

PROSE NOT POETRY: DELIVERING FROM DAY 1

July 2024



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About the Centre for Social Justice

Established in 2004, the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) is an independent think-tank that studies the root causes of Britain's social problems and addresses them by recommending practical, workable policy interventions. The CSJ's vision is to give people in the UK who are experiencing the worst multiple disadvantages and injustice every possible opportunity to reach their full potential.

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 are: educational failure; family breakdown; economic dependency and worklessness; addiction to drugs and alcohol; and severe personal debt. Since its inception, the CSJ has changed the landscape of our political discourse by putting social justice at the heart of British politics. This has led to a transformation in government thinking and policy.

For instance, in March 2013, the CSJ report *It Happens Here* 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 address slavery and trafficking in the 21st century. Universal Credit, Universal Support, Family Hubs, and Housing First are all examples of the CSJ's transformational thinking.

Our research is informed by experts including prominent academics, practitioners, and policymakers. We also draw upon our CSJ Alliance, a unique group of charities, social enterprises, and other grassroots organisations that have a proven track-record of reversing social breakdown across the UK. The social challenges facing Britain remain serious. In 2024 and beyond, we will continue to advance the cause of social justice so that more people can continue to fulfil their potential.

Foreword

The recent election result was a historic moment for Labour and congratulations to Sir Keir Starmer on becoming Prime Minister. But while the government may have changed, the challenges remain the same.

Our research during the election (Breadline Britain's Election Battleground) revealed that Labour has regained ground among low-income voters, with half of those polled saying they would vote for it. This is a 14 per cent increase since 2019. Meanwhile, Conservative support among this group has dropped by 8 per cent to just 15 per cent overall.

But politicians remain deeply unpopular, with more than half of low-income voters, 57 per cent, saying that "no political party really cares about helping people like me".

There are some clear national challenges that the government needs to focus on, that could make a real difference to this group.

For example, too many people are being written off as economically inactive. It is a tragic loss of potential, and is becoming unaffordable for government too. Our prisons have been squalid and unruly for too long, but they are now full as well. We can no longer ignore what is going on behind these locked doors. And tens of thousands of children stopped going to school during Covid lockdowns and never returned – around 150,000 children now spend more time out of the classroom than in it.

This paper outlines steps that the new Government can take to address these thorny issues and more.

I am an optimist. We can do better. If we focus on the long-term root causes of our troubles – like making work pay and supporting fragile families – rather than quick-fix sticking plasters, then we have the talent and resources to rebuild our future.



Andy Cook

CEO Centre for Social Justice

Introduction

The government has changed but the challenges have not.

This report outlines seven policy areas sitting in the new Government's in-tray that will demand their immediate attention. Some of these are urgent and recent, such as overflowing prisons and children missing from school. Others follow longer term trends, such as the decline in family stability and rise in economic inactivity.

But all of them are important and in five years' time the public will once again have the chance to judge this Government on their progress in these areas.

The Centre for Social Justice has been researching and advocating for the most disadvantaged individuals in society for 20 years and believes that none of the challenges we face are intractable. In fact, alongside each of the problems presented here are deliverable solutions, informed by data, expertise, and most importantly the hundreds of grassroots poverty-fighting charities with whom we work.

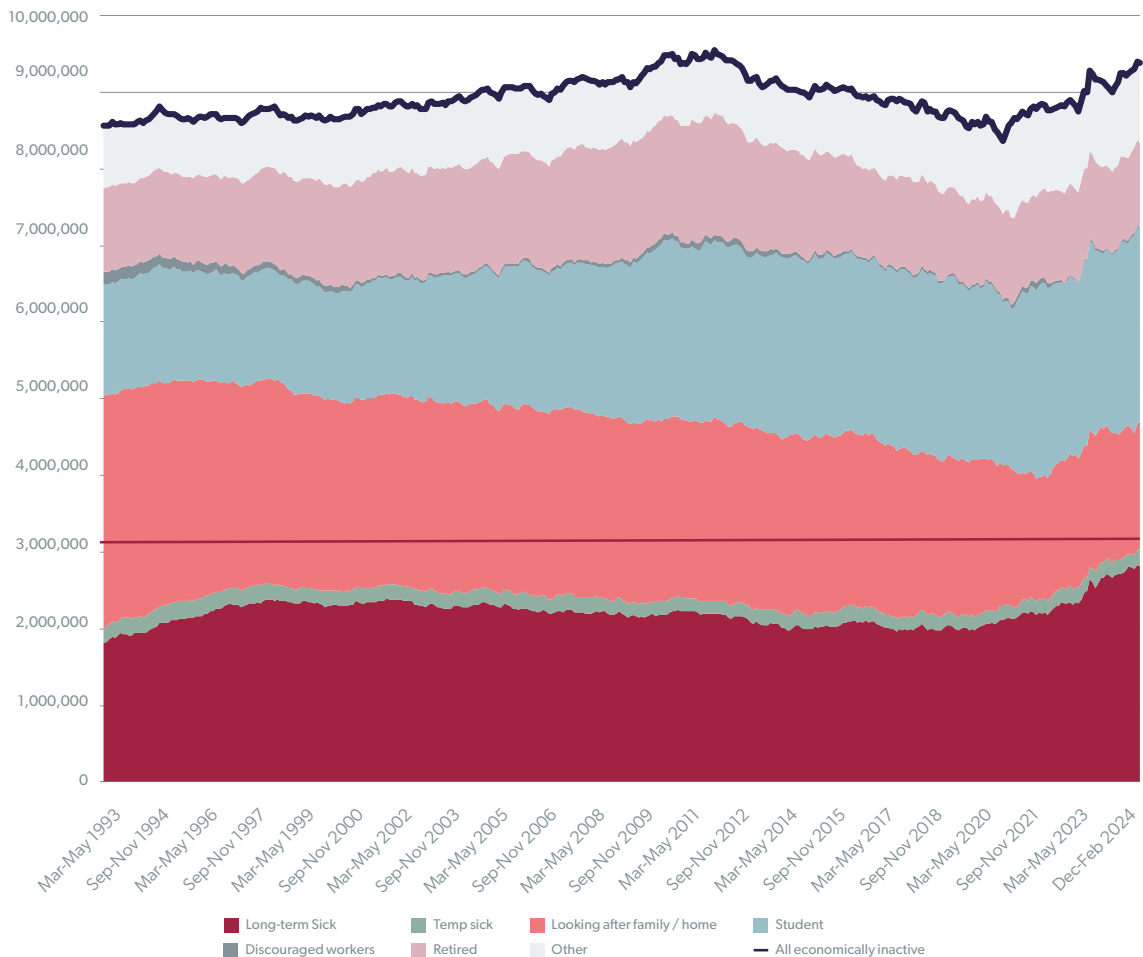
Five years is a long time in politics, but as days turn to weeks, turn to months, it will go fast, and if we are going to see the results of any action, that action needs to begin today. There will be trade-offs and tough choices, but if this Government can demonstrate improvements in these areas, they may just be trusted with five years more:

