



Welfare Conditionality

SANCTIONS, SUPPORT AND
BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Social (in)security? Exploring the impacts of welfare conditionality

Symposium at the 50th Anniversary Conference of the Social Policy
Association Social Inequalities: Research, Theory, and Policy



An ESRC large grant



Welfare conditionality: sanctions, support and behaviour change (2013-2018) ²

Twin aims

- To consider the ethics and efficacy of welfare conditionality
- Fieldwork with three sets of respondents:
 1. Semi-structured interviews with 55 Policy Stakeholders
 2. 27 focus groups with frontline welfare practitioners
 3. Three rounds of repeat qualitative longitudinal interviews with a diverse sample of 480 welfare recipients who are subject to conditionality (ie, 1,000+ interviews in total).

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Welfare conditionality?

- **A principle of (behavioural) conditionality**

Access to certain basic publicly provided welfare benefits and services should “be subject to the condition that those who receive them behave in particular ways, or participate in specified activities” (Deacon, 1994: 53)

- **Combinations of sanctions (‘sticks’) and mandatory support (‘carrots’)**

- **Conditionality within UK social benefit system**

Intensified, extended ,and personalised, ie, WFIs, work search, training activities

“Conditionality embodies the principle that aspects of state support, usually financial or practical, are dependent on citizens meeting certain conditions which are invariably behavioural” (DWP, 2008, :1)