

The 2015 Spending Review: Chancellor still failing to invest in women's security

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Chancellor has today announced further cuts to government spending, with women once again disproportionately adversely impacted. While the partial u-turn on tax credits cuts is welcome, the overall picture for women remains bleak.

Commenting on the tax credit and other social security changes, WBG Chair Diane Elson said:

“We are pleased that the Chancellor has listened to the many voices, including the Women’s Budget Group, and modified his plans to make further cuts in tax credits for those on low incomes, particularly women. However, we regret that he has neither completely rescinded changes that present disincentives for increased earnings, nor clarified the implications for new claimants with more than two children.

“We are also concerned that the cuts announced to housing benefit and increased conditionality around JSA will impact disproportionately on women. Yet again the Chancellor further undermines any notion of a system of social security that people have a right to rely on in times of need and that treats them with dignity.

Commenting on the social care levy, Professor Hilary Land said:

“The chancellor’s recognition of the funding gap in social care is welcome, but insufficient. We are concerned that his plan to pay for this through a 2 percent increase in Council Tax is highly regressive and will entrench existing geographical inequalities. It is also inadequate to meet the current funding gap. In addressing care, the Chancellor again did nothing to recognise and support the main source of care – families and communities – without which the country would grind to a halt. This impacts particularly on women as they are more likely to be both the providers and recipients of care.

Commenting on women’s security and the ‘tampon tax’, Polly Trenow said:

“We are also concerned that while the Chancellor talked extensively about security, he has implemented only token measures to ensure that women are secure in their day to day lives. The earmarking of the £15 million revenues from the so-called tampon tax for violence

against women charities is a drop in the pan compared to the cuts these services have suffered since 2010.

On overall public spending, Professor Ruth Pearson added:

“Women’s security depends on the provision of good public services and adequate income, education and employment opportunities. By cutting public spending from 40% to 36.5% by the end of this term, the Chancellor is undermining the social infrastructure we all depend on for security.

ENDS.

For further comment or media requests, please contact:

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NOTE: An in-depth analysis of the impact of the joint Autumn Statement and Comprehensive Spending Review will be published by the Women's Budget Group on Monday 7th December 2015.

The Women’s Budget Group is a network of over 300 academics and activists. For more information, please visit www.wbg.org.uk or contact Eva Neitzert (admin@wbg.org.uk), WBG Head of Development and Coordination.