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Between the devil and the deep blue sea

Exploring discourses and experiences of work, welfare, policy and practice.

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'Between the devil and the deep blue sea?' Exploring discourses and experiences of work, welfare, policy and practice.

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'Between the devil and the deep blue sea?' Exploring discourses and experiences of work, welfare, policy and practice.

Abstract

This thesis draws on ideas of governmentality (Foucault, 2008) to address the following research questions: what are the dominant political discourses of work and welfare; how have these changed historically, and do young people and front-line workers represent and reproduce these discourses? A historical analysis of work and welfare was undertaken, followed by a critical discourse analysis of four Conservative-led Coalition Government speeches, and narrative interviews with young people in precarious work or unemployed (n=15), and front-line workers, including employment advisers and mentors (n=7).

The thesis finds historical governance through stigma and the work ethic, to maintain the individual's closeness to the labour market. As paid entry-level jobs declined (late 1970s), young people became an object of governmentality, assumed to require 'employment training'. Welfare shifted from a safety net to a facilitator of individual responsibility, and paid work became increasingly precarious with job insecurity and low pay. Nonetheless, the coalition political discourses maintain work as transformative, and welfare as damaging.

Young people interviewed referred to competition for unpaid work schemes, hoping to get the 'job', and/or competed for hours in insecure jobs. Front-line workers maintained their client's confidence, and skills to access benefits, encouraging them to take work schemes, and low paid, insecure jobs. Both participant groups referred to stigma, financial hardship and demotivation, and yet reproduced discourses valorising work and denigrating the benefits 'scrounger'.

This thesis presents important insights into lived experiences of work and welfare, and the pervasiveness of discourses that obfuscate structural factors: low pay, poverty, and power relations. Where 'problems' of the unemployed inform policy solutions, young people may be shaped through discursive practices to become a resilient, potential reserve army of labour. Further research is required considering ongoing welfare reforms, in particular, Universal Credit which imposes conditionality for those in work, effectively blurring the distinction between the so-called 'shirker', and 'striver'.

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Abstract

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Chapter One: Introduction

In 1985, thousands of young people left their school to march in protest against youth training schemes, the government's response to high unemployment (Jeffries, 2016). Popular culture reflected employment realities, expressing resistance to poor work and acceptance of the 'dole'. The band UB40 formed in 1978 was named after the unemployment benefit form available at the time. Their songs acted as a commentary on political topics and included successes including 'Signing off' and 'One in ten'. Other bands enjoyed successes eschewing poor work and the dole: for example in 1978, the band 'Sham 69', with 'If the kids are united, then we'll never be divided'. WHAM (1982) enjoyed success with their song, 'Wham rap' asking 'You got soul on the dole? You gonna have a good time, down on the line' and 'Job or no job, you can't tell me what I'm not. Do! You! Enjoy what you do? If not, just stop! Don't stay there and rot!'

Nearly 40 years later, many young people are economically vulnerable in comparison to their counterparts in the 1980s. This is attributed, in part, to a bifurcated, hollowed out labour market, as traditionally entry-level industrial and manufacturing jobs declined in parallel with increases in 'precarious' employment. Precarious employment is notable amongst the young and unqualified, characterised by job insecurity; self-employment or underemployment; low pay and no opportunity to improve it, and a lack of collective bargaining or union representation (McKay *et al*, 2012; Burrows, 2013, 3). Although higher education widened to become more accessible to many irrespective of background, student loans soon replaced grants, and alongside rising tuition fees, many young people were required to take on debt to finance their studies. Young people must compete for jobs and if they are unemployed, are required or encouraged to participate in schemes to increase their employability involving unpaid work placements, internships, and work experience/employment schemes.

