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‘The Prime Minister is correct – parts of Britain are broken and we need to rebuild them’, says CSJ Executive Director Gavin Poole

“The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) fully supports and welcomes the Prime Minister’s statement this morning (10 August) that parts of Britain are ‘broken’. His commitment to rebuilding society is of crucial importance for our country, as we deal with these riots.

“His diagnosis that *‘there are things that are badly wrong in our society’*, is fully aligned with the work of the CSJ, both in the context of the riots and the need for wider social reform.

“In response to the current crisis, the CSJ has consistently argued that there are two priorities for the Government at the present moment. The first is to regain control of Britain’s towns and cities, through political leadership and robust policing, to restore normality for the law-abiding majority.

“Second, and just as important, the Government must remain steadfast in its work on social reform, increasing efforts in certain areas.

“The Prime Minister is absolutely correct in his commitment to rebuild families and improve parenting – preventing family breakdown must be the foundation stone of ensuring all children and young people grow up to become citizens who make a positive contribution to society – as the overwhelming majority currently do.

“The Government’s pledges to reform welfare – to ensure that work, not benefits, is the logical choice for those who have never known employment is vital in offering hope to those who are utterly detached from mainstream society.

“And they must press on urgently with radical education and police reform, to lift children’s aspiration in the poorest areas and maximise the role of police officers in preventing crime, not just responding to it.

“As well, we reiterate our calls for rapid action to tackle Britain’s violent street gang culture, which is ruining lives, as the Prime Minister highlighted in his statement.

“Rebuilding society and reinstalling a sense of hope, aspiration and responsibility in the poorest communities has to be the central mission for this Government. And in the response we have seen from citizens up and down the UK who have stood up to this crime, the Prime Minister has an unprecedented opportunity to lead people with him in that work.

“What we are witnessing on our streets is terrible criminality, and whoever is found guilty of such behaviour should be brought to justice.

“But as well as punishment, truly dealing with these problems means we must also restore order in our homes, schools, welfare system and housing estates, for we cannot simply arrest our way out of this problem in the long term.

“The majority of young people are a credit to our country and we should be proud of them. But there is a group, as we are seeing at the moment, who know no boundaries or fear, who do not care about their communities and to whom our values are alien.

“Such action on this is not just morally right – if we fail to heed the warning of these last few days, such social breakdown will continue to scar our society and destroy what is best about Britain. The Prime Minister is right – his Government must rebuild Britain and transform its broken communities.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

In July 2007 the Centre for Social Justice 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.

Breakthrough Britain identified five pathways to poverty; family breakdown, educational failure, worklessness, addiction and debt. The work provided innovative and practical solutions, many drawn from work being undertaken by the voluntary sector, to reverse this brokenness.

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. Many of the recommendations and proposals have informed government policy both past and present.

All of the CSJ publications can be found at
<http://www.centreforsocialjustice.org.uk/default.asp?pageRef=266>

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.

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.

