**PRESS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Sheffield councillors asked to back radical welfare pilot**

All 84 councillors in Sheffield have today been asked to give their support for a pilot of Universal Basic Income (UBI) in the city.

UBI would see all citizens given a guaranteed income regardless of their eligibility for benefits or their employment status. The idea has recently been piloted in Finland, Kenya and India.

Local group UBI Lab Sheffield are aiming to see the first English pilot hosted in Sheffield. Proponents of the scheme argue it would be a fair way of sharing wealth and could guarantee minimum standards of living.

Any proposed pilot would be entirely funded by central government, and would not require any council funding.

The group have written to every councillor asking them to support a local pilot, and have enclosed an executive summary of the group’s proposal for how a UBI pilot in Sheffield might work.

The group are looking for a cross-party group of councillors to champion the motion in the council chamber.

Launched on 9 March at a UK-wide summit for UBI activists in Sheffield, the proposal has been designed by Sheffield-based academics and researchers, informed by several workshops.

UBI Lab Sheffield aim to build a groundswell of support for a Sheffield pilot from organisations across the city, including the City Council and the universities.

In August 2018, shadow chancellor John McDonnell said that a pilot of UBI may be included in the Labour Party’s manifesto ahead of the next general election.

UBI Lab Sheffield have designed three options for a local pilot in their proposal. Each one would see around 4,000 people in Sheffield receive a form of UBI for three years.

The first option would remove conditionality from a specific set of employment-related illness and disability benefits. Ill or disabled people would then receive these benefits irrespective of their financial situation or work status. This pilot would cost around £18 million to pilot.

The second option would see a flat-rate top-up payment made to all citizens. The pilot would include a range of residents, with a flat-rate payment to all adults of £130 per month. It would not mean any changes to the current tax or benefit system. This pilot would cost around £23 million to run.

The third option would trial a full replacement of the tax and benefits system. The pilot would see a range of residents receive £6,000 per year, plus additional money for people who are disabled, with children, or over retirement age. This pilot would cost around £60 million to run.

The full pilot proposal and executive summary is available on our website: <https://www.ubilabsheffield.org/s/SheffUBI-proposal-working-paper-FINAL.pdf>

**Chair of UBI Lab Sheffield Jason Leman said:**

"Sheffield has a good history of being a bit revolutionary, of trying things out. As a city, we have a heritage that recognises the value of creating and caring alongside work. This history goes from the associations of little mesters, to Ruskin, to the strong communities, creativity and businesses we have across the city today. That's why Sheffield would be a perfect place to try out a basic income, and see whether it could make a positive change to the lives of people and communities."

**Mark Bryan of UBI Lab Sheffield said:**

“We hope to collect detailed evidence on how a basic income might affect peoples' lives in many different ways. For example, the options they have in their working lives, their health and wellbeing, and their activities outside work, including in their families and communities. For instance, might basic income free people up to do community work and foster a sense of community cohesion? Might people decide to pool some of their basic income to support community projects?”

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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. Organisations involved include Opus Independents, Sheffield Equality Group, Centre for Welfare Reform and the University of Sheffield. <https://www.ubilabsheffield.org/>
* A feasibility study launched by the Scottish Government and supported by NHS Scotland is currently looking at the practicalities of a pilot in Scotland.