

Breakthrough Glasgow

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THE CENTRE FOR
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PRESS RELEASE FROM THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE
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GLASGOW'S REBIRTH BLIGHTED BY SOME OF THE WORST SOCIAL PROBLEMS IN THE UK – NEW STUDY

(Breakthrough Glasgow is the third in a series of CSJ reports on British cities after Manchester and Birmingham)

Glasgow's remarkable economic and physical renaissance is blighted by appalling levels of social deprivation, according to a ground-breaking new report on the city drawn up by Iain Duncan Smith's think-tank the Centre for Social Justice.

Life expectancy in the poorest parts of the city is 25 years less than the wealthiest, levels of claims for incapacity benefit are the highest in the UK, educational achievement is the second worst in Scotland, half of all families are predicted to be headed by a lone parent eight years from now, and drug and alcohol abuse is at epidemic levels.

The report, which compares social problems in Glasgow with comparable cities in the UK and Scottish and UK averages, also pinpoints a severe youth crime problem in the city.

It warns that there are 170 teenage gangs in the city –the same number as in London despite a population of over six times its size, and which is notorious for its levels of youth and violent crime.

The report warns that like other major urban centres in the UK, Glasgow is a “tale of two cities” in which eye-catching and welcome regeneration of the commercial centre masks the parallel existence of social decay.

It also carries a message of hope, highlighting and praising the burgeoning number of voluntary projects and workers who are battling largely unsung in their efforts to rebuild the lives of the many people left behind by Glasgow’s economic rebirth.

In a foreword to the report, Mr Duncan Smith, who chairs the CSJ and who published the seminal Breakthrough Britain report last year containing nearly 200 ideas for mending the broken society, says:

“Glasgow is fortunate to have such vibrant and successful voluntary projects...I believe that a committed long-term approach to addressing poverty and social exclusion can work, but that government must listen to the people tackling deprivation on the ground.”

Breakthrough Glasgow is the third in a series of reports on the social challenges facing Britain’s major cities. It follows similar reports on Manchester and Birmingham and further such studies will be published later this year.

It recommends a much bigger role for the voluntary sector in tackling social problems, welfare reform to end the something for nothing culture, a renewed drive to get the long-term jobless into sustainable work, support through the tax system for marriage as the most stable environment for raising children, and education reforms designed to give parents real power and to support and expand the number of first-rate head-teachers.

Mr Duncan Smith and his team of researchers are visiting Glasgow again today (Tuesday) to consult with representatives

of 100 local poverty-fighting charities about ways of rescuing the city's growing underclass.

Key findings from the 20-page report include:

Health inequalities

* Glasgow city centre has the highest mortality rate in Scotland. In the poorest parts of the city, such as Calton, life expectancy is as low as 54 years. But in parts of the west end of the city, such as Bearsden-Kensington, life expectancy is more than 80 years.

Out of work

* 110,000 working-age residents in Glasgow are without work, 30 per cent of the total. This is 50 per cent higher than the average rate in Scotland and similar proportions to Manchester and Birmingham.

Welfare dependency

*The proportion of Glasgow residents claiming incapacity benefit is the highest of all major UK cities. It is 50 per cent higher than the Scottish average and double the rate for the UK. It is 69 per cent higher than the rate for Birmingham and 26 per cent high than that for Manchester.

* Over 40 per cent of Glasgow households are headed by a lone parent, 25 per cent higher than Birmingham. The figure in Glasgow is predicted to rise to 50 per cent by 2016.

Youth unemployment

* The proportion of young people not in employment, education or training (Neets) is around 18 per cent – 50 per cent more than the Scottish average and roughly twice that of Manchester.

Educational failure

*Glasgow has the second worst exam pass rate at standard level in the whole of Scotland.

* One in five young Glaswegians goes to university compared to 29 per cent in Edinburgh, 35 per cent in Aberdeen and 25 per cent in Manchester.

*One in five working age Glaswegians have no qualifications, 50 per cent higher than figures for Scotland and the UK as a whole. This figure rise to 65 per cent in the poorest parts of the city.

Drug and alcohol abuse

*Drug-related deaths have almost doubled in Glasgow in the last decade.

*Nearly half of all Scotland's methadone users live in Glasgow.

*The number of alcohol-related deaths in Glasgow rose from 440 in 2000 to 564 in 2004.

*Alcoholic liver disease is the biggest cause of premature death in Glasgow.

Crime

* Glasgow has the highest crime rate in Scotland.

* Serious assault in Glasgow is two and a half times the average for Scotland.

* Stabbings account for half of all murders in Scotland and Glasgow accounts for more than 50 per cent of all knife seizures in the country.

* There are an estimated 170 gangs in Glasgow – the same as in London which has over six times more people.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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