



**POLITICAL  
INTELLIGENCE**

Party Conference  
Sample Coverage 2022

# Labour Party Fringe 2022: Ensuring Net Zero Benefits Everybody: Supporting Vulnerable Households through the Net Zero Transition

29/09/2022

Hosted by IPPR and EDF Energy

## Panellists:

- Luke Murphy, IPPR (Chair)
- Jonathan Reynolds MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Industrial Strategy
- Dhara Vyas, Energy UK
- Juliet Philips, E3G
- Adam Scorer, National Energy Action
- Tom Davis, EDF Energy

## Overview

The event covered the way that government could make sure that the transition to a net zero economy could benefit everyone in society, and how to make sure that the most vulnerable in society were not disproportionately effected by the changes.

## Introductions

Jonathan Reynolds, Shadow Secretary of State for Business and Industrial Strategy, said that net zero was fundamentally a story about jobs and growth. If done properly and well this would benefit the whole country. The government was having a review, but we already knew that the green and decarbonised part of the economy was growing faster than the rest of the country. There was a debate about how to get the funding in place to help transition the economy more broadly.

He referenced Keir Starmer's earlier pledge to create a new publicly own energy company, Great British Energy, and how this would create the necessary incentives for the UK energy sector to innovate in the transition to net zero. He also questioned the accuracy of the often used term 'green jobs' because he didn't feel that any jobs can be reasonable called green until not all of them are, he said that he would like to move the conversation on from this sort of terminology.

Dhara Vyas, Energy UK, explained Energy UK's work and role in the marketplace. She said that when talking about net zero, often it was just talk about power creation, but not much on the idea of jobs and protection. Consumer protections were a mess, and they needed to be made a lot simpler. She also added that local area energy plans would be important going forwards. These were some challenges that we faced, but she said that there was the potential to meet them.

Juliet Philips, E3G, said that the UK has some of the coldest and leakiest homes in western Europe. It would cost £20bn to decarbonise homes in the UK, with heat pumps being particularly costly. There was uncertainty in the government's heating strategy, and there needed to be some long-term certainty. She said that there had been little focus on the demand side of the area. She supported Labour's conference pledges offering greater financial support for decarbonisation, adding that she felt it was best placed at local authority level. On skills and supply chains, she supported an 'Olympics-style' task force to retrofit homes. There also needed to be a nationwide campaign offering the public free advice on best practice around decarbonisation.

Adam Scorer, National Energy Action, said that the government's support had been defined by breadth rather than depth, a lot of wide support but not enough to solve the challenges that needed to be faced. There would be a lot of personal costs that might be incurred by the most vulnerable, clean heat and warm homes were not the same thing. People were not all the same, there were lots of different needs that people had. The challenge was that what came underneath these initiatives, and how does it help with the people.

Tom Davis, EDF Energy, said that he was glad to see EDF talked of as a model for the UK energy sector to follow. A month ago, EDF had put out a sobering statistic that 50 percent of their customers would be in energy poverty by the end of the year if no support was given, which helped move the government on the issue. In the last 6 months, they had unfortunately seen a whole new category of customer created that now must think about whether they could heat their home. He said that he was at the conferences last year and didn't think that he could have imagined then that the situation would get as bad as it was now.

### **Labour's position on the Net Zero Transition**

Reynolds said that after 12 years of Conservative government there were now people who were relatively affluent but were still struggling to pay their energy bills. On retrofitting, he said that they would reorganise government departments to recreate an energy and climate change department to directly oversee this. The work in this area hadn't been done to scale as necessary.

In response to a question on how Labour would make sure they were focused on this going into the next election, Reynolds said they would make sure that they had a comprehensive energy strategy when coming into office.

### **Meat Reduction Policy**

There was a question from the floor on whether we needed to look at a policy of switching away from producing and eating meat. Noting comments Wes Streeting, Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, had made earlier on support for some aspects of the government reducing these initiatives, the audience member asked whether this suggested some policy incoherence from Labour.

Reynolds said that food was one of the areas where people needed to make changes, but that it would take time to bring it about and it would be a case to be made over the coming years.

