



Issue 1

Policy News

Dec '07- Jan '08

The Young Fabians bi-monthly digest of the latest policy publications

Welcome to the first issue of Policy News, brought to you by the new Young Fabians exec. With this newsletter we hope to bring together policy news from think tanks, third sector organisations and Whitehall departments, including a summary of the best recent publications. You can read the reports in full online by following the links.

December and January have been busy months for policy makers. The perennial issues of climate change and terrorism continue to inspire debate. Meanwhile, the big theme of 2007 -inequality-looks set to roll on into the New Year, with a raft of new research on poverty and social mobility. Think tanks have also been quick to respond to events, with timely releases on personal information security and childhood.

To suggest a publication to include in the next issue of Policy News, please send an email with details to the address below.

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Publications

[DCSF - The Children's Plan: building brighter futures](#)

The Children's Plan, published by DCSF in December, outlined the Government's vision for a better childhood. Headline policy recommendations and announcements included:

- £225m will be allocated over the next three years to build or upgrade more than 3,500 playgrounds and set up 30 new supervised adventure playgrounds, designed for the 8-13 age group, in deprived communities;
- £160m will be allocated to improve the quality and range of places for young people to go and things for them to do. This could mean either 50 new state-of-the-art youth centres could be built, or 500 refurbished, or alternatively 2000 smaller scale centres or mobile units. These centres will provide space for a range of positive activities for young people including sport, music, drama, art facilities etc;
- 20,000 two year olds from disadvantaged families will receive free childcare, building on the current childcare offer to all three and four year olds

[Demos - Seen and Heard: Reclaiming the public realm with children and young people](#)



Published to co-inside with the Government's Children's Plan, 'Seen and Heard' draws on six case studies to explore the everyday experiences of children in public. It argues that we need a paradigm shift in the way we think about the built environment- one which addresses the deepening segregation between generations. The needs of the young are not opposed to those of other users of public spaces, but closely aligned. With a range of recommendations designed to empower frontline professionals and young people, this pamphlet offers practical steps to create communities that are welcoming for all.

[Involve - People and Participation.net](#)

Involve, an organization set up to help organizations encourage better participation, has launched "People and Participation.net", a website to share case studies about its subject. Say Involve: "People and Participation.net has been officially 'live' for over a month now. In this short time the site has been enriched with a large number of user case studies and resources. Some of the highlights of last month's uploads include: a case study on how Homeless Link and the GLA enabled homeless people to take part in the Mayor of London's Housing recent consultation and interesting resources on how to engage older people.

[Young Fabians- Stopping the Far Right: How progressive politics can tackle political extremism](#)

Co-edited by our very own Mark Rusling, 'Stopping the Far Right' argues that anyone involved in the Labour Party, trade unions and the wider progressive movement should join the response to this challenge. Through a detailed look at the recent history of British far right politics and a careful consideration of the current situation, the authors hope to engage all those who are ideologically opposed to the BNP. Stopping the Far Right aims to act as a practical tool for anyone who is engaged in this argument.

[Cabinet Office - Food: an analysis of the issues](#)

This new report on food in the UK focuses on public health, highlighting that improving the UK's diet could save 70,000 lives a year, or one in every 10 deaths. While obesity is a big problem, the most urgent challenges to health go beyond obesity- the majority of us do not need to eat less, just better.

The report also looks at trends in the production and consumption of food, the key drivers of those trends, the environmental impacts of the food chain, as well as issues around food safety, food security and global markets.

[Oxfam - Financing adaptation: why the UN's Bali Climate Conference must mandate the search for new funds](#)

Oxfam estimates that adapting to climate change in developing countries is likely to cost at least \$50bn each year, and far more if global greenhouse-gas emissions are not cut fast enough. Yet international funding efforts to date have been woeful. In the year that the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued its direst warnings to date of the impacts of climate change on vulnerable developing countries, the rich and high-polluting countries increased their contribution to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) for urgent adaptation needs by a mere \$43m. But on the evidence to date, rich countries are very unlikely to provide the scale of adaptation finance needed on a voluntary basis. Outcomes at Bali must, therefore, include a commitment to identify and establish new finance-raising mechanisms, so that vulnerable communities in developing



countries will have the resources and support they need to protect themselves from the worst impacts of climate change.

??[IPPR- Switched-on India: How can India address climate change and meet its energy needs?](#)

This report examines India's development dilemma: its large economy is growing rapidly, with associated high levels of greenhouse gas emissions. However, the majority of India's population is very poor, and development will require access to basic energy services; meanwhile the Government is very nervous of taking on costly decarbonisation commitments.

[Institute of Economic Affairs- Paths to Property: Approaches to Institutional Change in International Development](#)

The authors argue that the results of traditional approaches to development policy have been disappointing. Instead, the focus needs to be on the adoption of sound political and legal institutions. In particular, clearly defined and enforced private property rights are needed to encourage entrepreneurship and economic growth. However, institutional environments in Africa are both complex and challenging, and the creation of secure property rights is far from a straightforward process.

[Fabian Society- Winter 2007/2008: The Foreign Policy Issue](#)

On the back of 'Change the World' - the Fabian New Year Conference 2008 - the Fabian Review focuses on foreign policy. One year before George Bush leaves office, Foreign Secretary David Miliband talks about his European vision, the Society presents its 'Manifesto for the World after Bush' and six authors show us ways we can change the world.

