

date: 16th October 2007
embargo: 00.001hrs Wednesday 17th October 2007



**Attention: News Editors, social affairs
correspondents**

Child poverty across the UK is costing £40 billion a year – and tax breaks for marriage will do nothing to help

Child poverty in the east midlands alone is costing £2.8 billion a year through increased crime, public spending and lost economic productivity, a TUC conference will be told today (Wednesday 17 October). Without urgent action the Government will miss its pledge to halve the 3.8 million children currently living in poverty by 2010.

Measures in the Comprehensive Spending Review will, according to the Government's own figures, lift only an extra 100,000 children above the poverty threshold. They fall far short of the extra £4 billion that experts agree is needed to halve child poverty by 2010, the conference, coinciding with World Poverty Day will hear.

At £40 billion nationally, the cost of inaction on child poverty is ten times the cost of reducing it. The TUC believe the £4 billion needed can easily be paid for by fairer taxation of the super-rich. Introducing a proper residence test for non-doms would raise more than £4 billion.

TUC Regional Secretary **Roger McKenzie** said: "As the world focuses on the plight of children around the globe, it's shocking that 3.8 million children in the UK are living in poverty. Child poverty costs £40 billion a year, or £2,500 for every family in the UK. It's a problem none of us can afford to ignore.

"But the Government's commitment to halve child poverty by 2010 must now be in doubt, following the failure to step up spending and a deeply unambitious tax take from the super-rich.

"Hints that the Government is thinking of adopting tax breaks for marriage is even more worrying. Child poverty can only be eradicated by focusing on the needs of the children, not on the marital status of the parents. A tax break for married parents is the same as a tax punishment for the children of lone and unmarried parents.

"An extra investment of £4 billion is needed to halve child poverty by 2010. But the cost of inaction is ten times greater. The Government is running out of time to meet

its child poverty pledge. Today, as members of the Campaign to end child poverty, we urge the Government to take decisive action.”

Today’s TUC Poverty Conference will kick off a ‘Month of Action’ organised by the Campaign to End Poverty – a coalition of more than 90 organisations committed to eradicating child poverty in the UK. Speakers at the conference will examine the impact of benefits, housing and social services on child poverty. The keynote speaker will be the Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

Director of the Campaign to End Child Poverty **Hilary Fisher** said: “Poverty has a devastating effect on children’s lives. It shapes their development, impacts their education and shortens their lives. The Government must act now to invest the £4bn necessary to improve the lives of millions of children.”

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- The table below highlights the cost of child poverty across the country. To find out the cost of child poverty in your local area, please contact Rob Holdsworth in the TUC press office.

Region	Cost of Child Poverty
East of England	£3.7 billion
East Midlands	£2.8 billion
London	£4.9 billion
North East	£1.7 billion
North West	£4.6 billion
South East	£5.4 billion
South West	£3.4 billion
West Midlands	£3.6 billion
Yorkshire and Humberside	£3.4 billion
Greater Manchester	£1,689 million
Merseyside	£927 million
England	£33.4 billion
Scotland	£3.4 billion
Wales	£2 billion
United Kingdom	£40 billion

- The TUC Poverty Conference will take place at TUC Congress House, London on Wednesday 17 October, with keynote speaker the Rt Hon Peter Hain MP, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions. Other speakers include Frances O’ Grady, Deputy General Secretary of the TUC, Diana Holland of Unite, Mark Serwotka of PCS, Kevin Flynn and Jason Strelitz of Save the Children, Hilary Fisher of End Child Poverty and Kathy Kelly of ADT 4th world.

- Further information on the TUC’s child poverty campaign can be found at the TUC’s new micro-site www.tuc.org.uk/childpoverty.

- A recent analysis by the Institute of Fiscal Studies has found that spending an extra £4 billion on the Child Tax credit would give the Government a 50:50 chance of reaching its target of

halving child poverty by 2010.

- The Campaign to End Child Poverty is a coalition of more than 90 organisations working to eradicate poverty in the UK. The campaign's Month of Action runs from 17 October (World Poverty Day) until 20 November (Universal Children's Day). For further information on the month of action please contact Thomas Yocam on 020 7278 3404 or email Thomas@ecpc.org.uk.

- All TUC press releases can be found at www.tuc.org.uk

- Register for the TUC's press extranet: a service exclusive to journalists wanting to access pre-embargo releases and reports from the TUC. Visit www.tuc.org.uk/pressextranet

Contacts:

Media enquiries: Roger McKenzie, T: 0121 262 6383; M: 07879 497 291;

E: rmckenzie@tuc.org.uk; Alan Weaver, T: 0121 262 6383; M: 07771 778 694;

E: aweaver@tuc.org.uk