

The Extension and Intensification of Conditionality in the UK: Promoting Responsible Citizenship?

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■ **Social citizenship reconfigured (Dwyer, 1998, 2008)**

Importance of New Right and New Communitarian ideas in this shift

A welfare dependent 'underclass' is created and sustained by unconditional welfare

■ **Passive 'welfare society' of the past superseded by the 'active society' (Walters, 1997)**

Prioritisation of *responsible* individual agency/behaviour

Activation of previously '*passive*' welfare recipients, primacy of paid work

'No rights without responsibilities' (Giddens, 1998)

■ **Conditional welfare state**

'Third order' change (Hall, 1993)

Principle of conditionality is the 'prism' through which we view reform

A distortion or correction of social citizenship?

- **Nothing new?**
- **Principle of Conditionality (Deacon, 1994)**
- **Aspects of conditionality**

Sanctions and support ('sticks and carrots')

'Amorphous' – 'concrete' conditionality (Paz-Fuchs, 2008)

'Conditional' and 'earned' citizenship (Flint, 2009)

- **Purpose of conditionality:**

Realigning the relationship between entitlement/support and conduct/behaviour (Handler, 2004)

Promoting behaviour change

Punishing the poor or enabling the excluded?

■ Conservative governments (1979-1997)

Social security: Child Support Agency (1993), Jobseeker's Act (1995), 'Project Work' (1997)

Housing: Housing Act (1996) introductory tenancy periods, new powers for landlords to evict for nuisance and ASB

■ New Labour governments (1997-2010)

Social security: various 'New Deals' (from 1997), Welfare Reform and Pensions Act (1999), Welfare Reform Acts (2007, 2009), Jobcentre Plus (2002), Freud Report (2007), Employment and Support Allowance (2008)

Management of anti social behaviour/housing: Crime and Disorder Act (1998) Anti-Social Behaviour Act (2003), Criminal Justice Act (2003), Supporting People (2003), Action Plan on Social Exclusion (2006), Respect Action Plan (RTF, 2006)

Education and healthcare: Sure Start Maternity Grant (2001), The Skills for Life Scheme (2001), Welfare Food Scheme (2002),

■ **Social security**

Biggest welfare revolution in over 60 years...Past governments have talked about reform, while watching the benefits bill sky rocket and generations languish on the dole and dependency. This government is delivering it. Our new law will mark the end of the culture that said a life on benefits was an acceptable alternative to work (Cameron,2012)

Enthusiastic endorsement of ESA: use of WCA to reclassify many disabled people as fit for work

Mandatory Work Activity (May 2011): using the discipline of work for JSA claimants with poor work records/ethic

The Work Programme (June 2011)

The Welfare Reform Act (2012): introduction of Universal Credit
intensified, personalised and extended conditionality

Conditionality maybe applied to in work benefit recipients for the first time

■ **Anti-social behaviour and troubled families**

Troubled Families Programme (2012-2015)

LAs required to identify its most troubled families i.e.

a) involvement in ASB b) children not attending school c) an adult on out of work benefits d) a high cost to public purse:

£2.2B spend now to save on future costs

Anti Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill (2013)

19 powers replaced by 6 new ones

Broadening of definition of ASB

Lower civil thresholds of proof may be used

Injunctions to prevent nuisance and annoyance can impose positive behavioural requirements as well as prohibitions

Community trigger, community remedy

■ Social justice

1. A focus on **prevention and early intervention**
2. Where problems arise, concentrating interventions on **recovery and independence**, not maintenance
3. Promoting work for those who can as the most sustainable route out of poverty, while offering **unconditional support** to those who are severely disabled and cannot work
4. Recognising that the most effective solutions will often be designed and delivered **at a local level**
5. Ensuring that interventions provide a **fair deal for the taxpayer**

(HMG, 2012 :10 emphasis as in the original text).

A ‘second chance society’.... ‘Unconditional support’

Some concluding thoughts: can conditionality promote responsible behaviour?

■ Responsible behaviour?

Equated solely with activity in PLM

'other socially valued' activities e.g. care work devalued

Exemption on grounds of impairment problematized

■ Sanctions and support?

'A gulf between rhetoric and evidence of effects of sanctions' (Griggs and Evans, 2010)

A need to move beyond the rhetoric of irresponsibility and engage with complex realities

by offering support (e.g. Batty and Flint, (2012) on FIPS, Bowpitt et al. (2011) on MEHP)

■ The importance of context

Narrow sense: Interpretations of policy by street level bureaucrats (Lipsky,

When, how and why sanctions are applied (Johnsen and Fitzpatrick, 2010)

Broad sense: Austerity and the politics of resentment (Hoggett et al. 2013)

■ Citizenship is about *rights* and responsibilities

The empowering potential of enforceable rights based approaches (Watts, 2013)

Rights are the basis on which we recognize the need based claims of others (Dean, 2003)

Time to turn to rights again?

■ Twin aims

To consider the ethics and efficacy of welfare conditionality



■ Methods

Initial mapping of theoretical and normative frameworks, literature review, secondary data analysis, consultation workshops, expert panel seminars

Fieldwork with three sets of respondents

1. Semi-structured interviews with 40 'elite' policymakers/actors
2. 24 focus groups (6-10 respondents) with frontline welfare practitioners who implement policy
3. Three rounds of repeat qualitative longitudinal interviews with a diverse sample of 400 welfare recipients who are subject to conditionality i.e. 1200 interviews in total.

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- **Sanctions, support and behaviour change:
understanding the role and impact of welfare
conditionality**

5 year project March 2013 to Feb 2018

ESRC large grant

Collaborative project involving 6 universities

Conditionality across a range of policy sectors and people

England and Scotland

Establishing project and website now



ESA: conditional welfare for the majority of disabled people in the future?

Initial 13 week assessment phase : Basic rate ESA £71.70 (25 plus)

Work Capability Assessment (WCA). Two parts 'limited capability for work' and 'limited capability for work related activity'

Three potential outcomes:

1. Fail the 'limited capability for work' test i.e. fit for work or Claim JSA at £67.50 or appeal decision

2. Pass the 'limited capability for work related activity test'

Placed in the Work Related Activity Group: ESA at up to £100.15 provided you attend regular WFIs, reasonable steps to manage condition, specified training job preparation etc. (the majority of ESA claimants)

3. Fail the 'limited capability for work related activity test'

Placed in the Support Group: ESA at up to £106.50 (a minority of severely disabled people)

Impact of ESA: Outcomes of WCAs and sanctions

■ New ESA claims

52% deemed entitled to ESA of these:

- 23 % into WRAG, and
- 29% into SG

48% Fit for Work

- not entitled for ESA

■ Reassessment of IBs

73% deemed entitled to ESA of these:

- 38 % into WRAG
- 35% into SG

27% Fit for Work

- not entitled for ESA

Sanctions

June 2010 – May 2011: 11,490 sanctions applied

June 2011 – May 2012: 11,130 sanctions applied