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First PhD seminar/event
Edinburgh 26th-27th March 2015

Coping with conditionality?
An exploration of the impact of
welfare conditionality

Background

- Collaborative PhD partnered with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation
 - First collaborative PhD studentship with JRF
 - Opportunity to directly inform wider welfare conditionality project and JRF anti-poverty research
 - Two fully funded 12 week internship in years 1 and 2 of the PhD

Project focus

Exploration of impact of intensified welfare conditionality and the application of sanctions on the lives of vulnerable people

In particular:

1. Excluded from welfare services
2. Reluctant to access welfare
3. Unable to engage with mainstream welfare system

Research objectives

1. Explore the impact of conditional welfare and associated sanctions
2. Map the number, extent and type of sanctions applied
3. Assess the direct and indirect effects of sanctions on decisions to disengage from mainstream welfare provision
4. Consider the role of statutory and non-statutory agencies in meeting the needs of those unable to access welfare resources
5. Explore the strategies and responses of vulnerable people unable to or reluctant to access welfare services

Vulnerable groups

Potential vulnerable groups mentioned in research proposal:

- Sex workers
- Homeless
- Offenders
- Migrants
- Disabled people

Work so far...

- Exploration of the narratives surrounding vulnerability discourse
- Exploration of the historical shifts that surround concepts of conditionality and citizenship
- Exploration into how these vulnerability narratives are employed within the current conditional welfare system
- Identification of main conditional welfare policies for each vulnerable group
- Exploration of how vulnerability discourse has historically shaped and continues to shape different policy strategies
- Exploration of the current impact of conditionality and sanctions upon the lives of vulnerable people
- Initial Meeting with JRF

Core themes

- Role of vulnerability narratives in the legitimacy and/or exclusion from welfare support
- Extension of social divisions due to conditionality
- Ideas of care vs. control
- Inter-subjectivity between vulnerable groups and the impact upon the lived experiences of conditionality

Methodological approach

Realistic evaluation framework:

- Theory driven process
- Tests and refines underlying assumptions of conditionality
- Identify key features that render conditionality successful or otherwise in outcomes
- Offer a clearer understanding on how conditionality and sanctions will work, for whom and in what context and what respect

Next steps...

1. Identify core themes to frame research
2. Select vulnerable groups to explore further
3. Identify initial research questions
4. Attend JRF internship June-August
5. Start to explore methodology further

Thank you!