

Peterborough: Thousands apply for just 20 jobs

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When PJ Care advertised 20 jobs recently at its new 107-bed Eagle Wood neurological care facility on Bretton Way, Peterborough, over 2,000 workers applied for interviews. The rush for these few jobs shows the difficult struggle workers face finding employment in Britain.

In Peterborough 6,312 people—5.6 percent of the workforce—are claiming Job Seekers Allowance. Unemployment in the city is at a 17-year high and is rising six times faster than the national rate. The credit rating company Experian has placed Peterborough 62nd from the bottom in terms of poverty in a survey of 326 local authorities. This includes child poverty.

The small numbers of seasonally adjusted jobs that become available at places like Perkins Diesel engines makes little difference when 270,000 jobs are being shed nationally in the public sector.

The leaflet distributed recently by Danny Bird, the Conservative candidate in the Bretton North ward that I am contesting, reveals how the government is trying to scapegoat the unemployed for the economic crisis produced by the breakdown of capitalism.

Bird quotes approvingly Conservative MP Stewart Jackson's claim that the government's capping of welfare benefits at £26,000 for families—irrespective of their size—is a good idea because it will force the unemployed into work.

The queue for jobs at PJ Care show just how far removed Bird and the entire political establishment are from the reality of life for millions of workers. It is an insult to those who are desperately trying to make ends meet to suggest that capping benefits will put an end to a “something for nothing culture” that supposedly pervades the working class.

Nothing is said about the multi-billion bailout of the banks and super-rich that was supported by all the

parliamentary parties, and which is continuing. This is the real “something for nothing culture”.

The Conservative/Liberal Democrat government is slashing funding to the National Health Service and farming out essential services to profit-making private companies. The growth of the private sector is devastating the NHS, on which millions rely. Private companies now account for 70 percent of Britain's long-term care beds.

All of the official parties agree with these policies. It was Labour that led the way for the coalition, with its Private Finance Initiative scheme just another way of transferring vital social assets to big business.

Decent, universal health care—as with all the essential basic rights of working people and their families—is incompatible with the capitalist profit system.

What is necessary is the complete reorganisation of the economy on the basis of production for social need—not private profit—and under the democratic control of working people.

The SEP stands for a massive redistribution of wealth from the super-rich to provide decent paying jobs, modern infrastructure and high quality public services.

I urge all those who support this programme to assist in the SEP election campaign, and to join us in building the socialist alternative to the three parties of big business.



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