

One third of homes dependent on benefits

By Brendan Carlin, Political Correspondent Daily Telegraph 13/02/2007

One in three households across Britain is now dependent on the state for at least half its income, it emerged today.

Official government figures showed that more than seven million households are getting most of their income from government handouts.

The figures also reveal the huge gulf in welfare dependency between single parent and two-parent households.

The report is scathing about how New Labour welfare policy has been designed to "create beholden voters rather than independent people".

Gordon Brown has been repeatedly attacked for building up a society heavily reliant on tax credits and other state aid

In many single-parent homes with two children, the proportion of families that would be financially crippled without state support is now as high as 61 per cent. That compares with just nine per cent in a two-parent home.

The figures, prepared by the Department for Work and Pensions but cited today in a new report from the Civitas think-tank, paint a stark picture of how Britain's dependency culture has grown over the last few decades.

Gordon Brown has been repeatedly attacked for building up a society heavily reliant on tax credits and other state aid. The Chancellor's tax credits scheme was "only the most prominent example of welfare policies intended to create a grateful electorate rather than free-thinking citizens", the report says.



But it suggests that David Cameron's Conservatives are worried about seeming uncaring, and therefore

Comments

why don t you provide single parents withthe simple possibility to get a proper education. Instead of complaining about single parents being dependent on the tax payer, why don t you initiate a program of non-for-profit nurseries. I receive £620 for the childcare of 2 children (1 and 7). I do not see ANY of this money as it goes to the nursery of the little one (£500) and to school clubs (£120).

Please don t blame single parents for the lack of know how in providing adequate child care solutions.

Single parents are up to 90% female. Why isn t it possible to receive a proper EDUCATION for single parents? lack of childcare.

By forcing working parents into badly paid work, the only result is: high costs for the tax payer and parents who struggle to just about survive.

Kindly tackle the problems and not those who are willing to make things works despite of all odds.

PS: it does actually help if you speak to the people concerned (ie single parents) as they can pinpoint the problem areas.

This would save lots of money for the govts, tax payers money and the working parents patience, energy etc etc

Posted by fran marie on February 13, 2007 12:08 PM

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Me: married, 1 young daughter, ful-time work, but min wage, pointless wife working as nursery costs way too high, 300 pound a month tax credits, 500 a month rent for a 30-square metre flat, but can't buy, savings and pride so can't + won't suckle council for rent benefits, 20 pound a week free to spend on family. Pls, pls get my accomodation overhead down (more state housing or reasonably priced private) or set the tax system up such that I can work my way out this situation. If I spent those savings and "sponged" I'd be 600 a month better off!

Posted by Rick on February 12, 2007 11:55 PM

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Abolish all benefits and drastically cut taxes; introduce a Right to a humane method of suicide. At least then those who aren't good enough to survive on their own can have the choice of a quick death rather than dying from starvation, exposure or illness, and paying for someone to overdose on barbiturates cost less than keeping them alive for a life time. You can't force people to pay the price of survival (working even if it means doing a menial, low paid, low status job)but a humane society should try to do whatever it can to help alleviate the worst of the consequences of them not doing

Posted by Franics on February 12, 2007 10:55 PM

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I believe these figures do indeed include those households receiving the state pension.Remove them from the statistics and the percentage of people receiving most of their income from the government would be much lower.

Posted by Rob on February 12, 2007 9:53 PM

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'...the proportion of families that would be financially crippled without state support is now ...61 per cent. That compares with just nine per cent in a two-parent home.'

Clearly housing costs have much to do with this, as food and clothing are no longer major costs. The report did not say how much is housing benefit going to landlords.

I'd very much like to know.

Quite often single parents on income support and HB are mere conduits for money to pass from the state to other individuals or housing associations; they have very little of thier benefits left in their hands.

Posted by jane on February 12, 2007 9:19 PM

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Quite agree Frank Field!!!

Why on earth have we got a tax credit system that pays out government money (our taxes)to families with income of £50k per year? Absurd!!!! My wife and I have brought up 3 children without the benefit of tax credits as many other families have.

The benefits system should be a safety net not a "way of life" for people.

Messrs Blair & Brown appear to think that they can throw money at problems and the problem will go away.