[Demos- National Security for the Twenty-First Century](#)

This report argues that the British government lacks a clear and coherent view of the nature and priority of risks to the United Kingdom, and our national security architecture is flawed in its design. The government remains structured around functions and services with separate budgets for defence, foreign affairs, intelligence and development. Whitehall departments, intelligence agencies and the police forces that make up the security architecture have changed very little in the past two decades, despite the end of the Cold War and the attack on the World Trade Centre in 2001. Based on a 12 month research project, this pamphlet sets out an approach to national security drawing on reforms and innovations from governments elsewhere in Europe and the United States and suggests some new ideas designed to shape the future of the national security architecture.

[Compass- Towards a progressive immigration policy](#)

Challenging the standard view that pressure from migrants for better services is leading to a deterioration of standards, this report argues that the increased resources and greater diversity of experience which migrants bring with them, can contribute to the drive for a modern, more responsive, progressive direction for public policy. The report calls on the public, professionals and policy makers to assist in reframing the immigration debate.

[Demos- FYI: The new politics of personal information](#)

Following on the heels of recent losses of Government-held data, this timely report is intended to push the debate on personal information beyond the legal and technical language associated with data protection and identity management. The debate must move towards something that people –



through day-to-day experiences in their own lives – have a stake in. New trends of communication, customer services, personalisation, and issues of social inclusion and privacy are helping to create a new framework for the discussion of personal information.

[IPPR - Working out of Poverty: A study of the low paid and the 'working poor'](#)

This IPPR study shows that, despite the claim that 'work is the best route out of poverty' for many families, moving into work does not mean moving out of poverty. In fact nearly six in ten of all poor households have someone at work, and over a fifth of the UK workforce is low paid. This paper assesses the extent and nature of low pay and poverty in working households - as well as the relationship between the two. It also considers what the contribution of the minimum wage and working tax credit should be in tackling these injustices.

[DWP - Ready for work: full employment in our generation](#)

This Government policy paper shifts the emphasis from 'passive' to 'active' benefits in the welfare system, to achieve full employment and help eradicate child poverty. In a fresh approach to the welfare state, Peter Hain confirms that a raft of 50 changes to the current system of benefits and job-seeking support will be implemented over the next four years - with the bulk of the measures taking effect from next year and 2009. The core of the reforms will see hundreds of thousands of people on benefit moving from being passive recipients of cash handouts to job seekers actively seeking and preparing for work.

[JRF/ New Policy Institute- Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2007](#)

This is the annual report on the state of poverty and social exclusion in the United Kingdom from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the New Policy Institute. Some of the key findings are that:

- Half of children in poverty are still in working families
- Overall poverty levels in 2006 were the same as in 2002
- Child poverty in 2006 was still 500,000 higher than the target set for 2005
- Overall earnings inequalities are widening
- Disability rather than lone parenthood is the factor most likely to lead to worklessness

[Sutton Trust - Recent Changes in Intergenerational Mobility in Britain](#)

The brightest children in Britain's poorest homes are outperformed by the least gifted children from wealthy homes by the age of seven, according to this research. It concludes that social class is still the biggest predictor of school achievement, the likelihood of getting a degree and even a child's behaviour, suggesting that the advantages of being born in a privileged home have not changed in 30 years. The study found that 44% of young people from the richest fifth of the population had a degree in 2002, compared with only 10% from the poorest fifth. Children born in 2000 to the lowest income households and who scored some of the best results in tests aged three had, by the age of five, fallen behind. By the time they are seven, these youngsters will have been overtaken by the pupils from the wealthiest homes who came bottom in the tests aged three. Previous research suggested a dramatic decline in social mobility between 1958 and 1970. This latest research concludes that social mobility is now at a standstill.



[IFS- Racing away? Income inequality and the evolution of high incomes](#)

Since 1997, the UK's income distribution has become more equal across a broad swathe of incomes. But overall inequality on some measures has not fallen, in part because individuals with high incomes have seen relatively strong income growth. This briefing note analyses the characteristics of high-income individuals in the UK, how their incomes have evolved over the past decade, and how this compares with the rest of the population. The analysis is based on both the Survey of Personal Incomes, which is constructed by HMRC from income tax records, and the Households Below Average Income dataset.

[Progress- The Inclusive Society? Social Mobility in 21st Century Britain](#)

This pamphlet follows conversations that David Blunkett has conducted with members of the general public on the theme of social mobility in modern Britain. It pulls together some of the emerging themes, and makes some suggestions about what needs to be done to create a genuinely inclusive society. The aim is to raise awareness and generate meaningful debate about social mobility in Britain today, in a way that has the real-life implications for people at its centre.

[IPPR- Care in a New Welfare Society: Unpaid care, welfare and employment](#)

This report provides a policy framework for unpaid care in welfare and employment policy. It sets out a way to understand the value of care, and recognise the costs that caring involves. Laying out the principles on which care policy should be built, it goes on to outline what a welfare and employment policy that reflected these principles would look like. The report proposes reform of the central pillars of welfare and workplace policy: the social security and tax credit system, and flexible working and leave rights.

[Policy Exchange - Towards better Transport](#)

The new report concludes that traffic congestion is now endemic, affecting not just large cities but also the core motorway network and small towns. It currently costs the UK economy in the region of £20bn per year, a figure set to rise significantly in the coming years, harming our future economic competitiveness and growth. Solutions proposed by the report include infrastructure upgrades, funded by road user charges, and further devolution along the lines of Network rail.