

Stoke-on-Trent MP says lowering tuition fees is not the answer

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BY SADE MTOWA ON FEBRUARY 26, 2018

Labour MP for Stoke-on-Trent North, Ruth Smeeth, has expressed her concern about the possibility of the government lowering tuition fees for some university degrees.

Speaking to *StaffsLive*, Ms Smeeth explained that the best solution would be to make tuition fees fair for all university students.

She said: "Fundamentally, I am not sure that this is the right approach for the government, with what they are trying to achieve.

"I was blessed that I was the last year that didn't pay student fees.

"I don't see why I didn't have to pay, and now my constituents do."

Ms Smeeth's comments come after Prime Minister, Theresa May, launched a year-long review into tuition fees and university funding last week (February 19).

The Stoke-on-Trent MP states that the review needs to be a whole scale review, of how the government funds further and higher education.

"There are no answers to how universities are supposed to make up the deficit," she said.

"Personally, I think this is all to do with politics and not about reality.

"This was the Tories desperately trying to suggest that they can re-engage with young voters."

Ms Smeeth concluded that there needs to be communication with current students, people who use the system and future students.

She said: "Most importantly, speak to 16 and 17 year-old's to see what actually inspires them to go to university, and what will make a difference to them."

Leader of the Labour party, Jeremy Corbyn, also disputes May's review and said in a recent [tweet](#) that: "Labour will scrap fees, bring back maintenance grants and make education free." Currently in England, universities can charge a maximum of £9,250 per year and students have to begin repaying loans once they earn £21,000 or more.

As well as possibly cutting or freezing tuition fees, the review will look at methods of decreasing costs, such as reducing interest rates.

Currently the interest rate for student loans sits at 6.1%.

Listen below for our exclusive interview with Stoke-on-Trent North MP, Ruth Smeeth: