

# END CHILD POVERTY once and for all

Charity No. 1099008

Summer 2005

## Poverty: Bringing it home



In January, ECP hit the road with its campaign road show *Poverty: Bringing Home*.

**Lesley Taylor for Government Office South East at the ECP seminar in Oxford**

Covering eight regions within 12 weeks with a seminar and exhibition in each region, End Child Poverty managed to develop strategic discussion at a regional level and bring the issues of child poverty to the wider public.

When we kicked off the road-show in Newcastle, the campaign team could not have anticipated the amount of professional, public and media interest the road-show would generate. By the time we had concluded with a seminar in Birmingham and the exhibition in Coventry,

the road-show had attracted over 150 media and press stories.



Whilst ECP obviously had its campaign aims of highlighting the extent of child poverty, its causes and effects, as a staff team we were to learn a great deal about the public's understanding of poverty. The seminar provided a much-needed forum to allow councils, regional government, the voluntary and community sector and trade unions to meet and discuss regionally specific issues.

It also created a chance for many of the delegates to hear some of the detailed analysis surrounding poverty by some of UK's most prominent academics working in the field.

The seminars allowed chief executives and cabinet members of councils and civil servants within regional government to hear some of the extraordinary work being delivered by sure start programmes and the voluntary and community organisations within their region.

Perhaps the most significant outcome was the strategic connections that were made across the sectors and the subsequent discussions. A



**ECP's Alifia Chakera in discussion at the Victoria quarter shopping centre in Leeds**

will be published shortly, highlighting many of the discussions that took place with the seminars.

*Poverty: Bringing it Home* was a great success for ECP. It struck a nerve with the media and sections of the public who clearly recognised that the scandal of child poverty is a cross party issue.



**Dr Liz Dowler addressing the west midlands seminar**

But this is just the end of one campaign for ECP. As we enter a new parliamentary term, to reach all party support for ending child poverty by 2020, the coalition has its work cut out. 3.5 million children remain in poverty and the urgent case for greater social investment must be made continuously through collaboration and creative campaigns.



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### 10 for a million

On January 19, ECP launched its *10 for a million* charter.

Prepared in consultation and endorsed by over 40 members and supporters, the charter looks towards 2010 and makes ten progressive recommendations – to lift a further million children out of poverty.

- 1 Raise child benefit and pay an equal rate to all children.
- 2 Extend child benefit to pregnant women.
- 3 Link the child element in tax credits and benefits to average incomes or prices.
- 4 Take action, including extending the ten year childcare strategy, to help groups facing multiple barriers to work, including minority ethnic groups, disabled parents and parents of disabled children.
- 5 Ensure the National Minimum Wage provides a living wage.
- 6 Reform the Social Fund and provide grants for essential items and at times of key transition.
- 7 Ensure that all children, regardless of immigration status, qualify for benefits and for inclusion in mainstream services.
- 8 Reform education funding formulae at local and national level to give greater weighting to poor children.
- 9 Ensure poverty stops at the school gate.
- 10 Poverty proof all policies across all government departments.

ECP has initiated the *10 for a million* postcard campaign. This has been made possible by the incredible help from our members and supporters who are currently distributing the postcard via their networks. The aim is that all MPs will receive several of these postcards from their constituents and that this will compel them to respond to the recommendations within the postcard.

Again thanks to all the organisations that have supported us in this action. The demand for the postcard has surpassed expectations and if your organisation is able to distribute the *10 for a million* postcards please contact ECP directly we would love to hear from you **before the end of July**. Contact Laura Payne [laura@ecpc.org.uk](mailto:laura@ecpc.org.uk) 020 7843 1917

### A word from our Campaign Director



Jonathan Stearn, gives his view of the general election:

*We have had the election - 24 hours of wall-to-wall politics - yet the battle against child poverty still remains one of the government's least promoted policies. Back in January we asked the public if they knew the government was committed to ending child poverty. The majority - 62 per cent said they had never heard of the pledge. ECP, as ever, has tried to change all that.*

*Following the roadshow where we managed to make front page news and radio news headlines, End Child Poverty worked with the St Thomas More's school to create an alternative Queen's Speech, which got into the Sun, on breakfast TV and on the Today programme. Thanks to Clifford Longley, the need to end child poverty in the UK was also on thought for the day.*

*Thankfully the commitment to end child poverty was in the Labour Party manifesto, the Conservatives had a reference to child poverty in theirs and the Liberal Democrats did mention child poverty in one of their mini manifestos.*

*But the main parties did little to lift it from the page. Peter Hyman - the former head of No10's strategic communications unit predicted, on BBC's Newsnight, that the battle against child poverty would surface in the election campaign - he was wrong.*

*Before the election, the then Department for Work and Pensions secretary Alan Johnson responded to ECP by promising, at a Save the Children conference, that the government would start shouting from the rooftops.*

*David Blunkett, who has taken over Alan Johnson's job, picked up the gauntlet and, at the ECP's alternative Queen's Speech, affirmed that he was a '100% committed to shouting from the roof tops about the Government's achievements in reducing child poverty and equally, its commitment to tackle it.'*

*Well, End Child Poverty has acquired a loud hailer. We are happy to lend it to any minister or opposition spokesperson keen to let the public hear loud and clear their commitment to end child poverty once and for all.*



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### Children Speak

UK poverty campaigners continually struggle to illustrate the corrosive nature of poverty on children's lives. On the 16 May End Child Poverty entrusted this task to the talented drama group of St Thomas More school of North London, who through a series of sketches, including an enactment of the Queen's Speech, outlined their vision for the next parliamentary term and for a Britain free of child poverty.

These young people and their drama teachers effortlessly demonstrated what it means to only have half a glass of milk for breakfast, being without a cooker, missing out on school trips or simply not being able to afford the correct and fitted uniform.



New Work and Pensions Secretary David Blunkett MP came to listen to what these young people had to say.

Although the event was aimed at the media ECP were delighted by the support given to the students by new and re-elected MPs, government officers and ECP members. Their performance was excellent, well received and did attract media interest.

ECP will be watching the progress of the bills outlined in the real Queen's Speech - including education and welfare reform bills - and will get involved in lobbying as and when appropriate. ECP will be consulting with our members on the implication of impending legislation.

#### Recent publications of interest:

CPAG – Welfare benefits and tax credits handbook 2005/2006. *This comprehensive guide is a 'must have' for any office working with benefit claimants or dealing with social policy.*  
£33.00 available from [bookorders@cpag.org.uk](mailto:bookorders@cpag.org.uk)

IPPR - Maintaining Momentum: extending social mobility and life chances from early years to adulthood. *This volume outlines areas which have to be addressed in order to halt growing inequalities in British society.*  
£12.95 available from [www.ippr.org.uk](http://www.ippr.org.uk) or by calling ippr on 020 7470 6123

#### Forthcoming events:

##### June

- 17 CPAG in Scotland annual conference
- 18-25 National Childminding Week  
[www.ncma.org.uk](http://www.ncma.org.uk)
- 20 NFPI, CAF/CASS and Sure Start – Family relationships conference.
- 20-26 Refugee Week
- 21 Caritas – Open family one day seminar
- 27 BAAF conference on local authorities and private fostering
- 29 CPAG seminar at Social Policy Association, Bath
- 29-30 Children Now extended school conference, London

##### July

- 2 MPH – G8 event, Edinburgh
- 12 ECP, NSA conference “Child Poverty: education, well being and life chances conference”
- 13 BOND/MPH Parliamentary launch of campaign for G8 UK presidency
- 20 CPAG publication – Helter Skelter: disability and poverty
- 21 Parliament rises for the summer
- 22 Barnardos conference on children, young people and sexual exploitation.