



JUST ADAPTATION

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Social Justice: A Just Adaptation to Climate Change

Whilst mitigation is at the forefront of green conversations and policies, Labour must begin to prepare to adapt to a world radically altered by climate change. Climate change disproportionately affects poorer communities, both as shown through the growing number of climate refugees, as well as studies showing how [poorer areas of cities can be around 10 degrees hotter than in richer parts of cities](#).

Key policy

Implement a holistic just adaptation to ensure individuals and communities do not bear the brunt of climate change damages and costs.

A Just Adaptation would address the follow key themes:

Heatwave and Infrastructure Adaptation:

- **Create jobs through urban infrastructure adaptation:** The Government, Local Government and national governments should establish an **Urban Greening Services (UGS)** to adapt urban spaces to rising temperatures.
 - The UGS would be designated with creating cooler urban microclimates through tasks such as planting trees in cities; repurposing hot spots such as unused car parks; building public showers and more shaded places in summer hotspots, and installing a network of public water fountains (such as the [Wallace Fountains model in Paris](#)). The UGS' work should prioritise poorer, and more densely populated, areas of our cities;
 - The jobs created should fall under the remit of the public sector, with a tight contractual framework which is inclusive of locality employment clauses.

Land Adaptation:

- Labour needs to **incentivise alternatives to water-intensive farming** through - for example - a reallocation of agricultural subsidies;
 - By switching to less water-intensive farming methods (such as indoor farming, vertical farming and controlled environment agriculture), and cutting the amount of livestock that is being farmed and consumed, we will be freeing-up water for domestic use;
 - This could be facilitated by training a national ecological transition cohort to help farmers adapt for future climate stresses.

Flood Adaptation:

- National, devolved and local governments must undergo a mass [public programme of repairing and upgrading current artificial flood defences](#) and preemptively building new defences in high risk areas. [No single body](#) is responsible for flood defences in the UK, meaning action is essential at the local, devolved and national level.
- Government to **underwrite insurance and relocation assistance** for communities affected by sea level rise, coastal erosion and new high risk flood zones, and;
- **Reverse fire service cuts** to above pre-austerity levels.

Nationalisation of Water:

- Water is an essential right and this is why, as summer heatwaves become longer and more intense, **water should be nationalised**;
 - Nationalising water could save the UK £2.5bn a year on water (with each household being a reported [£113 better off](#)),
 - A nationalised, and in turn more affordable, water service will make our water network more resilient and better prepared for both heatwaves and flooding. A water-saving culture needs to be embedded to ensure that people understand the [strain heatwaves place on the water supply](#) and to ensure water is available during a heatwave, and;
 - , and there is no reason that the same cannot happen for the rest of the UK's water supply.

Infectious Diseases:

- Labour shall **provide green and climate-resilient health care** to protect public health from future outbreaks of infectious diseases.
 - COVID-19 has shone a light on the disparities, not only in healthcare access, but in the spread of diseases: [poorer people have been far more likely to contract and suffer from covid than the rich](#). With this in mind, and considering that as the [climate changes more outbreaks will become more likely](#), Labour should make our NHS more resilient to future outbreaks of infectious diseases through increasing climate-sensitive disease surveillance.

Examples:

- **Heatwave and Infrastructure Adaptation:** [New York City's Cool Roofs Initiative](#) encourages building owners in New York City to cool their rooftops by applying a reflective white coating that reduces energy use, cooling costs and carbon emissions.
- **Flood Adaptation:** [LA SAFE programme](#) is a federally backed project in Louisiana to help coastal communities adapt to rising sea levels, notably in the relocation of the whole Isle de Jean Charles community, who have witnessed the submergence of 95% of their island.
- **Water Supply:** Welsh Water is a not-for-profit NGO that supplies [3 million people across Wales and Herefordshire](#)

Campaigns:

- [Slow The Flow](#) is a charity working to improve flood defences in North Yorkshire, with considerable [success](#).