

The Labour Party National Policy Forum Consultation 2019

Members Policy Review Workshop June 22nd 2019

- Rebuilding a just social security system – Work, Pensions and Equality Policy Commission

Question 1 Funding:

Answers

1a) iii. Reflect peoples particular needs

1b) Yes. With regard to a minimum income standard household needs could be measured to take into account real costs e.g. in a rural area like Southwest Devon transport is essential but services poor, housing costs are high, income and jobs low. Also taken into account should be family composition, carers, young carers, health and social care needs, young people. Many organisations such as CPAG, WBG, NOA have already undertaken research.

1c) Yearly reviews reflecting cost of living, cuts, spending in this area, demographic. Publicise real increases in spending not figures.

1d) Introduce the real living wage

1e) Increase corporation tax, land tax, taxation generally, close loopholes, introduce higher taxes for gambling.

Question 2 Sanctions and conditionality:

2a) NO!!

2b) Having a range of suitable training according to age, capacity, capability, functional deficits such as literacy and numeracy, including computer skills, with work experience or job possibility at the end of

this. Members were divided as to whether this should be mandatory or non mandatory.

2c) YES. It should reflect caring responsibilities, educational need/ experience, age. In terms of rural areas, training needs to be local.

Question 3 Disabled People:

STOP USING THIS TERM! People with different ability/ disabilities.

3a) Bring back specialist services and dedicated trained staff, re-instate the Independent Living Fund, re- instate Disability Premiums for those unfortunate enough to have been moved onto Universal Credit (at a loss of £300 a week).

Bring back support services that have been cut by councils at the sharp end of government cuts. Bring back floating support, create proper re- skilling centres, make assessments of learning style, compensatory actions/devices, make use of technology, improve literacy and numeracy.

Mandatory number of people with disabilities employed in companies over a certain size (like BAME).

Consult people with disabilities to form and inform policy, create a space within Labour for this.

3b) By the old system of an occupational health doctor/ trained specialist to assess and suggest possible work capacity. Make this inhouse and do not outsource.

3c) As needed by the person

3d) Culture in DWP needs reversing. End the hostile environment and lack of personal dignity imposed by having to attend Job Centres where there are : NO DISABLED TOILETS, no privacy when discussing personal matters, no professional specialisms. STOP the roll out of UC, revers those already moved back to Legacy payments. Educate staff on ability/ disability.

Question 4 Design and Administration of Social Security:

*** we strongly believe that stopping to roll out of UC is NOT enough. Losses already suffered by those transferred to UC must be compensated***

4a) Elements of social security benefits should be paid separately. Housing Benefit should be paid separately and also Child Benefit. The bedroom tax must be scrapped. A return to legacy payments.

4b) Payment should be made according to need with the option of weekly payments to make budgeting easier. There needs to be flexibility.

4c) Priority should be given to the main caregiver, and child benefit to the main care giver. By properly funding refuges women have the chance to escape domestic violence. Families must have all children taken into account for payment of social security. There must be no wait for payments.

4d) Yes

4e) Both online and face to face, with help given at the place of meeting. Face to face meetings need to take place where there is privacy, respect, a pleasant building with toilet facilities and refreshment available. The meeting place needs to be accessible.

4f) By implementing the Living Wage.

4g) Localisation should be reversed.

Question 5 Children and Families:

5a) Removal of 2 child limit and Bedroom Tax, restoration of Sure Start, Crisis Loans, introduction of essential items loans (eg for cookers, fridges, washing machine). Funding of free nursery places, after school provision, free school meals restored for low income families, holiday provision, youth clubs, IT facilities and homework clubs, recognition of rural differences eg transport and time to get to work.

5b) Assessing according to need, allowances for foster carers.

5c) By legislation : social care needs completely overhauling: carers allowance is a joke and an insult: nursery care/ employment/ employers also have responsibility for this.

Question 6 Employment Support :

6a) Careers advice, free further education, available jobs! Skills Centres, specialist work coaches, mentors, specialist advice. Remove fear of return to work and then losing job by making a return to benefits within a year not subject to having to re apply. Top up if paid work is less than benefits because of costs. Nursery places and payment of nursery fees in advance.

6b) YES

6c) Local, tailored, mix of work experience, training, college courses, addressing functional deficits such as literacy and numeracy, testing for dyslexia, dyspraxia, etc. Support for people who cannot return to work, re training. Home visits, with mentor support.

By trained educators, life coaches, counsellors, trained medical personnel, practitioners.

6d) Stop employing G4S! Give privacy, access to toilet facilities, refreshment, have mobile units for rural areas, drop in and advice sessions, easier accessibility, make benefits agency separate from Job Centres, accessible technology courses, digital help.

Local job centres especially in rural areas. In our area of southwest Devon job centres have closed leaving people with a four hour journey for a distance of 12 miles, and cost of over £6.

6e) Properly run Job Centres with actual jobs, specifically to help a variety of job seekers. Magazine type programme on TV to help people look for work, local programmes made by young people, people with disabilities/ different abilities, and those successfully finding work. Youtube videos and tutorials, with training slots.

Question 7 Women and Equalities:

7a) i) Stop hostile environment in Job Centres and the culture that exists in Job Centres.

ii) stop scapegoating in media

iii) enforceable legislation, eg letting agencies discriminating against those on housing benefit, media must be held accountable for creating and inciting discrimination

b) i) communication between departments, multiagency but also inclusive and represented by those with lived experience (9 protected groups, to which we would also add young people). Look at all departments – make impact assessments mandatory and public scrutiny of these. Accountability and set it up for the future so that it cannot be reversed by a change of government.

ii) code of conduct enshrined in law with penalties.

7c) As above – someone responsible for this policy in each department, a 'select committee' from each government department.

Question 8 Pay Gaps:

8a) 9 characteristics, size of company, publication of pay scales, proper allowance for gaps in employment history, recognition of value of part time work, proper pension provision, honour WASPI demands, proper pensions in old age in line with EU, reverse SMI withdrawal for Pension Credit, reverse age discrimination in couple being able to apply for Pension Credit (the latter are institutions that affect women adversely).

Declare and reduce top to bottom ratios in companies.

8b) if blatant disregard, financial penalties, but need exemptions.

8 c) d) e) not answered due to time constraints.

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