

Press Release

Welfare reform, inequality, housing and Brexit. Just Fair's submission to the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights

20th September 2018

Just Fair has recently submitted evidence to the UN Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights, Prof Philip Alston, ahead of his official visit to the UK in November.

Just Fair is the author of the submission (available [here](#)), which is supported by the following 14 groups: Unison, Women's Budget Group, Inclusion London, Sustain Alliance's Right to Food Project, The Equality Trust, Race on the Agenda, Amnesty International UK, York Human Rights City Network, Surviving Economic Abuse, Mind, Generation Rent, British Institute of Human Rights, Latin American Women's Rights Service, and Equality and Diversity Forum.

We touch upon these four topics in the submission:

- Welfare" reform and the right to social security.
- How inequality harms society and puts human rights at risk.
- No fault evictions and child homelessness in England.
- Brexit: the loss of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights and European structural and investment funds.

Our recommendations are:

- The DWP should review the Welfare Reform Act 2012 and the Welfare Reform and Work Act 2016 to restore the link between social security entitlements and the costs of living.
- The DWP should design and implement a comprehensive child poverty strategy and reinstate the targets and reporting duties on child poverty.
- HM Treasury should extend the analysis of the distributional impact of tax and public spending to look at the aggregate impact in light of the protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 as well as income and wealth disparities.
- The UK Government should commence all the outstanding clauses of the Equality Act 2010 and in particular the socio-economic duty.
- The Landlord and Tenant Act 1985 must be amended to require that residential rented dwellings in England are fit for human habitation, and no-fault evictions regulated in Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 must be abolished.

- Local authorities must stop using B&Bs beyond six weeks and action should be taken when they break the law.
- To ensure that Brexit does not turn into a backdoor regression in human rights protection without adequate parliamentary scrutiny, the UK should bring economic and social rights home by enhancing the status of international human rights law in the national legal system.
- The government should provide guarantees that it will match the funding received from European structural and investment funds on equality and human rights once the UK leaves the EU.

“After the USA last December, Britain will be the second country in the global north that Professor Alston will visit as part of his UN mandate on poverty and human rights. The world is watching with great concern the erosion of human rights in Britain after years of austerity and on the brink of Brexit. Civil society groups and a number of international bodies have sounded the alarm bell about child poverty levels, rampant inequalities and the negative effects of the Universal Credit rollout, among other issues. The prospects of Brexit make it more urgent than ever to enshrine socio-economic rights properly in our laws and policies.”

Dr Koldo Casla, Policy Director, Just Fair

To discuss this further please don't hesitate to get in touch with us via email or phone: koldo.casla@justfair.org.uk / 07538561229

About us:

Just Fair works to realise a fairer and more just society by monitoring and advocating for the protection of economic and social rights in the UK, in particular housing, health, education, food and social security. We have a long experience engaging with UN and European human rights bodies. For example, between 2014 and 2016, Just Fair convened a consortium of 80 local and national organisations in England that gathered and submitted evidence to the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights about the level of enjoyment of these rights in the UK. In the last two years, the Chair of this Committee has visited the UK twice at our invitation to raise awareness and help monitor UK's compliance with international law on economic and social rights.