

Gill Furniss and Rebecca Long-Bailey comments on Fuel Poverty Awareness Day

Gill

Furniss MP, Labour's Shadow Business Minister, commenting on Fuel Poverty Awareness

Day, said:

"Fuel poverty

affects four million households in the UK. This has a detrimental effect on people's lives – both physically and mentally. Cold homes impact young people's

ability to study and socialise, and casts a shadow over vulnerable older people

who don't want to admit they are struggling to heat their homes.

"There are

also huge financial implications for our NHS. It is estimated that suffering from cold-related ill health costs the NHS £1.36 billion each year, and if the issue is not addressed properly, in the next 15 years £22 billion will have to be spent by the NHS to tackle ill-health related to cold homes.

"We welcome

the Government's shift in focus towards fuel poverty; however, there is no significant funding to back these announcements. There has been a shocking decline in funding available for energy efficiency measures and some of the most vulnerable fuel poor households are receiving no help at all.

"In my own

constituency of Sheffield, Brightside, and Hillsborough there are 7,241 households in fuel poverty. Whilst there have been fantastic local initiatives

to help those in need, these efforts are hindered by a lack of Government support.

"As we

mark Fuel Poverty Awareness Day, we know that Theresa May's government has slashed energy efficiency incentives, while offering meagre funding to support households in fuel poverty.

"The Labour

Party has made a commitment to end fuel poverty by making energy efficiency an

infrastructure priority and promising to insulate 4 million homes, as well as providing support for those struggling with their energy bills so that nobody has to live in a cold, damp home.'"

Rebecca

Long-Bailey MP, Labour's Shadow Secretary of State of Business, Energy and

Industrial Strategy, said:

“I am calling upon The Government to make support and investment into the industry surrounding home and premises insulation a key infrastructure priority.

“This makes clear moral sense in terms of ensuring that individuals, families and businesses have access to one of our most basic human needs: warmth. Aside from this however there is a clear economic case too.

“The return on investing in energy efficiency is even better than HS2, creating money for the taxpayer with £1.27 returned for every £1 spent, saves money for the NHS and will create tens of thousands of jobs in SMEs spread across the country. The fact the Conservatives are slashing investment in this area beggars belief.”

[News story: Lifetime ISAs available from 6 April 2017](#)

Opening a lifetime ISA

You can open a lifetime ISA if you are aged 18 or over but under 40. You must be either:

- resident in the UK
- a Crown Servant (for example a diplomat or civil servant)
- the spouse or civil partner of a Crown Servant

As with other [ISAs](#), you won't pay tax on any interest, income or capital gains from cash or investments held within your lifetime ISA.

Saving in a lifetime ISA

You can save up to £4,000 each year in a lifetime ISA. There is no maximum monthly savings contribution, and you can continue to save in it until you reach 50. The account can stay open after then but you can't make any more payments into it.

The £4,000 limit, if used, will form part of your overall annual ISA limit. From the tax year 2017 to 2018, the overall annual tax limit will be £20,000.

Example

You could save:

- £11,000 in a cash ISA
- £2,000 in a stocks and shares ISA
- £3,000 in an innovative finance ISA
- £4,000 in a lifetime ISA in one tax year

Your lifetime ISA won't close when the tax year finishes. You'll keep your savings on a tax-free basis for as long as you keep the money in your lifetime ISA.

Lifetime ISAs can hold cash, stocks and shares qualifying investments, or a combination of both.

Government bonus

When you save into your lifetime ISA, you will receive a government bonus of 25% of the money you put in, up to a maximum of £1,000 a year.

Withdrawals

You can withdraw the funds held in your lifetime ISA before you're 60, but you'll have to pay a withdrawal charge of 25% of the amount you withdraw.

A withdrawal charge will not apply if you are:

- using it towards a first home
- aged 60
- terminally ill with less than 12 months to live

If you die, your lifetime ISA will end on the date of your death and there won't be a withdrawal charge for withdrawing funds or assets from your account.

