



END CHILD POVERTY once and for all

Charity No. 1099008

Newsletter Spring 2006

Child Poverty in the News

700,000 children lifted from poverty - latest figures show

Figures released by the Government earlier this year showed that in 2004/05: 3.4 million GB children lived in poverty – a fall of 700,000 since 1998/99.

“It’s a scandal”
C.Abrahams, ECP

We are disappointed that the first milestone on the road to halving child poverty by 2010 and ending it by 2020 has been missed – figures are 300,000 short of the 25 per cent target, however we welcomed the Government’s success in lifting 700,000 children out of poverty since 1998.

In a coordinated response Caroline Abrahams,

chair of the End Child Poverty campaign, said: *“In a country as rich as ours, it’s a scandal that millions of children still grow up below the poverty line. Having just missed this first target the Government must urgently get back on track towards its ultimate goal of ending child poverty once and for all by 2020.”* And Kate Green, ECP Trustee and Chief Executive of CPAG demanded that *“the Government must now use next year’s spending review to outline what more will be done to meet their child poverty pledge.”*

The latest child poverty figures were published in the annual Households Below Average Income report, by the Department for Work and Pensions. You can view them at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/hbai.asp>

In a major step forward for the campaign to end child poverty once and for all, Oliver Letwin, the Chairman of the Conservative Policy Review, recently announced that the Conservatives are now committed to the Government’s aspiration of ending child poverty by 2020. We look forward to seeing the Liberal Democrats make their commitment to this ambitious aim soon!

To see our reaction to the news visit www.ecpc.org.uk/news.asp

New report sparks debates on how to solve child poverty

A far-reaching study has just been published which offers a feast of ideas to digest, and then debate in the run up to the comprehensive spending review. The final report of the Fabian Commission on Life Chances and Child Poverty shows the multidimensional pressure of poverty on people’s lives and provides clear recommendations for policy solutions to equalise life chances.

We welcome the valuable lessons drawn from their discussion group, showing that it is possible to change hearts and minds and win support for the ‘significant commitment of resources and political will’ that is required to achieve the ambitious target of ending child poverty in the UK by 2020. The report also focuses on early years services, tax & benefit reforms and ways to tackle educational inequalities.

Caroline Abrahams, ECP Chair, alongside Rt Hon John Hutton MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions will be responding to the report at a Fabian Society event later this month.

Individual copies of *Narrowing the Gap* by Louise Bamfield and Richard Brooks are £9.95 plus p+p from the Fabian Society. Contact 020 7 227 4900 or bookshop@fabian-society.org.uk

Do you have any news / good practice you would like to see covered in our newsletter? If so then get in touch, email info@ecpc.org.uk, or call us on 0207 278 6541

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Campaign Activities

Waiting for the future



Hundreds of school children joined the Poet Laureate to create a unique anthology published recently to protest against the devastating impact of bad housing and poverty on children in Britain. Andrew Motion, who supported the Children Write scheme and wrote an exclusive poem for the book, said: *"This is a wonderful scheme – imaginative and useful at the same time. It deserves to be widely and warmly supported."*

"Waiting for the Future" aims to raise awareness of the 3.4 million children in Britain trapped in poverty and the one million children in bad housing. The UK has one of the highest rates of child poverty in the industrialised world and housing inequalities are at their worst since the Victorian era.

At the launch of the publication, held in the House of Commons in February, Caroline Abrahams, Chair of End Child Poverty, said: *"We want children's voices to be heard, and people to understand that poverty and bad housing is affecting the lives of millions of children."*

After listening to a number of the pupils involved in the anthology, reading their poems to Ed Balls MP, and the invited audience, Adam Sampson, Director of Shelter, said: *"I hope the Government listens to their voices and commits to ending poverty and bad housing for the next generation."*

The anthology is available for £5 plus £1.75 postage and packing from Shelter's credit card hotline on 020 7505 2036, www.shelter.org.uk/publications or all good bookshops. All proceeds will go directly to Shelter and End Child Poverty.



Closing the Gap

High levels of child poverty in London have long been apparent. And in recent years national and local government have been working together to tackle the problem. But the scale of child poverty and its particular manifestations in London have meant that progress has been slow.

ECP teamed up with the Association for London Governments and the Greater London Authority to commission a report, **Closing the Gap**, to look at what lies behind London's child poverty problem, the action that is already underway to tackle it and what remains to be done. The launch, at City Hall, allowed in-depth discussion around the particular issues that London faces when fighting child poverty, as well as breakout sessions on specific areas of good practice.



