

Church of England Synod backs the Living Wage

An overwhelming vote of the General Synod today backed the Living Wage in a debate led by Church Action on Poverty member, John Freeman. It follows last week's similar commitment by the Catholic Bishops of England & Wales.

The motion was carried with no votes against, after an hour-long debate which include contributions from the Archbishop of York, John Sentamu. It was supported by the Archbishop of Canterbury elect, Justin Welby, who last week reiterated his support for the Living Wage and said it is something "we should be shouting about".

Alan Thornton, Church Action on Poverty's Campaigns Officer, said: "After 10 years working with churches to support the Living Wage, we have now persuaded all Christian denominations to publicly support the principle. It is a great encouragement to the Living Wage movement that two large institutions like the Catholic Church and Church of England have backed the Living Wage within the past week."

Politicians as diverse as Boris Johnson, Ed Miliband and Alex Salmond have all endorsed the Living Wage in the last year. As well as 35 councils, 12 universities, and four hospitals in the public sector, a range of private sector companies are already accredited Living Wage employers: Barclays, PricewaterhouseCoopers, Lloyds of London, KPMG and Lush.

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Further information

See www.church-poverty.org.uk/livingwage or contact Alan Thornton on 0161 236 9321 or 07736 673 246.

Notes

- Catholic Bishops' press statement: www.catholic-ew.org.uk/Home/News-Releases/Living-Wage
- The General Synod debate took place at 11am on Wednesday 21 November at Church House, in London. The supporting paper is at www.churchofengland.org/media/1571687/gs%201882a%20-%20living%20wage%20pmm.pdf
- Comment by Niall Cooper, Church Action on Poverty's National Coordinator: <http://niallcooper.wordpress.com>
- The Living Wage rates for the UK and London are £7.45 and £8.55 respectively, as announced by the Living Wage Foundation and Mayor of London on 5 November 2012. Previously it was £7.20 and £8.30 respectively. This is more than the statutory national minimum wage, which is currently £6.19 (for workers aged 21) and substantially less for young people. This takes into account top-up benefits and credits, which are often not enough to keep people out of poverty.
- The method for calculating the Living Wage was amended in May 2011 by the Living Wage Foundation to ensure compatibility with London. Previously the UK figure was £7.60. Because of this, Church Action on Poverty has continued to

campaign for churches and other employers to pay a Living Wage of £7.60 until the new method produces a higher figure. See www.church-poverty.org.uk/livingwage/livingwagebriefing2012

- Since 2010 all Methodist churches, districts, circuits and projects are required to pay the Living Wage. Similarly the Church of Scotland General Assembly requires congregations and agencies to pay it and urges them to make it a criterion in awarding goods and services over the value of £100,000. Past assemblies of the United Reformed Church, Presbyterian Church of Wales and the Baptist Union of Great Britain have supported the principle of the Living Wage.
- Church Action on Poverty is a national ecumenical Christian social justice charity, committed to tackling poverty in the UK. We work in partnership with churches and with people in poverty themselves to find solutions to poverty, locally, nationally and globally. Since 2022 we have been campaigning for churches to set an example to other employers by paying the Living Wage. We are an accredited Living Wage employer.