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Legal & General establishes partnership with Sir Michael Marmot to address UK health inequality

Legal & General announces that it has formed a long-term partnership with Sir Michael Marmot, Director of the University College of London (UCL) Institute of Health Equity (IHE) and professor of epidemiology. The partnership will lead to a multi-million pound charitable Fund - "The Legal & General IHE Places Fund" - to examine how improvements to the design and construction of our towns and cities can help to address health inequalities and support "levelling up" across the UK's regions.

The Fund will sit alongside a new Legal & General IHE Network for UK public authorities and businesses to support idea creation, sharing of best practice and insight, and innovation which can help increase long-term health span and reduce health inequalities. The Partnership represents a significant step forward as, for the first time, brings business together with local government and the voluntary and community sector to make a real difference to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and to health equity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has shone a spotlight on the strong link between health, wealth and overall economic performance - "Health Equals Wealth" – and particularly underscored how poor health outcomes are exacerbated for individuals and regions in more deprived areas. The conditions in which people are born, live, and work are the single most important determinant of good health according to the World Health Organisation. In the UK, the rich-poor gap in Healthy Life Expectancy is almost twenty years, with those in the most deprived areas not only having shorter lives but also spending nearly a third of their lives in poor health.

Whilst the correlation between health and wealth has become ever clearer, research in this area has - to date – tended to focus on the health service and role of government in finding solutions. Exploring the role of business as employers, providers of goods and services and as investors and innovators is an important next step. Health inequalities lead to productivity losses of between £31–33 billion each year in England alone, so there is a clear economic and business case for business to help to tackle health inequality by addressing the environmental and social factors which can lead to improved long-term outcomes.

Sir Michael Marmot, Director of the University College of London (UCL) Institute of Health Equity (IHE) and professor of epidemiology:

"Our *Marmot Review 10 Years On* report drew attention to the unacceptably large, and increasing, health inequalities in England. The question was not lack of knowledge of what to do to improve health equity, but how to do it. In light of the pandemic, which amplified social inequalities, our *Build Back Fairer* report argued that we must seize the opportunity to build a fairer, healthier society. For the first time, with this welcome initiative from Legal and General, we have the opportunity to bring business together with local government and the voluntary

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and community sector to make a real difference to the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, and to health equity. It represents a significant step forward.”

Nigel Wilson, CEO, Legal & General:

“We are delighted to have partnered with Sir Michael Marmot to bring forward this ground-breaking research and multi-million pound funding partnership. Reducing health inequalities is part of levelling up: literally a matter of life and death. Businesses and ESG (Environment, Social and Governance) investors are proving key to reducing carbon emissions. ESG’s “E” is working, but the “S” is further behind - the impact of corporate activity on population health and its associated costs is not currently adequately addressed. Post-COVID, there is a strong case to consider health and health inequality as crucial to the “S” of ESG - or even to explicitly call out health within a new “ESHG” framework.”

Pete Gladwell, Legal & General:

“We believe that business can be a force for good in society if we work to identify areas where we can sustainably and positively impact people’s lives. That is the aim of this partnership; to work with experts such as Sir Michael Marmot to identify the social role Legal & General and other businesses can play in addressing health inequality. We believe that place-based solutions will be essential and hope our new L&G IHE Network and Fund will empower other businesses and Local and Combined Authorities to co-create solutions in this historically-overlooked area.”

As one of the UK’s leading financial services groups, stewarding over £1.3 trillion of society’s pensions and savings, Legal & General is dedicated to playing its part in supporting the UK’s economic bounce back. It has invested over £30bn into reviving town centres and delivering quality affordable housing, transport and digital infrastructure to support levelling up. Recognising the important role of university and business partnerships in driving forward health innovations, Legal & General is a founding member of both the Longevity Science Panel and The Trinity Challenge; a coalition, including the University of Cambridge and leading academics, seeking to support prevention around future health emergencies. Meanwhile, its long-term partnership with Newcastle Council and Newcastle University continues to deliver at pace, undertaking research into improving ageing health span with The National Centre for Ageing. Legal & General has also formed long-term multi-billion pound partnerships with the Universities of Oxford and Manchester to develop innovation districts which will help incubate spin-out businesses such as those leading the way in developing the COVID-19 vaccinations. Legal & General also established the Advanced Care Research Centre (“ACRC”) with the University of Edinburgh last year.

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Further information

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Notes to editors

Legal & General Group

Established in 1836, Legal & General is one of the UK's leading financial services groups and a major global investor, with international businesses in the US, Europe, Middle East and Asia. With over £1.24 trillion in total assets under management, we are the UK's largest investment manager for corporate pension schemes and a UK market leader in pension risk transfer, life insurance, workplace pensions and retirement income.

Professor Sir Michael G. Marmot MBBS, MPH, PhD, FRCP, FFPHM, FMedSci, FBA

Professor Sir Michael Marmot is Professor of Epidemiology at University College London, Director of the UCL Institute of Health Equity, and Past President of the World Medical Association.

He is the author of *The Health Gap: the challenge of an unequal world* (Bloomsbury: 2015) and *Status Syndrome: how your place on the social gradient directly affects your health* (Bloomsbury: 2004). Professor Marmot holds the Harvard Lown Professorship for 2014-2017 and is the recipient of the Prince Mahidol Award for Public Health 2015. He has been awarded honorary doctorates from 18 universities.

Professor Marmot has led research groups on health inequalities for over 40 years. He chaired:

- the Regional Commission on the Social Determinants of Health, established in November 2019 to review health inequities in WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region and issue recommendations to address these inequities. In March 2021 the commission published both an Executive Summary and Executive Brief under the title: *Build Back Fairer: Achieving Health Equity in the Eastern Mediterranean Region*
- the 'Commission on Equity and Health Inequalities in the Americas', set up in 2015 by the World Health Organization's Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO)
- And the Commission on Social Determinants of Health (CSDH), which was set up by the World Health Organization in 2005, and produced the report entitled: 'Closing the Gap in a Generation' in August 2008.

At the request of the British Government, he conducted the Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England, which published its report 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' in February 2010. This was followed by the 'European Review of Social Determinants of Health and the Health Divide', for WHO Euro in 2014.

In February 2020, Professor Marmot launched the 'Marmot Review 10 Years On', which serves as an update to the 'Fair Society, Healthy Lives' review. In December 2020 he published 'Build Back Fairer: The COVID 19 Marmot Review'.

Professor Marmot also set up and led a number of longitudinal cohort studies on the social gradient in health in the UCL Department of Epidemiology & Public Health (where he was head of department for 25 years): the Whitehall II Studies of British Civil Servants, investigating explanations for the striking inverse social gradient in morbidity and mortality; the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA), and several international research efforts on the social determinants of health.

Professor Marmot served as President of the British Medical Association (BMA) in 2010-2011, and is President of the British Lung Foundation. He is an Honorary Fellow of the American College of Epidemiology; a Fellow of the Academy of Medical Sciences; an Honorary Fellow of the British Academy, and an Honorary Fellow of the Faculty of Public Health of the Royal College of Physicians. He is also a trustee of the Food Foundation, was a member of the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution for six years, and in 2000 was knighted by Her Majesty The Queen, for services to epidemiology and the understanding of health inequalities. Professor Marmot is a Member of the National Academy of Medicine.