

24 February 2017

Urgent Call on the Department for Work and Pensions to Reduce Inequality

The Equality Trust and Just Fair are urgently calling on the DWP to support the commencement of the socio-economic duty in section 1 of the Equality Act 2010. It introduced a duty on public bodies that required them *“when making decisions of a strategic nature about how to exercise its functions [to] have due regard to the desirability of exercising them in a way that is designed to reduce the inequalities of outcome which result from socio-economic disadvantage.”*

Passed by Parliament in 2010, this duty has yet to be brought into force.

The Scottish government has already announced that it will legislate this year to introduce the socioeconomic duty. The newly adopted Wales Act 2017 confers this power on the Welsh government.

The Equality Trust and Just Fair have written to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Damian Green, calling on him to recommend the commencement of section 1 in his department’s forthcoming Green Paper on Social Justice. This announcement would strengthen the government’s vision for a “shared society” and “a country that works not for a privileged few but for every one of us”.

This is the first step in a new joint campaign on equality and human rights (**#1forequality** (<https://www.1forequality.com/>)).

Dr Wanda Wyporska, Executive Director of The Equality Trust, said:

“The Socio-Economic Duty could play a key part in tackling the excessive inequality we see in the UK. Scotland recognises the importance and the potential of this uncommenced Duty, the Westminster Government is slow to act. The rampant inequality we see in the UK is damaging our society, our economy and our future. People in more unequal countries suffer from poorer physical and mental health, lower self-esteem, lower social mobility, and have less trust in institutions and civic participation.”

Jamie Burton, Chair of Just Fair, added:

“Inequality, particularly when it grows, suggests that the right policies are not in place to ensure an adequate standard of living for all. It is not only about material needs and available resources. Equality is of paramount importance for meaningful choice in a free society. Inequality puts freedom at risk. A more equal society can empower more people to take control over their lives. Several international human rights institutions have warned about the negative effects of inequality on the enjoyment of economic and social rights”.

Notes to editors:

[The Equality Trust](#) works to improve the quality of life in the UK by reducing economic inequality.

[Just Fair](#) monitors and advocates economic and social rights in the UK.

For further comments and to interview The Equality Trust or Just Fair, contact:

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