1. Economic inactivity
 - a. Deliver the "into work guarantee"
 - b. Roll out Universal Support
 - c. Devolve employment services and adult education
2. Family poverty and instability
 - a. Give parents choice with a family credit
 - b. Make tax allowances fully transferrable, frontload child benefit, and pay childcare in cash.
3. Crime and Justice – Prisons
 - a. Introduce a new form of sentence - the Intensive Control and Rehabilitation Order
 - b. Restore control, order, and hope to the prison estate
4. Crime and Justice – Police
 - a. Ensure stop and search remains part of the wider toolkit of violence reduction
 - b. Use Redirect methods against knife and firearm searches online
 - c. Make cuckooing a criminal offence
5. Ghost Children
 - a. Role out attendance mentors nationally
 - b. Create a national parental participation strategy
 - c. Roll out family hubs nationally
 - d. Invest in school sport and youth clubs
6. Housing
 - a. Ban no fault evictions
 - b. Roll out Housing First nationally
7. Better service delivery
 - a. Engage small charities in service delivery

1. Economic inactivity

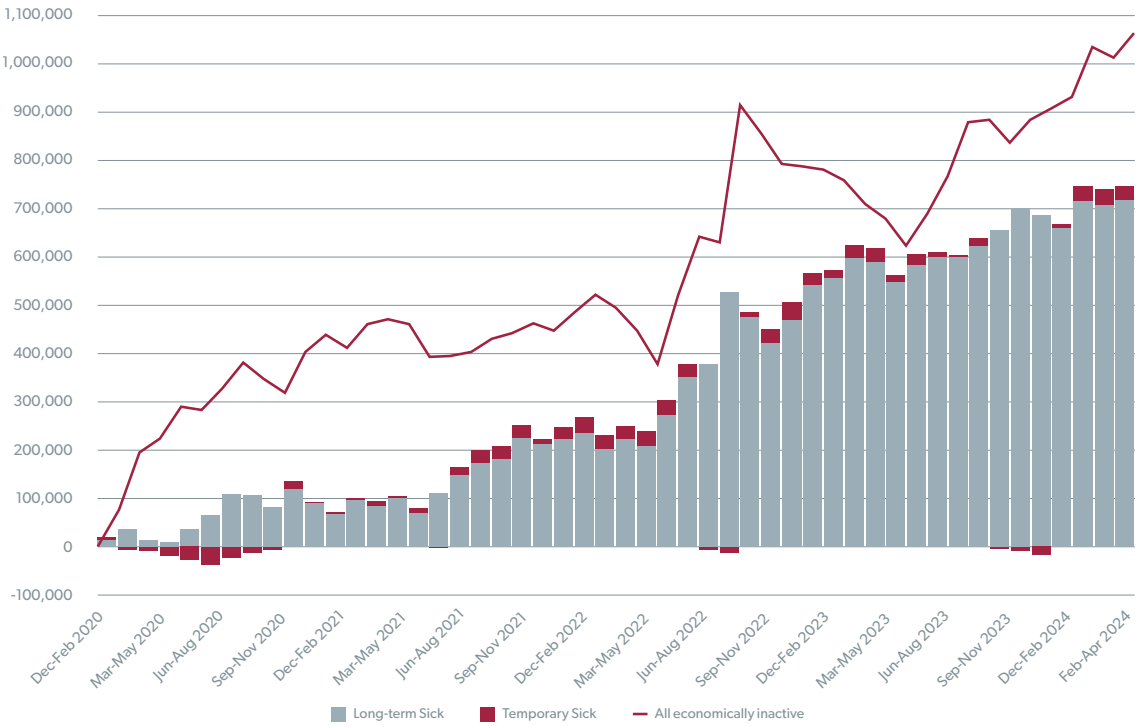
In the quarter to January 2024, there were 9.3 million 16-64 year olds in the UK who were economically inactive. This figure has increased by almost 1 million people since the Covid-19 pandemic. The population of economically inactive people includes around 3 million who are sick – an all-time high since records began in 1993 – and represents over 20 per cent of all 16-64 year olds.¹ Figure 2 illustrates how the volume of economically inactive people is defined by the long-term sick: rising by approximately 700,000 people since the pandemic.

