



POLICY AND PARTNERSHIP NEWS

Edition 1 - Friday 22nd September 2006

REPORTS AND PUBLICATIONS

1. Class of 2006 - A lifebelt for the IPOD generation

Last year the independent think tank Reform published the first assessment of the economic position of young people in the UK aged 18-34. It collected evidence on indicators such as earnings, debt, returns to higher education and ability to enter the housing market. Its overall conclusion was pessimistic. It described young people as the IPOD generation: Insecure, Pressured, Over- taxed and Debt-ridden.

One year on Reform has returned to the evidence to discover whether the situation has changed. The data presented below shows that young people's economic profile remains difficult and in some areas has actually worsened.

Several important trends continue to undermine young people's financial security. For example, young people's earnings are rising by less than any other age group; young people are most likely to be in debt; house prices have continued to rise beyond the range of young people's earnings. The Department for Education and Skills has reported that the expansion of the graduate labour market is showing signs of depressing returns to degrees.

The effect of the Government's changes to the tax and benefit system between 1997 and 2005 has been to penalise young people further. This shows that changes in the tax/benefit system between 1997 and 2005 have benefited pensioners, households with children and unemployed people. Net losers include households where one or more people work and households without children. Young workers without children have paid higher taxes without receiving any compensation from new tax credits.

Looking into the near future, last year's report argued that people under 35 in the UK could become a crossover generation who pay the cost of the welfare state without being able to expect many of the benefits. The key policy proposal of the last year – the Pensions White Paper, published subsequently

to the final report of the Pensions Commission – has turned this fear into reality.

From 2012, young people can expect to pay high taxes and compulsory or near-compulsory payments towards higher education and pensions. This will impose a considerable hindrance on enterprise and wealth creation for young people and the whole economy.

The full report can be accessed at:

<http://www.reform.co.uk/filestore/pdf/Class%20of%202006,%20Reform,%20006.pdf>

2. **Reaching out: an action plan on social exclusion**

The Social Exclusion Task Force recently published the report *Reaching out: an action plan on social exclusion*. It sets out the work, across government, to improve the life chances and opportunities of the most disadvantaged and hard-to-reach in society. The plan is aimed at reducing and preventing the harm and cost caused by social exclusion to individuals, their families and our communities and is guided by five principles:

- early intervention
- systematically identifying what works
- better co-ordination of the many separate agencies
- personal rights and responsibilities
- intolerance of poor performance

Some of the highlights of the plan include:

Health-led support from pre-birth to age 2, focused on the most at-risk, with 10 demonstration projects, up-skilling of key staff such as midwives and health visitors, and revised commissioning guidance nationally.

Individual budget-holding for looked after children, to ensure every child in care has someone who understands their personal needs and has the leverage to secure the right support. Details to follow in the Green Paper in the Autumn.

Teenage pregnancy hotspots targeted with enhanced Social and Relationship Education; an expanded media campaign; and better access to contraceptives.

Multi-agency and family based approaches piloted for tackling behavioural and mental health problems in childhood.

Personalised, coordinated and tailored interventions piloted for adults with chaotic lives and multiple needs.

A pdf of the executive summary is available here:



reaching out.pdf

The full report can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/reaching_out/reaching_out.asp

3. Education at a Glance 2006 – OECD Report

Among key findings in the United Kingdom (UK) briefing, the review says that several indicators in fields other than education confirm the UK's prominence in the global knowledge economy. Among the 30 OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, only eight other nations have higher levels of GDP per capita and the United Kingdom has seen robust productivity growth over the last decade. The UK stands out in showing consistent rises in educational investment, in terms of a rising share of GDP being devoted to education. At primary, secondary and tertiary levels, spending per student is above the OECD average.

This year's education indicators also point to strong performance and progress in the UK's education system, in terms of the expected years of education where the UK now tops the OECD countries and in terms of an above-average rise in investments in education, particularly in schools, or with regard to access to and use of new technologies in schools. The UK has also significantly improved its relative standing in the share of adults with high level qualifications over successive generations, but progress has now levelled off and, with below average entry rates to higher education in the UK, there is the prospect that the UK could slip below the OECD average on this measure.

