**HOUSE OF LORDS SELECT COMMIITTEE ON INTERGENERATIONAL FAIRNESS AND PROVISION**

**EVIDENCE SUBMITTED BY UNITED FOR ALL AGES September 2018**

1. **About United for All Ages**

United for All Ages is a ‘think and do’ tank and social enterprise that brings older and younger people together to create stronger communities and a stronger Britain. We focus on issues which affect different generations in different ways and which require solutions involving all generations. We have particularly focused on care, housing, work, technology and ‘fairness for all ages’. Our approach is very much about creating solutions to big social and economic issues that bring generations together, rather than pit generations against each other. We think this is particularly important in tackling intergenerational fairness.

We have published a series of policy papers addressing these issues, which should be read as part of our submission. These include: [‘A country for all ages: ending age apartheid in Brexit Britain’](https://unitedforallages.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/A-Country-for-All-Ages-January-2017.pdf); [‘Fairness for all ages: twenty radical ways to promote intergenerational equity’](http://unitedforallages.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/UnitedReportJan2016.pdf), which includes contributions from some twenty organisations; [‘Building a Britain for all ages’](http://unitedforallages.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/A-Britain-for-All-Ages-July-2014-pdf.pdf) which looks at creating a cradle to grave social contract between the generations; [‘A future for all ages’](http://unitedforallages.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/08/A-Future-for-All-Ages-growth-starts-with-homes-care-and-jobs-May-2013.pdf) which focuses on homes, care and employment as the basis for creating growth and a Britain for all ages.

Our policy work is supported by a range of practical initiatives that support cross-generational action on these issues. In 2012 we launched the Good Care Guide, a pioneering TripAdvisor style website that enables families to find, review and rate childcare and eldercare that they use. In 2014 we launched [www.downsizingdirect.com](http://www.downsizingdirect.com), encouraging older people to think about downsizing home and providing practical support to enable them to do so, thereby releasing family-sized homes for younger generations.

We work with a range of partners at national and local levels to promote and support multi-generational workplaces, multi-generational homes and centres for all ages. In 2018 our paper [‘Mixing Matters’](https://unitedforallages.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Mixing-Matters-United-for-All-Ages-paper-Jan-2018-.pdf) has demonstrated how shared sites or ‘centres for all ages’ where older and younger people can mix and share activities and experiences could strengthen links between generations. We are campaigning to create 500 centres for all ages across the UK by 2023 and we are working with partners to make it happen.

1. **Intergenerational fairness**

We welcome the House of Lords Select Committee’s inquiry into intergenerational fairness and provision. There is growing awareness that different generations have not fared as well as each other and that public policy has exacerbated this unfairness. In essence the current generation of young people is the first to be worse off than their parents, while retired people’s average income now exceeds that of working people. This has been well documented by the Office for National Statistics and other organisations.

Generalisations about intergenerational fairness also disguise issues within generations. Not all young people are doing badly; not all older people are wealthy; accumulation of wealth across the life course has always been a fact of life; and expectations have changed across generations while poverty within generations should not be ignored. A lot of people aged over 70 have experienced tough times throughout their lives. One of the major advances in the last twenty years has been the substantial reduction in pensioner poverty and it would be a backward step if the number of pensioners living in poverty were to increase. Another major advance in the last twenty years has been the substantial increase in the number of young people attending university and our society has not kept pace with the fact that their expectations of work, housing and lifestyle have increased as a result.

Intergenerational fairness is a multi-faceted concept – from housing and tax to climate change. Our work has focused on the following key elements:

* Housing: many older people have benefited from the boom in house prices while many young people can’t get on the housing ladder, particularly in London; investment in more affordable housing is key, but we could make better use of the housing stock that is currently under-occupied.
* Care, health and welfare: we need help most when we are very young or old and a cradle to grave approach to family support is critical; investment in childcare continues to increase while the care system for older people is in crisis; younger people today question why they are paying taxes for deteriorating health and care services that may not be there for them when they are old.
* Work: youth unemployment remains relatively high despite the general fall in unemployment and pay for younger workers has been squeezed, yet older people want to and are expected to work longer; flexible working is key to supporting lifelong working, but older people, particularly grandparents and carers, have not benefited from flexible working to the same extent as parents who work.
* Tax: older people pay less tax for every pound of income they receive and there are some major anomalies, for example, re liability to national insurance for older people working beyond pension age; the tax system generally is too focused on income and not on wealth which is concentrated amongst those aged over 55.
* Social integration and political engagement: young and older people are the age groups least likely to mix; participation in democracy by voting is lowest among young people and politicians focus on winning older people’s votes; this lack of interaction and mixing fuels mutual suspicions between generations.