Transferring a lifetime ISA

You can transfer your lifetime ISA to another lifetime ISA with a different provider without incurring a withdrawal charge.

If you transfer it to a different type of ISA, you will have to pay a withdrawal charge.

Saving for your first home

Your lifetime ISA savings and the bonus can be used towards buying your first home, worth up to £450,000, without incurring a withdrawal charge. You must be buying your home with a mortgage.

You must use a conveyancer or solicitor to act for you in the purchase, and

the funds must be paid direct to them by your lifetime ISA provider.

If you are buying with another first time buyer, and you each have a lifetime ISA, you can both use your government bonus. You can also buy a house with someone who isn't a first time buyer but they will not be able to use their lifetime ISA without incurring a withdrawal charge.

Your lifetime ISA must have been opened for at least 12 months before you can withdraw funds from it to buy your first home.

If you have a [Help to Buy ISA](#), you can transfer those savings into your lifetime ISA or you can continue to save into both – but you will only be able to use the government bonus from one to buy your first home.

Contact your provider directly for more information about the lifetime ISA.

INTERVIEW: Governments should think twice before putting children in detention – UN expert Manfred Nowak

17 February 2017 – Despite progress in the realization of children's rights, as set out in the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which entered into force on 2 September 1990, too many commitments remain unfulfilled. This is particularly true for children deprived of liberty, who often remain invisible and forgotten.

To address this situation, the United Nations General Assembly, by resolution 69/157 adopted on 18 December 2014, invited the Secretary-General to commission an in-depth global study on children deprived of liberty.

In October 2016, Manfred Nowak of Austria, an independent expert, was selected to lead the study.

Mr. Nowak is professor of international law and human rights at the *University of Vienna* and Secretary-General of the European Inter-University Centre for Human Rights and Democratisation in Venice. He was previously the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture and a member of the UN Working Group on Enforced or Involuntary Disappearances.

He spoke with *UN News* on his new mandate. The excerpts from the interview follow.

UN News: What is the definition of children deprived of liberty?

Manfred Nowak: It concerns the right to personal liberty. Whenever I put you in a particular place, and lock the door, then I deprive you of your right to

personal liberty. Most people think about prisons and jails. But in reality, there are many more places where adults and children are being detained. In the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture of 2002, the United Nations provided a definition. [Deprivation of liberty means any form of detention or imprisonment or the placement of a person in a public or private custodial setting which that person is not permitted to leave at will by order of any judicial, administrative or other authority.] This instrument created the UN Subcommittee on Prevention of Torture and national preventive mechanisms that inspect prisons, psychiatric hospitals, police lockups, and also special detention facilities for children and young persons.

UN News: Can you briefly explain the context in which your mandate was created?

Manfred Nowak: There are many children deprived of liberty, and it is a very serious problem because you destroy the lives of children if you lock them away. Unfortunately, that's the case in too many countries. In some States, the minimum age of criminal responsibility is very low. When I was UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, I found many kids of nine, ten and eleven years old locked away in prisons. There are many unaccompanied minors, migrant and refugee children in Europe and other areas of the world who are deprived of liberty and put in migration detention centres. Other kids are held in special institutions for children with disabilities, street children, orphans, drug users, or children who are regarded as difficult to educate. In the context of armed conflicts, there are child soldiers and children involved in terrorism and other national security crimes. Then we have children, in many countries, who live with incarcerated parents in prison.

UN Independent Expert Manfred Nowak talks to UN News about his new mandate.

There are many different reasons why children are deprived of liberty, but we simply don't know how many children [are locked away around the world]. We have no real estimate, but suspect that more than a million children are kept in detention, despite the fact that the Convention of the Rights of the Child says in principle, children should not be detained, and detention should be a measure of last resort.