Scorer said that health food deserts should be a core thing to address and there should be the food equivalent of sure starts to address this.

### **Benefiters of the green agenda**

There was a question from the floor on the social class aspect of net zero policies, suggesting that the 'green agenda' and the net zero policy disproportionately benefitted the better off in society. The questioner referenced the Greater London Assembly extending its Ultra-Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) within the city limits, as well as the fact that middle classes tended to be more able to afford hybrid and electric vehicles and so were likely not be affected by this.

Reynolds said in response that electric cars, like the Nisan Leaf, was built in Sunderland and used by regular drivers. He also referenced the Port Talbot steelworks and how their customers increasingly wanted 'green steel' that was produced to a more ethical standard. The choice wasn't between net zero and supporting the most vulnerable in society.

He said that if these industries didn't change, they risked losing those jobs because that was what consumers increasingly wanted. In Germany and Sweden, they had been doing this work, with business in collaboration with workers and government, and that was what the UK should be doing otherwise we risked losing those jobs to other countries that were better able to take advantage of this transition.

Scorer said that we should always follow the principle of helping the worst effected first by any transition to net zero, but that we needed to make sure that the poorest in society were not disproportionately hit by this transition.

### **Carbon Capture and Storage**

There was a question from the floor on the issue of carbon capture and storage, referencing the experience of Iceland to capture carbon and use hydrogen as fuel.

Dhara said that carbon capture and storage was something that we should be looking at going forwards. The panel broadly agreed that it was a key part of the net zero equation, but that this was still something that needed to be worked out.

Reynolds said that there had been some incredible technological advancements in this field, and that this would be something that a future Labour government will look seriously at.

## Conservative Party Fringe 2022: The UK's Integrated Review in light of the Russia Ukraine War

Hosted by Policy Exchange and Northrup Grumman

14:00, 3 October 2022

### **Panellists:**

- Rt Hon Ben Wallace MP, Secretary of State for Defence
- General (Retd.) Kenneth F McKenzie Jr, former commander, US Central Command
- Hon Alexander Downer AC, former Australian foreign minister and chair of trustees, Policy Exchange
- Nick Chaffey, chief executive (UK, Europe and Middle East), Northrop Grumman
- Marko Mihkelson, chair of Foreign Affairs Committee, Estonian Parliament

General McKenzie talked about the operational strategic lessons that could be derived from the Ukraine conflict. He cautioned we should "be wary" of intelligence assessments, noting that the US had been wrong on Afghanistan and only partially right on Ukraine.

He said the prospect of nuclear war remained very real and was a very real tool for the Russians. He said the importance of alliance structures had never been as important as it was today – between US and UK, and also between Nato partners. He said the threat of nuclear escalation was very high and we should be cautious about escalation control.

Marko Mihkelson, chair of the Estonian Parliament foreign affairs committee, said it was time to take some lessons, but too early to determine the direction in which the situation was heading. What was clear, he said, was that the danger growing on Estonia's borders they had seen for the last 20 to 25 years, and the time of Russian Empire was still not over.

So far, the west had discovered that they hadn't realised Russia had the ability to "break all possible lines" of the international order, even in the 21st Century. He said Estonia would be increasing their defence budget to 2.8 percent of GDP and there was political consensus that this should increase to 3 percent in near future.

Nick Chaffey, chief executive of Northrop Grumman, noted last year's Integrated Review (IR) had rightly highlighted Russia as an acute threat to UK security. He said many European nations were "caught napping" and were unprepared and under-resourced for the invasion.

He also said Ukraine was seen as the "broadband war", so Nato nations needed to take a renewed look at digital solutions and technologies – which Northrop Grumman were doing. He added the refresh of the IR offered an opportunity to do this, and welcomed increased Defence spending commitments from Nato allies.

Sophia Gaston, director of the British Foreign Policy Group (BFPG), said the IR had got all the fundamental elements right, but in the context of Ukraine it required a refresh as the situation had intensified the urgency with which choices should be made.