UK welfare reforms have occurred under what Wacquant (2010) has described as pervasive individual responsibility, emphasising welfare claimants' duties and obligations of citizenship over their rights, and the retrenchment of welfare as a safety net. Welfare policies are based on the presumed pathologies and immoral dependencies of the unemployed, without recourse to structural factors. This is however, accompanied by rationales of empowerment, so that the need for the unemployed should be to work on themselves to be more employable (Taylor-Gooby, 2011; Muncie, 2008, 233). New Labour (1997-2010) promoted the notion of

'employability', under these assumptions of the individual deficient in finding work, and as such, employment schemes became embedded within welfare policy. The subsequent Conservative led Liberal Democrat Coalition Government (2010-2015) too signalled problems of 'worklessness' and 'cultures of dependency', to be met with solutions of work-first approaches, unpaid work schemes, and increased conditionality to access out of work benefits. Then Work and Pensions Secretary, Ian Duncan Smith, summed this up. "'*A life on benefits is a poor substitute for a working life but too much of our current system is geared toward maintaining people on benefits rather than helping them flourish at work; we need reform that tackles the underlying problem of welfare dependency*" (Ian Duncan Smith 2010, quoted in Hills, 2015, 3).

The work first approaches, that any job is a good job, has been a mantra encapsulated by Coalition Government ministers. They have valorised labour market participation for its potential rewards of financial and in-work mobility. Then unemployment minister, Esther McVey in 2014, succinctly encapsulated this in the statement: '*You could be working in Costa. But in a couple of years' time you might say, "I'd like to manage the area" or might even want to run a hotel in Dubai*" (Perry, 2014).

Yet, despite difficult labour market transitions and more punitive welfare regimes, social attitudes waned in sympathy towards the unemployed, particularly from the youngest group 18-34, as many believed that unemployment benefits were too high and discouraged work (British Social Attitudes survey, 2013). High unemployment and the 2008 recession did not dampen beliefs that welfare encouraged dependency, or widespread perceptions of benefit fraud[1] (*ibid*, IPSOS MORI, 2013). These perceptions appeared congruent to the Coalition Government's discourses of cultures of benefit dependency.

In popular culture, the film 'I, Daniel Blake' (2016) received critical acclaim for its reflection of the welfare state under the Coalition Government. This tracked the lived realities of unemployment, through the protagonist, a skilled manual labourer and joiner who suffers a heart attack but nevertheless, is found fit for work following a work capability assessment. In receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) he must meet certain conditions, to demonstrate that he is searching for work, and must attend a CV workshop. However, Daniel Blake, portrayed as 'deserving' of welfare and demonstrating job-searching efforts is sanctioned, his benefits

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[1]29% believed more spent on JSA than pensions (15 times more is spent on pensions); benefit fraud overestimated with the belief that £24 is spent out of £100 (reality is 70p/£100).

removed. The film evokes sympathy from the viewer because of the unfairness towards Daniel Blake, who adhered to a work ethic and exhibited the correct behaviour.

Research Questions

This research aims to understand the perceptions and experiences of 'work' and 'welfare' by young people (18-24 years) and front-line workers involved in employment support and mentoring practices, in Wales. The research was undertaken during the time of the Conservative led (with Liberal Democrat) Coalition Government (2010-2015), when there were several key welfare reforms, including increased conditionality and benefit sanctions. These reforms occurred alongside increases in precarious employment, constituted by part time work, low pay, and job insecurity, particularly for young people.

The core orientated research questions included the following:

1. How have conceptualisations of work and welfare changed in the UK; what are the broad shifts in policy and discourse, with a focus from the 1979 Conservative Government up to the 2010-2015 Conservative led Coalition Government?

2. What are the dominant, governmental discourses surrounding work and welfare? How does the (2010-15) Coalition Government frame these?

3. How do front-line workers involved in employment or mentoring practices experience their roles, and do their narratives reflect and reproduce the dominant government discourses identified?

4. What are the lived experiences of young people living in North and Mid Wales, who are unemployed, or in precarious employment, do they reflect, and live up to the dominant Government discourses?

The thesis draws on the work of Foucault, and specifically the concepts of governmentality and discourse, to help understand and explore these questions. This research is underpinned by the belief that power is enacted through discourse and therefore there is a need to scrutinise taken-for-granted conceptions of work and welfare. As the work of Foucault makes clear, knowledge is linked ultimately to power and has effects. These can be investigated

through exploring people's lived experiences and perceptions. Additionally, power works through discursive formations, for example through the media and political rhetoric, but also, because of this microphysics of power, through front-line workers involved within policy, who may sustain common sense regimes of truth, of work and of welfare. As Lipsky (2010) noted, people do not experience policy, they experience the 'concrete setting' of policy, faced with the institution and the street level bureaucrat (see Crossley 2017, 103).

