**EMBARGO 00:01 hours FRIDAY 24th May 2019**

**PRESS RELEASE**

**PARLIAMENT CALLS FOR PEOPLE’S WELLBEING TO BE**

**THE GOVERNMENT’S CORE OBJECTIVE**

As the UK approaches another Spending Review, a group of parliamentarians are calling for a major change of direction: policy should be targeted at the wellbeing of the people and not at economic growth. A new report shows that it is mainly wellbeing rather than growth or jobs that determines whether a government satisfies the voters at the polls.

The report, which is launched today, comes from the [All Party Parliamentary Group on Wellbeing Economics](https://wellbeingeconomics.co.uk/). The authors include **Lord Gus O’Donnell (**the former Cabinet Secretary)**, Chris Ruane MP** (chair)**, Lord Richard Layard** (chair of Action for Happiness) and **Baroness Claire Tyler.** Their analysis shows that there are many neglected areas that are vital for wellbeing, and where big changes can be relatively inexpensive and, indeed, generate major savings. Recommendations from the report include:

* Spending on **mental health** should increase twice as fast as spending on physical health. There should be a separate budget for mental health to ensure that people who suffer from mental illness are as likely to get treatment as people who are physically ill.
* The wellbeing of children should be an explicit goal of **every school**. Schools should be enabled to measure the wellbeing of their children, and expected to dedicate at least one hour a week to the teaching of life skills by properly trained teachers.
* Young people wanting **vocational training** should have the same guarantee of a place as those wanting to go to university. That opportunity and experience will enhance their wellbeing.
* **Social care** of the young, the disabled and the elderly should be restored to at least its 2010 level before the spending cuts in the government’s austerity programme. Children’s centres, youth centres and old people’s centres are a crucial part of a flourishing community.
* **Employers** should be helped to measure the wellbeing of their workers and to retrain workers whose skills become redundant through technological change.

The gross cost of these proposals in the fifth year is no more than £10 billion. They should be at the centre of a Spending Review for Wellbeing.

**Lord Gus O’Donnell** said: ‘Britain led the world in measuring wellbeing. It should lead the world again is making wellbeing the goal of government policy’.

**Chris Ruane MP** said: ‘We are facing a mental health crisis, yet there is so much we can do at small cost to improve the wellbeing of millions of our people’.

The report of the All Party Parliamentary Group on Wellbeing Economics will be launched in Parliament on **Friday 24 May at 10:00am** and presented by), Chris Ruane MP (Group chair), Lord Gus O’Donnell (the former Cabinet Secretary, Lord Richard Layard and Baroness Claire Tyler, with comments from Prof. Paul Dolan (LSE).

----------------------------------------------------------------

Note to editors:

**The report will be available at**: <https://wellbeingeconomics.co.uk/reports/>

**The following are available for interview:**

Chris Ruane MP [insert contact number]

Gus O’Donnell [insert contact number]

Richard Layard [Tel: 07790906206 Email: r.layard@lse.ac.uk]

Claire Tyler [insert contact number]

For more information about attending the launch event on 24 May, please contact the secretariat at info@whatworkswellbeing.org.