Figure 1: Official UK economically inactive (16-64 year olds basis)



1 ONS, June 2024 www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/june2024

Figure 2: Growth in economic inactivity since Covid emerged (thousands of 16-64 year olds)



Source: ONS²

Any government that is serious about economic growth must get to grips with the issue of rising economic inactivity immediately.

The Labour Manifesto contains the commitment to “tackle the backlog of Access to Work claims and give disabled people the confidence to start working without the fear of an immediate benefit reassessment if it does not work out”. This is an excellent place to start. In fact, it was the CSJ that first developed the idea of an ‘into work guarantee’, after revealing that 1 in 5 people deemed not fit for work would like to return to employment, but were worried that it might endanger their benefits if employment didn’t work out. The idea of the guarantee was endorsed by the then Shadow Work and Pensions Secretary Jon Ashworth,³ and latterly adopted as a ‘chance to work’ by the last Government.⁴

It is imperative that this pledge by the previous administration is enacted by the new one.

It is also important for the Government to roll our Universal Support nationally. Universal Support is an intervention successfully piloted in 2014 – and the often forgotten ‘sister’ to Universal Credit – designed to help those facing barriers to the labour market into work, and in doing so, also help them overcome complex challenges holding them back in their lives. The purpose of Universal Support is to:

1. Identify individuals in need of support with complex barriers to work, including physical or mental health conditions, disabilities, problem debt, social isolation, childhood trauma, housing issues, addiction, relationship problems, caring responsibilities and more;

² ONS, June 2024 www.ons.gov.uk/employmentandlabourmarket/peopleinwork/employmentandemployeetypes/bulletins/uklabourmarket/june2024

³ labourlist.org/2023/04/jon-ashworth-welfare-system-benefits-csj-work

⁴ www.gov.uk/government/news/new-chance-to-work-guarantee-will-remove-barriers-to-work-for-millions

2. Refer them to a local authority assigned Key Worker who is independent of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), who is able to build a trusted relationship with vulnerable individuals;
3. Provide a bespoke “wrap-around” support plan for vulnerable individuals and people distant from the labour market, including triage and signposting to local organisations and community charities best able to help them overcome complex and overlapping barriers to work.

Initial points of referral to (and from) Universal Support include the JobCentre Plus, GP surgeries, Citizens’ Advice, occupational health, third sector organisations such as debt charities, mental health and addiction support groups, local housing associations, and councils.

The Labour manifesto has also stated the desire to “work with local areas to create plans to support more disabled people and those with health conditions into work. We will devolve funding so local areas can shape a joined-up work, health, and skills offer for local people”. The CSJ’s upcoming *Social Justice Commission* report, which took evidence from across the UK, will also make this as a key recommendation. Here, we will examine how other European models lead the way in devolving employment support and adult education, with the adoption of a similar model in the UK offering the potential to save £6 billion in welfare costs.

2. Family poverty and instability

The new Prime Minister has famously stated his desire to make the UK a country “in which we put family first”. Too many children in this country are growing up in poverty. Too many parents feel that they have no choice in how to raise their children. And too many families find themselves at a disadvantage within the tax system because of their decision to have one parent stay home to care for their children.

The CSJ has designed a radical new policy package, *The Family Credit*, that dares to put parents in charge of a budget to spend in raising their children. This initiative, rooted in the evidence that parents know best, seeks to give mothers and fathers more support when they most need it – in those first years of a child’s life, when families are more likely to be struggling financially.⁵

Investing in children at this stage can overcome the attainment gap that affects too many young lives. *The Family Credit* is designed to meet the demands of parents with young children, captured in our landmark national poll with Public First, where parents overwhelmingly told us they wanted to spend more time with their young children, not less.

Political discussions have focused on retaining or removing the present two child benefit cap policy. The CSJ takes the view that the focus should not be on the number of children per household, but on their age: children under four are in their most formative years and also the most likely to be living in poverty. This initiative is composed of three main elements: a transferable tax allowance, frontloaded child benefit, and a childcare budget paid directly to parents. These have been costed and are close to cost neutral for Treasury.

The CSJ recommends the following changes for the new Government to better address family poverty and instability:

1. Make transferable up to 100% of a married/civil partnered person’s personal allowance to the other partner in the couple. Some of this will be clawed back by the benefits system (through families losing eligibility, or part of payments owing to tapers/step-changes on rates as extra income rises). This delivers around £3.7bn tax foregone and approximately £700m clawed back from the benefits system, with a final Exchequer cost of £3bn in 2024/25 terms.
2. Exempt current Child Benefit from all other benefits calculations (so it is always outside welfare), with a cost of £250m.⁶

5 www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/CSJ-Give_Families_Credit.pdf