Britain is still one of the richest countries in the world. Yet we live in a society where inequality is growing and the gap between rich and poor is wider than ever. Social mobility is in reverse. There is a danger that looking at inequality from an intergenerational perspective and relying on wealth cascading down the generations through inheritance or the bank of gran and grandad will reinforce inequality by concentrating wealth in the hands of fewer and fewer families. In driving public policy, it must be decided which is most critical: intergenerational inequity or wider inequality across society.

1. **What can be done to promote and achieve intergenerational fairness?**

Our work has focused on solutions that are sustainable by being mutually beneficial for different generations such as:

a) a new social contract between the generations that includes guarantees on pensions, health, care and wealth support for the taxpayers of today; this should be underpinned by transparency and a better understanding about the financial pressures facing each generation from pension entitlements to debt;

b) a new culture of saving and asset accumulation needs to be encouraged among all families with children and young people; improving the asset wealth of young people from an early age is key to promoting intergenerational fairness; this could be done through a rejuvenated version of the Child Trust Fund, perhaps ‘Baby Asset Builder’ accounts that could be paid into by parents and relatives over a child’s lifetime, with top-ups by Government if the monies accrued are invested in asset acquisition such as a home, pension or business start-up;

c) a massive housebuilding drive, with some 300,000 new affordable homes a year, needs to be complemented by a drive to boost the supply of retirement housing to give older people more options to move and downsize, thereby freeing up more family-sized homes; this could be boosted by tax incentives to downsize, such as exemptions on stamp duty, and get the whole housing market moving; at the same time Homeshare schemes should be scaled up to enable older people with spare rooms to let them to younger people in exchange for some practical support and companionship; and more intergenerational housing schemes developed where for example some sheltered housing flats are let to students in return for reduced rent and practical support and companionship

d) ‘work for people of all ages’ will only succeed if flexible and part-time opportunities are available to older people, in particular those with caring responsibilities as grandparents or carers; employers need to recognise the benefits of older employees, from customer relations and understanding ageing markets to two-way mentoring and skills exchanges with younger staff in genuinely intergenerational workplaces;

e) creating shared spaces for all ages that make better use of community facilities and bring people of different ages together; children’s centres, care homes, retirement villages and other centres such as libraries could become community hubs, meeting places and service delivery points, that also increase contact and understanding between the generations; shared spaces and interests can enable people of different ages to mix and spend meaningful time together, sharing activities and experiences; there are increasing links between care homes and nurseries across the country and there are many other ways that ‘centres for all ages’ can be developed

f) political engagement is crucial for voters of all ages to be heard and compulsory voting should be considered; it would encourage action on long-term issues like climate change; we also need innovative ways, such as a national intergenerational convention where young and older people can together discuss and agree priorities on big issues like welfare reform, housing and climate change;

g) intergenerational fairness has to be underpinned by a fairer system of taxation that redistributes from the wealthiest pensioners to the poorest youngsters; fairer taxation will shift the tax burden from income towards wealth, end anomalies that favour older people, review inheritance tax and include tough action on tax evasion; in addition the creation of social wealth funds using the revenue generated in this way would be an intergenerationally fair way to deliver social care for all.

1. **Further information**

We would welcome the opportunity to submit further evidence to the inquiry.

For further information, please contact Stephen Burke, Director, United for All Ages, Thrums, The Hill, Happisburgh, Norfolk NR12 0PW; tel: 01692 650816; email: stephen.burke@unitedforallages.com; [www.unitedforallages.com](http://www.unitedforallages.com); twitter: @united4allages