

Our Child Benefit plan would help half a million families

8th April 2017

Labour's plans to boost child benefit would help over half a millions Scottish families and nearly 1 million kids.

We want to see child benefit increased by **£240 by 2020**.

This move will lift thousands of children out of poverty and put money back into the pockets of working class families.

You can find out how many families in your local area would [be better off here](#).

We aren't the only people who want to see this happen. So do the [Child Poverty Action Group](#).

We want to see this plan in the Child Poverty Bill, which Holyrood will debate later this year.

Earlier this week new figures revealed that working poverty in Scotland is at its highest point since the Scottish Parliament was established in 1999.

Scotland has huge new powers over social security. We can radically reshape our country to make it fairer.

Rather than focusing on dividing Scotland again with another referendum, SNP ministers should be working with Labour to put money back into the pockets of working class families and lifting children out of poverty.

Agree with our plan? Then help spread our message.

Press release: Minister condemns persecution of LGBT community in Chechnya

Reports from international human rights organisations suggest that over 100 gay men have recently been detained in Chechnya, with some reports suggesting that at least three have been killed and many have been tortured.

The detention and ill-treatment of over 100 gay men in Chechnya is extremely concerning. Reports have also suggested that at least three of these men have been killed. The statement by the regional Government, implying that such treatment towards LGBT people is acceptable, is particularly abhorrent. We condemn any and all persecution, and call on the authorities to promptly investigate and ensure that perpetrators of human rights abuses are brought to justice.

The human rights situation for LGBT people in Russia has deteriorated significantly in recent years and we continue to voice our serious concern with Russian authorities at all levels. Russia's international human rights obligations require them to protect citizens who may be at risk of persecution. We expect the Russian government to fulfill its obligations to this end, and to uphold the rule of law.

200,000 children in east Ukraine need urgent care to overcome trauma of conflict – UNICEF

7 April 2017 – More than 200,000 children, or one in four, in the two regions most severely affected by the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine require urgent and sustained psychosocial support to address their traumatic experiences, the United Nations Children's Fund ([UNICEF](#)) said today.

The world has forgotten about this invisible crisis in eastern Ukraine, but hundreds of thousands of children are paying a heavy price, one that could last a lifetime without adequate support," said UNICEF Ukraine Representative Giovanna Barberis in a news release, stressing the urgent need for funding to reach these traumatized children.

These children live in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts, within 15 kilometres of each side of the 'contact-line' that divides government and non-government-controlled areas and where fighting is most intense.

They are in chronic fear and uncertainty due to sporadic shelling, unpredictable fighting and dangers from landmines and other unexploded ordnance.

Many risk their safety to get an education. Seven schools were damaged during the most recent escalation of violence in February and March, and more than 740 schools, or one in five, in eastern Ukraine have been damaged or destroyed since the conflict began in 2014.

Parents, teachers, school directors and psychologists continue to report striking behaviour changes in children as young as three years old. Symptoms

include severe anxiety, bed-wetting, nightmares, aggressive behaviour and withdrawing from families and communities.

Dedicated social workers, psychologists and specially trained teachers are working around the clock. However, as the conflict drags on, additional investments are required to meet these children's needs.

UNICEF is appealing for \$31.2 million to support these children and their families.

Children should not have to live with the emotional scars from a conflict they had no part in creating. Additional support is needed now so that young people in Donetsk and Luhansk can grow into healthy adults and rebuild their communities,” said Ms. Barberis, calling on all sides of the conflict to recommit to the ceasefire signed in Minsk and end this senseless violence.

VIDEO: Ukraine: When a bomb shelter becomes a part of daily life | UNICEF

[Press release: RACE to host €10m ITER test facility](#)

The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) and the ITER Organization have entered into a technical collaboration which will see the UKAEA's centre for Remote Applications in Challenging Environments, RACE, host the ITER Remote Handling Test Facility (IRTF) for a period of at least five years.

The UK Government is investing €5 million over this period, matched by the ITER Organization, to perform testing of critical remote handling operations necessary for the maintenance of components for ITER – the international fusion energy project based in Cadarache, France.