6 IPPR model

3. Target now exempted remaining Child Benefit at children aged 0-4 years to alleviate poverty (as poorer older children's families claim Universal credit), with a cost of £9.9bn in 2024/25 prices. This will give an annual award for under 5-year-old children of just under £3,700 per annum or just under £70 per week per child.
4. Increase availability and generosity of Free Childcare from 39 to 47 weeks The cost of increasing availability to all under 5s over the new period would be £7.1bn in 2024 terms, with annual payment for under 5 year olds varying by local area, to reflect the wide variety of average childcare rates per area. We suggest compensation to families is capped at the 60th percentile, so most typical families are fully covered by the scheme. Removing the Universal Credit childcare element (as everyone can claim a full year's worth of cover excluding holidays) yields savings of £1.3bn to Treasury. We propose this childcare 'budget' to be paid directly to parents to spend as they see fit – whether on formal care, as now, or on informal care, provided by the extended family. The additional resource, when combined with the other elements of Family Credit, could also enable parents to forfeit paid work in favour of providing care themselves.

We recognise that by targeting the most vulnerable in our society – children whose first years are spent in poverty – our proposal risks creating losers as well as winners. The Family Credit, for example, will result in some families not on UC, with a sole earner and older children, losing £25.60 per week; while a family not on UC with two children aged 1-4 years old, and two earners (and one using only half their PA) will be £429.22 better off per week. This dramatic shift in our childcare system reflects our commitment to supporting children in their most formative early years: evidence shows that investing in children's early years repays huge dividends in terms of reduced child poverty, reduced need for services, and boosted productivity in the longer term.

3. Crime and Justice - Prisons

Our prisons are in a terrible state. This has not come about overnight. For decades our prisons and the public have been let down, just as those working and living in them, have been failed. The problem is now critical. Prisons are now full. In June 2024 Scotland saw a first batch of prisoners released early, with around 500 more expected to be in the next month.⁷ The move involves prisoners with 180 days or less to serve from a sentence of under four years but will not apply to people convicted of sexual or domestic abuse offences.

This follows a scheme introduced in England in 2023 to ease the pressure in prisons, which saw a number of prisoners released 18 days early. By March 2024, this had risen to prisoners being released 2 months early.⁸

The incoming government will need immediate answers to the problem faced in prisons and will have little choice but to extend these schemes. Clearing the court backlog to reduce the number of people on remand will also be a first priority. In time, however, the Government will need medium- and long-term plans to tackle the problem.

Medium-term sentencing reform: Implementing the Intensive Control and Rehabilitation Order (ICRO)⁹ and tackling sentence inflation.¹⁰

- ICRO, a new sentence, would be served wholly in the community using Electronic Monitoring, curfew requirements, and regular periodic reviews before the court. The availability of new technology in the market means that we can go further than ever before in seeking new alternatives to custody, while safeguarding the public and commanding the confidence of sentencers.
- We consider that by enabling individuals to remain in the community, meaningful rehabilitation can be achieved. The ICRO presents an opportunity for individuals to serve their sentence without being separated from their families – saving thousands of children from the trauma of parental imprisonment.
- The ICRO would also allow for individuals to engage in work and education programmes in the community, where 92 per cent of community learning and skills providers have been rated as “good” or “outstanding”. In contrast, 71 per cent of prisons inspected in 2018–19 were rated as “requires improvement” or “inadequate” for the overall effectiveness of their education, skills, and work provision.”

7 www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c6pp2r473ejo

8 www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-68976494

9 www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/CSJ-Sentencing_in_the_Dock.pdf

10 researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/POST-PB-0058/POST-PB-0058.pdf

- Those sentenced to an ICRO, who already live in settled accommodation, will not be required to give up their tenancy but will carry out their custodial sentence in the confines of their home. Out of all the individuals released from custody in many recent years, fewer than half find settled accommodation on release.
- And for those battling addictions to drugs and alcohol, they will be able to receive treatment in the community, away from the black market of illicit drugs within the prison estate. By combining a robust package of monitoring requirements, alongside meaningful opportunities for rehabilitation, the ICRO presents a unique opportunity for justice to be served while offering a realistic prospect of rehabilitation for those caught in the revolving door of crime.
- The number of people given immediate custodial sentences fell from 98,044 in 2012, to 67,812 in 2022, suggesting that prison overcrowding is not driven by more convictions. However, average sentence length increased from 14.5 to 21.4 months between 2012 and 2023. This was partly driven by increases in sentence lengths for the same offence over time (sometimes referred to as 'sentence inflation'). Increased sentence length is a significant contributor to a growing prison population, as people stay in prison for longer.
- Changes in sentencing policy have increased minimum and maximum terms for a range of offences. As of 2023, 56% of prisoners were serving determinate prison sentences of over 4 years, compared with 36% in 2008. In 2020, the National Audit Office asked the Government to "monitor the operational consequences of emerging policies and practices, as well as its capacity and capability to respond".
- Anecdotally, much of the increase in sentence length may be down to successful lobbying for certain crimes to be punished more harshly, but more research is needed to understand the true drivers behind increased sentence length. There is also little research to say whether they offer any greater deterrent, rehabilitate any better, or keep the public safer. It is not clear that they are good or cost-effective policy and represent a possible avenue for system reform.

