

Fight the Higher Education Green Paper

This was passed at London Young Labour AGM January 2016.

London Young Labour Believes

- 1) That the Secretary of state for Business, Innovation and Skills presented a green paper to Parliament for consultation entitled Fulfilling Our Potential: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Student Choice. Also known as the “HE Green Paper”.
- 2) That the Green Paper is a statement of intent of the Government’s reforms to higher education and is likely to result in a Government bill that will be presented to Parliament and voted on
- 3) The Green Paper sets out the following reforms/changes [1]
 - a. Tuition fees will increase in line with inflation from 2017.
 - b. The introduction of a Teaching Excellence Framework (TEF)
 - c. The possibility of variable tuition fees across institutions that can rise above inflation if universities meet certain criteria in the Teaching Excellence Framework.
 - d. The rising of tuition fees will no longer require a vote in Parliament but can instead be approved by the Secretary of State for Business, Innovation and Skills.
 - e. Increased private sector involvement by making it easier for private providers to enter the ‘market’, award degrees, and compete with existing universities.
 - f. Creating a structure to allow universities to ‘exit’ the sector by closing. The HE Green Paper states that the proposed changes would bring an increased likelihood that a provider may need to “exit” [2]. The abolition of the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) and creation of a new single regulator, the Office for Students.
 - g. The exemption of Universities from the Freedom of Information Act
 - h. Students’ Unions are mentioned directly in the context of the Government’s reforms to Trade Unions that have weakened the ability of Trade Unions to campaign and take industrial action
 - i. The Green Paper seeks the public’s’ views “on the role of students’ unions and what further steps could be taken to increase transparency and accountability to individual members.” [3]
 - j. The National Campaign Against Fees and Cuts is calling a student strike through the National Union of Students on the 22nd and 23rd of February

London Young Labour Further Believes:

- 1) That higher education institutions should be run democratically by the staff, students and communities that they serve.
- 2) That the proposals will radically change the structure of HE.
- 3) That the HE Green Paper will be disastrous for higher education in the UK.
- 4) That the HE Green Paper is irremediable.
- 5) The Freedom of Information act is an essential tool for holding universities to account by students and student media.
- 6) That the Green Paper attempts to depoliticise the rising of fees and removes the accountability for fee rises from Parliament.
- 7) The Government is proposing a structure which expects some universities to close. The HE Green Paper sets Universities up to fail by making them compete in a market and will

allow institutions to fail, to the detriment of the students and staff, and the reputation of the sector.

- 8) That the HE Green Paper, in combination with the removal of maintenance grants and the wider government higher education policy, is catastrophic for higher education.
- 9) That we have seen a barrage of attacks to education since 2010, but that this is the worst yet.
- 10) The Green Paper presents policies in a convoluted and confusing way. It is important that the public understands them.

London Young Labour resolves:

- 1) To write to the Leader of the Labour Party to express our opposition to the HE Green Paper and to request that he makes it a focus of a session of Prime Ministers' Questions
- 2) To support and mobilise for the student strike against the Green Paper if it is called by the National Union of Students.

[1] <https://www.timeshighereducation.com/news/higher-education-green-paper-glance>

[2] <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice> (p. 54)

[3] <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/higher-education-teaching-excellence-social-mobility-and-student-choice> (p. 61)