



Labour pulled up for gimmicky August free bus policy

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Labour

The cost of living is an ongoing crisis in modern Britain. In response to this, [the government has unveiled a "Summer Savings" plan which will provide minimal savings for a single month](#) specifically August. In response to this, *Sky News's* Trevor Phillips has laid into Labour minister Darren Jones:

As several people have pointed out, do Trevor's figures add up?

"Saul Staniforth (@SaulStaniforth) [May 24, 2026](#)

Summer Savings

As we reported on 22 May, [the Great British Summer savings plan includes free bus tickets for children, in addition to](#)

a temporary reduction in VAT across Scotland, England and Wales from June to September. The reduction applies to admission tickets for family shows and attractions and children's menu meals.

On the topic of free buses, transport union TSSA said:

the chancellor should now look at extending support as part of a wider package of help, well beyond the summer months. Not only would doing so assist those most in need, it will help the wider economy.

Sadly, the Cost-of-Living crisis is a year-round affair. But while things continue to get worse for ordinary Britons, [the super-wealthy are experiencing bumper year after bumper year](#). Do you think there could be a connection between those two things?

Writing on the Summer Savings plan, [the Canary's James Wright reported](#)

The way Labour is conducting the policies show a further entrenchment of corporatism. The government is [proposing](#) policies to supermarkets that the corporations can choose whether or not to accept. Indeed, corporations rejected a proposal on price controls on food staples.

As he noted, there is nothing preventing companies from pocketing the VAT savings – not from a legal perspective, anyway. [the Canary's Maddison Wheeldon](#) described the crisis as follows in relation to supermarkets

our political and media establishment has abandoned the very people it claims to represent. Instead of standing up for the public, politicians and the mainstream media now ask us to [sympathise with supermarkets](#) operating in an industry that continues to generate enormous profits.

Meanwhile, those same supermarkets have posted [record-breaking profits](#) throughout the cost-of-living crisis. Or, more accurately, the [cost of greed crisis](#). Now, profits look set to rise yet again while more hard-working families fall into food poverty.

Because this crisis seems to be never-ending, many are now calling for bold solutions to tackle the issue once and for all:

Nationalise Morrisons, use it as the foundation for a new, publicly-owned grocery store selling high quality, affordable food. National-level version of the Mamdani plan in New York.

Need to think big in a world with repeated, major shocks to essential supply systems.

pic.twitter.com/vlXweJI5HO

– James Meadway (@meadway) [May 22, 2026](#)

Labour, meanwhile, is proposing limited-time discounts.

Theme park that thought

Here's what Phillips said to Jones in the clip at the top:

I looked at the entry passes to Thorpe Park, Alton Towers, Legoland, Chessington. They all come in around about 32 quid if you book online, which means that the saving you're offering is £1.64 for the average family with two children. A family's got to pay £128 just to get into the park. Then they've got to pay travel and all the rest of it. Free travel on buses for some kids and £1.64 off a bill that most families will see as £200, £250; it's not very impressive, is it? It's not going to make much of a difference

Darren Jones (chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster) responded:

Savings are small, helpful contributions to just help lift the pressure a bit for families during the summer months.

Phillips repeated:

£1.64 off a bill of nearly £200!

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Jones expanded:

Trevor, I don't think you understand. There are many families who can't afford to take their kids out for a meal or to a theme park.

And angry Phillips continued:

A family can't afford to take their kids out for a meal is not going to spend £200 going to a theme park. The point is, you're trumpeting this, but it's really a tiny, tiny gesture.

Labour's calculations

As some highlighted, however, Phillips calculation may be off by a factor of ten:

What's he talking about? The saving would be £16.

I'm not here to defend Labour, but a £32 ticket is
£26.67 + £5.33 VAT.

Cutting VAT to 5% makes it £26.67 + £1.33 VAT

So, £28 per ticket, instead of £32, saving £4 per ticket.

Steve Paxton (@Steve__Paxton) [May 24, 2026](#)

It's still accurate to suggest this small amount won't make much difference, though. As such, it's no surprise that Labour is losing voters to the more ambitious Green Party. As the *Canary's*

HG wrote:

YouGov's new study of the 2026 local elections shows that only 46% of Labour voters from 2024 who went to the polls remained loyal to the party. More previous voters backed the Green Party (22%) than voted for Reform (6%).

HG added:

Starmer has practically bet his party on trying to beat Reform. In the process, he has created the perfect opportunity for the Green Party and a more progressive version of British politics. Importantly, the local elections showed us that many people want that alternative and Labour have paved the way for their own demise.

Some are hoping that switching from Keir Starmer to Andy Burnham could make all the difference, but Burnham is just as eager to chase Reform voters as Starmer. As Antifabot reported for the Canary

Greater Manchester mayor and Labour election hopeful Andy Burnham has dumped his past defence of Trans people to protect Westminster, it seems. Journalist Alex Wickham has revealed that Burnham now backs the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) restrictions on single-sex spaces. This u-turn appears to be nothing but a transparent bid for Reform votes, something we could have predicted coming a mile off.

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The Canary's Cameron Baillie added

Burnham might be a shot better than Starmer, sure. But don't be fooled into thinking he can be trusted. Why trust a man who's shape-shifted so often throughout his career? He'll only shift again.

Labour's reverse course

The years of crushing austerity inflicted on this country have left most of us much poorer than we would have been without it. At the same time, it's proven to be a bountiful time for the rich, with their wealth growing to obscene levels. As Tax Justice report

The richest 350 individuals and families in the UK now hold over £784 billion that's more wealth than 50% of the UK population (35 million people) and more than the UK spends annually on healthcare, education, defence, policing and housing combined.

The 1.4% growth in the Rich List's hoarded fortunes means a single person with a net worth of £1bn would be £14 million better off at the end of the year, even after their lavish annual expenses. Despite the Times' attempt to pitch this as a "stagnation", the

truth is this represents an enormous growthâ?? Â£14 million is 7x more than the average person will spend in their whole lifetime. The roughly 1% average increase seen in the last 4 years is, more accurately, a less steep increase, relative to the absurd, astronomical growth of the Rich Listâ??s fortunes from 2000 to 2022, which grew around 600%.

Are you more than 600% better off than you were 27 years ago?

Weâ??ve moved well beyond the point where half-measures can make a difference. And if these Labour politicians refuse to acknowledge that, they will be replaced by one party or another.

Featured image via [Sky News](#)

By [Willem Moore](#)

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