Longer-term prison reform: Restore control, order, and hope to our prison system.¹¹

- If we are to revitalise the prison system, it is essential that staff are awarded the respect they deserve for doing an incredibly difficult and dangerous job, help strengthen a shared sense of purpose and identity across the service, and reinforce it all with a commitment, in the form of a Dignity at Work Covenant, to take the wellbeing and welfare of prison staff seriously.
- All prisons operate a criminal economy where illicit items – drugs, mobile phones, tobacco – are traded. The rhetoric of drug control mirrors a corporate approach to other problems in prisons where 'harm minimisation' and 'suppression' hold sway and limit ambitions. Solving the problem of drugs in prison and the horrendous violence and disorder associated with it requires a three-pronged response with as much effort going into psycho-social rehabilitation as efforts to tackle supply and demand.
- In the 12 months to June 2023, the rate of assaults was 285 assaults per 1,000 prisoners – a staggering 23,557 recorded assaults in total. This is up 9% from the 12 months to June 2022 and continues some alarming previous trends. Uncontrolled violence in prisons drives institutions into a self-sustaining vortex of disorder and undermines the social fabric of the prison.

11 www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/control-order-hope-web.pdf

- Families are often the main source of emotional and rehabilitative support for prisoners both during their sentence and after leaving the prison gate. Visits from relatives and loved ones can provide a foundation on which prisoners can build a new life when they leave prison. As set out in Lord Farmer's landmark review, families of offenders offer a network of potential support that has been under-utilised. Families of offenders have personal motivations to encourage relatives to build a better life for themselves. Further, they are often best placed to offer consistent and meaningful support.
- There is overwhelming and conclusive evidence that offenders who find stable and legitimate employment on release are much less likely to reoffend. Getting offenders into work makes economic sense. It relieves the welfare and criminal justice system of an otherwise heavy burden and adds to the tax take, but the real benefits lie off the balance sheet.

4. Crime and Justice - Police

Recent trends reveal an increased risk of young people being caught up in a cycle of fear and violence. A greater number of teenage homicides were recorded in London in 2023 than the year prior, with 21 teenagers being killed.¹² More broadly, in England and Wales, almost 18 per cent of knife and offensive weapon offences resulting in a caution or conviction were committed by children aged 10-17.¹³

Fear, either through knowing someone who has been a victim of knife crime, or knowing someone who carries a knife, often drives the tendency to carry a knife for protection. Previous CSJ research has shown how crime can also be driven by people having little to do in their spare time, few positive role models, and being in a state of poverty combined with a lack of opportunity and aspiration. We know that recorded crime in London is more prevalent in neighbourhoods with higher levels of income deprivation. Overall, 40 per cent more crimes were recorded in the most income-deprived areas in 2023, compared with the least income-deprived 10 per cent.¹⁴

Throughout the CSJ's research – and research conducted by others across the sector – the importance of preventative techniques to reduce serious violence has been raised, including successful practices used in the Glasgow Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV).

This approach has been broadly accepted by many community and policing leaders, but there is a reticence around enforcement, which is central to it. This must not be an afterthought.

The incoming government must:¹⁵

1. Ensure that stop and search continues to be used as a part of a toolkit for crime prevention. Despite levels of stop and search falling over the last five years, the public remains supportive of it. The reduction in stop and search is not because of any change in legislation, but rather economic and political considerations relating to shrinking police budgets, a reduction in the number of officers, an inability to retain talented police officers, and clear political messaging from lobby groups and the Mayor of London. We would encourage that stop and search continue to be used as part the enforcement arm of a wider toolkit to prevent serious violence, as was the case with Glasgow's Community Initiative to Reduce Violence (CIRV).

12 www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-67863910

13 commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn04304

14 trustforlondon.org.uk/data/crime-and-income-deprivation

15 www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/CSJ-Serious_Violence_in_London.pdf

2. Publicly and regularly release findings of stop and search to improve trust and confidence in the police. We propose that police forces continue to use stop and search as a preventative tool to reduce serious violence but focus less on quantitative targets. Therefore, the focus should not be on meeting a minimum quota of stop and search levels per day (which may lead to the same people being stopped and searched again and again to meet these targets) but rather ensure that searches are as effective as they can be, and that the individual being stopped genuinely understands the motivations and purpose of the power. We also recommend that the Home Office consult on the development of a new methodology for assessing and understanding potential racial disparity in the use of tactics like stop and search. This is vital to ensure that the public, politicians, and police leaders are armed with methodologically sound facts in relation to this important crime-fighting and life-saving tool.
3. Publicly and regularly release the findings of the newly created Violence Harm Assessment. The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Gangs Violence Matrix (GVM) was a tool used to identify and risk-assess the most harmful gang members in a Borough. The Mayor of London made a commitment in his 2016 manifesto and his Police and Crime Plan 2017-21 to conduct a review of the GVM. This review was published in December 2018, and was the largest and most comprehensive exploration ever conducted into the Matrix. One of the recommendations was the need to systematically capture key elements of the Matrix process and report annually on outputs in terms of the Matrix population. We believe such reviews and the resulting data are significant in reducing crime. Yet, in 2024 the Matrix was decommissioned following a legal challenge and because it was classified as racist by lobby groups. As a replacement, each area in London will use the information of a new, broader Violence Harm Assessment to prioritise police resources towards the most harmful individuals. We strongly encourage regular and transparent reporting of the new Violence Harm Assessment to the public to ensure that public perceptions of tackling violence and trust in the police is addressed.
4. Legislate for social media companies to use Redirect methods against knife and firearm sale searches online. Research by the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) has revealed that 60 per cent of children witnessed real-world acts of violence on social media in 2023. Social media has an important role to play in the normalisation of violence. It is also concerning that weapons and knives can be easily found to buy online, on marketplaces such as Amazon, and through a simple Google search. We recommend that social media companies use techniques used in the fight against terrorist content online, such as the Redirect method, to make extreme violent and graphic content and the sales of weapons online harder to find. As part of this initiative, we would encourage companies to redirect such searches to helplines and charity organisations that can provide young people with alternative narratives and engagement programs. We also recommend that companies are put on a timeline for this, and fines are implemented by Ofcom under the Online Safety Act 2023 if companies fail to comply within that time frame.
5. Make 'cuckooing' a criminal offence. At the time the General Election was called, a specific offence of cuckooing had just been added by amendment to the Criminal Justice Bill at Report stage in the House of Commons, but the Bill ran out of time.¹⁶ 'Cuckooing' is where offenders exploit vulnerable people by taking over their home and use the property for their own – usually criminal, purposes – often for storing drugs or weapons. Criminals take advantage of vulnerabilities like old age, learning disabilities or addiction to befriend, coerce or threaten their victims, inveigling their way into their homes.

