

[John McDonnell MP responds to Resolution Foundation Report](#)

John

McDonnell MP, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, commenting in the Resolution Foundation report out today, which shows that Britain is on course for the biggest increase in inequality since Thatcher, said:

"This report is damning of the unfair economic policies of this Chancellor, as the gap between working families and a wealthy few gets wider, with the poor getting poorer and the rich getting richer. It demonstrates to us all once again that the economy under a Tory government will be rigged for those at the top, with poor and middle income households facing their worst Parliament for income growth since the 1960s.

"Labour called on the Government at the Autumn Statement to end the unfair cuts to in work benefits, whilst they were going ahead with tax giveaways to a wealthy minority, but Philip Hammond chose to carry on with the work of his predecessor.

"It is becoming clearer by the day that working families will be forced to pay for a Tory Brexit that favours the rich and not the rest of us, as our country faces its biggest rise in inequality since Margaret Thatcher.

"The next Labour government would rewrite the rules of our economy in favour of working families, with a real living wage expected to be £10 an hour by 2020, and proper investment to ensure no one and no community is left behind."

[Food recycling – Perth Road Lanes – further update](#)



I recently updated residents about the impending food recycling extension to cover the Perth Road lanes and surrounding area.

There was a drop-in session yesterday for residents that I previously advertised and I thought it would now be useful to give a list of the streets wholly or partly included in the new food recycling extension :

AIRLIE PLACE
BALTIC GARDENS
BELLEFIELD AVENUE
FORDS LANE
GREENFIELD PLACE
HIGH MILL COURT
MAGDALEN MEWS
MAGDALEN PLACE
MAGDALEN YARD ROAD
MCGONAGALL SQUARE
MCVICARS LANE
MID WYND
MILLERS WYND
OSBORNE PLACE
PATONS LANE
PATRICK PLACE
PENNYCOOK LANE
PERTH ROAD
RITCHIES LANE
ROSEANGLE
RYEHILL LANE
SEABRAES COURT
SEABRAES LANE
SEAFIELD CLOSE
SEAFIELD LANE
SEAFIELD ROAD
SHEPHERDS LOAN
SPINNERS WYND
SPRINGFIELD
ST PETER STREET
STEP ROW
STRAWBERRYBANK
TAYFIELD PLACE
TAYLORS LANE

THOMSON STREET
UNION PLACE
WESTFIELD AVENUE
WESTFIELD LANE
WESTFIELD PLACE
WINDSOR PLACE

I have details of the locations of communal on-street recycling units in the area so do please contact me if you wish further information on this (recycling@frasermacpherson.org.uk).

Last week, I attended a briefing for councillors about the proposed final extensions of all other household recycling across the city (paper, cardboard, metals, plastics, etc) and this will take place in two phases – commencing April and June. The above area is the only part of the West End left to have this extension (the rest of the West End being covered from 2015) and I will update with further details on this soon.

[Tuition fees are a harsh lesson for parents](#)

As pupils face ever-growing pressure to improve grades, courses offered by private agencies seem like an easy solution but the cost in both time and money is high.



Students practice calligraphy in Wuzhi county, Henan province. The course is part of a free-tuition program run by the local government. [Photo/Xinhua]

Wang Haifeng is pondering whether to register her son, a fifth-grade Beijing primary school pupil, on a math tutorial course. If she does, it would be the fifth course the Beijing resident has signed her 10-year-old child up for.

The other four are English, Chinese classics, basketball and the game of Go. Her son has to attend each class once or twice every week.

“The number is not that large compared with many of my son’s classmates at school, who have seven, eight or even more tutorial courses of different subjects to take outside school.”

The popularity of these seemingly “hot services” is accentuated by the scarcity of places offered by some tutorial agencies.

In November 2016, a report by Metro Express, a newspaper in Zhejiang province about parents waiting outside classrooms of a well-known tutorial agency to obtain a place for their children went viral on WeChat Friend Circle. It triggered heated discussions and retrospection among parents and educators on whether the pursuit of such services is rational or not.

