

A Budget that undermines women's security

The UK Women's Budget Group said today in response to the budget statement:

"The changes in welfare benefits and personal income tax redistribute money from the purse to the wallet. The majority of people losing from cuts to tax credits (£5.8bn a year by 2020) will be women and the majority of people gaining from rising tax thresholds (£1.5bn a year by 2020) will be men. A benefit system is a necessary part of providing economic security, especially for people with caring responsibilities." – Prof. Diane Elson, Essex University and Chair of the Women's Budget Group.

"The Chancellor wrongly claimed to be introducing a living wage. In fact the increase in the minimum wage to £7.2 per hour in 2016 leaves it lower than the living wage for the UK, which is £7.85 and far lower than the London living wage of £9.15. The promised increase to £9 by 2020 is insufficient and too late. While it will increase the wages of many women, it will not help the young being limited to people aged 25 and over or help the many women who are self-employed. Further, it will not compensate for the losses to "in work benefits", which disproportionately hurt women." – Prof. Ozlem Onaran, University of Greenwich.

"Reducing benefit and tax credit support will make women more vulnerable both outside and within households, reducing their ability to live independently. The government proposes to reinstate just £3 million of the support lost to victims of domestic abuse, a sector that, according to Women's Aid, has been "dismantled piece by piece" through 31% cuts. This can have but limited impact in relieving the symptoms of a worsening problem that costs society £23 billion per annum and this budget will just continue to exacerbate." – Dr Gill Kirkup, Open University.

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NOTE: *An analysis of the impact of the July 2015 Budget will be published by the Women's Budget Group on Tuesday 14th July 2015.*

The Women's Budget Group is a network of over 250 academics and activists. For more information, please visit www.wbg.org.uk or contact Rosalind Worsdale (admin@wbg.org.uk) WBG Coordinator