Yes you can throw money at problems but this has been done irresponsibly in a number of areas not least tax credits, the NHS, Iraq etc

The benefits system has created its own monster of dependency.

Posted by H Catherall on February 12, 2007 8:33 PM

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I don't know who I despise more, those who are happy to receive welfare (why call it "benefits") or those who don't, and are still in the majority, but are are stupid enough to authorise their government to spend their money on others.

Of course when the welfare recipients become the majority there will be no possibility of ever turning off the tap...

Posted by Peter M. Clarke on February 12, 2007 7:43 PM

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Tony from South Carolina says:

"So how do you instill a sense of social responsibility in a society that since Maggie Thatcher breeds the 'stuff you I'm alright Jack!'"

Actually, I thought that was the Trade Union Movement in the 1970s.

Posted by David J Walker on February 12, 2007 7:26 PM

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What's not mentioned are the households that are pensioners or very ill people out of this total. The total benefiting from "state handouts" (entitlements) is different from those specifically receiving tax credits.

The report implies all these people are all labour voting, unemployed, lazy, boozers and drug addicts , like me.

Posted by fully employed for thirty-five years on February 12, 2007 7:16 PM

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Ten years ago, President Clinton enacted s welfare reform in the US, and it has been a real success. It prodded welfare mothers and fathers into the workplace with a series of carrots and sticks. Work, and you got help with child care, job training, transportation. Refuse, and you risked sanctions and being cut off by time limits. And that is exactly what happened. We reduced are welfare roles by 75 percent and destroyed a culture that could have done to us what the UK wefare state is doing in your country.

You need a leader who is willing to make the difficult choices that will be necessary to save your country.

Who will that be?

Posted by MaryYank1 on February 12, 2007 6:47 PM

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Reember, this is one third of house-holds who want a high tax and spend government. If you pay no tax, why vote for tax cuts? Gordon Brown was not stupid when he set out down the tax credit route

Posted by Nigel on February 12, 2007 5:11 PM

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Surely this is Gordon's way on increasing the Labour vote - Turkeys don't vote for Christmas

Posted by Tony White on February 12, 2007 5:00 PM

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I have two people in full time employment in our family run business. The youngest [aged 28]has not had a payrise in two years. He refuses one because it would affect his tax credits! He simply has no ambition to further his career. His partner has no desire to go out to work to better their situation. She attends an evening computer class for one hour a week. He has to be home on time without fail for that night. Neither his parents nor hers are available to babysit - they do their shopping on that night! None of them has a job!

My oldest employee - he will be 86 this year, lives in a block of flats. He is the only one working!

Posted by Anne Smith on February 12, 2007 4:17 PM

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Welcome to Communist Great Britain, the world's leading Welfare Paradise, by Labour's totalitarian "1000-year-Reich". Don't know about you, but I'm getting out of here before they erect an iron curtain to keep the real workers from escaping.

Posted by Derek on February 12, 2007 4:16 PM

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I dont work in the UK anymore the thought of paying for prescotts wages/pension makes me feel ill. the same goes for Bliar and his wife and the rest of the deviant parasites scattered around the country. Its against my human rights mrs bliar, would you take up my case for free? If I buy faulty goods I can ask for my money back, there is no such protection against this the most incompetent corrupt government ever.

Posted by Mugg on February 12, 2007 4:06 PM

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Nowhere in this story can I see whether the figures are including state pension as one of the benefits in question - this would seriously skew the findings.

Posted by Sandra Gee on February 12, 2007 4:03 PM

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It is clear to all Mr Brown has no all he can idea how to run a succesful economy all he can offer is more tax for the working population and more benefits for the economically inactive,ensuring they will never be off benefits ,for gods sake gordon resign before the whole country goes bankrupt

Posted by martin oddy leeds on February 12, 2007 4:00 PM

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First of all, we're dependent on one another whether we think we are or not. Secondly, when you have a system in place that rewards the rich with tax incentives, taxes everyone across the board excessively with purchase taxes, etc, and gives to people irresponsible enough to have large families when they have no income, then what do you expect?

Accountability and responsibility isn't taught in Britain, and that's why some people just take advantage of the whole situation. But it happens at both ends of the social spectrum, so don't blame the "scroungers". A scrounger is also someone who "gets themselves a really good accountant" as well. In my mind, someone who manages to find tax loopholes and ends up paying little or no tax even when he's earned far more above the average wage is a scrounger, too.