The report said many parents signed their children up for tutorial courses not only to improve the children’s test results over a short period of time, but also with a longer-term view: to get the children prepared for the fierce competition of entrance exams for highly selective junior middle or high schools.

According to educational laws and regulations, pupils in China do not have to take any tests when they finish their primary school studies and rise to junior middle school.

But the principle only applies to students who choose to enter ordinary junior middle schools that are adjacent to the addresses on their hukou, or permanent residence permit.

For those who want to attend prestigious junior middle schools with better facilities and teachers, they have to pass independent recruiting exams, which are organized by the schools and consisting of tests of subjects taught in primary school, including math and English.

Under such circumstances, turning to tutorial agencies that help students improve test scores is almost a must to possibly increase the odds of being admitted.

Donald Tusk speaks out for the elites

Mr Tusk has written a letter to the EU 27 saying he disagrees with the views of many voters around the EU “that European integration is beneficial only to the elites, the ordinary people have only suffered as a result”. He should try telling that one to the millions thrown out of work or never able to get a job thanks to the Euro and the EU’s banking and economic policies. The UK was badly damaged by the EU’s Exchange Rate Mechanism.

He thinks that people do not feel secure enough. He urges the EU 27 to unite to undertake “definitive reinforcement of the EU external borders”. Does that mean he now wants to build more walls and fences, as the EU is helping Turkey do already and as some EU countries have done individually?

There is news for the UK, which is not mentioned by name. He tells us “The EU should not abandon its role as a trade superpower, which is open to others”. That sounds like a man who wants to have access to the UK market and accepts we will have access to the EU’s internal market. He clearly does not wish to lose any European trade.

There is also the curious statement that “the times of European unity have been the best times in all of Europe’s centuries long history”. Is this the idea that the Roman Empire or the Habsburg Empire or the French conquests of the late eighteenth century were some golden age, despite the role of the military and of occupation?

His letter of course sets out exactly what many of us expected to be the EU’s next move – more progress towards a full political and defence union.

Fujian orders paid leave to care for elders

Adults in Fujian province who are the product of single-child families will be guaranteed paid leave of up to 10 days annually if they need to care for older parents who are hospitalized, according to legislation passed by the province’s top legislature.

The measure was passed on Jan 22 and is set to go into effect on March 1. It is intended to protect residents at age 60 or above, but some experts and members of the public say they are doubtful it will work in the private sector.

It says that wages and benefits for those without siblings who take time off for the specified purpose should continue to be paid.

Employers who refuse to continue paying wages and benefits will be punished, said Xu Hua, vice-chairwoman of the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Fujian Provincial People's Congress Standing Committee.

If employers still refuse to pay past a deadline, the Department of Human Resources and Social Security will levy fines ranging from 2,000 to 20,000 yuan (\$290 to \$2,900) in accordance with Regulations on Supervision of Labor Security, Xu said. They also will be listed as "promise breakers" and will be restricted in bidding, market access and obtaining financing, she said.

There were 5.15 million seniors aged 60 and above in Fujian by the end of 2015, representing 13.4 percent of the province's population. For the whole country, the number was 222 million, or more than 16 percent of the population.

Fujian's new measure follows a national law passed in 1996 by the country's top legislative body on the "protection of the rights and interests of the elderly". The law was amended twice in 2012 and 2015. According to the latest amendment, seniors have the right to obtain material assistance from the State. It also says families are required to care for them.

The Fujian regulation builds upon the national law by adding more detailed provisions, said Gan Mantang, a sociology professor at Fuzhou University.

But while calling paid leave "innovative", he said it will be difficult to put into practice.

"Workers are not even paid now for some normal vacations. It remains doubtful that this paid leave will be carried out."

He said it probably can be put into practice in State-owned institutions, but it may not be so easy in private companies, he added.

Han Yongjing, an assistant to a real estate company's chief financial officer in Fuzhou, Fujian's provincial capital, said public servants may benefit from the policy but doubts the same will apply in the private sector.