But in reality, many children are locked away for many years. In order to shed light on the phenomenon of children deprived of liberty, we need to gather data. We request Governments, different UN agencies, non-governmental organizations and other stakeholders to provide reliable data, from all countries in the world, about how many children are actually deprived of liberty.

We also wish to identify the alternatives and best practices. There are many countries that have done quite a lot to reduce the number of children in detention. Others could learn from them.

UN News: What differentiates this study from other studies on children?

Manfred Nowak: There are two major global studies on children. First is an

expert study in 1996 by Graca Machel about children in armed conflict, primarily child soldiers. That study raised awareness about the seriousness of this issue, and led to the creation of the mandate of the Secretary-General's Special Representative on Children and Armed Conflict. Ten years later, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro conducted a global study on violence against children. Again, this raised awareness that so many children are subjected to violence in families, schools and all kinds of circumstances. Again, this became a major issue for the UN.

My study is a third, and a follow-up to those previous two studies. In principle, locking children up amounts to structural violence against children. It should only be allowed as an exceptional measure and only for a very short period of time. I hope this global study will raise awareness of a hidden subject of serious violations of the rights of children.

UN News: What are some challenges in conducting this study?

Manfred Nowak: This study is not about naming and shaming of countries. It is not an exercise that says that's a good country, that's a bad country. We are trying to collect data. We hope that governments will cooperate. Of course, there are always governments that are not happy to provide data. But the real challenge is that data are not simply available. So, the process of conducting this study should raise awareness within governments that it is necessary to know how many children are deprived of liberty.

I'm working in close cooperation with UNICEF [the United Nations Children's Fund], which has offices in some 160 countries. They will assist governments in collecting those data. Collecting data is also in the interest of Governments because they can learn from others and from best practices in order to reduce the number of children in detention. It is also more cost-effective to provide them with social care or put them in small homes with foster parents rather than institutionalizing them.

UN News: You were UN Special Rapporteur on Torture from 2004 to 2010. How does your experience as the Special Rapporteur help fulfil your new mandate?

Manfred Nowak: One of the main reasons why I was chosen is that I have six years of experience as Special Rapporteur on Torture. During those six years, I carried out 18 official fact-finding missions to countries in all different regions of the world. If you want to investigate torture, you have to go into closed institutions, police lockups, prisons, and psychiatric institutions. So I spent most of my time in closed institutions. I didn't only look for torture and other forms of ill treatments. I also looked at the conditions of detention. In many countries, the conditions of overcrowded, dirty prisons and other detention facilities are only to be defined as "inhuman and degrading." Children who are locked up may be traumatized for the rest of their lives. These children need social care and love. They don't need to be incarcerated.

UN News: When do you expect to complete the study and what contributions will this study make to the protection of child rights?

Manfred Nowak: I'm very confident that as soon as I get the budget to fully start working on the study, it will really have an impact. It will create awareness that so many children who are in reality deprived of liberty should not be there. It will have preventive effects in future. I hope that in the future Governments will think twice before putting children in detention for whatever reasons. It is important to get children involved who have been detained. We want those children to speak out. We want to also show there are best practices in all regions and there are viable alternatives.

It took about two years to select the independent expert who leads the study. Developing methodologies takes much longer. So honestly speaking, I will not be able to finalize the study until the summer of 2018. It also depends how quickly governments will provide comparative data. While I intend to submit an interim report, the General Assembly will hopefully extend the two-year deadline for the final submission of the global study.

UN News: What kind of childhood did you live, and what influence if any, did that have on your becoming a lawyer?

Manfred Nowak: I had a very happy childhood with my parents and with my siblings. I grew up in different areas of Austria. My childhood experience did not lead to becoming a lawyer. My father was a chemical engineer, and my mother had studied English and German and became a teacher in high school. My father wanted me to study at a technical university, and I wanted to study filmmaking. I did different studies, including law, which was purely by incident. My interest in human rights grew toward the end of my various studies.