The earnings and employment benefits for completing higher education remain well above the OECD average and continue to increase. Low drop-out suggest that higher education institutions operate efficiently. While the indicators provide no clear-cut explanations of the observed decline in the relative standing of the UK in higher education participation, one contributing factor, on which this edition sheds light for the first time, may be that the array of public subsidies for tertiary study in other countries may be better geared to encourage participation.

In the UK, a significant share of individuals does not complete upper secondary education and faces considerable and increasing penalties in the labour market, more so than the OECD average.

For further information, the UK section of the report is available at:

<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/32/50/37392956.pdf>

4. Economic Prosperity – the Local Perspective

A transcript of the speech made by Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Ruth Kelly at the Lyons Inquiry conference on 14

September 2006. She talks about the crucial role and contribution that local government makes to economic performance.

The full transcript can be read at the link below:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1502944>

5. 'Working Together' - United Kingdom National Action Plan on Social Inclusion 2006-2008

'Working Together' is the third UK National Action Plan (NAP) on social exclusion. It explains how people from across the UK will be co-operating in the coming three years to tackle social exclusion and make a decisive impact on poverty. Across the European Union, 25 countries will produce NAPs this month, as part of a co-ordinated strategy aimed at increasing social cohesion by sharing understanding of what works.

'Working Together' follows an agreed format for NAPs and addresses shared social inclusion objectives. The title of the NAP reflects the vital contribution that people at all levels of UK society - and in particular people experiencing poverty - have made to the development of a social inclusion strategy.

There are three parts to the NAP.

Section 1 - highlights the key challenges that need to be addressed as part of the commitment to tackling poverty. These are summarised under five key headings: the economic situation; child poverty; access to employment; access to quality services; and discrimination.

Sections 2-5 - outline the four key policy areas which the UK will be pursuing during the period 2006–2008 which will best contribute to the achievement of the goal of making a decisive impact on poverty: eliminating child poverty; increasing labour market participation; improving access to quality services; and tackling discrimination.

Section 6 - outlines the extent to which partnership working with others outside government has led to the design and delivery of policies. It reflects the wide range of 'actors' from the devolved administrations, central and local government and the voluntary and community sector who are increasingly working together to ensure that social inclusion issues are mainstreamed across all relevant policies and services, and how they are working together in their delivery.

The report can be accessed by clicking on the link below:

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications/dwp/2006/nap/uknaprev150906.pdf>

The NAP also highlights the Get Heard project. Led by people outside government, it's the largest project undertaken in the UK to involve people with first hand experience of poverty and social exclusion to give their views on government policies on social exclusion.

Workshops have been taking place in all parts of the UK over the last 18 months. Further information about the Get Heard project can be found on the [UK CAP website](#) .

6. Government Action Plan – Implementing the Women and Work Commission Recommendations

This action plan sets out how the Government is responding to the Women and Work Commission's report, *Shaping a Fairer Future*. It describes actions that can be taken to improve the prospects and career options of women in the labour market now, as well as those that will influence the choices of future generations and achieve culture change in workplaces over a longer timeframe.

The Women and Work Commission's report, *Shaping a Fairer Future*, was published in February 2006. The Commission looked in detail at the causes of the pay and opportunities gap between men and women, taking evidence from a wide range of stakeholders and drawing upon the most recent academic work in the field. They found that women are crowded into a narrow range of lower-paying occupations, which do not make the best use of their skills. These patterns of "occupational segregation", plus lower levels of qualification and skills (though younger women have higher levels of qualifications than younger men), time out of the labour market, the greater incidence of part-time working among women, and "unobserved factors", including discrimination, combine to create a pattern of lower pay and fewer job opportunities for women on average. The problem is multi-faceted and deep-rooted and the response must be wide-ranging and aimed at all its drivers.

This action plan should therefore be seen in the context of this persistent difference in women's and men's experience of the labour market. Some actions will have immediate benefits for the women working today. Others are aimed at cultural change, the impact of which will be felt over the coming years and decades. The central theme of all of the proposed actions is to give women greater power to choose the working patterns and employment that best suit them without resulting in disadvantage in their pay.

There are now plans to extend the right to request flexible work to the carers of adults. Maternity and adoption pay will be extended from 6 months to 9 months from April 2007, towards the goal of one year by the end of this Parliament. At the same time, the length of service requirement for additional maternity leave so all employed women will be removed and all women will be able to take one year's maternity leave. A new right for fathers to take additional paternity leave and pay will be introduced and this will enable parents to share childcare responsibilities in the child's first year.

