

Iain Duncan Smith

Former Leader of the Conservative Party and Former Secretary of State for Work and Pensions

Social Justice. In 2004, the Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith MP founded the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ), an independent think-tank to put social justice at the heart of British politics to make policy recommendations to tackle the root causes of poverty and combat social breakdown. Over the last 12 years the CSJ has outworked this mission significantly and successfully, with highlights including the design and implementation of Universal Credit – the biggest Government reform for generations – and the creation of the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The organisation has excelled at designing ambitious, effective and implementable reforms, and then persuading Governments to adopt them.

As Leader of the Opposition and then Secretary of State for Work & Pensions, he spent time in many of the UK's most disadvantaged communities, with people whose lives were blighted by social breakdown and the poverty it created. He frequently encountered levels of social breakdown which appalled him. In one of the world's largest economies, too many people lived in dysfunctional homes, trapped on benefits. Too many children were leaving school with no qualifications or skills to enable them to work and prosper. Too many communities were blighted by alcohol and drug addiction, debt and criminality, many of them with stunningly low levels of life expectancy.

Many people he met had given up on politicians because they felt politicians had given up on them. The political process had become irrelevant in their lives; Westminster was failing to play its part in getting to grips with Britain's deepest social problems. The CSJ was founded to understand the lives of people living on poverty and develop policies to help these people. The organisation argues that poverty is about much more than the simple absence of money. Rather than finding short term solutions, it is committed to tackling poverty's root causes and recommending life changing solutions.

In 2007, the Centre for Social Justice published was commissioned by the then Leader of the Opposition, David Cameron MP to develop a new poverty fighting agenda for the Conservative Party which resulted in our first Breakthrough Britain report. This ground breaking report identified five pathways to poverty experienced by people living in our poorest communities. These five pathways, family breakdown, worklessness, serious personal debt, addiction and educational underachievement are all interconnected and characterised the lives of many of those experiencing the worst poverty in the UK. The report provided practical policy solutions to meet social needs such as the creation of Pioneer Schools (which became Free Schools) as well as the expansion of Credit Unions to help tackle serious personal debt.

Iain Duncan Smith is now back at the CSJ as its Chairman and it continues to have significant political influence on the Westminster arena by making life-changing proposals to the Government. The Prime Minister, Theresa May, has pledged her commitment to tackling the social injustices that are entrenched in our society and the CSJ's role is now more important than to ensure that this narrative is translated in action.

Work and Pensions/Employment. The Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith MP was the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions from May 2010 until March 2016. He had overall responsibility for the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and direct responsibility for departmental expenditure and departmental management.

DWP is responsible for the administration of the State Pension and working age benefits system, providing support to:

- people of working age
- employers
- pensioners
- families and children
- disabled people

He made a number of legislative achievements during his time in office. Most notably, he successfully designed and delivered Universal Credit and the Work Programme. In March 2016, he resigned as Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in opposition to cuts to disability benefits.

Current Political Outlook/ Government Policy. Rt. Hon. Iain Duncan Smith MP was elected Conservative MP for Chingford and Woodford Green in April 1992. He was Secretary of State for Work and Pensions from 2010 to 2016 and previously Leader of the Conservative Party and Leader of the Opposition from 2001 to 2003. He joined the Conservative Party in 1981, and succeeded William Hague as Conservative Leader in 2001; he won the leadership election and was received the support of Margaret Thatcher for his Eurosceptic beliefs. Iain Duncan Smith is now regularly meeting with the Government and taken an active role as a backbencher and Chairman of the CSJ in making policy recommendations to them.

Defence. Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP served in the Scots Guards from 1975 to 1981, seeing tours in Northern Ireland and Rhodesia.

EU/Brexit/International Relations. Rt Hon Iain Duncan Smith MP campaigned to leave the EU ahead of the referendum on 23 June 2016 on the UK's membership of the EU. This decision was based on longstanding views about a high-regulatory and costly EU. He is now regularly taking a key role in influencing Government policy on how the UK can proceed with Brexit and ensure it flourishes outside of the EU.

On Thursday 23rd June 2016, the citizens of the United Kingdom voted to leave the European Union. This presents the UK with a remarkable opportunity to improve the lives of its citizens, especially the poorest. The Centre of Social Justice (CSJ), to which Iain Duncan Smith has now returned as Chairman, is heading up significant work on how the UK can take full advantage of the opportunities presented by Brexit. The decision to leave the European Union was a bold and unequivocal statement for millions of people who wanted to change the political, economic and social status quo. It was a rational choice by those who had not felt heard by the establishment and expressed their desire to take back control, exposing divisions that exist within society.

The CSJ has already published an in-depth study of the Brexit vote to understand the concerns and worries of those who voted to leave, *48:52 – Healing a Divided Nation*, followed by a clear route map for how we undertake the process of our EU departure, *The Road to Brexit*. Recommendations from both reports have already been taken on by Government, such as the repeal of the European Communities Act 1972, in the short period since they have been published. Yet this work is just the beginning. It has recently begun a Breakthrough Brexit Programme to set out a comprehensive analysis of the way forward for our nation, over this Parliament and beyond. It will set out, in a series of research publications and campaigns, how to make the most of our departure from the EU.