

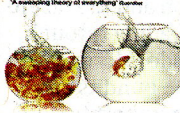
## The Spirit Level

Why Equality  
is Better for Everyone

Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett

'A big idea, big enough to change political thinking'  
Amey Stone

'A compelling theory of everything' Quarrier



**The Spirit Level:  
Why Equality Is  
Better For Everyone,**  
by Richard Wilkinson  
& Kate Pickett  
(Penguin, £9.99)

For all previous generations, economic growth has been seen as the answer to improving the quality of human life. But no longer. Wilkinson and Pickett argue that in the developed world, social problems such as violence, mental illness, teenage births and educational failure have little relation to levels of average income in a society. What matters is not how wealthy a country is, but how equal its society is. From levels of trust to obesity and crime, people in unequal societies are far worse off than those in equal ones. And the effects of inequality are not restricted to the poor, but have an impact on everyone. Sadly, the UK is ranked with the worst in terms of equality and social problems. If we became as equal as countries such as Japan and Sweden we could halve mental illness, get an additional year of life and see homicide rates fall by 75%. The authors don't claim to have all the solutions, but as an analysis of the problem and a passionate plea for a better society, *The Spirit Level* is hard to fault. This important book should be on the reading list of every politician. **PDS**