



Public affairs with a difference...

Welfare, Work, Economy, Universities, jobs

### Osborne's 'shares-for-rights' scheme is denounced

**Daily Telegraph, The Times, Independent**

THE chief executive of J Sainsbury, one of the biggest employers in the UK, has denounced George Osborne's proposals to offer company shares to workers in exchange for surrendering their employment rights.

Justin King said trading employment rights for company shares is "*not what we should be doing*" and could worsen the levels of trust between the public and businesses. He called on the Government to instead focus on **cutting employment costs and national insurance**.

Mr King said: "Sainsbury's has well-established colleague share ownership schemes but does not think this type of scheme should be linked to reduced employment rights".

### Four day week could solve our problems

**The Daily Telegraph**

Employers should introduce the option of a four-day working week, with gardening promoted as a beneficial way of using the extra time.

Spending less time in the office and switching to gardening have a range of benefits, according to a leaflet by Andrew Simms, of the New Economics Foundation, and Mollie Conisbee. A scheme to provide a shorter working week and space for growing plants and food could "provide the answer to every headline problem at the moment".

The suggestion is that all private and public employers should offer new recruits, and possibly existing staff, the option of a four-day week, either with the same amount of hours compressed into four days or a shorter working week with less pay. Alongside the four-day week, employers should seek to provide urban growing spaces where people could grow fruit and vegetables, as well as plants and flowers that made cities more attractive and provide havens for wildlife.

#### yesMinister comment

This is clearly a think tank that has more money than sense, and a lot of time to do nothing with it.. "This brings a whole new meaning to gardening leave"

### We're all in it together to grab what we can

**Times columnist Alice Thomson**

Times columnist argues that if the Tories cut £10bn from welfare they must take benefits from the middle classes too..

She continues "*Most of us are on the take these days. The Centre for Policy Studies yesterday released figures showing that 53 per cent of households in Britain are now receiving more in benefits than they pay in taxes. In Scotland, they are*

*even more dependent — only 12 per cent of households pay more in tax than they receive in gifts from the Government.*

*At the Tory party conference this week elderly delegates waved their programmes in glee when George Osborne castigated scroungers lounging in bed on welfare. Yet half of the delegates probably came to Birmingham using their free bus passes and will have a little help with their spiralling gas bills from their winter fuel allowance."*

### Thomas cook sheds 430 jobs

**The Independent**

About 430 jobs are at risk at Thomas Cook after the beleaguered tour operator revealed plans to cut its aircraft fleet to slash costs. The UK's second-biggest travel company aims to reduce the number of planes it operates from 35 to 31, returning four aircraft at the end of their lease term.

Thomas Cook said it expects the move to hit 430 staff – including pilots and cabin crew.

The group, which was recently forced to ask its banks for an extra £200m in loans, has scaled back its own airline in the past year and entered a partnership with Easyjet. Its air travel division currently employs just over 3,100 staff and the cuts will be made across the board.

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