The second area of focus should be around forcing the definition of the UK's role in the European security landscape, which she described as "the actualisation of Brexit" and a confident "post-Brexit Britain". She also said it was required to look at Ukraine's reconstruction, which she said was an "active deterrent" that showed the West would not back down and the Russian invasion was futile.

The past few months highlighted the need to integrate domestic and foreign policymaking, she added. The review would also help tackle the question of China and Taiwanese sovereignty, particular how UK could contribute to this.

Alexander Downers, Policy Exchange trustee and former Australian foreign minister, said the original IR had been a solid document, as it promoted the notion of Global Britain – that the UK would be one of the leading countries of liberal democracies in upholding the international order. He said he hoped there would be a recognition of successful liberal democracies within the IR refresh.

He asserted the rise of China was "the world's most significant geopolitical issue" and that Russia's actions might have given Beijing cause for hesitation. He said he'd like to see the refresh reinforce the importance of AUKUS and the role of UK as a member of the UN security council, while strengthening existing arrangements, such as the Quad.

Defence Secretary, Ben Wallace, said that the world was far more interconnected, which meant ripples from the likes of Afghanistan went much further and wider than they may have once done. He questioned whether the response to Afghanistan had at all factored hugely into Putin's decision-making with regard to Ukraine. "Putin had plans for Ukraine long before" the fall of Kabul, he asserted.

He said that Ukrainians were laying down their lives, not just for their own country, but for the rest of Europe, which was why the international community had placed themselves so squarely behind them. He noted the progress made since the start of the invasion – from initial discussions on how many anti-tank missiles to send, to now deciding how many planes to provide.

He said the likes of the UK hadn't had the correct levels of readiness and munitions at the time, but this had been the case across Nato. The question for the IR in his perspective wasn't whether we should spend 3 percent of GDP on Defence, but that we couldn't afford not to. The world was getting more unstable and insecure year on year, he added.

A member of the audience asked what lessons could be learned from the Ajax programme. Wallace reiterated his previous comments that it was a "troubled program" but still a requirement the Army needed, and the Government would deliver on.

Asked about utilising technologies, the panel agreed that resilience in the space domain would be key to security successes.



# Conservative Party Fringe 2022: Health and Care Interview

Monday 3 October 10.00-11.00

Dods Group and Roche

## **Panellists:**

- Clive Smith, Chair, The Haemophilia Society
- Samantha Bolam, CEO, tide (together in dementia everyday)
- Alain Tolhurst, PoliticsHome (Chair)
- Conn O'Neil, Public Affairs, Roche

## **Summary**

This fringe focused on reforms to the health and care system, including workforce retention and recruitment, and innovation.

## **Opening statements**

Alain Tolhurst, the chair, asked the panelists what they wanted to see from the government.

Clive Smith, Chair of The Haemophilia Society, said he wanted to see better staffing, specifically in rare diseases where service specifications were not being met. They needed new therapies, but he warned that the IMF was not a long-term solution. In the units they also needed physio and psychological support help.

Samantha Bolam, CEO of tide (together in dementia everyday), said she wanted them to look at economic policies that supported everyone. 900,000 people were living with dementia, and it had become the biggest killer of people in England. She said it was a "silent public health crisis".

She said that the government needed to involve carers in the health and care system as they were saving the UK economy so much money. She said the big changes, such as ICBS, made everyone internally focused.

Conn O'Neil, Public Affairs at Roche, said that the detail behind the ABCD made sense. He was glad Coffey had confirmed that her priorities would go further than those letters and said the government had seen some progress over the last 12 years – they had the 10-year cancer plan and new dementia strategy. He said that lots of effort had gone into that, so wanted to see the plans fully published and implemented. He agreed that clearing the backlog was important so that there was headspace for other targets, such as these plans.

## **Efficiencies in the system**

Bolam said there was a massive disparity across the UK with dementia care.

Smith said the conversation needed to move from health " as a cost " to health " as an investment " as they needed to have it working to its full potential. He highlighted that there was an issue with accountability, as there was no one to raise issues with. He further said that there were not enough people in the right areas.

He concluded by saying that the government needed to understand that "the system is not working because you've never given it an opportunity to work". The UK needed the system to work to its full capacity, otherwise they wouldn't know whether it was failing or not.