[News story: Parole Board Quarterly Performance Report](#)

From:

First published:

17 February 2017

Part of:

Statistics and performance information for quarter two of 2016/2017 (July – September).

PDF, 679KB, 7 pages

If you use assistive technology (such as a screen reader) and need a version of this document in a more accessible format, please email

info@paroleboard.gsi.gov.uk. Please tell us what format you need. It will help us if you say what assistive technology you use.

The Parole Board is committed to keeping stakeholders informed of our work and progress towards achieving our objectives. As part of this openness we will publish our quarterly performance report which is produced for the Board's Management Committee. This report represents a summary of Parole Board operational performance in all its key areas of external delivery and internal management. It provides a snapshot of that period which is used to advise and guide on performance and executive decision making.

The data in this pack shows the large volume of business being processed by the Board, and how that business feeds into hearing demand and outcomes. The number of cases outstanding is now falling on a consistent trajectory and it is hoped the Board will make further significant progress during the rest of the year as we aim to increase the number of hearings held to 750-800 a month.

Based on the year so far, the Board can be confident that by the end of this year we will yet again have completed more oral hearings than ever before and, as the backlog clears, will safely release more people. The deferral rate of hearings remains a concern despite falling over the last few years, as it remains at a high level. We are considering what further steps can be taken to tackle these problems by sharing the reasons for deferrals with the Public Protection Casework team within NOMS (National Offender Management Service) and the National Probation Service.

The below information is intended to aid understanding of the attached performance report, which covers quarter two of 2016/2017 (July – September):

1. Paper Hearings – MCA assessments This graph shows the outcomes from all paper based hearings on a 12 month rolling basis. All cases, irrespective of sentence type or review category are assessed on the papers in the first instance through the Member Case Assessment (MCA) process.
There are a number of outcomes possible at the MCA stage, depending on the sentence type: no release, direct to oral hearing, release, defer.
2. Listing Queue for oral hearings This graph shows the queue of cases deemed ready to be considered at oral hearing and currently waiting to be allocated a confirmed date. The graph additionally records those cases that have been waiting more than 90 days for a confirmed oral hearing date, including a figure specifically for IPP cases. This highlights the capacity constraints across the system to list all those cases that are ready to be heard.
3. Oral Hearings Outcomes and Release Rate This graph shows the outcomes from all oral hearings on a 12 month rolling basis. In addition it shows the conduction rate (cases that do actually progress to on the day

against the original number of cases listed) and completion rate, i.e. those cases that are concluded on the day. The release rate is also captured in the smaller chart.

4. Deferrals These graphs show the number of cases which are deferred on the day for each month in a 12 month rolling period and also by quarter since 2013. Identifying and mitigating against deferrals is a key aim to contribute to reducing the backlog.
5. Generic Parole Process – Cases Outstanding This graph shows the volume of Generic Parole Process cases that are outstanding in a 12 month rolling period (it does not include recall cases) Case outstanding is defined as all cases referred to the Parole Board for a GPP review, where the original target date to conclude the review has now passed but the review is still ongoing, and as such overdue. A case may be outstanding for a variety of reasons including complexity of the case, case readiness, justified and reasonable deferral or because of an inability of the Board to list the case.
This is a key metric for the Parole Board and reducing this number down to pre-Osborn figures of around 1200 by the end of 2017 is a core focus of our strategy.

If you have any questions relating to this report please contact our Performance Team on info@paroleboard.gsi.gov.uk

[Press release: West Belfast shooting](#)

From:

First published:

17 February 2017

Part of:

James Brokenshire issued a statement following the shooting of a child in the Forest Street area of West Belfast on Thursday 16 February.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

This was a brutal and shocking attack on a child by abusive criminals.

I will continue to offer all possible support to the PSNI and Department of Justice to ensure that the thugs responsible are held to account. Collectively we will continue to work to build a society where violence of this sort has no place.