The introduction of the public sector duty on gender equality in April 2007 will bring a significant shift by elevating gender equality issues into public sector employment practice and delivery. All public sector organisations will have the duty to positively promote equality between men and women. Sitting alongside the specific policies that are outlined in the action plan is the general requirement being placed on the whole of the public sector from April to carefully assess the impact of all their policies and activities to ensure that these promote equality of opportunity between women and men.

The full action plan be accessed at the link below:

http://www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/women_work_commission/

7. Migration and the UK Labour Market

This special briefing, assembled from various statistical sources, deals with the impact of migration from the Eastern European Accession States on the UK labour market.

The decision to allow unrestricted access to migrants from 8 European Accession States was accompanied by some very inaccurate forecasts of the number of migrants likely to enter the UK from Eastern Europe. The far higher than expected numbers of arrivals has been linked in some media coverage to the recent rise in unemployment. However, although Eastern European migration has probably been higher than anticipated, it is also likely that the data source (the Workers Registration Scheme) referred to in recent public debate has led to an over-estimate of their numbers.

In recent years, there has indeed been rapid growth in net migration to the UK, but only the smaller part of this has been from the European Economic Area. Immigration has certainly been economically beneficial in that it has allowed employment and output to grow without stoking up wage inflation, but its labour market impacts are very hard to identify with any degree of certainty. There are currently apparently contradictory trends in the labour market, with both unemployment and employment rising. Uncertainties over the labour market impacts of migration may mean less willingness to allow unrestricted access to migrants from the next round of Accession States in 2007.

More of this briefing can be found at the LGIU website at:

<http://www.lgiu.gov.uk/briefing-detail.jsp?&id=1168&md=0§ion=briefing>

8. Floor Targets Interactive

Floor Targets Interactive (FTI) is a web-based system for monitoring progress towards Public Service Agreements. FTI enables users to examine performance at the national, regional and local levels.

The FTI website is in line with the new Floor Targets generated by the 2004 Spending Review

The data underpinning the system has been brought together from across Government to provide a single resource for users. FTI allows users to interrogate the data to produce a range of analyses and illustrative maps.

Where it is available, data going back to 1997 has been included on FTI. The system covers all English local authorities down to district level. The focus is on the local authorities that receive Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF).

The information was last updated in August 2006

<http://www.fti.neighbourhood.gov.uk>

IN THE NEWS...

Train to Gain employer training scheme goes national

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2006_0129

More people in work, claimant count down

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2006/sep/empl060-stat130906-lms.asp>

Ed Miliband pledges £1.1 million to promote volunteering among hard-to-reach groups

<http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=226627&NewsAreaID=2>

Government information sharing can help protect the most disadvantaged

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/newsroom/news_releases/2006/060913_dca.asp

Strong performance and progress in UK education

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2006_0124

Professional Recognition Learning and Skills Scheme

<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/readwriteplus/PRLS>

Pilot projects to protect vulnerable workers

<http://www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=226137&NewsAreaID=2>

From the playground to the boardroom: Action plan to break down barriers to women's achievement

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1002882&PressNoticeID=2239>

EVENTS

1. National Skills for Life Conferences 2006

The national *Skills for Life* conferences will be held in three locations across the country this autumn. The conferences are aimed at all people working in *Skills for Life* and offer the opportunity to find out the latest about *Skills for Life*, participate in workshops and discussions, and feedback views and opinions relating to *Skills for Life*. There is no charge for attending the conferences.

Working in Partnership is the theme of this year's conferences. The partnership that the Government has forged with the wide range of local, regional and national organisations involved in the *Skills for Life* programme has proved hugely successful over the past five years. But the major challenges that remain will require even greater collaboration between policy-makers, practitioners, managers and researchers in the next phase of *Skills for Life*.

- To consolidate, strengthen and celebrate the *Skills for Life* community's collaborative efforts to improve the life chances of the millions of learners it serves.
- To provide a forum for practitioners to discuss and contribute to the future direction of the strategy.
- To showcase some of the most successful *Skills for Life* projects.
- To share the good practice that many providers have developed.
- To highlight the key messages from research for policy and practice.