The people who suffer; or rather the people who support everyone else are the people in the middle. Those who find they can't afford a family, own home, car or much else, and yet find themselves working all hours.

Let us not forget, too, the royal family and the aristocracy, whom "we" all pay for. Are they not scroungers? Can anyone say that all the barons and earls and viscounts and duchesses and dukes and lords and ladies ever known what a struggle life can be when you barely have enough to live on?

Why should anyone expect someone at the "lower" end of the social spectrum be any different? Many people learned a long time ago that working hard and playing fair was a mug's game.

Posted by jack on February 12, 2007 3:33 PM

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Isn't this what the Soviet Union did? Made families dependent on the Government, so they would be eternally grateful. No wonder the world and his wife are heading in this direction.

My husband keeps getting a leaflet asking if he needs Income Support. Why are they touting for business. As someone previously said, why should someone earning 50k have handouts from the Govt.

We were picked at random to receive a nosy questionnaire asking about our circumstances, supposedly on behalf of the CC!! Touting for people to enter the grip of the State!!

Posted by M.S. on February 12, 2007 3:29 PM

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As a slave to our government (and I don't hear Brown apologising to me), i.e. not claiming a penny and constantly paying tax and NI (NI which is something I don't use, I have no doctor no dentist etc.). It makes me sick to have to pay for these scumbag single wretches to make babies to get bigger and better houses than the rest of the working class. To top it all off you have their kids raping and pillaging the neighbourhood. I'll be left with nothing after working day in day out, while halfwits run the country into the ground. Great Britain? Great Bull****! Thanks Labour for ruining this country!

Posted by Benny Neil Place on February 12, 2007 3:24 PM

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Peter Hain is typical of NewLabour, indeed, socialist attitudes. Spiteful envy of those earning more than he does. Has he ever held a job? How much has he actually contributed to the welfare and betterment of this country? Of course we know his recent declaration is simply a first move in his going after the deputy PM job. And he is the kind who wants to destroy the House of Lords. For what? He advocates those who make vast sums in the City should be penalised and robbed of much of their earnings can go to the layabouts who want all they can cream from legitimate taxpayers. I am a pensioner and what I get wouldn't cover Hain's taxi expenses. Nor does Gordon Brown's 25pence a week extra do much for my wellbeing. But to those who earn their fat bonuses I say good luck to them, they must be doing something right!

Posted by G. Mitchell; on February 12, 2007 3:14 PM

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Well, the democracy has already ceased to exist as slaves are allowed to vote. Slaves: those who are willing to work, basing their decision not on free will but what they believe they should do to keep their existence, pressured by the government, which is pressured by their "donors" read: business

If you pay people for their work, which is by a definition enough for them to live on, then they will work. If not, they'll have to rely on the government that allows companies to exploit them. Remember: In business there is NO DEMOCRACY. You do what you are told to do.

And if Government allows it to happen then there's no democracy, nor it will ever be.

Targeting weak is easy: Targeting strong is a challenge. Government does not like challenges as it will affect their electability. After all, I bet that no MP and any member of their family will ever be relying on benefit as they have worked hard to secure themselves, while claiming to work for the 'people' that elected them.

Posted by m. madacky on February 12, 2007 3:03 PM

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And you wonder why taxes are so high in the UK? One third of all households take more than they produce, and half the working population works for the State, non-productively. I think that's not sustainable in the long term.

Posted by Dave Wheatley on February 12, 2007 2:57 PM

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To me it all seems quite simply , just give people old fashion jobs . If a British squaddie needs boots why do we buy from some other country just because of the price. Whats the price of a generation who may never work because they is no work .

Making boots for example may be low tech , (actually do we still have the ability to do such mandane work ?); but do not people feel better having a purpose or is it better to send low tech work to others whilst are own people lounge around spaced out on drugs or spending afternoons drinking super larger at special afternoon rates funded by crime or benefits.

Posted by Mark on February 12, 2007 2:47 PM

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I am fortunate to have left UK for Canada 30# years ago.