O'Neil said that the pace of innovation meant that you had to make efficiencies elsewhere – it was a cost benefit equation. He did not advocate cuts in the service, as inflation would put extra pressure on it anyway.

He maintained that the government could not use ICSs as a way to absolve wider responsibility. They had to go beyond local systems and look at it holistically, as a well-oiled machine. The issue was that the backlog and workforce did not help with that.

There was a need for investment and infrastructure in the system, but they also needed to remove beyond the hospital-centric view. He said that Coffey putting ambulances first in the strategy was interesting, as they were the embodiment of primary care, and it gave a n indication of her awareness of not making health hospital centric.

Bolam said the plan should be moving away from hospitals and towards social support. She praised dementia meeting centres and said she wanted to see this in every town . These were invaluable in stopping peoples' worlds from shrinking. The government needed to think more creatively on ideas that have potential to save money and let people live better.

## **Workforce**

Smith said it took time to train professionals but needed to be more aspirational with the number that were being trained. He mentioned the Labour pledge to double those.

Specifically on rare diseases, he said a trained, specialist workforce would be needed as these people with rare diseases would be living longer. In the short term, they definitely just needed to be better staffed. He continued that the workforce needed to be better trained for rare diseases to clear the backlog and reduce the number of people in hospital.

He concluded by talking about patient safety and said that the Patient Safety Commissioner remit needed to be broader. The UK needed to stop seeing things like the Cumberlege and infected blood scandal. Safety needed to be integrated in the system.

O'Neil said the two-week GP appointment target should not be compared with pre-pandemic targets as it was now different considering we were coming out of the pandemic so that needed to be taken into consideration. He said people did not fit into neat boxes, and there were overlaps between conditions, such as those who had dementia and a rare disease, and this should mean that GP appointments could be targeted at the right people. There needed to be a focus on these people who wanted to sit in front of the people who could diagnose them.



An audience member from National Aids Trust asked about monkeypox and the preparedness for new diseases. They said that the sexual health sector had a lot of pressure on this but that the system was not prepared to deal with this.

Smith said it was short-sighted to not allow another monkeypox vaccine as the focus needed to be on prevention rather than curing. He said they needed to procure the vaccine to prevent.

O'Neil said the sexual health sector had suffered from convoluted problems with funding. These problems prevented some of the long-term thinking as the NHS had less accountability. He said that potentially ICSs would play a bigger role in this in the future.

He continued that the split with OHID and UKHSA instead of one organisation, PHE, meant they could focus more but they were understaffed and under-budgeted. At least it would give clarity on who they needed to talk to, he concluded.

A patient counsellor asked about those in beds in hospitals with dementia who didn't have relatives to look after them. He asked how long the hospital could afford to have beds occupied in this manner.

Bolam said it was amazing that we were still having the same conversations about "bed blockers" that they had decades ago. She said it spoke to underinvestment, but this was not an appropriate place for someone to live. She said this needed to be a priority area. This was a public health crisis that related mostly to older people with a huge cost and created inertia but there was no alternative at the moment.

O'Neil said that local government did not have the funds. There had to be shared budget responsibility but there was not currently political will for that.

Bolam said they were getting decisions on carers right in other countries. The UK needed similar progressive fiscal and social policies. She said that the UK was beginning to feel like a cold and unfriendly place.

Smith said we needed to be more flexible about the way they employed people in the system so they were doing what they enjoyed, and they could share the workload between Trusts.

O'Neil said there was a lot of frustration in the health sector, and this was not just at the government but there were global pieces shifting. Balancing the funding and making a reality out of plans was difficult, but they had to find ways to also allow families to care for those who wanted to.

In answer to a question on appointments, Smith said the patient had to work around the system not the other way round. Missing an appointment was not always the patient's fault, it was the lack of coordination and inefficiencies in the system.

O'Neil said that creating new commissioners should not absolve responsibility of politicians or NHS staff to not comment on things.



Smith wanted a public inquiry commissioner. At the moment these were government inquiries, but they needed these to be implemented with recommendations and they needed accountability.

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