

EC6 Sam Bristow - Campaigns Officer

Proposer: Sam Bristow (Wandsworth Green Party)
Agenda item: A Reports

Report Details

Reform PIP

The EC priority of starting a Campaign focused on the injustice of Personal Independent Payments was set at Convention 2017. It was my key task at the start of my elected term to create the campaign strategy and form a subcommittee comprised of members with lived experience of the injustice of PIP and allies to the cause. Chairing with the priority proposer Violet Webb, we launched the subcommittee in the new year and formed a full subcommittee by spring of 2018.

Over the course of the campaign, the subcommittee looked into a number of ways to explore the following campaign aims:

- Highlight and raise the voices of young people who have had lived experience with PIP.
- Provide a platform for them to share their suffrage and their opinions on what think needs to be changed.
- Investigate the reality of how many young people are denied fair treatment and support.
- Provide a platform to discuss the particular difficulties those with mental health problems and other 'fluctuating' or 'invisible' health issues face when applying for PIP

I am extremely proud of the work this subcommittee have done, which includes:

- Producing a brilliant podcast with the Media Subcommittee discussing the realities of the PIP process from members with lived experience
- Submitting a RoPS motion to Autumn conference. Whilst this was not heard due the time needed to facilitate the holistic review, the strawpoll in the Workshop indicated that should this motion have been brought to plenary floor, it would have passed.
- An internal Guide to Personal independence payment for Young Green Members that that will be launched on the new Young Greens Website

We have also been focused on developing a video for a social media campaign, that would look to platform young people's experience of PIP and their view on what they believe needs to be changed. This would have not been inclusive to Green Party members, seeing the Young Greens becoming the initial voice to start the conversation on what PIP should become to truly deliver a just support to disabled people. Unfortunately, this was never realised due to time constraints.

Another priority was to produce a report, with myself and Georgia Whittaker, Young Greens Staff Officer, submitting an FOI to the Department of Work and Pensions. Frustratingly, the response we received was unusable, with the DWP rejecting almost all of our questions on the grounds that the cost of complying with our request would exceed the appropriate limit for central Government, set by regulations at £600. However, it was confirmed they do have the information and I recommend that the questions that were submitted are now asked individual by YGs.

There have been some struggles with this campaign. Over the course of the year, it has proven to be a challenge to find ways to bring to local groups into the campaign. The campaign has also encountered ageism and disbelief from external organisations, who did not believe as a subcommittee we have the grounds to suggest what a reform change should be for the process.

There has also been issues with capacity. It was of a great importance to myself and Violet that there was a representation within the subcommittee of members with lived experience, and the unfortunately downside to this was limited capacity due to committee members needing to that time for their own personal health and wellbeing (which the subcommittee has an outset fully supported). It is vital that their voices are the leading voices to the campaign and what is needed for this campaign to continue on is allied members coming forward and participating in the campaign. **This is a campaign issue that could at any time effect all of us. Disability is not discriminative, it can happen at any point to any individual. Fighting for the rights of disabled people should be at the forefront of our campaigning objectives, and our first step should be fighting the current injustice that is PIP.** Within this report I would like to call out for the membership to come forward and get involved with this campaign. Please visit: <https://younggreens.org.uk/campaigns/reform-pip!.html> to get involved.

People Not Numbers

It was my steer at the beginning of my elected year to keep the People Not Numbers campaign going through this elected EC's year. This was due to the strong positioning that the campaign has had through the previous year, along with relevance to membership and public interest. At the time, this was mainly driven by the continuing conversation and campaigning around Brexit, but as the year has progressed, we have seen continued relevance, with the fallout of the Windrush scandal, the continuing impact of the Conservative's Hostile Environment, the ongoing injustice within Yarl's Wood Detention Centre and the Stansted 15 trial.

