



end child poverty

Child Poverty in the News

Children's Secretary re-affirms commitment to child poverty targets

The head of the Department for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls MP, re-affirmed his support for the Government's child poverty targets in a keynote address at a Campaign to End Child Poverty event in London on December 10th.

"Addressing child poverty is a key focus of this department," Balls told a select audience of more than 70 leading chief executives of organisations, charities, Trade Unions, businesses and faith leaders. "I am absolutely committed to eradicating child poverty completely by 2020." He said that meeting the goals would not be easy, adding, "But I want to be clear that we're not going to abandon these goals just because the going has got tough."

During the address, Balls announced a three-year plan, £90 million plan to help disabled children take short breaks with their peers and an additional £8.4 million to raise the upper age limit for help for severely disabled children and their families from 16 to 18.



Ed Balls speaking at the ECP event, from left Chris Pond (One Parents Families), Martin Narey (Barnardo's)

The announcements are part of the new Children's Plan. Other elements of the plan include £18 million over three years to reduce the risk of preventable accidents in low-income homes.

The event featured roundtable Chatham House discussions as the attendees pooled their skills and expertise to debate: Is it too late to meet 2010 and if it isn't, what needs to be done; and to discuss how their influence and networks can help the Campaign. The discussions will be written into a report which will be submitted to the DCSF.

To read a copy of the Secretary of State's speech: <http://pegasus.xssl.net/~admin315/assets/files/news/Rt%20Hon%20Ed%20Balls%20MP%20Speech%20Dec%2010%202007.pdf>

Welfare Change for Lone Parents

Work and Pensions secretary Peter Hain MP has confirmed plans that would require all lone parents on benefit to look for a job once their children reach age seven, from 2010.

Despite coordinated lobbying from the sector, the Government disappointingly decided to press ahead with the benefit changes.

Currently single parents do not have to seek work to get benefits until their youngest child is 16. But under the new measures they will go on to Job Seekers' Allowance and be expected to look for employment once their youngest is 12 from next October, 10 from 2009 and seven from 2010.

Chris Pond, chief executive of One Parent Families/ Gingerbread said "Most lone parents want to work, and most do. But there are times in their lives when any parent must be allowed to make a judgment as to what is best for their children. That judgment should not be handed over to overworked Jobcentre advisers."

ECP Campaign Activities

Month of Action

ECP had a successful Month of Action taking the Campaign to children, young people, government and business.



Beverley Hughes being interviewed

In our London Children Speak Out event 30 London primary school children (aged 10) took part in workshops on child poverty, followed by an opportunity to interview the Children's Commissioner, Sir Al Aynsley Green and Beverley Hughes MP, Minister for Children.

Activities such as "If I were in charge for a day..." gave us some interesting answers: "If I were in charge I would open up all of the boarded up houses, renew them and lower the price or make it a free home for people in poverty" "If I were in charge for a day I would give every family in poverty £250, and a house with everything they need in it for 5 years until they find a proper job".

ECP also held a **Young People's Question Time** for over 70 15 – 21year olds at the House of Commons, with Beverley Hughes MP, Annette Brooke MP and Tim Loughton MP on the panel, hosted by Kerry McCarthy MP. This became a heated debate with the young people voting with red, yellow and green cards to indicate whether they supported what the politicians said.

Questions included:

- Are there plans to involve young people in ending child poverty by 2020 and how will you keep us informed?
- 2.5m children suffer multiple deprivation – what is the Government doing to address this situation?
- Thousands of disadvantaged young women living in poverty are given advice to go into gender stereotypical jobs such as childcare and hairdressing; what is the new Child Poverty Unit going to do about this?



Voting in the House of Commons

Children as young as five are feeling the effects of living in poverty in England, a new report reveals, with some hiding their needs from their parents or giving their family money they received as gifts. These are just some of the findings revealed in *'Living with Hardship 24/7: the diverse experiences of families in poverty in England'* launched by the Chancellor of the Exchequer at the City of London's Guildhall, as part of the Campaign to End Child Poverty's Month of Action.

The report, with a foreword by the Prime Minister, is published by The Frank Buttle Trust and based on research conducted by the NSPCC and the University of York, explores in-depth the impacts of poverty on families' lives.

Poverty forces families into high-cost loans

A new report by Save the Children reveals that as many as 2.3 million people in the UK on low incomes are being forced to take out high-interest loans at rates topping 183% APR - many simply to provide essentials for their children.

