



PRESS RELEASE
FROM CENTRE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND LEGATUM INSTITUTE

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'Tough on Brexit, tough on the causes of Brexit', urge leading think-tanks

A major new study published today has found the vote to leave the EU was part of a “deeper malaise” in British society, and calls on Theresa May to continue wide-ranging social reform to address the real causes of the Brexit vote.

The decision to leave the European Union was a bold and unequivocal statement for millions of people who wanted to change the political, economic, and social status quo. It was a moment in time – a rational choice – when those who had not felt heard by the establishment expressed their desire to take back control – control of their wages and of their public services.

One of the key conclusions of the report, entitled “48:52 Healing a Divided Britain” and jointly published by the Centre for Social Justice and the Legatum Institute, is that if immigration was the most quoted reason people gave for voting to leave, their focus was not migrants themselves, but the impact uncontrolled migration had on wages, access to housing, schools and health care.

Many supporters of Leave had “nothing to lose”, the report finds, pointing out that they were disproportionately poorer, older and less well educated than those backing Remain. The upper AB social class was the only one in which a majority backed Remain. Social classes C1, C2, D and E all contained a majority for Leave.

Of people living in households earning more than £60,000 a year, 65 per cent backed Remain. But this figure plunged to 38 per cent among those earning less than £20,000 a year.

In their joint foreword to the report, Philippa Stroud of the CSJ and James O’Shaughnessy of the Legatum Institute, say:

“In our view, the vote was a heart-felt cry from millions of people who feel Westminster no longer knows, or even cares, how it feels to walk in their shoes.

“The referendum result itself has given a voice to many of those who may have felt disenfranchised, and seeing their will enacted can bring them hope of a stake in the future.

“Changes to immigration, altering the trend of the past 15 years, will make it possible to address the immediate and damaging issues of low wages and public service pressures. But if we are to truly change how people’s lives feel to them at present, whilst leaving the EU is a critical first step, the vote must also trigger wider social reform and a better and clearer vision of social justice.

“The Government must get on with delivering the will of the British people and implementing Brexit. But it must also learn the deeper lessons of the referendum vote and act to give many more people a genuine voice and stake in their country.”

The CSJ/LI report concludes that implementing Brexit, which will ease the pressures on public services and wages by curbing immigration, is a critical first step to a much wider programme of social reform, centred on raising productivity and levels of education and skills, especially among the most disadvantaged, and strengthening the social fabric of the country.

The report adds: "This starts with a renewed commitment to strengthening families through marriage and relationship skills. It must look at how communities can be bound together in shared experience, tackling social problems without first calling on the state, but via social bonds, charity, and philanthropy. A lack of social capital and life chances characterise our most deprived communities. Addressing this situation must be the goal of the Prime Minister’s social reform programme.”

ENDS

Notes to editors

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About the Centre for Social Justice

The Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) exists to put social justice at the heart of British politics. Advancing social justice is about identifying the root causes of poverty and providing a way out to those it affects. Established in 2004, the CSJ is an independent think tank that studies the root causes of poverty and aims to address them through practical policy interventions.

The CSJ’s vision is to give people in the UK who are experiencing the worst multiple disadvantage and injustice, every possible opportunity to reach their full potential. The principles behind this vision are:

- A mandate for the whole of the UK, not just isolated areas;
- A focus on the bottom 20 per cent and those who, without external intervention, may never fulfil their potential;

- An agenda that is evidence-based, targeted towards long-term solutions, and harnesses the best grass-roots practice;
- A commitment to providing a route out of poverty via a hand-up, not a hand-out;
- A commitment to the transformation of lives, not just alleviating symptoms.

About the Legatum Institute

The Legatum Institute is an international think tank and educational charity focused on understanding, measuring, and explaining the journey from poverty to prosperity for individuals, communities and nations. We believe true prosperity is as much about wellbeing as it is wealth, if all people are to flourish.

To support and promote this vision, our research programmes—the Economics of Prosperity, Transitions Forum, the Culture of Prosperity, and the Centre for Character and Values—seek to understand what drives and restrains national success and individual flourishing.

The *Legatum Prosperity Index*[™], our signature publication, ranks 142 countries in terms of wealth and wellbeing.

The Institute, together with *Foreign Policy* magazine, co-publishes *Democracy Lab*, whose on-the-ground journalists report on political transitions around the world.

The Legatum Institute is based in London and is an independent charity within the Legatum Group, a private investment group with a 30-year heritage of global investment in businesses and programmes that promote sustainable human development.