

Levelling Up: challenging the Government attack on race and class

Wednesday July 7, 2021

**North East Regional Race Crime and Justice Group with
NEREF**

2pm-4pm BST

**This event will be held online via ZOOM (due to the current
pandemic)**

To register please [click here](#)

**[For any queries or questions please contact Jenny Johnstone:
equalityforum@newcastle.ac.uk](#)**

[Registration open until 10am Wednesday 7th July](#)

The government now claims it is committed to a levelling up process, whereby disadvantaged communities (of whatever kind) will be provided with resources and policies to 'raise' them to the level of more prosperous communities elsewhere in the UK (particularly in the south of England). There is no clear indication of what this 'levelling up' process means in practice although it has been likened, by several commentators, to 'porkbarrel' politics whereby electoral votes are purchased by promises of 'goodies' of various kinds to working class communities in the North of England. The first announcement of this funding for the North of England seemed, by a strange coincidence, to favour the constituency (Richmond) of the Chancellor and his place of residence (Northallerton, in North Yorkshire), alongside the move of civil servants from the Treasury to Darlington adjacent to Richmond. It will be interesting to see what effect this has on house prices in the area. Government promises were also made to the voters of Hartlepool about industrial investment and jobs.

Is there more to this than a continuation of what used to be known as regional policy whereby, since the 1920s, various schemes were introduced to mitigate major job losses – one led to the development of the Team Valley Trading Estate in Gateshead which allegedly would replace the jobs disappearing as manufacturing industry declined? The failure of early policies was highlighted by the 1936 Jarrow marchers. Symbolically, the HQ of the National Coal Board on the Team Valley was replaced eventually by a Sainsbury's supermarket.

The demography of the UK has changed significantly over the last hundred years and disadvantaged communities are marked as much by their ethnicity, class and gender, for example, as much as by their geographical location. In this innovative webinar, very experienced speakers will reflect on what recent government policies on 'levelling up' might actually mean for people who have slipped further and further behind 'average' levels of income, wealth and levels of service provision or into less and less skilled jobs as a consequence of government policy. There will be plenty of time for questions in the Q and A session after the speakers' presentations.

2pm-2.10pm

Welcome and Introduction

Co-Chairs: Pat Poinen and Dr Rick Bowler

2.10pm-2.40pm

John Page, Race and Class, Levelling Up - the National Perspective

Runnymede Trust

2.40pm-2.50pm

Q&A

2.55pm-3pm

Comfort break

3pm-3.30pm

Alice Wiseman

Race and Class, Levelling up - the Regional Perspective

Director of Public Health Gateshead

3.30-3.40pm

Q&A

3.40pm

General conversation

Biography – Alice Wiseman (BA Hons. PG Cert. MPH. FFPH)

Alice Wiseman has been Director of Public Health in Gateshead since May 2016 and registered with the UK Public Health Register since December 2009. Before becoming the DPH Alice worked in a broad range of senior public health roles across Tyne and Wear. In an earlier part of her career, prior to retraining in public health, Alice worked as a Primary School teacher in an inner-City Newcastle school.

Alice is passionate about improving health and well-being with a particular focus on tackling the unfair inequalities faced by some communities. Alice believes that effective action to address these inequalities requires dedicated effort across the determinants of health as set out in the first Marmot Review 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' (2010).

Her interest in tackling inequalities was shaped by the earlier part of her career in education. She is driven by the injustice of how two babies, born on the same day, can experience such different life chances, due entirely to the circumstances into which they are born.

Alice's approach is firmly rooted in the belief that people, in their own communities, must be central to solving the issues of inequality; firstly, through illustrating a true understanding of the lived experience and secondly, through identifying innovative and creative ways to improve the outcomes for their community.

Over the past four years Alice has benefited from hosting an embedded research post in Gateshead. Priorities for research have focussed on opportunities to gain a better understanding of the lived experience of and impact of Government policy on people in some of the most disadvantaged communities. Giving a voice to those people who are least likely to be heard and easiest to ignore is central to her work in tackling inequalities at a local level.

Biography - John Page, Public Engagement Advisor, Runnymede Trust

John is Public Engagement Advisor at Runnymede and supports the strategic initiatives at the Trust to maximise impact.

John's background includes being a strategic organiser within both the trade union and community sectors. He was an Assistant General Secretary at the rail union TSSA (where he delivered an equality program that forced the biggest employer in the sector to renegotiate their pay structure to resolve unequal pay issues). He was Head of Organising at HOPE not hate where he developed their strategic response to provocative racist marches, oversaw their response to far right electoral initiatives, and developed their training offer. John was a consultant at the Jo Cox Foundation, and remains a strong advocate of their work. More recently John was a founder member of the Ella Baker School of Organising. (taken from the Runnymede Trust web page)