# Investment in care is as important as investment in buildings

FPSW Press Release on the ‘Summer Statement’ July 2020

“I could scream” says Fair Play South West Chair, Jackie Longworth

“How many times, and by how many economy experts, does it have to be said before the Government takes any notice?”

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown the crucial economic value of women’s work in both childcare and adult care (paid and unpaid) as well as in the NHS. It has also shown the vulnerability of these sectors to under-funding, low wages and inadequate supply to meet demand for paid for support.

And yet, the Chancellor’s latest emergency investment strategy is totally ignoring the fragile care sectors. This puts at grave risk not only the jobs in those sectors but also the ability of women to return to other jobs in the economy. It is not only an issue of women’s equality, it is also a massive drain on the economy if a large proportion of the workforce is not available, not earning, not spending, not paying taxes and relying on social security income.

In addition to health and social care, the majority of the key workers defined by the Government have been in the women-dominated sectors of education and childcare, local and national government, charities delivering frontline services, food production and processing. These workers have put themselves and their children at risk of the virus and in many cases have been working longer hours in more stressful conditions than before the pandemic. It is clear that investment in ‘women’s work’, social infrastructure and local government is essential for the future of the economy and resilience against any future economic shock, as has been highlighted in other countries such as Germany, where the response to the pandemic has been more effective.

Many organisations in the UK have been publishing research papers and articles in the press and on-line, including the IFS and WBG, making these points and recommendations which the Chancellor should have actioned in this ‘summer statement’ but hasn’t. The Government should recognise that the general public too have seen how investment in care is as important as investment in buildings.

# Note for Editors

Fair Play South West is the women’s equality network for the SW of England

@FPSouthWest