

Written evidence from William Shutt [PCW0063]

Link to previous evidence submitted by William Shutt (PCW0035)

<https://committees.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/8045/pdf/>

Introduction

This second submission should be read as an amendment to the first submitted by me (PCW0035). I wish to bring to the Committee's attention the following changes of substance in two sections which put my argument more effectively:

Is there a need to consider new, long term approaches to addressing changes in the labour market: Introducing a Universal Basic Income (UBI)?.

A few of my associates and I, all long time advocates of UBI, make the assumption that the need to introduce UBI in the United Kingdom is now so urgent that, irrespective of objections in principle to Pilots, which certainly exist, there is no time to run either of the well researched Pilots proposed for Scotland in 'Assessing the Feasibility of Citizens' Basic Income Pilots in Scotland: Final Report.'

It has to be recognised that these proposals are an important and very understandable development because of the crying need to alleviate the widespread deprivation in the local authority areas selected in the Lowlands for Pilots. (It should be noted that this whole and entirely necessary project has been funded by the Scottish Government with £0.25 million.) However if the committee refers in particular to the paragraph entitled 'Institutional Feasibility' in the Executive Summary of the draft final report **, it will become fully aware of the massive difficulties that are inevitably associated with such a scheme.

In the face of the huge and mounting challenges (Pandemic, Climate Change and Social Care) to be overcome, I repeat, there is no time for a Pilot. With the sheer complexity of such a project and the formidable number of different parties that will need to be satisfied, it could take several years or more to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

UBI could help so much to alleviate the "mounting challenges" were it to be introduced much sooner. Better to embrace the principle of UBI and develop it in a way which allows it to be modified with the least difficulty as it is applied.

** https://basicincome.scot/wp-content/uploads/sites/75/2020/06/Draft-Final-CBI-Feasibility_Exec-Summary-June-2020.pdf

Conclusion

I am very glad to get this opportunity to lodge my current views in the Parliamentary domain at such a critical juncture in the political affairs of the nation. Those most conscious of the merits of UBI observe, week on week, evidence arising out of a surprising variety of political difficulties that would be alleviated by the application of UBI.

There is now an overwhelming and urgent need for (at least) the questions above to be addressed by the Work and Pensions Committee and Central Government because of the convergence of some very pressing issues, doubtless exacerbated by the current pandemic: the inadequacy of

housing provision and social care, the prospect of large-scale unemployment and above all the overwhelming threat of climate change. Universal Basic Income will be a vital ingredient in a mix of measures required to overcome these difficulties.

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