My work within this campaign throughout the year has been the work that I have been most proud of, and I would like to opportunity to personally commendation for the work of Georgia Whittaker, Young Greens Staff Officer, who's work within this campaign has been not only a massive support to me, but also a key driving force to the development the campaign. I would also like to thank my fellow Sub-Committee Co-Chair, Arran Rangi, who's support, dedication and passion have been a huge support to myself and the campaign.

Campaign Aims update – On the formation of the new subcommittee, I proposed we updated the campaign aims. The only campaign aim to change was “The end of detention centre” which was update to “The end of detention centres and deportations”.

Reformed subcommittee – The subcommittee was reformed at the beginning of 2018. As Subcommittee Chair, I created new Job Descriptions and Terms of Reference for Subcommittee, along with organising a callout for new members. Over the course of the year, due to committee member external commitments, the subcommittee did not meet as regularly as decided. After reflecting on this, Arran and I decided to split our campaign aims between us, with him focusing on the international students and myself focusing on the campaign aims of Ending Deportation and Detention, which allowed us both to progress with campaign aims more productively.

Building wider connections – The campaign and built strong connections with organisations including End Deportations, Detained Voices, Universities Resist Border Control and Educating Beyond Borders. Our

connection with End Deportations has been a large strength for the main party, leading to Jonathan Bartley speaking at the Stansted 15 trail launch on the 1st of October.

Yarls' Wood – Due to controversies surrounding Movement for Justice, which started in October 2017, both EC and PNN subcommittee voted to cut ties with the organisation, and look to organise with other organisations. I penned, with the help of EC, the open letter to membership explaining this decision. I pushed to work with other officers on EC to build a larger event for the summer Yarls' Wood demo, but due to workloads, this was never realised.

FOIs and Report Launch – Georgia and I made the decision to submit an FOI request to the Home Office, with the intent to investigate how are young people affected by deportations and immigration detention. The information received was extremely concerning, and this has been built into a report which I am thrilled to announce will be launched on the 19th of November at a Panel event, including guest speakers Jonathan Bartley and representatives from End Deportations and the All African Women's Group.

Other Works

Panels – As part of my role on EC, I have organised two panels for convention 2018 on issue based campaigning. One panel will be focused on People Not Numbers and End Deportations, and will include two activists on Trial for the Standsted15 case. The other panel will be responding to the impact of and Plastic Pollution, with both Caroline Russell and Natalie Bennett speaking.

Merchandise and Fundraising – Myself and fellow EC member Benedict Allbrooke formed a subcommittee to address the current Young Greens Fundraising and Merchandise offer. Fundcomm produced a new digital donation form and, thanks to Benedict's work with digital and finance teams at Green Party HQ, was able to facilitate Direct Debits. Working with both Benedict and Ben Parker, Young Greens Co-Chair, I produced a new leaflet that on our fundraising offer, which we launched at Spring Conference. Heading up the Merchandise side, we looked at reviewing the whole of the merchandise offer, including the possibility of launching an online shop. The key outcome from this was a new merchandise offer of a tote bag, which included key YG campaign priorities. The strategic aim is to net a funding income of £500-800 profit. These were launched at Autumn Conference, however not as successfully as hoped, due to MEPs offering two free tote bags.

YG Branding and Graphic Design

YG rebrand – Over my year on EC, a side project has been reviewing the Young Greens brand and style. There was a discussion at the beginning of the year on EC to do a soft rebrand, focused on modernising the design work and giving Young Greens their own edge, but still be reflective of the main party branding. The project never materialised, however I do have a proposal ready, should the next EC wish to explore it. I have offered professional advice over the year, and I am happy to say that whilst a rebrand has not officially launched, Young Greens materials have adopted a cleaner, vibrant styling.

Design products – Over the year I have offered my skill set out to the committee and have designed a large amount of graphics and publications. My favourite will always be the Mariah Carey Christmas cover!

Training – I delivered training to Georgia on InDesign and design principles. Georgia now has a good foundation of using InDesign, which means she can now look to produce her own documents and grow her skillset.