Other research has focussed on people's experiences of welfare or work; however, this thesis explores not only experiences but also issues of discourse, that is; how is work and welfare understood as common sense and disseminated through policy and practice. Additionally, the thesis presents an understanding of how young people have become the object of governmentality, and are 'between the devil and the deep blue sea' as economic independence becomes a challenge. Furthermore, it includes investigation of front-line workers who work with young people, their clients. This research builds on some findings from my Master's dissertation in Social Research and Policy (Prendergast, 2013), that explored the experiences of a young man who had not entered higher education, but had undertaken various college courses, spells of unemployment and temporary work placements. Here, he expressed a dislike of being in receipt of out of work benefits (Job Seekers Allowance), experiencing stigma, but at the same time he disliked his current temporary, low paid job and work environment. He had wanted to work with his hands, mostly in construction, and not in the service industry. He expressed an ambiguity towards work, whereas at the same time, he strongly expressed that he was a 'grafter'.

This thesis presents a significant contribution in focussing on young people, as well as front-line workers, to explore their understandings of work and welfare as common sense 'truths'. I have also employed a discourse analysis of Coalition Government speeches, to make apparent the assumptions and discourses made of work and welfare. This highlights the interplay of power and knowledge that sustains regimes of truth and has consequences, as well as the absence of alternative knowledges. Importantly, this research also builds on existing historical literature that explores the changing discourses of work and welfare, and policies employed to control labour. I argue that young people contested and resisted the training schemes imposed upon them in the late 1970s, introduced to discipline young people due to their restlessness towards meaningless work, a lack of entry-level jobs, and unemployment. The discourse of the young people as deficient, requiring training and not paid work became embedded within policy translated into workfare - unpaid work schemes.

Furthermore, the knowledge of work offering, not money but a transformative potential of opportunity, and confidence –is identified as common sense, used to frame discourses of work and welfare in policy carried within the narratives of young people and front-line workers.

Reflexivity and Personal motivations

My personal experiences of work and welfare informed the topic of the research. I developed an interest in the concept of the precariat following the work of Guy Standing (2014), and alongside my own experiences of long-term unemployment, of 'signing on' (the colloquial term for claiming Jobs Seeker's Allowance) and homelessness from the ages of 17 -21. I eventually enrolled in a higher education course and then university, where I was among the first cohort to take out a student loan. Twenty years later, I no longer shared the experience of signing on, although did work in low paid, zero hour jobs. However, this reflexivity as introspection (Finlay, 2002) enabled me to use these insights as a springboard for the research (*ibid,* 215). I have since developed an awareness of the changing discourse surrounding work and welfare, shifting attitudes and policy, as media reporting and policy discourse at the time of the Coalition Government appeared to adopt, as the norm, the notion of the shirker and the scrounger, whilst 'work' was assumed to have unquestioned normative moral and positive value. The 2008 financial crisis, caused by the failure of banking and financial deregulation, was problematized as laissez-faire government spending, which then legitimised solutions of austerity, particularly towards welfare and the public sector more broadly. At the same time, there were reports of people suffering the consequences of punitive welfare policy– from work capability assessments that found seriously ill people 'fit for work' to the adoption of benefit sanctions, including the removal of benefits for young people.

Rational and theoretical underpinning

Welfare policy under the Coalition Government has included greater conditionality to receive out of work benefits, which has included the requirement to demonstrate work searches, CV workshops, and undertake work schemes. There have also been increases in benefit sanctions with some benefits removed for non – compliance of conditions outlined in the Job Seekers Agreement, and the subsequent Claimant Commitment. These policy reforms have run

parallel to discourses of the unemployed person being at risk of welfare dependency, despite empirical evidence to the contrary (Shildrick *et al* 2012a; MacDonald *et al* 2013). The narrative provided by politicians has been that the individual has failed, but then so has the state, in failing to help the individual reach their potential (Jensen, 2014). As I demonstrate, discourses within policy briefings, pamphlets, reports and ministerial speeches present welfare as expensive and rewarding wilful worklessness. Again, this is unsupported by social research (e.g. Wiggan, 2012; Garthwaite, 2011).