Over the past five years I have become increasingly dismayed and disgusted by many of the attitudes and prejudices of the British people (how can that revolting mayor of London get elected?) and various government policies.

Britain is on the road to self destruction through its own inherent stupidities.

And another thing.; I am also appalled by the performances of my soccer team - Tottenham Hotspur. They certainly need some government assistance.

Posted by Ian on February 12, 2007 2:05 PM

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I hope they are not including my State Pension as a "government handout".I paid NICS and worked for thatjust as in any other private scheme . I noticed again this year that on my letter recently telling me of the April 07 increase on my Pension it is described as a "Benefit".I think it is beneficial OK?

Posted by christina gore on February 12, 2007 1:54 PM

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After reading the above comments I can only say I am so glad I left the UK in the Mid 70's at a time when Britain was being raped by another Labour Govt It would appear that the present "New Labour Govt" is finishing the job My only solace is the words of G K Chesterton "England Has Not Spoken Yet"

Posted by Jack on February 12, 2007 1:47 PM

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Firstly, many benefits are paid to working people because employers are getting labour on the cheap and not paying enough to families to live on. Second, those moaning about benefits should try living, or rather existing on limited benefits. i.e. £60 to £90 a week. Jobs are not easy to find because employers still resist employing over qualified, disabled or older people, regardless of legislation.

Posted by Mark on February 12, 2007 1:43 PM

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Antonio Souto for Prime Minister PLEASE!

A Daniel come to judgement!

Posted by j.b.windmill on February 12, 2007 1:40 PM

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To put things in perspective, the number of 'scroungers' in relation to the really unemployed is probably very small. The real unemployment figure is probably way much higher than published as an earlier writer mentioned. There seems to me 2 main contributors to this problem and in the US it is also a major problem particularly in the South. (1) The corporate greed of outsourcing jobs to India and the Far East in order to fatten profits for investors who have no social accountability. (2) The influx of cheap labour from (in our case), and largely illegal, who work for next to nothing, just like the good old "lump" days in Kentish Town and Camden town with workers from all over Europe. Folk who will not pay taxes and take cash in hand. So how do you instill a sense of social responsibility in a society that since Maggie Thatcher breeds the 'stuff you I'm alright Jack'. Least it wasn't that way after WWII where everyone had to help out.

Posted by Tony, South Carolina, USA on February 12, 2007 1:40 PM

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Gordon Brown is truly misguided if he thinks that throwing money at layabouts and wasters is the way to move this country forward. The whole philosophy behind these "handout" policies are flawed as there is no reward for effort in there. On the flipside, for those who do achieve some financial success there are only penalties to pay in terms of an ever increasing tax burden. HOW CAN THIS BE RIGHT??? What do all the major charities say when dealing with the third world....."they don't want handouts, they want the means to create a sustainably better life through their own endeavours" Perhaps the government should try forcibly applying this concept to this countrys benefit population. Oh, and can we also stop rewarding ignorant morons with massive benefit payments simply for procreating.

Posted by Andrew on February 12, 2007 1:40 PM

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What proportion of the income source discussed is made up of pension payments? The figures might be a little misleading, although I don't disagree with the general tone of the article.

Posted by Pdraig on February 12, 2007 1:39 PM

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Antonio Souto you are so right.

Posted by steve byrne on February 12, 2007 1:39 PM

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I gather that the report includes pensioners in its 7 million. Take those out and the picture is rather different. But hey, what's accuracy versus a juicy story?

Posted by Paul on February 12, 2007 1:39 PM

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Adrian... I think a billion a week (52 billion a year) is somewhat of an exaggeration, however I would agree that we should certainly pay no more than France net.

Posted by charlie clark on February 12, 2007 1:22 PM

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Its getting ever nearer the day when Gordon Brown will have all pensions and salaries paid directly into the the income tax office and just giving us back just £50 a week spending money,excluding MPs of course.

Derek Whistable

Posted by derek on February 12, 2007 1:18 PM

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It's even worse in Scotland where 50 per cent of the population work for the government. So immediately half the working population aren't contributing to the pot financially (many do great work etc yes), neither do children or students, pensioners, the unemployed or those on the sick (of which Glasgow has the highest proportion in the UK) and then if you add all the other people who are reliant on family credits or the like, there appears to be a very small minority paying for everything.