Save the Children's report *Robbing Peter to Pay Paul*, shows how desperate

parents have to choose between essentials for themselves or adequate clothing, meals and heating for their children. To read the report visit:

http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/en/54_4006.htm

ECP adds its 100th member
TreeHouse, the national charity for autism education, has become the 100th member of the Campaign to End Child Poverty.



TreeHouse Chief Executive, Ian Wylie, said: "TreeHouse is delighted to be supporting this campaign as it highlights the very serious issue of child poverty. TreeHouse is very aware that the 1 in 100 school aged children affected by autism are particularly vulnerable to poverty as their disability has far reaching financial consequences for the families. In order to reduce the high number of children affected by poverty in the UK, we must ensure that families have access to the provisions and support they both need and deserve."

Dare to Care – Make time to help end child poverty

Dare to Care: Make time to help end child poverty is a campaign led by CSV and the Campaign to End Child Poverty to encourage 35,000 people to volunteer their time to help children, young people and families living with the effects of poverty in this country.

The campaign was launched in mid September and will run until 29 February 2008, and five children's charities will each have a themed month, in which to promote their volunteering opportunities.

December is Family Support month led by Barnardo's. January is Health led by Children's Links and CSV RSVP, and February is Time for Money, led by NCH.

There are many ways that people can get involved, from helping disadvantaged children with reading to volunteering in a local family support centre. To find out more visit www.daretocarecampaign.com

ECP Members success at Treasury Select Committee

The Treasury Select Committee's report on the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 to which Child Poverty Action Group and Barnardo's gave evidence, slammed the Government for its failure to set out in the review how it would meet and fund the commitment to halve child poverty by 2010.

To read the report visit: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmselect/cmtreasy/55/55.pdf>

Child Poverty in the News

There has been lots of media on child poverty recently, below is just a sample:

- <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/columnist/story/0,,2225569,00.html>
- <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/story/0,,2225585,00.html>
- <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/publicservices/story/0,,2225583,00.html>
- http://www.channel4.com/news/articles/business_money/child+poverty+vow+not+abandoned/1167347
- http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/article3031406.ece

ECP Members Day & AGM

Monday 21 January 2008, 1.45 – 5.30pm
Friends Meeting House, 173 Euston Road London NW1 2BJ

2008 is a vital year for ECP. We plan to step up the Campaign with activities throughout the year and we need your help to achieve this.

Feed into the ECP Campaign plans, hear from the ECP Board and other key campaigners and consider the role your organisation can play in ECP.

For more information, email Lizzie@ecpc.org.uk 0207 278 6541

ECP Members' Comment

Manage your money on your mobile, says Credit Action Director, Chris Tapp

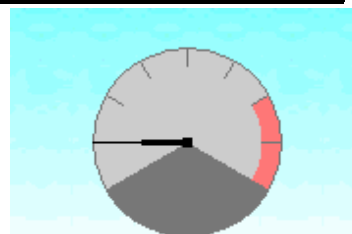
Christmas is a particularly difficult time for people struggling financially. The pressure on parents and families to spend, spend, spend during the festive shopping frenzy can be enormous and unfortunately come to the New Year organisations like ourselves at Credit Action see the negative consequences this can have.

At any time of year it is important for everybody to be monitoring their spending carefully, keeping budgets and setting themselves limits to ensure they don't live beyond their mean. Often people hear this kind of advice and it fills them with dread; budgeting, limiting spending and keeping money records sounds like a recipe for a dull and unexciting life as well as being a bit of an embarrassing hassle. However the opposite is true! Staying in control of your money enables you to use your money more effectively, helping it go further and allowing you to do more! For those in poverty it can be the difference between having enough every month, or going short.

At Credit Action we have a passion for helping people stay in control of their money, particularly those suffering from severe financial hardship – that's why we got involved with End Child Poverty. Recently we have launched a tool aimed at making the process of managing your money much quicker and easier than it has been in the past. The *Moneybasics Spendometer* is a tool which allows you to record your spending on your mobile phone as you go about your daily life.



With the Spendometer it takes less than ten seconds to enter your spending, simply saying what you've spent and what category the spending falls into. After that the tool does all the work for you. It produces reports so you can see where your money is going, it alerts you if you go over the spending limits you've set yourself, on the Spendometer dial it



Press # to continue



shows you your 'spending speed', and it stores records for up to a year so you can track your spending over time. Give it a go – it might not make you any richer, but it may well help you make the money you do have stretch that little bit further.

The Moneybasics Spendometer can be downloaded **free** from www.moneybasics.co.uk

Wishing you a happy holiday from all at ECP



Card designed by Soner Hasan, Victory Primary School