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**Sheffield Church Action on Poverty** Facebook page Details of campaigns and updates are put on this page regularly and can be shared with your networks, friends, and Churches. **If you have not already done so and you are able, please go to the page and like it.**

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*You are welcome to share this update with your Church/Networks*



- **'Alpha city: How London was captured by the Super Rich.'** Talk by Professor Rowland Atkinson of the University of Sheffield

7 pm on Wednesday 26 May on zoom.

Professor Atkinson will draw on his recent book with the same title. Some would have us believe that poverty is caused by 'the poor', by the 'feckless behaviour' of the 'lower orders' of society. But Professor Atkinson argues that 'poverty itself is hugely

influenced by the way our economic and political systems create and reproduce forms of affluence. We cannot look at one without the other.' So, his study of the large numbers of super rich in London. their influence and the effects of their presence on the rest of society is of great importance. *If you wish to attend this special meeting on zoom, please contact our secretary for the link.*

- **Beyond inequality - bringing together the broke and the billionaires - Jason Leman , Co-founder of Sheffield Equality Group- 7pm 23rd June 2021 (once again by Zoom)**

Great inequality of wealth and income pulls at the fabric of our society, creating stress, fear and resentment. In this talk, Jason Leman will outline the impact of inequality and explore whether we could change what we value, and how we see others, to close the gap between the broke and the billionaires. Jason Leman is co-founder of Sheffield Equality Group, affiliated to the national Equality Trust, and UBI Lab Sheffield. He has campaigned around issues of income and wealth inequality in Sheffield for many years. He is currently a Doctoral Researcher in Politics at the University of Sheffield, looking at the role of local democracy in society.

- **Sheffield Church Action on Poverty AGM-7pm Wednesday 7 July-speaker Simon Duffy.** Simon is the founder and Director of the Centre for Welfare Reform

## **Reset the Debt: Update**

Did you join the day of Prayer & Action on 26 March? We were encouraged to join in prayer, alongside MPs and Church Leaders. If you missed the service, its still on YouTube link below

[Prayer Broadcast - Day of Prayer and Action for Reset the Debt - YouTube](#)



## **The Living Wage Campaign**

### **Living Wage Campaign: Talk by Val Barron**

On 18<sup>th</sup> March, Val Barron, Community Development Worker, gave an interesting presentation via Zoom to members of Sheffield Church Action Poverty on the *Living Wage Campaign*. This is a campaign, supported by Church Action on Poverty, which seeks to achieve a minimum living wage for all employees that reflects current costs of living (presently it has been calculated as £9.50 per hour and £10.85 in London). Val's focus was on how we can best organise ourselves as campaigning units that can help achieve this goal. She adduced Citizens UK as a charity that has been successful in this regard via its Living Wage Foundation network. Their focus has been on contacting local employers, explaining to them the advantages that come from paying (as a minimum) the living wage (for them and their employees) and seeking to get them to commit to paying (as a minimum) the living wage. Crucial in this regard has been the tenacity Citizen's UK has shown in following-up on promises to ensure that they have been kept; or, if they have not, in the way they have reinforced by persuasion the case for doing so. There is much that we can learn from this campaigning approach.

Joe Forde

National CAP produced this briefing last November on the living wage:

[Living Wage churches briefing November 2020 \(church-poverty.org.uk\)](#)

# Explaining UK Wage Rates

	<b>THE MINIMUM WAGE</b> <small>Government minimum for under 23s</small>	<b>NATIONAL LIVING WAGE</b> <small>Government minimum for over 23s</small>	<b>REAL LIVING WAGE</b> <small>The only wage rate based on what people need to live</small>
WHAT IS IT?	<b>£8.36</b>	<b>£8.91</b>	<b>£9.50</b> across the UK and <b>£10.85</b> in London
IS IT THE LAW?	Statutory	Statutory	Voluntary
WHAT AGE GROUP IS COVERED?	21 and older	23 and older	18 and older
HOW IS IT SET?	Negotiated settlement based on recommendations from businesses and trade unions	A % of medium earnings, It aims to reach 66% of median earnings by 2024.	Calculation made according to the cost of living, based on a basket of household goods and services
IS THERE A LONDON WEIGHTING?	No London Weighting	No London Weighting	Yes - Separate higher rate for London

In April 2016 the government introduced a higher minimum wage rate for all staff over 25 years of age inspired by the Living Wage campaign - even calling it the 'national living wage'. which can cause confusion.

However, this wage is not calculated according to what employees and their families need to live. Instead, it is based on a target to reach 66% of median earnings by 2024. Under current forecasts this means a rise to £10.50 per hour by 2024 and from 2021 was adjusted to include those over 23 years old. The government minimum takes into account what is affordable for businesses.

The real Living Wage rates are higher because they are independently calculated based on what people need to get by. That is why the Living Wage Foundation encourages all employers that can afford to do so to ensure their employees earn a wage that meets the costs of living, not just the government minimum.

**The Joseph Rowntree Foundation state that 3.8m people in poverty live in families where all adults work and 3.1m people in poverty live in families where one adult works. Which means that more than half the people in poverty have someone working in their household.**

**Source Living Wage Foundation**

## **Housing and Homelessness: Talk by Tim Renshaw**

On 9 April Tim Renshaw, who manages the Cathedral Archer project, gave a fascinating talk to Sheffield U3A. He said that homelessness had increased since 2010. Reasons included a lack of welfare support (linked with austerity and sanctions), increased housing costs, low incomes and 'no recourse to public funds' for some migrants. The number who slept rough was hard to assess. The national count for 2019 was 4266 but, when the Government set up the 'Everyone In' scheme as a result of Covid 19, the number needing shelter was 30,000. Projects for the homeless were increasingly taking psychological factors into account. People who had repeated adverse or violent experiences in childhood could suffer from trauma. This might make them very passive (wanting just to be left alone) or aggressive (eg taking offence at harmless or neutral remarks). Projects try to help them to new and more stable life.

David Price

## **Priti Patel's 'New Plan for Immigration'**

Church Action on Poverty generally leaves asylum issues to specialist organisations. But everyone concerned about marginalised people should be aware of the Home Secretary's New Plan, as it carries the 'hostile environment' to a new level of hostility. The Plan brands as 'illegal' anyone who has not arrived in the UK by a 'safe and legal route' and threatens to deport them to another safe country or to their country of origin. The plan ignores the fact that the Government has blocked off safe routes by punitive fines on the transport industry. Moreover, the Refugee Convention (which UK has signed) states that 'illegal' entrants should not be penalised. There is much else of great concern to refugees and those working with them. We would urge those concerned about these proposals to engage in the Home Office consultation - go to <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/new-plan-for-immigration>

David Price

*I was a stranger and you welcomed me (Matthew 25:35).*

## **Right Wing and Left-Wing Christian Attitudes to Poverty**

In March Nick Jowett wrote an article about the differing approaches of Right-leaning and Left-leaning Christians to the issue of poverty in society. It can be easy to assume that concern about poverty and inequality is exclusively on the Left, but this is not necessarily the case. The article seeks to be fair to the arguments, often based on the Bible, that both sides use, and to identify the challenges that either viewpoint faces. It can be found at:

<https://www.church-poverty.org.uk/right-wing-and-left-wing-christian-approaches-to-poverty/>