# Conditionality at a cross-roads:
# Exploring public attitudes to universal (unconditional) basic income and in-work conditionality

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Welfare Conditionality Conference
University of York, 27th June 2018

# Overview

- What is conditionality?
- At a cross-roads?
- Attitudes to welfare & conditionality
- Hypotheses
- Data and methods
- Results
    - Overall support
    - Where does support come from?
    - Multivariate regressions
- Reflections

# Conceptualising welfare conditionality

- Conditionality in welfare restricts or guarantees social rights (Dwyer 2004; Clasen & Clegg 2007)

LEVEL: **Category** (e.g. unemployed)
LEVER: Definition (socially defined)

LEVEL: **Circumstance** (e.g. low income)
LEVER: Eligibility and entitlement criteria (means-test)

LEVEL: **Conduct** (e.g. searching for work)
LEVER: Behavioural requirements and penalties for non-compliance

# Conditionality at a cross-roads

- Long history of conditionality in UK but "punitive turn" from 2012 – sanctions regime especially for unemployed (Fletcher and Wright, 2018)

- Two "new"/ divergent pathways for conditionality

    1. **Universal Basic Income (Unconditional)**
       -  no conduct or circumstance conditions, very broad category (e.g. citizens)

    2. **Universal Credit (In-work conditionality)**
       - Extends conduct conditionality to **working recipients** not meeting DWP's earning threshold
       - Requirements to try to increase income by attending appointments, take part in training, apply for additional work etc.

# Attitudes to conditionality in the UK

- High support for conduct conditionality for unemployed recipients (BSA 2011; Buss et al. 2018)

Which of the statements on this card comes closest to what you think should happen to unemployed people's benefits if they do not visit the job centre regularly and prove they are actively looking for work?

| Values | Categories | N | |
|--------|-----------|-----|------|
| 1 | Their benefits should not be affected | 192 | 5.8% |
| 2 | Their benefits should be reduced a little | 1013 | 30.6% |
| 3 | Their benefits should be reduced a lot | 782 | 23.6% |
| 4 | Their benefits should be stopped | 1294 | 39.1% |
| 8 | Don't know | 28 | 0.8% |
| 9 | Refusal | 2 | 0.1% |

- Different attitudes towards welfare for "deserving" and "undeserving" groups (Van Oorschot 2006)

- Welfare attitudes driven by material interests (e.g. Rehm 2016)

- Values & political ideology equally if not more important – authoritarianism? (Hausermann & Kriesi, 2015)

# Hypotheses

*H1: Support for benefits with in-work conditionality will be higher than support for universal (unconditional) basic income*

*H2: Attitudes to conditionality will be related to material interests*

*H3: Attitudes to conditionality will be related to values and political ideology*

*H4: Values will be a stronger determinant of attitudes to conditionality than material interests*

# Data & methods

- Cross sectional IPSOS-Mori - IPR poll conducted in August 2017

- Representative sample of 1,111 adults aged 18-75 in the UK

**DEPENDENT VARIABLES**
- Universal basic income
- In-work conditionality (x4)

**INDEPENDENT VARIABLES**
- Material interests:
Household income, benefit receipt, employment status, gender, children
- Values:
Political party choice (2017), age, attitude to unemployment benefit conditionality and education

# Items

As you may be aware, some countries are considering introducing a basic income.

If introduced in the United Kingdom, this would provide a regular income paid in cash to every individual adult in the UK, regardless of their working status and income from other sources.

In other words, it would be:

- Universal (i.e. paid to all),
- Unconditional (i.e. paid without a requirement to work); and
- Paid to individuals (rather than to a household)

Assuming the level would be set roughly at the amount the UK government judged to be necessary to cover basic needs, e.g. food and clothing (but not housing costs), to what extent would you support or oppose the UK Government introducing a basic income in general?

Imagine now a working adult on low wages who is receiving tax credits from the UK Government to top up their wages.