The focus on presumed individual deficits, aided by the ubiquity of the terms 'shirker' and 'scrounger' has underpinned the belief that some people will rationally avoid work to live a life on benefits. Therefore, UK welfare policy follows a 'work first' approach, which mandates getting people into work as soon as possible, presuming that *any* employment is desirable. The individual must demonstrate that they are actively seeking work, and not to, results in a sanction (the welfare payment is stopped). It is telling that the National Audit Office (2016) and Parliament's own Work and Pension's Select Committee (Parliament.uk, 2017), reported that sanctions were not effective at helping people into work, but rather, punish people, and did not provide value for money.

Unemployment has been linked to poor health and wellbeing (Fryer, 2013; Marston, 2013), affecting an individual's confidence, their long-term employability, prospects, and earnings (scarring effects) and contributing to social exclusion (Gardiner 2014, 14). Being in employment has been associated with positive benefits to the individual: 'manifest functions' (e.g. making use of one's abilities), 'latent functions' (fulfilling personal goals, time structure, social rewards), social norms and work ethic (as 'internalized duty'), as well as avoid 'social sanctions' such as stigma (van der Wal and Halvorsen, 2015, 100). However, since the late 1970s, within the labour market, there have been increases in precarious work, characterised by insecurity and low pay, as well as decreases in pay, weakened labour law and reduced union activity. Research has documented adverse mental health effects, as assessed by the Mental Health Inventory (MHI-5), for unemployed individuals who move into poorer quality jobs. For instance, moving to 'sub-optimal' modes of work can be just as damaging to mental health as remaining unemployed (Broom *et al* 2006; Butterworth *et al* 2011). Zero hour contracts – where the employer does not guarantee the individual any work, have increased; 'manager controlled flexible scheduling' has been found to be detrimental to workers' perceived job quality (excluding those that desire flexibility for example, students or those nearing retirement, see Wood, 2016; 2017). Nevertheless, work first policies have

continued to promote any job as a good job: with the promise of lifting people out of poverty, thereby leading to social mobility, and enhancing confidence.

Young people have always entered the labour market via precarious positions (*ibid* 113), for example, the 'last in, first out' adage by the unions during unstable economic activity of the 1980s (Mizen 2004, 55). More recently, young people who do not follow the academic route into higher education are more likely to be in precarious, low skilled employment (MacDonald, 2011, Roberts and MacDonald, 2013), and even with the 'widening' of higher education, a degree may not guarantee labour market 'success'. Standing (2014a, 15) asserts that young people make up the core of the 'precariat', which whilst not homogenous, share characteristics including anomie and alienation experiencing insecure labour, part-time employment and casualization. They must take on 'work for labour' and are exploited both within and outside of the workplace, as they experience uncertainty, insecurity of rights and income in and out of employment, and are angry and anxious: '*the prospect of persistent insecurity sits uncomfortably with a feeling that it is contrived and not necessary*'. (*ibid*, 134).

Research describes a more mundane experience of a precarious labour market by young people. In Greece, Kesisoglou *et al* (2016) found young adults in precarious work drew on discourses of personal freedom and autonomy, and spoke of their own potential and entrepreneurialism rather than being critical, and alluding to anger and resentment. Burrows (2013), likewise explored the experiences of young adults in precarious work in Australia, and found that despite poor employment rights and irregular hours, young people subscribed to a belief that there would eventually be better pay and conditions, and assumptions that work taken on a casual basis would eventually lead to permanent contracts. They too accounted for their labour flexibility as if it was their own individual choice, and those with some training believed that they could avoid precarious work and eventually find work reflecting their aspirations. Lloyd (2012) concluded, from his study of call centre workers, that low paid and flexible 'unsatisfactory' forms of service work have replaced previously well-paid and unionised work available to young people. He found little evidence of a worker identity or the belief that there was a job for life, as young people in his research, formed their identities outside of the workplace.

Brannen and Nilsen (2002, 516) explored theories of individualisation, the life course and concepts of time. They noted that the life course of young people has changed since the

decline of unskilled and semi-skilled e.g. manufacturing jobs. Working class men no longer were to leave school to assume adult responsibilities, and young women became expected to combine traditional roles of motherhood with workforce participation. They suggest that in a labour market constituted by insecure jobs, low rates of pay, and limited unemployment benefits, it would be no surprise if they did not plan for their future. In their research in the UK, Shildrick *et al* (2012) found that young people were often 'stuck' in low paid work, or remained between low pay, unemployment, and unpaid work schemes. Carpenter and Freda (2007, 87-100) in their study exploring experiences of young people in the labour market noted that there were difficulties accessing employment, and in particular young people without skills, qualifications, and experience often felt that employers were discriminating against them in terms of recruitment.

