A vision for **Early Years and Childcare** that works for all

wbg WOMEN'S BUDGET GROUP

WBG is an independent network of leading academic researchers, policy experts and campaigners that analyses the gendered impact of government policy.

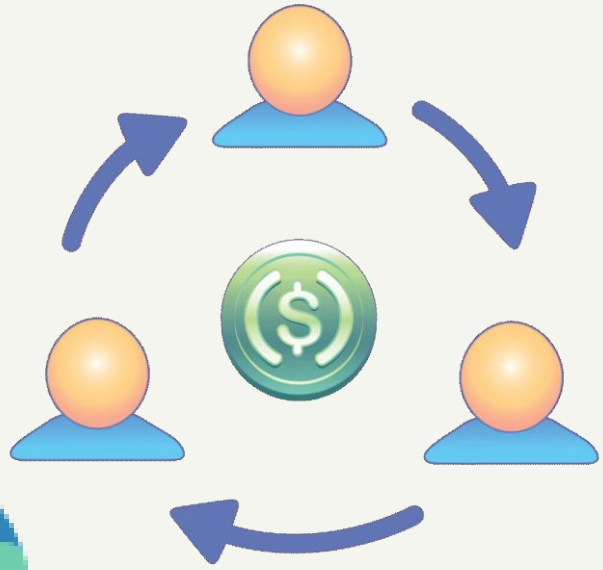
Our vision is of a caring economy that promotes equality between women and men and recognises the economic value of unpaid care.

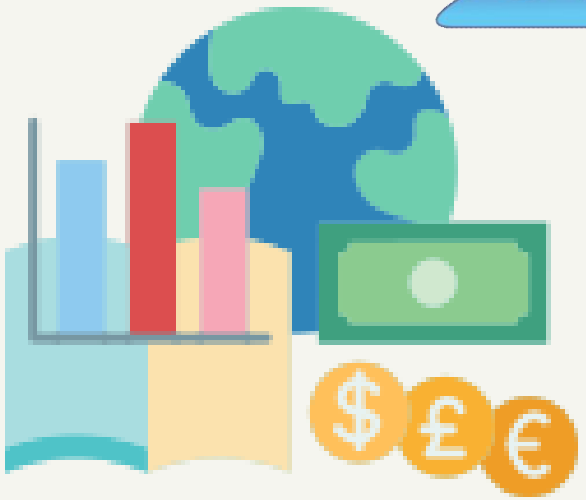
Care is gendered. We'll never address women's economic inequality until we begin valuing paid and unpaid care.

According to the Centre for Progressive Policy,
1.7 million women are prevented from increasing their hours of paid work because they are managing childcare.

The childcare workforce is 98% female.
1 in 8 childcare workers earns less than £5 per hour.

Women are the main providers of paid and unpaid childcare, but we all benefit.





High-quality, affordable childcare...

...can help to close the attainment gap and give children the best start in life, particularly children in the most disadvantage regions.

Every £1 invested in early years education saves £13 in later interventions.

For every £1 spent on early years education, £7 has to be spent to have the same impact in adolescence.

wbg WOMEN'S BUDGET GROUP

High-quality, affordable childcare...

...helps businesses to access a wider pool of talent because more parents can work.

Employers are currently battling to fill 1.3 million job vacancies.

Meanwhile the number of women aged 24- to- 35 who have left work to look after family has risen by 13% in the last year.

wbg WOMEN'S BUDGET GROUP

High-quality, affordable childcare...

...is good for the wider economy.

More people in work decreases reliance on social security and generates more tax revenue for the Government.

The Centre for Progressive Policy estimates that underemployment among women due to childcare issues costs the economy £28.2 billion every year.

wbg WOMEN'S BUDGET GROUP

But we don't have high-quality, affordable childcare in England

Instead we have...

- 4,000 less providers this year than we had last year
- 28% turnover in the workforce
- the second highest fees in the OECD
- offerings that don't meet the needs of families including a £2.37bn underspend on tax-free childcare
- and five - FIVE - 5 - education secretaries this year alone!

The case for reform

- In other liberal welfare states, Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and Switzerland, those on the lowest incomes paid the least for childcare. In the UK the opposite is true.
- A trial of investment in childcare in Quebec found that for every $1 invested, the wider economy saw a return of between $1.50 and $2.80 through increased employment

What would that look like here?

- Investing the same in care as we invest in construction would produce twice as many jobs.
- High-quality, free universal childcare from six months would pay for itself.
- 75-79% of the cost would be repaid through increased direct & indirect employment. The rest would be recovered through reduced reliance on means-tested benefits and increased tax revenue.

How do we secure the change that's needed?

- The benefits are universal so the solution should be too
- WBG has brought together a group of 27 organisations that represent the interests of parents, workers, providers, businesses, the wider economy and, most importantly, children.
- Our focus is on mapping out a route to long-term reform that recognises childcare as vital social infrastructure and a public good.

What should high-quality, affordable childcare look like?

- Provision that works for all kinds of working parents and their employers. It should be accessible and affordable.
- High quality provision for all children, especially those who benefit the most
- Good pay, terms and conditions for the professionals who deliver it
- Locally shaped options that respond to local circumstances

wbg.org.uk