¹⁶ hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-05-15/debates/70FB3786-C2A3-4CFE-90EA-CC2CB5AE5CCE/CriminalJusticeBill#contribution-2EF3D16E-A94A-453B-BB86-520086B37CE5

The idea of a specific criminal offence of cuckooing has wide political support: the Report stage amendment signed by over 50 backbench MPs including Jess Phillips, Sarah Champion, and Carolyn Harris.¹⁷

CSJ polling conducted for the *Slavery at Home* report in 2022 revealed strong public support for a specific offence of cuckooing, with almost four in five of the people we polled (78 per cent) agreeing that cuckooing should be a criminal offence.¹⁸

A specific cuckooing offence will fill a gap in the law, whereby exploitation of mostly vulnerable people in their own home is not currently an offence. It will offer greater protection to vulnerable people, and provide an additional tool to tackle the gangs using cuckooing as a means to facilitate their criminal enterprises. It will also play a key role in tackling the anti-social behaviour that often results from cuckooing causing disruption, fear, and harm to local communities.

17 hansard.parliament.uk/commons/2024-05-15/debates/70FB3786-C2A3-4CFE-90EA-CC2CB5AE5CCE/CriminalJusticeBill#contribution-60B18D37-CE74-4D7C-B925-BAF7CABC0781

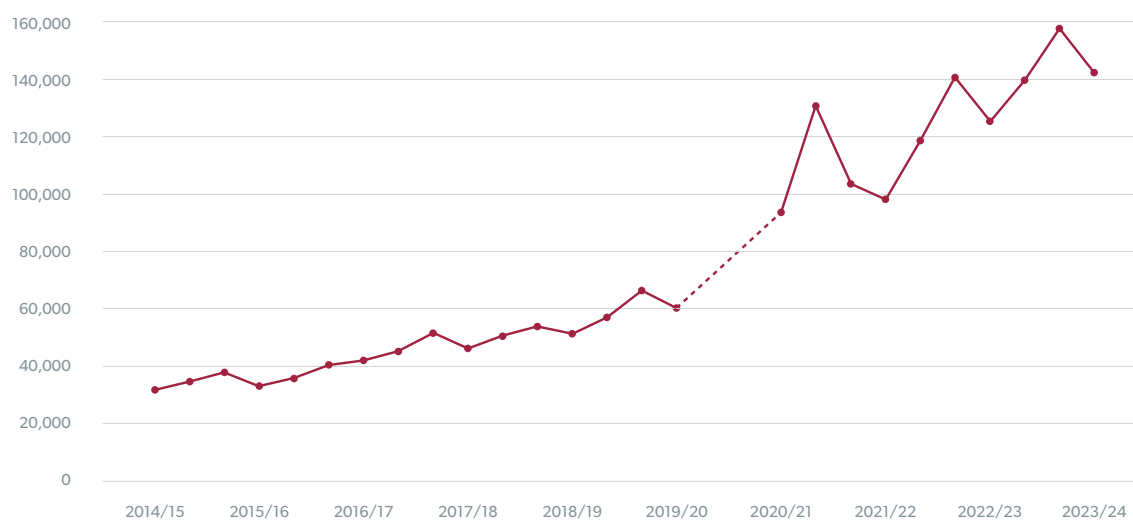
18 www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Slavery-at-Home-a-new-bill-to-tackle-slavery-in-Britain.pdf

5. Ghost Children

The number of severely absent pupils has soared by 136.5 per cent since before the pandemic. In Autumn 2023, 142,487 pupils were absent from school more often than they were present (severely absent), which is 1.97 per cent of the school population. This compares with 60,244 who were severely absent in Autumn 2019, the last full term before the pandemic.

It is vulnerable children who are affected most. In the 2022/23 academic year, children in receipt of Free School Meals (FSM) had a severe absence rate more than triple the rate for children who were not eligible for FSM. Children in receipt of special educational needs (SEN) support are also more likely to be severely absent than their peers. While persistent absence has decreased slightly, it is still at a concerning high level compared to pre-pandemic. 1,407,802 pupils were persistently absent in Autumn 2023, which equates to nearly 1 in 5 of all pupils. This is an increase of 52.6 per cent since before the pandemic.

