



## **PROJECT SPECIFICATION BRIEF:**

# **Literature and Civil Society Review of Social Security in the UK**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Amnesty International UK (AIUK) wishes to engage a consultant to conduct a literature review and review of significant civil society organisations (CSOs) positions on the subject of social security in the UK, with a focus on specific schemes run in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland.

1.2 The research will support a social security campaign we will be launching in early 2025. We plan for it to be primarily an internal document to inform our analysis but if it is deemed that the content will be useful to partner organisations, we will make it public.

1.3. The research will be commissioned and owned by AIUK, and it will be Amnesty's decision whether or not to publish.

### **2. ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

2.1 Amnesty International is the world's largest grass-roots human rights organisation with over three million members across more than 150 countries and territories. We investigate and expose abuses, educate and mobilise the public, and help transform societies to create a safer, more just world.

2.2 Amnesty International is an unincorporated worldwide movement consisting of independent sections throughout the world and an International Secretariat (IS) based in London which coordinates the worldwide movement and provides support for global governance structures.

2.3 AIUK is one of the largest of 69 national entities that make up the global Amnesty movement. It has over 325,000 members, supporters and activists, 232 local groups, 114 student groups and 567 youth groups.

2.4 Amnesty International UK is made up of two separate legal entities. The UK Section is a membership body. Its 132,000 members control the Section through its General Meetings and by electing a Board of Directors. It is a campaigning organisation and much of its work does not fall within the prevailing definition of "charitable". AIUK Charitable Trust funds global charitable activity, including human rights research, monitoring and education, and promoting public support for human rights. Although there are 48,000 regular donors to the charity, it is not a membership body and it is governed by trustees. AIUK Section and the Charitable Trust have separate constitutions and governance arrangements. However, they work to a common vision. In August 2006, the UK Section acquired Amnesty Freestyle Limited, a trading company.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Economic Social and Cultural Rights (ESCR) is one of AI UK's priority areas in this strategic period for human rights campaigning and research. ESCR are not adequately protected in UK law, and we want that to change.

3.2 Social security plays an important role in poverty reduction and alleviation. This right is a core component of international human rights law including the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). A well-functioning social security system should protect the adequate standard of living of marginalised and vulnerable groups such as people living in poverty, disabled persons, children, the elderly, migrants etc. The UK Government and devolved administrations (where applicable) are obliged to provide a social security system which is human rights compliant.

3.3 Governments must support people with money (like welfare benefits) and other forms of support through a social security system so people can afford their basic needs if they cannot make their own income, or their income falls below an adequate level.

3.4 The right to social security in the UK has been raised by communities as a key priority for them in previous research carried out by AIUK. Communities told us that where the right to social security is compromised because the level of benefits aren't enough to make ends meet; the indignity caused by assessment processes and punitive sanctions or other deductions, has an impact on their ESCR as a whole. If you violate the right to social security, you violate all other everyday rights.

3.5 AIUK is focused on demonstrating how social security is a lynchpin right which – when violated - triggers rights violations in other ESCRs. We want a national conversation about the need to protect ESCR as a whole within the UK rather than allow knock on effect of rights violations happening through siloed policy making.

3.6 To enable this project, we need a review of existing knowledge on social security in the UK which includes the UK Government's own reporting, research carried out by civil society organisations, academics and think tanks and which can also analyse and organise these findings in line with international human rights treaties and standards.

### **4. DELIVERABLES**

4.1 A research report that provides Amnesty UK with an up to date understanding of current research, positions and analytical frameworks on social security in general and specific welfare benefits or schemes. It will:

4.1.1 Summarise and clearly set out the obligations in the international human rights framework which underpin the UK and devolved governments obligations to economic, social and cultural rights.

4.1.2 Summarise the social security system which has developed within the UK and the key legislation, strategy and guidance which underpins how the system aims to achieve protection for people facing lack of work-related income. Where the delivery of the social security provisions are devolved matters, the description

should demonstrate difference in schemes across the nations and jurisdictions of the UK.

4.1.3 Carry out a desk-based review and analysis of relevant research or publications produced by charities, academics, think tanks and government agencies and within the last 3 years which documents evidence of how the social security system works within the nations and jurisdictions of the UK (where there is variation) to ascertain to what extent the is compliance with obligations on the Right to Social Security in the UK.

4.1.4 It is acknowledged that the social security landscape is complex and therefore to narrow the scope of analysis it is proposed the desk-based review should focus primarily on specific schemes.

