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11 December 2009

Rt Hon D Cameron MP
House of Commons
London SW1A 0AA

Dear Mr Cameron

Poverty impact of public policy and expenditure

As you know, the Get Fair coalition represents over sixty national organisations campaigning against poverty in the United Kingdom. We wrote to you following last year's Pre-Budget Report, when the full scale of the financial crisis and economic recession became known (19th November 2008). As a national coalition, we called for bold and decisive action from Government to protect the most vulnerable and those hardest hit by the recession, including escalating fuel and energy prices, a housing crisis and rising unemployment.

There have been a range of initiatives and support introduced by Government to help deal with the recession. Much more remains to be done. It is vital that next year's Budget and longer term spending plans include a rigorous assessment of the impact on poverty, how public policy measures are used to reduce poverty and inequality.

In your speech last month on The Big Society, you set out the case for smaller government, but to use the state to remake society. You highlighted inequality is now at a record high and that over the past decade the poorest became poorer. Get Fair believes it is the duty of Government in a crisis to stand up for those least able to pay the price of the recession and to protect the vulnerable in times of economic hardship. However, in order to reduce the number of people living in poverty by any serious margin, the UK needs to recover not just from the recession, but from deep-seated problems that were re-emerging before the downturn and banking crisis of the past year.

The depth and breadth of the Get Fair coalition provides particular insight and experience to help better understand the causes of poverty and what it means to be poor across from the children and older people's organisations, refugee, disability, housing, faith and community groups. We would welcome an opportunity to inform debate in the run up to the next general election and work with you to develop measures for poverty-proofing public policy and expenditure, to help achieve a lasting reduction in poverty in the UK.

Yours sincerely

Vanessa Stanislas
Chair, Get Fair

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