

THE GREAT BENEFIT FRAUD BLAME THE SICK AND THE POOR



Lowestoft Jobcentre

The list of cuts and attacks on benefits makes grim reading. The bedroom tax is a disgrace – the bankers and politicians who caused the financial crisis can have as many spare houses as they want, but social housing tenants with a spare room are obviously an unbearable drain on society! Crisis loans have been abolished, leaving people at the mercy of pay day loan sharks and food banks. The Independent Living Fund, which supports about 18,000 severely disabled people, is set to close next year. Disability Living Allowance is being replaced by Personal Independence Payments, with a backlog of medical assessments leaving people waiting months for a decision or payment. Sanctions on the unemployed have multiplied, on the most dubious of pretexts, with DWP staff being penalised if they don't hit targets for referrals. Yet all these

We didn't vote for these cuts and this is our alternative*...

End tax dodging believed to cost £150 billion a year

Tax the rich

Stop the disastrous foreign wars, expenditure on weapons of mass destruction and invest in green jobs

Stop the bankers paying themselves obscene bonuses

Levy a Robin Hood tax on bank turnover

*Resolution passed at LCAC launch rally - 2 March, 2011

vindictive measures have not created a single new job. The Work Capability Assessment (WCA) has caused misery for countless Employment & Support Allowance claimants with massive delays, totally inadequate assessments by Atos and a huge number of appeals, many of which are successful. What does society gain by putting sick and disabled people through this torment?

Although the Coalition has pushed this war on welfare faster and further than before, it didn't start it. The increased use of sanctions by the DWP began under the last Labour government. Labour also introduced the WCA. Somewhere along the line, governments decided that the welfare state was not a safety net but a burden that society could no longer afford. Most of the media are happy to regurgitate the lie.

So being unemployed is regarded as only slightly above being a criminal. The jobless are even forced to do unpaid labour – workfare – for periods longer than the average community service order. And everyone who is sick or disabled is regarded with suspicion, as a potential shirker, or declared fit for work even though many have died shortly after such a prognosis.

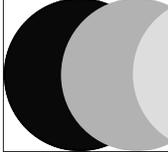
We live in one of the richest countries in the world. We have a failing economic system called capitalism which only serves the interests of the 1% while everything else crumbles. Are we really going to blame the most unfortunate and most vulnerable members of society? Is it really their fault?

WHAT YOU CAN DO...

- Support LCAC by joining our leafleting every Saturday, 11-1pm, in the town centre precinct, outside the Britten Centre.
- Join our email list - keep up to date with activity in your area.
- Photocopy this leaflet and pass onto friends and workmates.
- Support the local libraries campaign - contact Pauline on 01502 586412.
- Want to know more? We can supply a speaker for your group or trade union branch.

Contact us

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LOWESTOFT COALITION

AGAINST THE CUTS

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CARLTON COURT HOSPITAL STAYS OPEN FOR NOW

BUT SERVICE REMAINS INADEQUATE AND INSECURE

Andy Evans, the CEO of HealthEast, the clinical commissioning group (CCG) which holds the funds for NHS services including Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust has produced a plan for the future of mental health services, including the future of Carlton Court Hospital in Lowestoft.

All adult acute mental health services at Carlton Court will close with the number of beds reduced to 20 and relocated to Northgate Hospital in Yarmouth. All dementia beds will close but six beds in private nursing home will continue to be used. Assessment will now be carried out in Norwich.

Up to ten beds for older people with mental health issues will temporarily reopen in Laurel Ward until outpatients' teams are ready. Young people's mental health services will be transferred to Carlton Court from Lothingland. The one section 136 suite, where people in police custody with suspected mental health issues can be assessed, is to be located at Northgate Hospital.

The plan involves more travel for people in Lowestoft, either to Yarmouth or Norwich. It depends on the success of the support teams

which will treat people in their own homes, and relies on a great improvement in after treatment care. If it works then Laurel Ward will close and

there will be no inpatient beds for adults in Carlton Court. If it doesn't work the plan fails both medically and financially. The plan isn't dissimilar to the one we were consulted on and which was overwhelmingly rejected. It is a gamble, a gamble with peoples' lives.

Large numbers attended the consultations and forcefully made their views clear. Credit must also go to Bob Blizzard and in particular to Terry Skyrme of the Campaign to Save Mental Health Services in Norfolk and Suffolk. Without that campaign things could have been much worse.

But as one patient present at the meeting said, the plan was always driven by money. There is over occupancy of existing beds and needs are expanding. Andy Evans and the local GPs who own HealthEast want "to use resources better". LCAC's Chair Stephen Mynott put the question back to them, "Why don't you join us and demand greater resources?". They didn't have an answer.



Demonstration at HealthEast meeting, 25 September

FOR THE LATEST NEWS, VISIT OUR NEW WEBSITE
lowestoftagainstthecuts.org.uk

JULY 10 PUBLIC SECTOR STRIKES - A LINE IN THE SAND?



Firefighter speaks at Lowestoft rally

The big strike day of 10 July saw public sector workers protest about the continuing squeeze on their incomes, conditions and pensions. At the rally in Lowestoft strikers told of young teachers burnt out and quitting the profession within five years, of fire fighters told to work until the age of 60 when even training exercises become near impossible. After three years of frozen pay, council workers are told to accept a 1% rise or get nothing.

It also brought to light the scale and the range of attacks on a society that is fast being dismantled. Public services such as Suffolk's care homes, once thought to be the responsibility of us all, have been sold to the City. CareUK, which now owns them,

is cutting carers' pay. Local mental health services have had their budgets cut by £44m.

Councils shed staff and call it efficiency. Students start their working lives with tens of thousands pounds of debts. Attacks on benefits, described elsewhere, mean that the idiotic bedroom tax has taken hundreds of thousands into debt. Private sector workers are treated as badly.

In Lowestoft, zero hours contracts are rife, in some of the oldest firms and many of the newest. Can you get a mortgage, start a family, plan for childcare or even raise your voice if you are on a zero hours contract? All necessary, we are told, because the money isn't there.

Yet the country is 35 times richer than it was in the 1970s when proper jobs, pensions and services were affordable. After the Second World War the country managed to create the NHS and, among other things, nationalise the railways. Now, apparently, "the money isn't there".

The question is, where has all the money gone? The statistics are clear. The already wealthy are scooping up more and more of the country's wealth. In 2013 average FTSE 100 CEO's pay, at £4.4m pa, was 120 times the average earnings of their employees, up from 47 times as recently as 1998. The division between rich and the rest has been widening for some forty years and is now at the level that it was before the First World War.

Significant on that day was the absence of library staff and other outsourced council workers. On legal advice, union leaders decided not to ballot these workers. They are effectively cast adrift. At the same time David Cameron announced that the Tories would further restrict the right of public sector workers to strike. All the major political parties are united in planning further cuts up to and beyond the next election. For us, things are going to get worse.

THE REAL LIFE EFFECTS OF THE CUTS:

A map showing the out-of-area placements for mental health patients from Norfolk and Suffolk (30 April, 2014)

For more info on the campaign to defend local mental health services visit www.norfolksuffolkmentalhealthcrisis.org.uk

