

A breakthrough for children: an end to discrimination at last

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Child Poverty Action Group is delighted that, at last, a major political party has shown it is serious about child poverty. “Labour’s policies are a properly integrated and comprehensive beginning to the solution of this complex, multi-faceted problem” says CPAG’s economics spokesperson, Associate Professor Susan St John.

“We are especially pleased that Labour has acknowledged that Working for Families discriminates against the poorest children, and that has had such serious consequences” says St John. Labour now acknowledges “...the In Work Tax Credit (IWTC) stigmatises beneficiary families, undervalues care, and keeps poor families’ incomes unnecessarily low outweigh any remaining issues about work incentives.” CPAG applauds this insight. The IWTC has been a huge injustice and is against the spirit of Human Rights legislation.

The policy to extend the IWTC which Labour says will start with those families with young children is absolutely critical. CPAG says “more money means more children will be fed properly and have the basics that currently they may get only from charity”.

The IWTC and a change in tax means around \$70-\$80 per week extra will be paid to the poorest families. This will be effective in significantly reducing the depth of poverty among children.

CPAG challenges National to emulate the leadership shown by Labour and the Greens, Maori and Mana parties on this issue.

St John says: “As well as promoting a better educated workforce, fewer health problems and less crime, these policies will help to return New Zealand to what it once was: a great place to bring up children.”