Figure 3: Severe Absence Over Time



The number of severely absent children remains at crisis levels term after term. The Government must accelerate its response urgently to get this cohort of children back into the classroom. The CSJ has a plan to turn the tide on school absence. The plan was developed taking evidence from multiple alternative education providers, local authorities and charities that work with children disengaged with school as part of our attendance inquiry. Throughout the inquiry, we heard about the need to tackle the underlying drivers behind absence, including the need to engage parents in the process, the case for extra-curricular enrichment activities, and the role of youth work.

The CSJ recommends the following:

- The Department for Education (DfE) should roll out a national programme of 2,000 attendance mentors. These mentors would work with families to understand and remove the underlying barriers to school attendance. A national programme would cost an estimated £80 million per year.
- The DfE should create a National Parental Participation Strategy, which should create a new duty for schools and multi-academy trusts (MATs) to focus on parental participation and publish parental participation plans. Trusts and schools should design these plans in consultation with parents and guardians to reflect the needs of local families. As part of a broader Parental Participation Strategy, the Government should release additional guidance on the best practice for engaging parents of children who are severely absent. This should include specific guidance on communicating with parents who no longer live together.
- Family Hubs should be rolled out more widely and wherever possible integrated with existing school services and collocated within schools.
- The Government should build on previous commitments to invest £500 million in new youth clubs and services, with a new match fund scheme designed to inspire major businesses, charities and third sector organisations to support a national mission of returning our young people to school.
- The Government should introduce a new 'enrichment guarantee' in schools. When activities take place in the morning, breakfast clubs should be incorporated as part of the enrichment guarantee. This should also include the introduction of a new Right to Sport for all secondary school pupils to unlock five hours of extracurricular activity for every pupil in secondary school in England.
- The DfE should conduct a review into the effectiveness of fines and attendance prosecution, to examine the conditions under which these formal mechanisms can improve attendance.
- The fines for School Attendance Orders (SAOs) and attendance prosecution should be made the same value to avoid creating perverse incentives which push children out of the education system.

6. Homes

The new Government's immediate focus on changing the planning system to get housing supply moving is the right one. Many of our housing problems stem from a simple lack of stock in the short term this will also address the UK's economic problems – more building will be good for economic growth.

But there are two much needed and quicker changes that could have significant benefit on the lives of the poorest in society.

Ban no-fault evictions

Labour, Conservative, and Liberal Democrat manifestos all committed to end no-fault evictions. Banning no-fault evictions was a manifesto promise originally proposed in the 2019 manifestos as well. It is a long-standing cross-party commitment with a high level of public support, aimed at tackling the scourge of insecure housing.

The new Government should abolish Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988, meaning that households can live with the security of no longer having to face 'no fault' evictions and having to move with two months' notice. The Standard Tenancy ends automatically at the end of the four-year fixed term; however, tenants finishing their tenancy should be entitled to another four-year term if rents are successfully negotiated with the landlord. The Government could look elsewhere – in Scotland, for example – where since 2017 private tenancies have been made indefinite, to assess the viability of even longer-term securities for private renters. Meanwhile, the Government could update the mandatory grounds covered by Section 8 of the Act so that landlords can gain possession of their property during the fixed term for a wider range of reasons, such as needing to sell or move into the property (on top of the existing mandatory grounds for antisocial behavior and rent arrears).¹⁹

'Accelerated grounds' could also be introduced for when a tenant has incurred serious rent arrears of more than three months. As the Government advances on these reforms to tenancy, it could also consider whether tax incentives should be reintroduced to maintain investment in the sector.

¹⁹ <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/putting-down-roots.pdf>

Roll-out Housing First nationally

Housing First is an effective way of tackling and preventing rough sleeping for people whose homelessness is compounded by challenges such as serious mental health issues, a history of trauma, and drug or alcohol dependency. Instead of asking people to move into temporary accommodation and demonstrate their 'tenancy-readiness', Housing First provides ordinary settled housing alongside intensive, person-centered support.

The last Government showed an initial commitment to ensuring Housing First is part of the response to rough sleeping. While there has been a welcome rise in the number of Housing First places in England, there is potential for its impact to be far greater. The CSJ estimates that only one in seven (14 per cent) of the 16,000 people that might benefit from Housing First currently have a place.²⁰

Evidence from UK pilots show success in a number of areas. Research from Homeless Link, for example, found that there is some level of consistency in tenancy sustainment across the three years of their recent study: "Given that 92.0% of the people represented by this survey have had a history of rough sleeping previously, seeing more than two-thirds of them being able to manage their tenancies at these three-year points (specifically 67.7%, 69.0% and 66.2% respectively) shows a positive trajectory in tenancy sustainment."²¹

Homeless Link also found a reduction in addiction, mental health problems, and antisocial and offending behaviours amongst those offered places in Housing First. 84.3% of people were involved in antisocial and offending behaviours at the point of entry, compared to 44.8% by the end of the third year. There is a sharp 23.5% decrease particularly between the point of entry (84.3%) and the end of the first year (60.8%), followed by a steady decline until the end of the third year.²²

There would need to be some upfront cost commitment to a national rollout and a guarantee of housing stock but given the benefits illustrated by Housing First, these costs should become neutralised over time.

