

Motion nr. 13

Name of the person introducing the motion: Chris Whitwood and Arnie Craven

On behalf of the party: Yorkshire Party

Title: Addressing regional inequality and poverty in the United Kingdom.

The Statement on Visit to the United Kingdom by Professor Philip Alston, United Nations Special Rapporteur on extreme poverty and human rights [i], declares that “14 million people, a fifth of the [UK] population, live in poverty. Four million of these are more than 50% below the poverty line [ii], and 1.5 million are destitute, unable to afford basic essentials[iii]. The widely respected Institute for Fiscal Studies predicts a 7% rise in child poverty between 2015 and 2022, and various sources predict child poverty rates of as high as 40%.”[iv]

European Union Statistics on Income and Living Conditions [EU-SILC] indicates that disposable income inequality is greater than in neighbouring countries [v] and the five regions with the lowest purchasing power standard [PPS] per capita are in the United Kingdom, three of which are in areas represented European Free Alliance member parties [South Yorkshire, Yorkshire Party; Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, Mebyon Kernow; and West Wales and The Valleys, Plaid Cymru].[vi]

The European Free Alliance:

Calls on the government of the United Kingdom to implement the recommendations of the aforementioned United Nations report [see appendix].

Demands that powers and funding to tackle poverty are passed to devolved nations and regions in the United Kingdom and that where regional devolved bodies do not exist, democratically accountable assemblies should be established.

Reaffirms the principle of subsidiarity so that when the United Kingdom leaves the European Union [Brexit] powers returned to Westminster are further passed down to regional/national governments wherever possible.

Calls on European governments to work in partnership with regional bodies in order to prevent similar instances of poverty and inequality occurring as the result of public policy in other European nations.

Appendix: United Nations report recommendations:

The UK should introduce a single measure of poverty and measure food security.

The government should initiate an expert assessment of the cumulative impact of tax and spending decisions since 2010 and prioritise the reversal of particularly regressive measures, including the benefit freeze, the two-child limit, the benefit cap, and the reduction of the housing benefit for under-occupied social rented housing.

It should ensure local governments have the funds needed to tackle poverty at the community level and take varying needs and tax bases into account in the ongoing Fair Funding Review.

The Department of Work and Pensions should conduct an independent review of the effectiveness of reforms to welfare conditionality and sanctions introduced since 2012, and should immediately instruct its staff to explore more constructive and less punitive approaches to encouraging compliance.

The five-week delay in receiving benefits under Universal Credit should be eliminated, separate payments should be made to different household members, and weekly or fortnightly payments should be facilitated.

Transport, especially in rural areas, should be considered an essential service, equivalent to water and electricity, and the government should regulate the sector to the extent necessary to ensure that people living in rural areas are adequately served. Abandoning people to the private market in relation to a service that affects every dimension of their basic well-being is incompatible with human rights requirements.

As the country moves toward Brexit, the Government should adopt policies designed to ensure that the brunt of the resulting economic burden is not borne by its most vulnerable citizens.

References:

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- ii. Social Metrics Commission, "A new measure of poverty for the UK," p. 97., September 2018, <https://socialmetricscommission.org.uk/MEASURING-POVERTY-FULL-REPORT.pdf>,
- iii. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Destitution in the UK 2018, 7 June, 2018, pp. 2-3 <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/destitutionuk-2018/>
- iv. Institute for Fiscal Studies, "Living standards, poverty and inequality in the UK: 2017-18 to 2021-22," 2 November, 2017 <https://www.ifs.org.uk/publications/10028>,
- v. Eurostat, Gini coefficient of equivalised disposable income - EU-SILC survey, 6 November, 2018 http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?query=BOOKMARK_DS-053230_QID_152CE537_UID_-3F171EB0&layout=TIME,C,X,O;GEO,L,Y,O;INDIC_IL,L,Z,O;INDICATORS,C,Z,1;&zSelection=DS-053230INDICATORS.OBS_FLAG;DS-053230INDIC_IL,GINI_HND;&rankName1=INDIC-IL_1_2_-1_2&rankName2=INDICATORS_1_2_-1_2&rankName3=TIME_1_0_0_0&rankName4=GEO_1_2_0_1&sortR=ASC_8&sortC=ASC_-1_FIRST&rStp=&cStp=&rDCh=&cDCh=&rDM=true&cDM=true&footnes=false&empty=false&wai=false&time_mode=NONE&time_most_recent=false&lang=EN&cfo=%23%23%23%2C%23%23%23.%23%23%23,
- vi. Eurostat, Gross domestic product (GDP) at current market prices by NUTS 2 regions, 9 April, 2018 http://appsso.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/nui/show.do?query=BOOKMARK_DS-513634_QID_4F7314C9_UID_-3F171EB0&layout=TIME,C,X,O;GEO,L,Y,O;UNIT,L,Z,O;INDICATORS,C,Z,1;&zSelection=DS-513634INDICATORS.OBS_FLAG;DS-513634UNIT,PPS_HAB_EU;&rankName1=UNIT_1_2_-1_2&rankName2=INDICATORS_1_2_-1_2&rankName3=TIME_1_0_0_0&rankName4=GEO_1_2_0_1&sortR=DESC_9&sortC=ASC_-1_FIRST&rStp=&cStp=&rDCh=&cDCh=&rDM=true&cDM=true&footnes=false&empty=false&wai=false&time_mode=NONE&time_most_recent=false&lang=EN&cfo=%23%23%23%2C%23%23%23.%23%23%23