

The Centre for Social Justice  
1 Westminster Palace Gardens  
Artillery Row  
London SW1P 1RL

Telephone 020 7340 9650  
Website [www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk](http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk)

Release date: 22nd December 2011



**PRESS RELEASE FROM THE CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE**  
**RELEASE TIME: IMMEDIATE**

# **Twelve cost-free policies to reform Britain: a Twelve days of Christmas gift to the Government from the Centre for Social Justice**

## **Let free schools make a profit and stop paying benefits to the well-off**

The Coalition has been offered one cost-free policy for each of the twelve days of Christmas as part of a strategy to tackle poverty and drive social recovery.

The Centre for Social Justice has identified twelve reforming policies which are cost-free and aimed at providing long-term solutions to deep-rooted social problems, such as educational failure, family breakdown, prisoner reoffending and economic growth.

Gavin Poole, Executive Director of the CSJ, said:

“Everyone finds their finances tight at this time of year, so we are delighted to offer these cost-free and cost effective policies to the Coalition as a Christmas gift from us.

“At the heart of the proposals lies a commitment to help the most disadvantaged in society and reverse the deeply alarming trends of social, economic, educational and family breakdown.”

The policy proposals include enabling the Government’s flagship free schools to be run by profit-making organisations in the poorest areas of the country. Under current legislation free school operators are not allowed to run as profit-making ventures, but the CSJ believes that adding this incentive would dramatically boost the number of transformational schools required to fight educational failure and enhance social mobility.

The CSJ Christmas present goes on to urge to the Coalition to end the practice of giving winter fuel payments to better off households. The think-tank proposes using the money saved to fund local projects that support lonely pensioners. The isolation of many old people in the UK is an area that the CSJ has campaigned on this winter.

A full list of the “12 Christmas presents” follows, but other proposals include:

- Allow a relaxation of the national curriculum on a temporary basis for any pupil struggling with basic literacy and numeracy, in order for them to catch up.
- Use pro-bono offers from the private and voluntary sector to start delivering effective financial education for young people, in school and non-school settings.
- Stop prisons from releasing offenders on Fridays. It fuels re-offending because many essential services, including those for inmates with addiction problems, are closed during the weekends.

The 12 policies in full:

1. Broaden your measurement of poverty beyond income inequality, to include important factors such as family breakdown, poor education, worklessness, drug and alcohol abuse, and damaging personal debt.
2. Enable profit-making organisations to run Free Schools in the poorest areas. This would help bring to scale the number of transformational schools required to fight educational underachievement and boost social mobility.
3. Help prevent family breakdown by requiring Registrars to point engaged couples towards local marriage preparation and relationship education courses.
4. Stop providing future Winter Fuel Payments to better off households. Use the money saved to create an investment fund for local projects that support socially isolated pensioners.
5. Tackle educational exclusion by working with head teachers to get tough on the disengaged parents of pupils with challenging behaviour. Where relevant, cut their benefits to force compliance.
6. Pressurise prime contractors in the Work Programme to make better use of the most effective charities in delivery. Without action, this essential back-to-work initiative could be undermined.
7. Stop prisons from releasing offenders on Fridays. It fuels re-offending because many essential services, including those for offenders with addiction problems, are closed during weekends.
8. Children don't exist in isolation, they are part of families – so ask local authorities to collect relationship status data to assess the impact of their Child Poverty strategies on families. This should include a distinct category for marriage, to demonstrate its stability.
9. The *Talk to Frank* drugs awareness programme is feeble. Urgently replace it with an effective prevention initiative that tells children and young people not to abuse drugs and alcohol.
10. Work to develop a mentoring culture within business to deliver growth. Established companies should advise start-ups and experienced workers should mentor new entry-level employees.

11. Allow relaxation of the National Curriculum on a temporary basis for any pupil struggling with basic literacy and numeracy, in order for them to catch up.
12. Use pro-bono offers from the private and voluntary sectors to start delivering effective financial education for young people, in school and non-school settings.

## **ENDS**

For media inquiries, please contact Nick Wood of Media Intelligence Partners Ltd on 07889 617003 or 0203 008 8146 or Alistair Thompson on 07970 162225 or 0203 008 8145.

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

The Centre for Social Justice is an independent think tank established, by Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP in 2004, to seek effective solutions to the poverty that blights parts of Britain.

In July 2007 the group published *Breakthrough Britain: ending the Costs of Social Breakdown*. The paper presented over 190 policy proposals aimed at ending the growing social divide in Britain.

Subsequent reports have put forward proposals for reform of the police, prisons, social housing, the asylum system and family law. Other reports have dealt with street gangs and early intervention to help families with young children.

The Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP stood down as Chairman of the Centre on his appointment as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in May 2010 and is now the Founder and Patron.