Do you feel it would be acceptable or not for the UK Government to reduce the payments that person receives in each of the following situations?
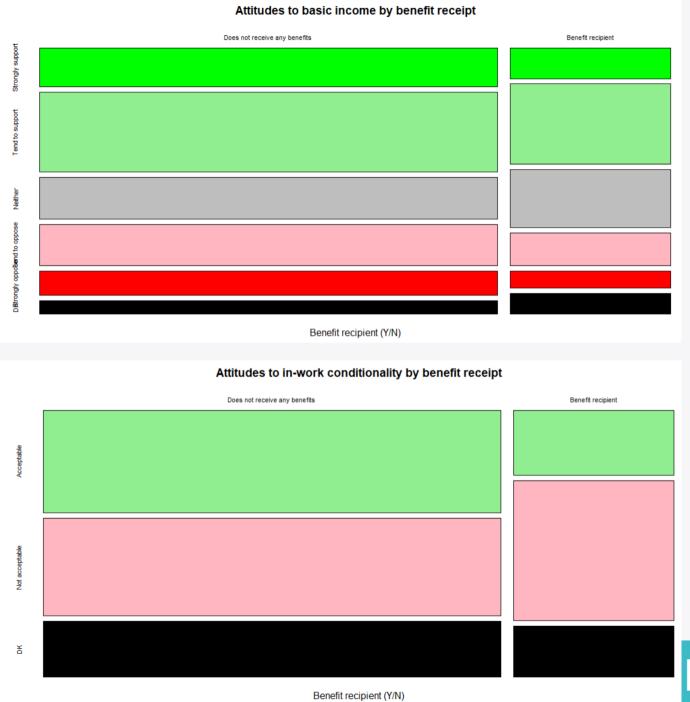
...If they received an offer to work more hours to increase their income, but did not take this work on

…If they received an offer of a better paid job, but did not take this work on

…If they had not been actively looking for a better paid job

…If they had not been actively looking to increase the hours that they work to increase their income

# Overall support

| | | Support (%) | Oppose (%) | Net (%) | Neither (%) | Don't Know (%) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Basic income** | | | | | | |
| | in general? | 49 | 26 | **+23** | 19 | 6 |
| **In-work conditionality** | | | | | | |
| | refused offer of more hours | 50 | 33 | **+17** | - | 18 |
| | refused offer of more pay | 54 | 29 | **+25** | - | 17 |
| | no active search for more hours | 36 | 42 | **-6** | - | 21 |
| | no active search for more pay | 36 | 45 | **-9** | - | 19 |
| **Unemployment benefit conditionality** | | | | | | |
| | 1-5 v. 6-10 | 64 | 33 | **+31** | - | 4 |
| | 1-4 v. 7-10 (5-6) | 51 | 24 | **+27** | 22 | 4 |

Attitudes to basic income by benefit receipt


Attitudes to in-work conditionality by benefit receipt

**Benefit receipt**

Attitudes to basic income by employment status

Attitudes to in-work conditionality by employment status

**Employment status**

Attitudes to basic income by family type
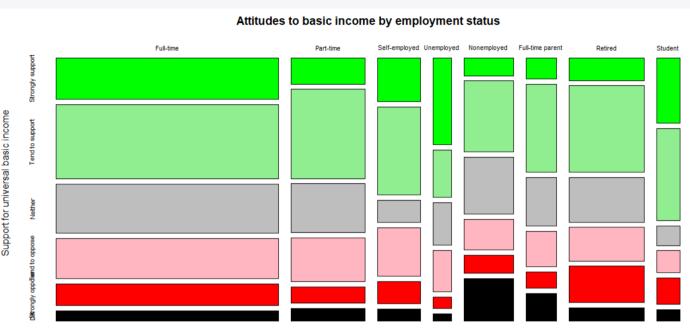
Support for universal basic income

No Kids — Has Kids

Strongly support / Tend to support / Neither / Tend to oppose / Strongly oppose / DK

Kids (Y/N)

Attitudes to in-work conditionality by family type

Support for in-work conditionality

No Kids — Has Kids

Acceptable / Not acceptable / DK

Kids (Y/N)

**Children (Y/N)**

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**Attitudes to basic income by party choice**