Speakers included; Deputy Mayor, Nikki Gavron, Lord Victor Adebowale, as well as representatives from the ALG and ECP campaign. The purpose of the day was to involve a range of stakeholders; including policy makers, public service providers and employee organisations in a dialogue about the causes and solutions to child poverty in the capital. For a copy of the report please contact info@ecpc.org.uk or call us on 0207 278 6541



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Poverty Consultations

Journalist, Polly Toynbee, chaired the first in a series of poverty consultations, which have taken place across the UK over the last few weeks. At the London region event, speakers included a number of parents from ECP member organisations to whom we are very grateful for their contribution; as well as Helen Barnard JRF, Sophie Chapman Citizens Advice and Stephen Timms MP. There was a great deal of participation from different community groups, and a good discussion of the ideas that JRF put forward; the key issues raised included the lack of affordable high quality childcare in London, especially for disabled children and the need for improved support/ training for those seeking work.

ECP and its partner organisations have organised this series of Poverty Consultations as part of a larger nationwide project - in association with Joseph Rowntree Foundation. All the discussion points raised at this event and at events in Belfast, Cardiff, Glasgow, Liverpool and Sheffield will be fed into the JRF report which is to be launched this summer. The report will aim to show costed policy options to end child poverty in the UK by 2020; for more details visit <http://www.jrf.org.uk/child%2Dpoverty>

No place for a child

"No Place for a Child is a unique collaboration between the Refugee Council, Save the Children and Bail for Immigration Detainees. It was launched as a result of no fewer than 2000 children being locked up in the UK during 2005.

Asylum seeking children can be detained without a legal process or time limit and around one in three spend more than a week in detention.

Our campaign is battling on two levels. The first is parliamentary, as MP's prepare a report for the Home Secretary spelling out the alternatives to detention. Pilots have demonstrated more humane and cost effective ways of looking after families during the asylum process.

The second level is the humanitarian appeal. Studies show detention damages children, causing depression, sleep deprivation and ill health. A 7-year-old detained for 32 days in an Immigration Centre said 'detention is like a cage, and I was like a small bird with no food in it'. That's why we're running this campaign.

Anyone can join the campaign by visiting www.noplaceforachild.org.uk, filling in his or her details and submitting the form." Maeve Sherlock, Chief Executive of The Refugee Council, For more info. go to www.noplaceforachild.org.uk

No Place for a Child
Stop detaining children now!

www.noplaceforachild.org.uk



Publication of Interest

Welfare Benefits and Tax Credits Handbook 2006/7, Child Poverty Action Group, April 2006.

The new *Handbook* gives you comprehensive coverage of all welfare benefits and tax and pension credits. This fully revised and updated edition includes the latest information on benefit and tax credit overpayments, civil partnership changes and telephone claiming. Accessible & authoritative, the annually-updated **Handbook** is a must-have for anyone involved with Welfare Rights. Copies are available for £33.00 (£8 for individual benefit claimants) from bookorders@cpag.org.uk or 020 7837 7979.

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Thanks to our Marathon Runner!



The London Marathon was, as always, an inspiring occasion with millions of pounds raised for charities across the world. But this year it is of added significance to ECP thanks to a tremendous effort from BBC Radio London's news reporter Max Rushden, on April the 23rd who has raised almost £1,000 for ECP.

We ensured his journey round wasn't too lonely with volunteers there to support him and take him for much needed celebration afterwards - well done Max and thanks again!



Staff News

We are pleased to announce that Hilary Fisher will be joining us as Campaign Director at the beginning of May.

"I am delighted to be joining End Child Poverty at this crucial time. I am really looking forward to working with you to ensure that child poverty remains at the top of the political agenda. For the last three years I have been leading Amnesty International's global campaign to Stop Violence Against Women and I hope to bring some of the insights gained there to the End Child Poverty Campaign."

Hilary will bring great campaigning expertise with her and her arrival coincides with a renewed commitment from many national organisations to enable a step change in the ECP campaign.



AGM

Finally we must mention the changes that took place at our end of year AGM; In line with our articles of association three trustees were required to stand down. Kate Green, Natalie Cronin, and Andy Jaeger, stood down from the board after making great contributions to the campaign in the last few years. Following three unopposed nominations from our members, the meeting approved the re-election of Kate Green, Child Poverty Action Group while Chris Pond, One Parent Families and Colette Marshall, Save the Children UK, were appointed for the first time.

For more details please contact us at info@ecpc.org.uk



C CHICKS (Country Holidays
H for Inner City Kids) is a
I national charity who
C provide free respite
K holidays for disadvantaged
S children aged 8 – 15 from
across the UK.

They have just bought their second holiday centre and are looking to form new contacts as they are able to take more children in 2006. Referrals come from any professional agency who work with vulnerable children such as social services, teachers, family support groups and sure start.

For more information please contact:
Country Holidays for Inner City Kids
The Annex, Fore Street, Liffon, Devon, PL16
0AA. T: 01566 784488 info@chicks.org.uk

If you would like to contact anyone at the End Child Poverty campaign about the information in this newsletter, for submissions for future newsletters or any other matter then please do get in touch; But don't forget... we have moved offices and are now based at:
ECP, 94 White Lion Street, London N1 9PF **tel: 0207 278 6541**