Posted by charlie clark on February 12, 2007 1:18 PM

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I would agree that whilst there are people who do need help, I don't see how anyone with an income of 50k needs tax credits - even in London

Posted by charlie clark on February 12, 2007 1:13 PM

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The answer is simple - phase out benefits gradually for the "workshies" so that it is to their economic advantage to find work.

Also, raise the basic tax threshold so that those on lower incomes keep more cash and don't feel that it is to their economic advantage to stay on benefits.

Finally, dismantle the state apparatus that requires such high funding levels and bring back independent rather than dependent voters.

Peter Hain was quoted today as saying that 2/3 of city bonuses should be given to "boost deprived communities". The only reason that they are "deprived" is thanks to the present government's irresponsible spend, spend, spend culture promoting this dependence attitude. At least the city bonuses (if left in the right hands) get recycled back into the economy to recipients (corporate and individual) who pay tax. Perhaps Mr. Hain should think of this rather than making another envious grab to then fritter away funds on useless projects and buy votes.

Posted by Had Enough on February 12, 2007 1:10 PM

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Hi, I live in Spain, I have 3 kids & I make enough to live, if I didn't have kids I would have a much higher standard of living. I have never received one cent of Government cash, simply put there are no benefits in Spain. Spain has one of the lowest birth rates in Europe, but at least Darwin's theory has not been turned on its head to arrive at the situation where the least capable of looking after children are those that are breeding like rabbits. In Spain you have a child if you can afford to look after it.

The UK is storing up trouble for its self by encouraging the least capable to breed at the expense of the most capable.

Posted by Antonio Souto on February 12, 2007 1:04 PM

And how many more are employed by the state? And hence dependent on it.

Posted by David on February 12, 2007 1:04 PM

Whichever way you look at it, all this simply boils down to one simple thing - a huge group of unproductive people is living off people who do produce/generate wealth. What makes this possible? Why does it have to be this way? How long will it be sustained? When will the people who carry the

parasites learn to shrug?

Posted by Lal on February 12, 2007 1:00 PM

Just looking at my gross pay and then the net pay, from which I can buy things for *my* family. Am left wondering why I even bother working in the UK!

Posted by Colin Soames on February 12, 2007 12:58 PM

Lets all give up work and see where it gets them. Me, I'm off to New Zealand.

Posted by Chris on February 12, 2007 12:50 PM

These Welfare Beneficiaries are Voters .The Government of the day is terrified of changing their status quo for fear of a "backlash" from them.

Posted by Alan on February 12, 2007 12:48 PM

When fit and able people (look around your shopping arcades during the day) find it unnecessary to find work there is only one reason - benefit payments are unmonitored and too high. When pregnant, unmarried teenagers are legally entitled to be allocated accomodation and receive benefits, why practice birth control? These attitudes of the work-shy directly result from New Labour. The other lot are no better - like Europe, Cameron will not 'bang on' about it but embraces the hoodies! With the correct electoral strategy, UKIP and BNP are bound to make large inroads next time up.

Posted by Roy Gilbert on February 12, 2007 12:43 PM

I am a single parent family with two children. If the Child Support Agency had done their job in the first instance and made my ex-husband pay monies due to me and our two children then I would not have had to rely on a govenment hand-out in the form of Working Family Tax Credit.(Which in fact I had to pay back in full, due to them not calculating the correct amount I was entitled to) And for those who don't know the criteria to claim this 'hand-out'is that one has to work! I do not sit at home all day watching TV like many people believe single parent's do who receive a freebie!

Posted by Ms A Soanes on February 12, 2007 12:39 PM

Is it also legitimate to charge people on the minimum wage income tax?

Posted by John Wade on February 12, 2007 12:32 PM

Tell us something we DON'T know! It would seem these days that one can claim benefits for almost anything unless of course you have a job or are not parents. Steve Searle has pretty much describe my neighbours too - two parents, three kids, no one at work but plenty of disposable income. My girlfriend and I commute to London every day and work full time and we can barely afford the odd holiday and run an older car than Joe Workshy next door. Don't get me wrong, I don't want or need benefits. I just think the threshold for being able to obtain them is far too low. Being a parent should never be a catalyst for being entitled to benefit.