This year's conferences will be held on the following dates:

- **Friday, November 3**, London
- **Tuesday, November 21**, Birmingham
- **Monday, November 27**, York

[Click here to book your place](#)

2. **LGA Urban Conference & Exhibition - 'thriving local economies and cohesive local neighbourhoods' – 5-6 February 2007**

The 2007 Urban Conference and Exhibition 'thriving local economies and cohesive local neighbourhoods' will take place at the International Centre for Life, Newcastle upon Tyne, on Monday 5 & Tuesday 6 February. The event is being hosted by the LGA Urban Commission, which represents more than 280 urban councils. Further information, together with delegate booking forms and accommodation booking forms will be circulated shortly.

Contact: LGconnect on 020 7664 3131 or info@lga.gov.uk for more information

3. **Joint LGIU/Knowsley Council Event - Working together to improve employment rates**

To be held on 19 October 2006, at The Kirkby Suite, Knowsley

Two major changes in governance are impacting on the way economic development and employment initiatives are being tackled. By 2007 **Local Area Agreements** will be built into all unitary and top tier councils. Agreed outcomes, indicators and targets will be based on an economic development block enabling authorities and their partners to flexibly pool funding and deliver services in new ways. At the same time, the **Cities Strategy** will allow local providers and partners to come together in a single consortium and provide solutions to the specific problems that prevent people getting into the labour market. These two agendas open up exciting new opportunities to tackle worklessness.

This is a national conference that will be an opportunity to hear from City Strategy Pathfinders on their emerging ideas, national speakers and also from Knowsley Council. Knowsley Council was awarded beacon council status for its initiatives on worklessness. It has developed a leading Employment and Skills Strategy with all partners in the area as the foundation of the fourth block of its LAA, and has also just set up a Life Chances task

force. Hear how partners can work together, from PCTs to Trade Union education, and from RDAs to Jobcentre Plus.

Rate for voluntary sector and trade unionists -- £70 plus VAT

Rate for local authority LGiU affiliates -- 99 plus VAT

Rate for non-affiliates and other organisations -- £135 plus VAT

To reserve your place, complete the booking form at:

www.olive360.com/lgiuknowsley

4. Halton Strategic Partnership Conference - 4th October 2006 9.30am - 1.00pm, Halton Stadium, Widnes.

The event will give partners a chance to bring the wider partnership together and look at the progress that's been made over the last year. This year's conference is themed around the future for partnerships, and we're aiming to provide a fast-paced and lively event.

The day will include:

- An awards ceremony for the best projects of 2005/06
- Video cases studies of our work
- A keynote address from record-breaking sailor Dee Caffari
- A look at the future for partnerships from regional and local perspectives

If you would like to join us at the conference please register your attendance by emailing lsp@halton.gov.uk

Alternatively you can telephone on **0151 471 7528**. A buffet lunch will be provided at the end of the event - please let the LSP team know if you have any special dietary, access or other requirements.

HALTON NEWS

1. Latest Population Estimates for Halton

The ONS recently published a revised population figure for Halton at 118,800 in 2005. The figures are always produced a year behind, and are slightly down on the 2004 figure of 118,900. The attached report describes the main trends overall throughout Greater Merseyside, and in the different age groups in more detail for those who require this additional information.



Population Summary
Report Fina...

2. The Enterprise Game

A message from Andy Page at Halton Education Business Partnership:

On both Tuesday mornings October 10 and 17, Halton EBP will be running The Enterprise Game with about 80-90 Year 11 students at Fairfield High school in Widnes. If you have not seen the game in action, would you consider "learning by playing" and acting as "Bank" to one of the 15-20 Games we envisage taking place on either morning?

Full briefing would be provided at **9.15am that morning, the students play from 10.00am and will finish at 12.30.** In short the Game provides students with a powerful insight into how business works.

The Enterprise Game will be officially and nationally launched on November 16 at Halton Stadium ~ this is your chance for a sneak preview! We think it is an educational success story waiting to happen.

I hope you will consider joining us on **either morning, October 10 or 17.**

If you would like to volunteer please contact Andy at;
andy.page@halton.gov.uk

3. He (or She) Who Dares...

The attached poster gives details of HVA's latest venture, the Social Acquaintances Society. For more information and to get on the mailing list email Adam at adam@haltonva.org.uk



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CAMPAIGN.doc

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