**Attitudes to in-work conditionality by party choice**

**Party choice**

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| ORDINAL REGRESSION MODEL | ATTITUDE TO UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME [RELATIVE RISK RATIOS] ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1 |
| --- | --- |
| INCOME | 1.004 (0.031) |
| EMPLOYMENT STATUS (REF: FULL-TIME) | PART-TIME 0.977 (0.179); SELF-EMPLOYED 0.988 (0.221); UNEMPLOYED 1.027 (0.328); NON-EMPLOYED 1.177 (0.23); FULL-TIME PARENT 0.906 (0.272); RETIRED 0.876 (0.209); STUDENT 0.711 (0.282) |
| BENEFIT RECEIPT (REF: NO) | 1.099 (0.156) |
| GENDER (REF: MALE) | 1.204 (0.116) |
| FAMILY TYPE (REF: NO CHILDREN) | 0.981 (0.152) |
| AGE | 1.008 (0.005) |
| PARTY CHOICE (REF: CONSERVATIVE) | **LABOUR 0.42*** (0.148);** LIB DEM 0.645* (0.263); **SNP 0.361*** (0.339); OTHER 0.607** (0.209);** DID NOT VOTE 0.808 (0.196); N/A 0.636* (0.236) |
| EDUCATION (REF: NVQ1-2/GCSE) | NVQ3/A-LEVEL 1.23 (0.157); NVQ4/HIGHER 0.975 (0.139) |
| UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT CONDITIONALITY (SUPPORT) | **0.882*** (0.022)** |

| MULTINOMIAL REGRESSION MODEL (DON'T KNOW OUTCOME NOT DISPLAYED) | ATTITUDE TO IN-WORK CONDITIONALITY [RELATIVE RISK RATIOS] ***p<0.01; **p<0.05; *p<0.1 |
| --- | --- |
| INCOME | 0.955 (0.043) |
| EMPLOYMENT STATUS (REF: FULL-TIME) | PART-TIME 0.842 (0.249); SELF-EMPLOYED 0.793 (0.221); UNEMPLOYED 1.355 (0.45); NON-EMPLOYED 1.457 (0.335); FULL-TIME PARENT 2.13* (0.387); RETIRED 1.385 (0.28); STUDENT 1.611 (0.377) |
| BENEFIT RECEIPT (REF: NO) | 1.194 (0.216) |
| GENDER (REF: MALE) | 0.925 (0.158) |
| FAMILY TYPE (REF: NO CHILDREN) | **2.233*** (0.207)** |
| AGE | 0.999 (0.007) |
| PARTY CHOICE (REF: CONSERVATIVE) | **LABOUR 2.344*** (0.198); LIB DEM 1.989** (0.327); SNP 3.759*** (0.481);** OTHER 1.631* (0.286); **DID NOT VOTE 2.133*** (0.274);** N/A 1.647 (0.35) |
| EDUCATION (REF: NVQ1-2/GCSE) | NVQ3/A-LEVEL 1.156 (0.217); NVQ4/HIGHER 1.063 (0.191) |
| UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT CONDITIONALITY (SUPPORT) | **1.32*** (0.031)** |

# Reflections

- Future of conditionality in the UK
  - Opposition to IWC
  - Support for UBI (cautious)

- Other policy features matter
  - Target group
  - Level and funding

- Political ideology and value-driven attitudes to conditionality
  - But parents' opposition to IWC striking

- Attitudes are not fixed – battle of ideas (or framing)?

# References

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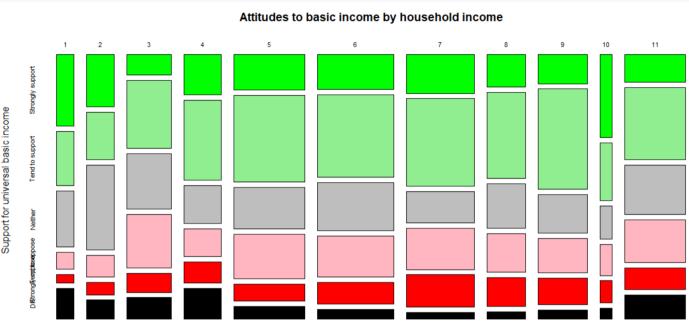
**Attitudes to basic income by household income**

**Attitudes to in-work conditionality by household income**

**Results: Household income**