexual offences that the police were dealing with, drawing a correlation between the impact of sexually violent content online and the impact this had on young people.

Simon highlighted the unsustainable structures that specialist services were founded on, citing short-term funding as a major issue. She cited data from Women's Aid stating that for every pound invested in domestic violence services it represented a £9 saving for public services, so investing in these services was good value for money for victims and the taxpayer.

Justice

Phillips commented that if victims were properly supported during the process they did not drop out, with cases handled by specialist agencies having lower dropout rates. She aired her frustration that most cases ended up with a 'no further action' outcome despite victims doing the right thing and having evidence.

Stanko spoke about the trauma that victims faced in the system and the need for an empathetic and sympathetic policing service. They were calling on officers to do their job in a way that did not do

more harm. She commented that if criminal justice could not stop offenders causing harm, it was imperative that the intervention came from somewhere else.

Redgrave spoke of the cycle of decline to policing VAWG, with the biggest delay in the justice process being bringing a charge. He said that it undermined a victim's confidence in policing, as when a suspect was released without charge, victims lost hope. He called for a return to same-day-charging which had largely stopped after changes were made to the process in 2018.

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Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Securing our Streets: The future of Policing in Britain

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

12 October 2023

Labour Party 2023 Fringe: Securing our Streets: The future of Policing in Britain

Date and time: 9 October at 4.30pm

- Harvey Redgrave, Senior Policy Advisor at the Tony Blair Institute,
- Alex Norris MP, Shadow Policing Minister
- Anne Longfield, Chair of The Commission on Young Live
- Kate Green, Deputy Mayor of Manchester

Summary

The session looked at ideas on how to restore confidence in the police and ways to tackle crime.

Issues with policing

Kate Green, Deputy Mayor of Manchester, said that neighbourhood policing was the way forward. They had the ability to get dug in and police communities using intelligence from knowing the community to pre-empt issues.

Harvey Redgrave, Senior Policy Advisor at TBI said that there was a crisis for policing and public confidence in the police. There were issues around legitimacy of the police, as it is a system that relies on public consent. He commented there were two metrics that underline this crisis that predated the recent crisis in forces like the Metropolitan Police: a drop in the change rate to under six per cent and visible policing falling to 15 percent nationally.

Anne Longfield, Chair of The Commission on Young Live highlighted that relationships with the police and young people were at rock bottom. Young people were being targeted, groomed, and used as commodities by criminal gangs. She went on to say that the police needed to collaborate with other services to tackle this issue as they couldn't deal with it alone.

Shadow Policing Minister, Alex Norris, commented on the size of the issue facing policing, saying it would need cross sector buy in to resolve it.

What would neighbourhood policing look like?

Norris commented that criminals were brazen and faced little consequences. He went on to say that the principle of more neighbourhood policing would build trust and intelligence among communities. He wanted a police force that reflected the communities they serve. He stressed that confidence came when policing was done well, and this was measured on performance.

Green advocated for a return to old-fashioned policing with feet on the streets in communities most impacted by crime. She also commented that competition with tech and private sector for tech-savvy

people to tackle online and cybercrime was a challenge as those sectors were able to offer higher salaries.

Redgrave said that neighbourhood policing was more like social work and that intelligence was the cornerstone of good policing. He went on to say that when trust and relations breaks down policing becomes reactive rather than preventative. Redgrave advocated the idea of 'minimum levels in policing' across forces. He stipulated that neighbourhood policing had not been protected, it needed legislative underpinning to stop officers being relocated onto other areas.

Longfield highlighted the negative impact that a 70 percent reduction in youth services had on young people. The lack of services has left young people open to the influence of criminal gangs. She stressed the importance for the police to regain the mandate to be a part of young people's lives in a positive way. With high levels of mistrust towards the police, young people had an absence or negative relationship with them.

Raising confidence in the police

Redgrave closed on the idea of looking at the charging process to rebuild confidence in policing. He explained that the concept of same day charging had gone due to the removal of support phone lines in 2018 and a transition to an online service. Redgrave was in favour of changing the charge threshold to allow police to charge more themselves, with the support of the Crown Prosecution Service. The system needed rebalance as it was slow and bureaucratic.

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Labour Party 2023 Fringe: How a Labour Government will transform lives of disabled people

UK Stakeholder - Press Releases

12 October 2023

Labour Party 2023 Fringe: How a Labour Government will transform lives of disabled people

Disability Labour

11am, 8th October 2023

Panellists:

- Vicky Foxcroft MP, Shadow Minister for Disabled People;
- Abena Oppong- Asare, Shadow Women's Health and Mental Health Minister;
- Kathy Bowland, Chair of Disability Labour;
- Lillian Greenwood, Shadow Minister for Arts, Heritage and Civil Society;
- Stephen Morgan, Shadow Rail Minister.

Overview

The panellists discussed the policy changes Labour would introduce to improve the accessibility and inclusion of disabled people in society.

A cross government approach is needed

Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Vicky Foxcroft, said that disabled people's voices should be at the heart of policymaking across Government, not just in the Department for Work and Pensions. Departments needed to work together on the co-production of policy.

Chair of Disability Labour, Kathy Bowland, then spoke about a cross-party approach to disabilities. It was not a left versus right issue but one of right versus wrong.

Making healthcare more accessible

Shadow Women's Health and Mental Health Minister, Abena Oppong- Asare, commented that they needed to ensure that disabled people were not left out of the policy making process. She also stressed the importance of making sure the NHS was fit for purpose but that this would take time. Oppong- Asare went on to speak about the impact of health inequalities, especially on those from a BAME background, ensuring that the experiences and challenges people faced were taken into consideration. She mentioned the increasing importance of mental health support, and the need to have a holistic policy approach for support encompassing issues like housing, pregnancy, welfare etc.

Making arts and culture more accessible

Shadow Minister for Arts, Heritage and Civil Society, Lillian Greenwood, highlighted the vast impact that disabilities had on people, and said their needs were more complex than just making accessibility adjustments. Arts and cultural heritage were an essential part of British culture and

disabled people had just as much right to enjoy our cultural heritage. Greenwood asserted that making physical heritage accessible in as many ways as possible and celebrating the experiences and cultural heritage of disabled people was important.

Making rail journeys more accessible

Shadow Rail Minister, Stephen Morgan, acknowledged there were issues with railways being accessible. He commented that recent ticket office closures had a significant impact on disabled people, with one in nine tickets sold in physical ticket offices annually which represented 150m of the 9bn rail journeys each year. Morgan said that disabled adults faced significant barriers in using the railways, with the ticket office closures being particularly damaging for those with sight impairment.

Integrating disabled people into communities

Greenwood said that the cuts to vital services had been damaging and that local government could use their power through procurement by working with not-for-profits and the social sector for a greater social impact than investing in the private sector. Taking a multi-benefit approach has a huge social benefit.

Morgan also commented that there was less meaningful engagement with the community, so the impact of policy or spending cuts was not being seen. Government and local authorities were not doing impact assessments on their policy decisions to see who they would impact.

Foxcroft closed by reaffirming Labour's commitment towards the co-production of policy with disabled people, she wants a Labour Government that would ensure that every single minister would be a minister for disabled people not just the disabled minister.

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