**PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Finland basic income trial to inform Sheffield pilot proposals**

Imagine every month you got a cheque for £500 through the post. Whether you were in work or not, no application forms required. You get it just for being a citizen. That's the idea of a Universal Basic Income.

A trial has just finished in Finland and the first results are out. The trial found that a Universal Basic Income improved people’s health and happiness. It’s not made it any more likely they will take work, or not take work. There is now discussion over what the results mean. One place that is taking particular note is Sheffield.

On March 9th a public meeting and series of workshops will be held on making a Universal Basic Income a reality in the city. There will also be the launch of a draft proposal, setting out plans to pilot a Universal Basic Income in Sheffield.

Chair of the UBI LAB Sheffield group, Jason Leman, said: “What the trial in Finland has shown us is that a Universal Basic Income works to improve health and wellbeing, which means people are less of a burden on health services and more likely to be able to contribute.

“But the Finnish experiment just looked at people who were long-term unemployed. We want to see what the effects would be on everyone. Whilst there are trials being proposed in Scotland, our proposal is the most detailed yet launched for England.

“We have a lot of relevant knowledge in Sheffield, and essentially being a collection of towns, the city is well suited to running a pilot where we hope to see the impact on whole communities. The current tax and benefit system is a maze of paperwork and bureaucracy with all sorts of hoops people have to jump through. The research says that all those hoops don’t really help. We’re proposing a pilot that will show whether you could get rid of all that, which the Finland trial suggests would improve health and happiness.

“We also think it’s likely to really benefit the low-paid and people on things like zero-hours contracts. Of course, we can’t be sure, which is why we need to do a pilot. We’d like to look at different ideas, because partly this is about exploring a way of doing tax and benefits that doesn’t lead to the issues we’ve seen with Universal Credit.”

The UBI LAB Sheffield proposal includes three different pilots that might be run. The first two would explore ideas related to a Universal Basic Income, like conditions being removed from benefits and everyone receiving a regular amount of money. The third proposal is a full Universal Basic Income pilot.

Specifically, the first pilot is for the removal of conditionality for disability benefits, meaning that once people were put onto disability benefits they wouldn’t keep having assessments or be required to do work-related activities. The second pilot proposal is for a standard ‘top up’ of £130 per month for everyone, as could be paid from a national wealth investment fund. The third pilot proposal is for a full Universal Basic Income of £500 per month for everyone, as could be funded from increasing income taxes.

The event, ‘Basic Income: How do we get there?’, is being held from 11am to 4pm at the Diamond, University of Sheffield on Saturday March 9th. It is jointly sponsored by Basic Income UK, Citizens Basic Income Network Scotland, UBI LAB Sheffield, and the University of Sheffield. More details are available at [north.ubilabsheffield.org](https://www.ubilabsheffield.org/events/). Dr Simon Duffy of Citizens Network is chairing the event, and said:

“This event will show what individuals and groups are doing to make basic income a reality. The discussion panel and workshops have people from across the country sharing their experiences. For example, we have Newcastle artist Toby Lloyd, who creates artwork challenging us to think about what we do in our day-to-day lives, and if we didn't need to do work for pay, how we might live our lives differently.

“We also have councillor Patrick Hurley, who pushed Liverpool Council to support the principal of a basic income. They will be speaking and leading workshop on what they have done. We hope the event will encourage activity and discussion on the idea of a Universal Basic Income”

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**Notes for Editors**:

UBI LAB: Sheffield is a collaboration between multiple organisations and individuals, seeking to explore the potential of a Universal Basic Income and the possibility of a pilot in the city.

<https://www.ubilabsheffield.org/>

The Finnish trial of Universal Basic Income was targeted at long-term unemployed or those unemployed without much work experience. It made participants no more likely to find employment, but no less likely to find employment, than other unemployed people

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-47169549>

<https://blogs.bath.ac.uk/iprblog/2019/02/08/what-if-anything-can-we-learn-from-the-preliminary-results-of-the-finnish-basic-income-experiment/>