

“Little to celebrate on International Women’s Day”, says the Women’s Budget Group

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In response to the 2017 Budget, WBG Co-Director, Dr Mary-Ann Stephenson commented:

On social care

“We welcome the announcement of an additional £2bn for social care over three years. Yet it is not enough, with the funding gap estimated to reach £2.8bn and £3.5bn annually by the end of the Parliament.

“The social care crisis hits women hardest. Not only are the majority of paid and unpaid carers women, but the majority of those with care needs are women too. While Hammond focused on older people blocking beds in the NHS, we know that there are around 1.86 million people over the age of 50 with unmet care needs, the majority of whom are women.¹

“Tackling this requires more funding than was announced today and a new approach. We look forward to Government’s Green Paper later in the year for further details on its proposed strategic approach for addressing this crisis.”

On the International Women’s Day Announcements

“The £30 million in measures announced to mark International Women’s Day is purely a token gesture.

“The additional £20 million for domestic violence services for the next two years, while welcome, is insufficient compared to the scale of the problem. Sexual violence services are excluded from this additional funding, even though we know that these services are severely stretched. It costs £70m annually to run Rape Crisis England and Wales and they currently have a £10m budget shortfall, yet will not see any of this additional money.

“The Chancellor also announced £5m for women returning to work and £5m for celebrations to mark the centenary of women gaining the vote. This will make no difference to the daily lives of ordinary women that have lost the most, and gained the least, from changes to taxes and benefits. We know that women in the poorest 20% of households by 2020/21 will be losing £1,600 a year on average as a result of changes to taxes and benefits since 2010.²

¹ Franklin, B. (2015) “The end of formal adult social care: A provocation by the ILC-UK” Report for Centre for Later Life Funding,
http://www.ilcuk.org.uk/index.php/publications/publication_details/the_end_of_formal_adult_social_care

² WBG analysis, 2017.

On NIC rise for self-employment

“The Chancellor’s announcement on the treatment of employees and the self-employed is welcome. In particular we welcome the move to equalise parental rights for the self-employed. However, by focusing on the contributions paid by the self-employed, these measures do little to disincentivise employers from pushing individuals into bogus self-employment. We urge the Chancellor and government to look at this as a matter of urgency as it particularly affects women, who are also then denied access to the protections of employees.

On the failure to carry out a robust Equality Impact analysis

“The Chancellor and Treasury have again failed to undertake a robust equality impact assessment of the Budget, despite their obligations under the Equality Act and calls from the Women and Equalities Select Committee to improve its reporting of equality impact. Without such an assessment, the government cannot fully understand the impact of its decisions on different groups, including impact, or how to minimise unintended negative impacts. Given the failure of the government to carry out an impact assessment, the Women’s Budget Group will publish an independent distributional impact assessment by income, gender, and ethnicity tomorrow.”

Notes to Editors

1. The Women’s Budget Group (WBG) is an independent, not-for-profit think tank that has scrutinised the gender impact of social and economic policy decisions of successive governments for more than two decades.
2. WBG will be publishing a distributional impact assessment of Budget announcements by income, gender and ethnicity on Thursday 9th March 2017.

Further information

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