

# Margaret Greenwood, Labour MP for Wirral West

## Background

Margaret Greenwood was born on the 14th March 1959. While public information about her private and early life is limited, she has lived in and around her current constituency for more than 30 years.

Prior to becoming an MP, Margaret worked as a secondary school English teacher, a lecturer in further education, and an adult education tutor. Most recently she worked as a travel writer and web editor.

Margaret was a health campaigner, and a founding member of Defend our NHS, a Merseyside-based campaign group which was originally formed in 2011 to oppose the Health and Social Care Bill.

Margaret is a keen hill walker, and is interested in theatre, music and painting.



## Constituency

Margaret Greenwood first stood in the 2015 General Election, where she defeated incumbent MP Esther McVey, who was Conservative Government Minister for Employment at the time. Margaret won the seat with a very small majority of just 417, and has won at successive elections since. Her current majority is 3,003, with 48.2% of the vote.

Margaret has said she will not stand in the 2024 election. While the current prediction is that this seat will remain Labour in the next election, likely with an increased majority, it is not a safe seat, and has alternated between Conservative and Labour since its creation in 1983.

Margaret's constituency's local authority is Wirral Council, one of 5 Metropolitan Boroughs in Merseyside, and a constituent member of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The Local Authority has changed over the years, but since its

establishment in 1973 it has been controlled by both Labour and Conservative, as well as having no overall control.

Currently Wirral Council does not have a party in overall control, with Labour holding 29 seats, Conservatives: 17, Green: 14, and Liberal Democrats: 6. However, since 2012, the Leader of the Council has been Labour, with the incumbent being Cllr Paul Stuart. The ceremonial role of Mayor of Wirral, Jerry Williams is also currently Labour.

Margaret Greenwood appears to have a positive working relationship with Wirral Council. She has spoken in parliament and elsewhere about their work and importance, as well as that of councils more widely, criticised the government's reductions of local council budgets, and advocated for their importance in tackling climate change and nature loss at a local level.

For a more through analyst of Wirral Council, and detail on its approach to climate policy, please see this [2024 Wirral Borough Council TLS](#)

## **Political Activity**

Margaret has held several shadow ministerial positions; Shadow Minister for Employment (October 2016 - 2018), Shadow Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (March 2018 - April 2020) and Shadow Minister for Schools (April 2020 - October 2020). She resigned from the latter of these to vote against the Labour Whip, and since then has been a backbencher.

Additional roles in parliament include membership on the Environmental Audit Committee, Leasehold Reform (Ground Rent) Bill Committee, and Charities Bill Committee. She is the Chair of the Adult Education APPG, Co-Chair of the Liverpool City Region APPG, and an officer in the Spinal Cord Injury APPG, Occupational Safety and Health APPG, and Carers APPG.

Margaret usually votes in line with the Labour whip, rebelling just four times in her career. With significant experience in front bench, backbench, select committees and APPG's, they are an experienced MP, but their current focus seems very much to be on constituency issues. As Margaret has announced she will not stand in the 2024 election, her priorities this year are likely to be those of most personal or local importance, and she is very unlikely to make a return to the front benches. As a backbencher, Margaret has signed 86 EDMs, and initiated 5 debates. She has not brought forward any Private Members Bills.

Margaret is a vocal supporter of action on climate change and the environment, referencing it often in parliament, on social media, and locally. She claims leadership in the campaign against Underground Coal Gasification (UCG) in the Dee Estuary,

and locally has opposed proposals for developments which would have an impact on the green belt. Her appreciation for the local beauty of the natural environment in Wirral seems to be a significant motivator in her concern on climate change, and the need to protect nature.

Margaret has mentioned climate and the environment over 100 times in parliament, often criticising the government on a lack of action, or negative action on climate change. She is rated very good by VoteClimate on her voting record, never voting against environmentally positive legislation, and abstaining only three times. She has supported environmental legislation and action in parliament, including EDM's and the Climate Coalition Letter.

While Margaret appears passionate about climate change and the environment, her main interests are education and healthcare. 32% of her parliamentary questions have been to the Department of Social Care, and 27% to the Department of Education, with the remaining 41% being split between 20 other Departments combined. Additionally, 4 of the 5 debates she has sponsored have been related to healthcare and education.

On health, she is staunchly against any privatisations of the NHS, and is concerned that it is significantly underfunded, which is impacting people's quality of care, and future health. She also has an interest in spinal cord injury, and musculoskeletal conditions. On education, she is particularly interested in adult education, and the opportunities further education later in life can provide.

Alongside these two policy interests, she is very much interested in her local area, and her constituency, devoting considerable time to local issues, frequently referencing local relevance when discussing national issues in parliament, and attending local events.

## **Tailored Strategy**

There is a very clear connection between the environment and people's health. Research from UCL estimated more than 48,000 people in the UK die prematurely due to pollution, with nearly 80% of the UK exceeding the World Health Organization's guideline for safe fine particulate matter levels. Access to nature, be it woodlands, greenspaces, or clean waters have distinct positive impacts on mental and physical health.

The NHS currently spends considerable resources treating conditions that are exacerbated by poor access to nature, pollution, and climate change, such as respiratory illness, mental health conditions, or sickness related to limited exercise. However, the NHS itself is a large contributor to the UK's environmental impact,

with the health and social care sector contributing an estimated 4-5% of the UK's carbon footprint. Given the financial, and health benefits of a less polluted UK, the NHS should be a large and active part of the UK's Net Zero Target.

The NHS has set a target to reach emissions we control directly (the NHS Carbon Footprint), we will reach net zero by 2040 on directly controlled emissions, and net zero by 2045 on emissions the NHS can influence. Its ambitions for Net Zero are enshrined in legislation in the Health and Care Act 2022.

While this is a positive step, it means that the NHS will continue to be directly responsible for a percentage of the patients it treats for a further 15 - 20 years. Additionally, research by the BMA shows that progress on these targets has started to stall, and that some NHS organisations are not measuring their carbon footprint, making progress impossible to measure accurately.

The [BMA is asking for the UK government to do more](#) to help the NHS, including greater specific resources, more ambitious targets, and mandatory emissions reporting.

- **Possible Ask 1:** Will you read the recommendations of the BMA on NHS Net Zero, submitting a written or oral question, or private letter, to both the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero to integrate these recommendations into the NHS Net Zero?
- **Possible Ask 2:** Will you discuss the BMA's recommendations with the Shadow Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, and the Shadow Secretary of State of Climate Change and Net Zero, advocating for their inclusion in the Labour Manifesto?

We have also identified green spaces as potential areas of common ground for engaging your MP. Given Margaret's support of the local campaign against the Leverhulme Estates development on greenbelt, and her discussion of the importance of greenbelts in parliament she may be willing to speak about the need for the protection further.

- **Possible Ask 3:** Will you sponsor a debate in parliament on the importance of the greenbelt and green spaces, to discuss what suitable environmentally friendly alternatives exist given the need for further housing development.
- **Possible Ask 4:** Will you approach the Shadow Secretary of State of Climate Change and Net Zero, and Shadow Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, asking for a manifesto commitment that house building under a Labour Government will not come at the expense of the green belt.

Please [get in touch](#) if you'd like to discuss asks for other areas of common ground, as well as accessing our free, tailored support for engagements with your MP. We can help draft your letters and meeting agenda, do further research and help you craft your ask.

Please keep in touch with us and let us know how your engagement progresses. We use this information to help us work as effectively as possible and to report to our funders so we can continue to provide this service to others.

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