Posted by Steve on February 12, 2007 12:14 PM

Like Steve Searle, I too live in a terraced house, I am self employed & work hard for everything I have. On either side of me are a single mother with 4 children & on the other are a couple who are now expecting their fifth child! None of these people work & exist solely on state handouts. I also echo

Steve's sentiments about feeling like I'm the fool for working but funnily enough, there are things like feeling pride & a sense of your own achievements. Personally I'd rather feel like that, than a lazy parasite!

Posted by Alison Jones on February 12, 2007 12:11 PM

Doesn't this prove the point that the Unemployment Figures are a complete fiction and that the true level is probably 3X higher than the Official Quote.

By transferring the Unemployed on to other benefits reduces the Unemployment Figure since they fall out of the count of those who receive that benefit, which is what the unemployment statistic is created from. However, the same person is still actively looking for work and wants to work.

More creative accounting Mr Brown?

Posted by Chris Richards on February 12, 2007 12:10 PM

Like Steve Searle I have neighbours who do not work, but in my case it is have never worked. One family manages to own a horse as well the family car and multiple dogs, but then they do have 6 children of which only the eldest works. The next 2 children down are also in council houses living on benefit, them and their children. They think I am mad for going out to work - and do you know, so do I!

Posted by Peggy Webb on February 12, 2007 12:09 PM

An alternative view, besides the hysterical calls to leave the EU, would be that this report shows the widening gulf between the haves and have-nots and that a one income family can not afford living in the UK anymore.

Posted by Nick Dommett on February 12, 2007 12:08 PM

The US Secretary of Education made a observation
If you finish high School, get married, stay married, your chances of being poor are about 2%, if you have a child , as a single parent your chances of being poor is 80%.
Seems like it's true in the UK as well.

Posted by John Burke on February 12, 2007 12:06 PM

A more efficient way of distributing money to people who are deemed to need it, is via the existing tax code.

People are stupidly grateful to this government for the return of their own money (which is what this Government wants people to do). People don't think about the issue properly.

We know why we have the "Tax Credits" system; to make people pathetically grateful; to extract information about people's earnings and savings (in the application form); and to provide jobs within the public service to massage the unemployment figures (and even better - these jobs come with unfunded, index-linked, final salary pensions!)

Posted by Diana on February 12, 2007 11:35 AM

I live in a 2 bedroom terraced home; both my wife and I work and we have a 11 year old son. Either side of me lives one single parent family and on the other a husband & wife with 3 children. Neither of these families have ever worked in the 3 years we have known them. Despite this, their rent is paid by the Gov't, they both have Sky TV and they have better cars than we do. I sit at work and think....."Why am I working? Is it worth it"? And this is where the problem lies. This Gov't has no backbone, it is not willing to say enough is enough. It's far easier to keep adding another stealth tax here and another one there and fund these lazy, idle, good for nothings to go on enjoying the handouts. I might just have to fake a debilitating illness and enjoy life to the full and play golf everyday. If you can't beat them, join them!

Posted by Steve Searle on February 12, 2007 11:16 AM

Another crowning achievement by Gordon Brown, along with colossal personal debt, that will take a generation to put right.

Meanwhile UK plc will become junk status for credit. Does he have the IMF's telephone number?

Frank Field is the most sensible of any Labour MP and it is a crying shame he was sidelined so early on in the reign of "King Tony".

He would make an excellent PM.

p.s. I am not a Labour voter,

UKIP gets my vote next time.

Posted by A.N.Other on February 12, 2007 10:59 AM

Lets stop paying a billion a week into the EU which has only got us 17 thousand laws since 1997 ... and put this money into sorting out the fundamentals that Blair claimed he was going to do ... like sort out the NHS and schools. Think what could be done with a billion per week (and that's the overt amounts .. its arguably double that in hidden costs and all the gravy train EU supporters !)

Leave the failed EU .. an experiment of the 1940s ! Join UKIP and save the country. Lets prepare for the future !!!

Posted by Adrian Jones on February 12, 2007 10:54 AM

The democracy will cease to exist when you take away from those who are willing to work and give to those who would not.---

Thomas Jefferson (1743 - 1826)

Posted by Nick on February 12, 2007 10:54 AM