

By **Alastair Darling, MP** and *Ex-Minister responsible for much of it*



This Christmas time it's important to remember others less fortunate than ourselves. The losers in the lottery of life; people for whom a cucumber face mask would be considered food.

We see them in every city and town... milling about next to all those new banks the Trussell Trust is setting up; which is living proof, I might add, that the UK is heading out of recession so we should pay no heed to splittist propaganda.

I mean more banks means a growing economy – even if it is for the odd past time of storing your groceries... what's wrong with kitchen cupboards... has there been a spate of burglaries that's made people want to store food in a bank? Who knows?!

Although in all fairness, they may just not have a kitchen anymore as they've been forced to slap a bed in it after the Bedroom Tax forced them to downsize to one of the very easy to find and unbelievably available 1 bedroom flats that litter the marketplace in the UK... which I understand are kitted out particularly well for the disabled and are far better than their previous homes.

Anyway, I digress. Danny Alexander has said that he and many other MP's have even had photo-ops and grand openings at these banks, so at least there's still a free party circuit on the go for these unfortunates to enjoy. However as you may be aware, this year there are thousands of children living in poverty.

I often talk on this subject but tend to come back to the wise words of my Lib Dem pal and Minister for Portsmouth, Alistair Carmichaelmoore. Alistair, or old bruiser as we call him – which is on account of his unbelievable ability to bruise and swell up like a banana under even the slightest pressure – anyway, he is quite philosophical about the whole child poverty thingy and says “no one can really know for sure, and since no one can know, is there even a single child in poverty out there? Doing something to help may just be wasting resources on phantom figures... I mean if a politician isn't there to hear a child crying, do they even exist?”

It's a conundrum that I have often asked myself as I travel around the world on my latest speaking appointment - £170k and counting – but you can't dwell on thoughts like that as they only get you down, so instead I like to read the technical manual for an Astute submarine and thank god we punch above our weight internationally... I mean we would be in pretty dire straits if we were useless at home AND abroad.



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