There is a lack of research in the UK that addresses experiences and discourses of work and welfare, constructed by young people, who are in either precarious work or unemployed. Therefore, this thesis, based on empirical research seeks to fill this gap by exploring young people's attitudes to and experiences of work and welfare, specifically those unemployed or in precarious work themselves, as a 'litmus paper' of attitudes (and common sense discourses). As MacDonald (2011, 428) states, broad processes of social change can be observed by studying young people, and shines a light on contemporary aspects of inequality, social policy, and social mobility. Their experiences and perceptions can illuminate, in particular, how the effects of neoliberalism have transformed employment conditions and transitions on-the-ground (Burrows, 2013, 5). However, this thesis goes further to explore the experiences and perceptions of front-line workers, in employment and support services. In other words, those key workers who operate at the interface between discourse and policy are an integral part of the interventions that govern and guide young people. Lipsky (2010) referred to 'street level bureaucracy', to describe the (not always positive) behaviours, attitudes and front-line practices implemented by public sector workers. These provided a service with some state influence and control and with varying degrees of authority, had some power and discretion in their encounters with clients. Their decisions could influence the lives of their clients (*ibid,* 9). Despite welfare delivered through private and third sector organisations, policy decisions remain centralised in Westminster. This can be problematic for front-line workers, who socially interact with clients and are moral agents (Wright, 2012). Delivering welfare policy has been described as challenging for some, considering government's welfare reforms. For example, within the Coalition's flagship welfare to work

'Work Programme', advisers had trouble enforcing conditionality and sanctions upon claimants (Rees, 2013). More recent managerialist agendas have left front-line workers experiencing difficulties where their sense of justice and public sector ethos has been challenged, leaving them struggling with ethical dilemmas (Lipsky, 2010; Marston, 2013; Wright, 2013; Hoggett *et al* 2006). Wright (2013, 832) discussed how benefit reforms have increased pressure on street level interactions (Lipsky, 2010), and that front-line staff, such as employment advisors have been under pressure to deliver results, although with little autonomy. She noted that anti-welfare myths were so popularised, that they were likely to be shared by front-line workers. The 'de-moralisation' of welfare, as exemplified by so called generations of dependency for example, may find its way to influence how front-line workers implement policy, and as such, result in discriminating against certain 'types'. Her previous (PhD) research (Wright, 2012) did find that front-line workers (Jobcentre Staff) categorised their clients as 'good' or 'bad', for example, 'wasters' who refused to work, and 'unemployables' who could not work. Subsequently, they implemented policy, that is, different 'levels of service', according to these judgements *(Ibid,* 251)*.* However, other more recent research found that front-line workers perceived that welfare recipients were in fact unlikely to play the system, and that the media had over-exaggerated this belief, and described their claimants as vulnerable (Fletcher *et al*, 2016).

Finding and reviewing literature

I located many articles and other resources relevant to the research by using database searches (Web of Science, ProQuest, JSTOR and Google Scholar) using the Bangor University E-resources. I decided to start broadly, by using the key words 'work' and 'welfare', and 'policy and discourse', and then filtering to peer reviewed journal articles by title. Additionally, I used citation searching, finding articles that had cited these original articles, and to the references within articles. Social media, in particular Twitter, was useful as a source of other academics shared relevant, and often more current journal articles, as well as an array of recommended books. Furthermore, I searched grey literature, newspaper articles and government websites for copies of policy documents, as well as relevant political speeches. This literature review was a continuous process throughout to check for new, updated research and literature on welfare, and work.