20 <https://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/CSJ-Close-to-Home-2021.pdf>

21 https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Exploring_holistic_Housing_First_outcomes_exec_summary.pdf

22 https://homelesslink-1b54.kxcdn.com/media/documents/Exploring_holistic_Housing_First_outcomes_exec_summary.pdf

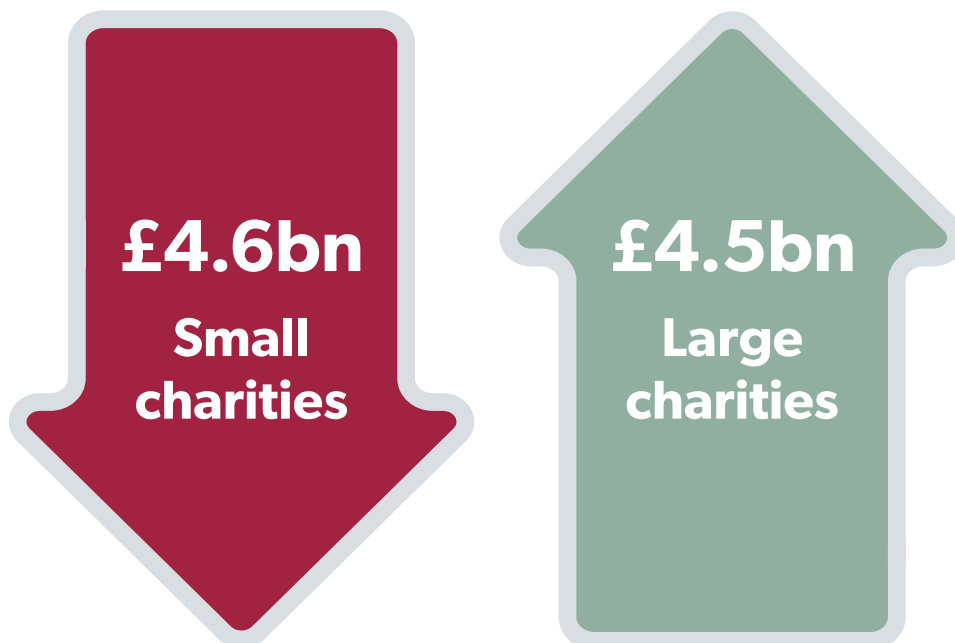
7. Better service delivery

Britain and its poorest people rely on grassroots charities which make an incredible impact on communities and in addressing the root causes of poverty. But many do this with their hands tied behind their backs due to being consistently underfunded and their impact being overlooked. Grassroots charities are in a perilous situation, too many have been forced to close despite the excellent service they provide.

Small charities make up the majority of charitable organisations in Britain. They may not be household names, but their importance to the charity sector is undeniable. In Scotland, just 4 per cent of charities have an income of over £1 million and 56 per cent have an income of under £25,000. In England and Wales just 7,000 of the 170,000 registered charities have an income of over £1 million. As CSJ analysis shows, the 10 biggest charities spend more on fundraising alone (£243 million) than the combined total income of over 75,000 smaller charities. Furthermore, 75 per cent of the sector's total income flows to just 1 per cent of charities.²³

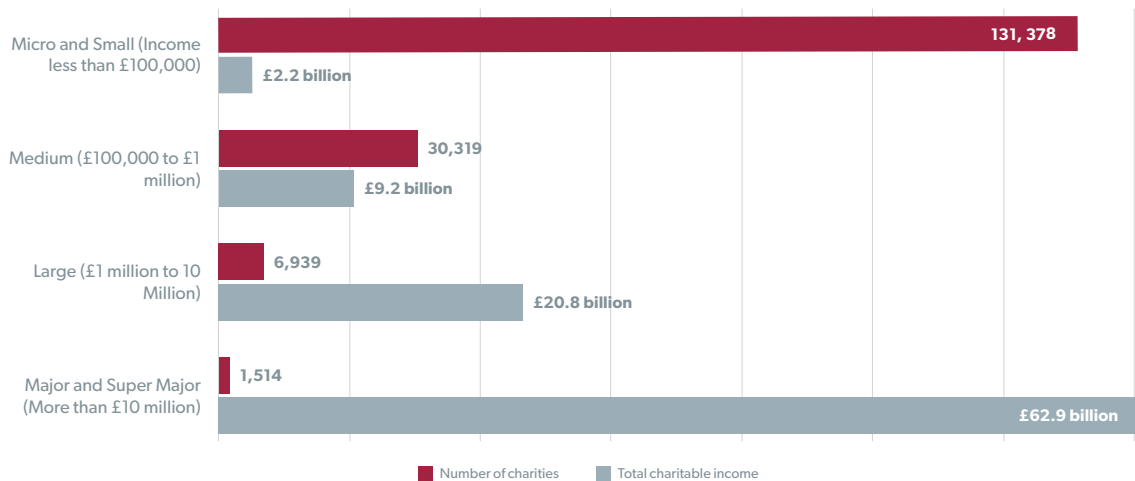
Our polling also shows 79 per cent of UK adults agree that small, local, charities seem to be often overlooked and under-resourced.

Figure 4: Change in income between large and small charities post pandemic.



23 www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/CSJF-Overlooked_and_Underfunded.pdf

Figure 5: How funding flows in the charity sector



Change is needed, including concerning the government procurement system. The Government is too reliant on large charities as grant recipients and winners of contracts, such larger charities who are often more distant from the people they support than grassroots organisations truly embedded in the community.

- The incoming Government must level the charity playing field, both in terms of voice and funding. We would encourage the Government to turbo charge the impact of outstanding grassroots organisations across the country with a proven track record in supporting the most disadvantaged.



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