

# Green Party U.K.: Responsibilities & Rights

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Available at: <https://policy.greenparty.org.uk/rr.html>

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## Background

RR100 Rights as currently interpreted, and especially human rights, are based on the individual and on the liberal tradition, which gained acceptability with the European Renaissance. Rights are viewed largely in terms of freedom of action. Such emphasis on rights independent of responsibilities can provide apparent justification for actions which challenge both sustainability and equity.

RR101 This approach gave rise to legal interpretations through such statements as the United Nations Charter of Human Rights. But there are difficulties with the liberal/individualistic approach, both practical and fundamental: it has failed to give equitable access to the world's resources and to reduce oppression, exploitation and alienation world-wide.

RR102 Under this approach those individuals and groups with the most power claim their rights, and those with less power find their rights denied. Thus the collective rights of minority groups, life support systems, and habitats tend to suffer.

RR103 In a world of increasing human population, and with the technological power available to humankind ever greater, there is a need for a new understanding of humankind's responsibility, not only for each other, but also for the life support systems.

RR104 Other living creatures, the earth's resources, and the biosphere must be protected from the irresponsible use of the powers which people, as individuals and as groups, have at their disposal. Thus the exercise of informed responsibility becomes as necessary a part of the use of humankind's individual and collective powers as the enjoyment of rights.

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## Principles

RR200 A Green view of rights acknowledges the interconnectedness of all things, the finiteness of resources and the ethical imperative in politics. It therefore sees human responsibilities, not as a counterbalance to individual and collective rights, but as integral with them.

RR201 Accepting interconnectedness means that individuals and groups share rights to equitable status, treatment and freedoms not only with other people, but also with life support systems and other species, in the present and in the future.

RR202 Accepting the universal dimension to the concept of human rights requires recognition of the cultural dimension, in that different cultures do not always share the same view of what constitutes a good life. But the Green concept of responsibilities as an integral part of rights transcends such possibly conflicting views. It is everyone's responsibility to allow space for differing value systems, while ensuring that their own concept of rights does not curtail recognition of their responsibilities towards all humankind and the life support system.

RR203 In a world where resources are finite, whether they be spatial, physical or biological, there can be no absolute right either to a particular level of resources or to act in a way which denies equitable rights to others or to the life support system. In any cases of doubt, then the precautionary principle must apply.

RR204 It is humankind's responsibility to carry out only activities that enhance or maintain the quality, variety, diversity, integrity and wholesomeness of human society and the life support system. Those activities which are exploitative, or threaten either the well-being of others, society, the life support system or the future must be avoided.

RR205 People thus have both the right and the responsibility to pursue such personal fulfilment as will enable them to function both as individuals and as fully responsible and integrated parts of society and the life support system.

RR206 While seeking to maintain a sustainable life support system, people have responsibility for respecting each other's physical, emotional, intellectual, spiritual and social needs, within the natural constraints of society and the life support system.

RR207 While seeking to maintain equity in meeting people's needs, people have responsibility for ensuring the absence of discrimination in ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, religion or other opinion, age, national or social origin, economic status or any other social, physical or mental condition.

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## Aims

RR300 To facilitate the development of human societies in which people can enjoy the exercise of their individual and collective rights responsibly while

RR301 To promote development of responsibility, and the acceptance of rights both by individuals and by society collectively, for all members of the human society and for all aspects of the life support system.

RR302 To refine, define and implement policies which aim to be effective in encouraging positive and discouraging negative types of activity within our current understanding of interconnectedness, the finiteness of resources, and humankind's capacity for damage of each other and the life support system.

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## Rights of Nature (added April 2016)

RR1000: The Green Party advocates the legal recognition of rights of nature as a legal concept to protect ecosystems. Central to this are the rights of nature to exist, persist, maintain and regenerate its vital cycles, as well as the right to restoration. Green parliamentarians, both in Europe and the UK, will support any sensible measures to introduce such legal instruments.

RR1001: Recognising the rights of nature advances a new framework for environmental protection, placing the highest societal value and protection on nature through the recognition of rights.

RR1002: The State shall defend and enforce the rights of nature. People and communities shall be empowered to defend and enforce the rights of nature for perceived breaches, which will then be judged through the legal system.

RR1003: If an ecosystem's rights are breached then the State shall establish effective mechanisms to achieve full restoration and shall adopt adequate measures to prevent future violations of the rights of nature.

RR1004: These rights will not be restrictive to human flourishing, and will be designed to cover a definition of ecosystems that is established in conjunction with legal experts, as well as public consultation.

RR1005: The rights of nature will be established in coordination with legal experts and will involve public consultation; as well as dialogue with countries that have successfully integrated rights of nature into their constitutions and legal frameworks.

RR1006: Recognising that corporate rights and powers are often used to exploit nature and undermine environmental protections, corporations that violate or seek to violate the rights of nature shall not possess legal rights, powers, privileges, immunities, or duties which may interfere with or violate the rights of nature.