

CHiLD POVERTY ACTION GROUP

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PRESS RELEASE: Keep child poverty on the agenda, says UK visitor

Child Poverty Action Group New Zealand (CPAG NZ) will host the Chief Executive of CPAG United Kingdom next week. CPAG NZ director Janfrie Wakim said "CPAG UK is the group that inspired our own, so it is a great privilege to welcome Kate Green. New Zealand can learn a lot from Britain's commitment to tackling child poverty. International experience shows us that child poverty is not inevitable and there are clear solutions."

Nearly ten years ago the British Labour government made a bold and ambitious pledge to end child poverty by 2020. It has stood by that commitment and the UK child poverty rate has since dropped from 1 in 3 children to around 1 in 4. The UK has also moved up from its place at the bottom of the EU league table.

Kate Green said, "Our child poverty target has been an immensely helpful framework for ensuring that child poverty stays on the political agenda." Another important factor has been that the UK's three main political parties all back the goal of ending child poverty by 2020 and are committed to addressing relative poverty.

However, Green warns progress has been slower than expected. "There is so much more to be done. Child poverty in the UK remains shockingly high, despite our national wealth. Still, the target gives us something to work toward. It's something we in the UK can be very proud of."

Child poverty targets help remind the public of the need for action, too, said CPAG NZ Director Janfrie Wakim. "In rich countries it can be easy to forget that poverty exists. Sometimes people blame lifestyle choices and poor parenting, and overlook the big picture. But a firm commitment to ending child poverty would reinforce the need to work together to protect all our children."

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Contact:

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Related events:

Kate Green will give a public lecture in Auckland on Mon 14 April at 7pm. The topic is "Child Poverty: What makes a difference? Lessons from the UK." See invitation www.cpag.org.nz

In April CPAG NZ will publish a new report, *Left Behind*, which looks at how social and income inequalities damage New Zealand children. It recommends that NZ adopt a child poverty target. Launch date Mon 28 April. Contact Rachel Somerfield, CPAG NZ Administrator, for more information.

Background – Kate Green:

- ◆ Brief biography of Kate: <http://213.86.122.139/about/k-green.jsp>

- ◆ Australian article featuring Kate discussing her work against child poverty
<http://www.cpag.org.nz/resources/articles/res1134959492.pdf>
- ◆ Excerpts from Australian coverage of Kate's visit there for a conference in 2005
<http://www.cpag.org.nz/resources/articles/res1134959110.pdf>.
- ◆ Child Poverty Action Group NZ was inspired by CPAG UK, however they are two independent organisations and are not formally affiliated.