<b>Great Britain</b> <i>Department for Work and Pensions</i>	<b>Scotland</b> <i>Social Security Scotland</i>
Universal Credit Employment Support Assistance	Adult Disability Payment Carer Support Payment
<b>England and Wales</b> <i>Department for Work and Pensions</i>	<b>Northern Ireland</b> <i>Department for Communities</i>
Personal Independence Payment Carers Allowance	Universal Credit Personal independence payment Carers allowance

4.1.5 Where the delivery of the social security provisions are devolved matters, the analysis should demonstrate difference in provision and outcomes across the nations and jurisdictions of the UK.

4.1.6 In presentation of the analysis consideration should be given to what the literature tells us about Adequacy, Availability, Accessibility, Non-Discrimination, Dignity, Progressive Realisation or Retrogression.

4.1.7 Based on the analysis, provide a conclusion which identifies what the literature tells us about the consensus across sources.

4.2 The final report should resemble a Literature Review with Executive Summary: A comprehensive document presenting the literature review, methodology, description of underpinning Human Rights and legal frameworks, findings, analysis, and recommendations.

## 5. METHODOLOGY

5.1 The following is an outline of a proposed methodology, but we expect to develop this with the consultants. This methodology should align with rigorous ethical standards and strive to capture diverse perspectives on the research process. Any evidence included in the Literature Review must meet AIUKs evidentiary standards which will be provided.

**5.2 The following stages are recommended for consideration and incorporation as appropriate:**

**5.2.1 Inception Meeting:** An inception meeting to outline the proposed research framework, methodology, and project plan.

**5.2.2 Internal Document Review:** An analysis of internal project documents, research guidelines, and any correspondence.

**5.2.3 External evidence review:** Analysis of the evidence produced by government and reviews carried out by civil society organisations, think tanks and academics.

5.2.4 Evidence should be no more than 3 years old to be considered and only where it is deemed that the context has not shifted to make the findings no longer relevant.

## 6. TIMESCALE AND KEY DATES

6.1 We would like the work to begin in August with the aim for the final report to be submitted at the end of November.

6.2 The Literature Review should be conducted efficiently and with clear communication throughout. Below is the anticipated timeline but this is subject to discussion with the successful applicant:

- **WE/ 11th Aug:** Deadline for tender applications
- **WC/ 12<sup>th</sup> Aug** Interviews with applicants
- **WC/ 22nd Aug:** Inception meeting with the successful candidate.

**Summer:** Conduct the literature review with regular check in meetings

**End of November:** Deliver findings and recommendations.

## 7. BUDGET

Available budget would be £15,000 inclusive of VAT and including any expenses.

## 8. REPORTING LINES

Our Economic, Social and Cultural Lead, Jen Clark will be the lead contact for this piece of work.

## 9. REQUIREMENTS

9.1 We envisage that this assignment will be undertaken by an agency/Individual that will be able to demonstrate their experience and expertise of undertaking similar types of work.

We will assess the proposals based on:

- Understanding of international legal frameworks applicable to the UK context for social security.
- Understanding of domestic legislative frameworks which guide the operation of the department of work and pensions and devolved administrations.
- Experience of evaluating research methodology and process
- Clear plan for evaluation which fulfils the brief within budget.
- Quality and appropriateness of the proposal
- Understanding of the brief
- Value for money

## 10. NEXT STEPS

10.1 A response to this tender should be submitted on no more than 4 pages which should include:

- Contact details of tendering consultants
- Short summary (1-2 pages) outlining: proposal, timetable, team, methodology, strengths and added value.
- Details of relevant previous experience (including any experience in literature review or delivering research)
- Budget outline to demonstrate value for money.

10.2 Additional documentation that will not be included within the word limit could include but are not essential:

- CVs of consultant(s)
- References from previous clients
- Examples of previous work (if you have permission to share it)

10.3 Requests for additional information or clarification and submissions should be made to [jen.clark@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:jen.clark@amnesty.org.uk)

10.2 Proposals should be submitted by email to [jen.clark@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:jen.clark@amnesty.org.uk) no later than **Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> August 2024**. We will be interviewing/meeting with all prospective consultants before making a decision. We will start to arrange and conduct these meetings from **Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> August 2024** (possibly outside working hours).

9.3 We will be asking consultants to give us a short presentation of their submission followed by a Q&A with Amnesty staff.

/Ends