

The Centre for Social Justice

Established in 2004 the CSJ is an independent think tank that studies the root causes of poverty and aims to address them through practical policy interventions. The CSJ's vision is to give people in the UK who are experiencing the worst multiple disadvantage and injustice, every possible opportunity to reach their full potential.

The principles behind this vision are:

- A mandate for the whole of the UK, not just isolated areas;
- A focus on the bottom 20% and those who, without external intervention, may never fulfil their potential;
- An agenda that is evidence-based, targeted towards long-term solutions, and harnesses the best grass-roots practice;
- A commitment to providing a route out of poverty via a hand-up, not just a hand-out;
- A commitment to the transformation of lives, not just alleviating symptoms.

Many of these people had given up on politicians because they felt politicians had given up on them. The political process had become irrelevant in their lives; Westminster was failing to play its part in getting to grips with Britain's deepest social problems. It was from this experience that Iain founded the CSJ, to bring practical political solutions to Britain's social problems.

The CSJ delivers empirical, fully-funded policy solutions to address the scale of the social justice problems facing the UK. Our research is informed by expert working groups comprising prominent academics, practitioners, and policy makers who, collectively, bring vast expertise in relevant fields.

The majority of the CSJ's work is organised around five pathways to poverty, first identified in our ground-breaking 2007 report, *Breakthrough Britain*. These pathways are interconnected and many people trapped in poverty experience more than one of these problems. Our work seeks to identify these issues and to help people escape the disadvantage that holds them back.

Achievements

Since 2004 the CSJ has put forward more than 800 policy proposals, spanning more than 20 research themes, each of which are designed to make a transformative difference in people's lives. Many of these have been adopted and implemented by government. Examples include:

***Breakthrough Britain* (2007):** was hailed as a landmark research paper in defining Britain's social problems. Prime Minister David Cameron described it as 'a major influence on this Government'. The report provided practical policy solutions to meet social needs such as the creation of Pioneer Schools (which became Free Schools) as well as the expansion of Credit Unions to help tackle serious personal debt.

***Early Intervention Good Parents: Great Kids, Better Citizens*, (2008):** provided evidence of how early intervention can break intergenerational cycles of under-achievement and multiple deprivation. It emphasised the importance of addressing cultural and material factors of a child's home life by providing evidence that, by 11 years of age, it is often too late to make a substantial difference, whereas intervention in early childhood is most effective. The report, co-authored by Labour MP Graham Allen, attracted cross-party consensus and was a vital precursor to the two subsequent Early Intervention Reports commissioned by the Coalition Government.

***Dynamic Benefits* (2009):** first made the case for a 'universal' benefit to create a 'simpler, more cost-effective system that provides greater rewards for work'. This was the foundation for the

Government's Universal Credit policy that was introduced as part of the Government's Welfare Reform Act 2012 and is currently being rolled-out across Britain.

***Rethinking Child Poverty* (2012):** called for reform to the way child poverty is measured. It called for the Government to take into consideration more representative indicators beyond simply a relative measure of household income such as educational attainment and worklessness. These proposals are now included in the Welfare Reform and Work Bill. Appropriate recognition and measurement of these factors will help to focus Government interventions on tackling child poverty at its root cause rather than merely treating the symptoms.

***It Happens Here* (2013):** shone a light on the horrific reality of human trafficking and modern slavery in the UK. As a direct result of this report, the government passed the Modern Slavery Act 2015, one of the first pieces of legislation in the world to specifically address slavery and trafficking in the 21st century.

In June 2015, the Prime Minister delivered a speech to the CSJ in which he cited the CSJ's 'five pathways' as the principle drivers of poverty in the UK as he set out his mission to transform the lives of Britain's poorest. Following this, in January 2016, he re-stated his mission to launch an 'all out assault on poverty'. His speech on Life Chances once again focused on addressing the root causes of poverty, announcing funding for parenting and a new approach to treating addiction. We are currently working with the Government to provide expertise and input across different areas of policy.

We will continue to work with the Government – and indeed politicians from all major parties – to push forward ideas and policies that will promote social justice. Our past successes serve as a reminder of what can be achieved, as well as point us towards what remains to be done.

The Future

The CSJ's future priorities will continue to focus on providing opportunities to those who are most disadvantaged in society. Our policy priorities for the coming year include:

- **Disability:** advocating for policies that address the disability employment gap;
- **Homelessness:** seeking policy solutions to the problem of homelessness;
- **Productivity:** addressing the UK's productivity problem to increase the nation's economic efficiency and ultimately raise living standards;
- **Life Chances:** delivering practical solutions to the Government's Life Chances Strategy;
- **Modern Slavery:** furthering the research behind and application of Britain's Modern Slavery Act. The CSJ pioneered this work back in 2013 and we will re-visit the issue again in 2016/17.
- **Welfare:** continuing to advocate for reform of the welfare system to ensure that it supports the poorest and most vulnerable people in the UK.

In addition to producing rigorous policy papers, the CSJ will continue to host events with leading politicians, academics, and thought-leaders to further the debate about social justice in the UK. These will range from major speeches to smaller roundtable discussions.

Our political engagement work seeks to influence policy and lead the debate on social justice issues. Our influencing work spans our research agenda, however we take a long term interest in specific issues, such as family stability, which we promote through ongoing campaigns and political engagement to promote policies that strengthen families and relationships.

Our political engagement work focuses on influencing real change through key political moments of the year and by building relationships with political figures who have a commitment to the social justice agenda.