The IRTF will be used to test and evaluate remote handling system designs, conduct remote handling trials of generic and specific maintenance tasks and thus demonstrate the feasibility and compatibility of these remote handling tasks and to provide operational feedback into the final component designs. Test facilities will be established across many of the ITER systems, including Diagnostics, Heating, Vacuum and Port Plugs. UKAEA's RACE centre, at Culham Science Centre near Oxford, is actively supporting a number of industry-led partnerships developing remote maintenance systems for the ITER project, including the Divertor, Neutral Beam and the Cask & Plug Remote Handling System. Having this common link provides the opportunity for sharing best practice, creating common standards, sharing development effort and the development of generic test facilities.

UKAEA Head of Business Development, Martin Townsend, explained:

UKAEA remains committed to the realisation of ITER, helping to support industry to secure business from the ITER programme and partnering with all stakeholders to deliver the new technologies and processes necessary for success. Hosting the ITER remote handling test facility provides an excellent opportunity to link UKAEA's know-how with ITER Organization technical experts, supported by industry.

The ITER Organization's Division Head for Remote Handling & Radioactive Materials, Spencer Pitcher, summarised the win-win nature of the collaboration:

At the RACE centre, we now have access to an excellent new facility at a fusion laboratory dedicated to remote handling and staffed with expertise arising from long experience in performing such tasks on the JET fusion experiment. Meanwhile at ITER, we are in the midst of designing components that will require remote maintenance and for which validation of maintenance schemes by mock-ups can greatly reduce the risk to the ITER project. ITER itself will not have facilities on our premises to perform such tests for several years. This UKAEA contribution to the success of fusion and ITER makes an excellent match with ITER's remote handling >mock-up and testing requirements.

Ends

For more information please contact Nick Holloway, UKAEA Media Manager, on 01235 466232 or email nick.holloway@ukaea.uk

Notes to Editors

RACE (Remote Applications in Challenging Environments) Part of the UK Atomic Energy Authority, RACE is conducting R&D and commercial activities in the field of Robotics and Autonomous Systems. Based at Culham Science Centre near Oxford, RACE offers access to test facilities, robotic equipment and expertise for SMEs, multinationals, research laboratories and academia from sectors with 'challenging environments' such as nuclear fission and fusion, petrochemical, space exploration, construction and mining. Further information: <http://www.race.ukaea.uk>

United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority The UK Atomic Energy Authority (UKAEA) carries out fusion energy research on behalf of the Government at Culham Science Centre. It is also developing Culham as a location of hi-tech research and business, with around 40 tenant companies now on site and UKAEA's new RACE robotics centre and Materials Research Facility, which both opened in 2016.

UKAEA's fusion lab Culham Centre for Fusion Energy oversees Britain's fusion programme, headed by the MAST Upgrade experiment. It also hosts the world's largest fusion research facility, JET (Joint European Torus), which it operates for European scientists under a contract with the European Commission.

ITER ITER ("The Way" in Latin) is one of the most ambitious energy projects in the world today. At Cadarache in southern France, 35 nations are working together to build the world's largest tokamak, a magnetic fusion device that has been designed to prove the feasibility of fusion as a large-scale and carbon-free source of energy based on the same principle that powers our Sun and stars. The work that will be carried out at ITER is crucial to advancing fusion science and preparing the way for the fusion power plants of tomorrow.

ITER will be the first fusion device to produce net energy. ITER will be the first fusion device to maintain fusion for long periods of time. And ITER will be the first fusion device to test the integrated technologies, materials, and physics regimes necessary for the commercial production of fusion-based electricity. The ITER Organization is an intergovernmental organization that was established by an international agreement signed in 2006. The Parties to the ITER Agreement (the ITER Members) are the People's Republic of China; the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom); the Republic of India; Japan; the Republic of Korea; the Russian Federation; and the United States of America. Further information: <https://www.iter.org/>

Today's figures demonstrate the failure of the Tory Government's industrial strategy – John McDonnell

John McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting on today's manufacturing and trade figures, said:

"Today's figures demonstrate the failure of the Tory Government's industrial strategy.

"UK manufacturing output has shrunk for the second consecutive month and our trade deficit, on both goods and services, has widened for the second consecutive month, getting 2017 off to a particularly worrying start.

"It is becoming increasingly clear that the Tory Government's rhetoric on its industrial strategy isn't matched by reality.

“Only Labour, with a proper industrial strategy, and a plan for a high-investment, high-skill and high-wage economy will deliver the trade and export opportunities of the future.”