In addition to above, I read the seminal research of Shildrick *et al* (2012) 'Poverty and Insecurity', which traced lives of individuals in low pay and no pay, in Britain. This proved a

useful background to inform the research questions and debate. Additionally, Standing's understanding of the 'The Precariat' (2014) was an informative text for the research questions early on. I read the work of Foucault, and found it helpful to draw on others' interpretations of his work to illuminate and give clarity to the theoretical discussions. In particular, 'The Will to Empower' (Cruikshank, 1999) was useful in examining 'technologies of citizenship' in relation to welfare policy, practice, and discourses in the US. Again from the US, Nancy Fraser and Linda Gordon's 'Genealogy of Dependency' (1994) was an informative starting point in exploring the history of the discourse of dependency. For other theoretical discussions of neoliberalism, I drew on the work of Wendy Brown who also considered a Foucauldian perspective in her work, 'Undoing the Demos' (2015).

Conceptual framework

As noted, the work of Michel Foucault provides several concepts that inform the conceptual framework for this thesis and the research questions it seeks to answer. In particular, the two ideas of governmentality and discourse are paramount. This section discusses the relevance of Foucault's work, alongside the ideas of other theorists.

At this point, it is worth mentioning that Foucault himself did not offer any one way of theorising and no specific instructions. Rather, he offered a 'toolbox' for those that wished to use his work. As he stated, "*All my books…are if you like, little tool boxes. If people want to open them, to use this sentence or that idea as a screwdriver or spanner to short-circuit, discredit or smash systems of power, including eventually those from which my books have emerged…so much the better*" (Foucault, 1975, cited in Patton, 1979). This is the view taken here, that using some of his concepts helps explore the research questions, findings and informs the following discussions.

Miller and Rose (2011), influenced by Foucault's work on governmentality, discuss the understanding that problems are identified and framed within a common, formalised language. This is so that they can be understood and subsequently made '*amenable for intervention'* (*ibid*, 14). Governments depend on modes of representations and formalised knowledge to depict the problem, and here Foucault's relevance is clear, as he sought to remove 'self-evidence' from the problem (Miller and Rose, 2011, 14). As he stated:

"To show that things weren't as necessary as all that; it wasn't a matter of course that mad people came to be regarded as mentally ill; it wasn't self evident that the only thing to be done with a criminal was to lock him up; it wasn't self evident that the causes of illnesses were to be sought through the individual examination of bodies; and so on. A breach of self-evidences on which our knowledges, acquiescences and practices rest: this is the first theoretic-political function of "eventalization" [...] rediscovering the connections, encounters, supports, blockages, plays of forces, strategies, and so on, that at a given moment establish what subsequently counts as being self-evident, universal and necessary" (Foucault 1994a, 226).

The shape of this research follows this understanding of Foucault and underpins chapters. As presented in Chapter One, problems are not pre-given, and there needs to be agreement for there to be interventions. Government re-presents and intervenes, as it has done for unemployment and the unemployed, as a population. Chapter Two explores how work and welfare have been conceptualised, and uncovers some rationalities and knowledges that have informed policy on work and welfare. Chapter Three focusses on the question of how work and welfare were conceptualised through dominant, elite discourses of the Conservative led Coalition Government, in power during the time of the empirical research (2013-5). Primarily recognising that language does not describe a reality but '*inscribes it*' (Miller and Rose, 2011, 33), this identifies the apparent 'self-evidences' mobilised to unite the audience. In Chapters Five and Six respectively, front-line workers' and young peoples' perceptions and the lived experiences are investigated to explore the common senses and practices that may shape and normalise, to achieve objectives of government (Miller and Rose, 2011, 32).

The research follows the understanding of governing from a distance and that there is power behind, and mobilised within, discourse, for example through language. (Fairclough, 2001a, 33). Language is a form of social practice, and in particular, political language has a 'performative dimension' that 'creates' whilst appearing to only describe (Hoggett *et al*, 2013, 582-3). Foucault recognised that knowledge and power were linked, and that the ways of knowing about phenomena underpinned how they were understood, (as if common sense) and subsequently discussed and dealt with through policy and practice. This is important because when knowledge (as truth) becomes a public common sense it can become normalised within thought and practice, and this goes some way to exclude other perspectives. To illustrate this, in 'Discipline and Punish', Foucault (1991 {1977}) wished to uncover the '*system of thought and form of rationality*' that supported the view that prison was the most effective and accepted way of punishing. The prison was privileged as being a corrective against criminality, and affirmed issues of the psychological aspects of the

criminal (Foucault, 1994b, 387). This was the accepted rationality, as were the knowledges underpinning these, but at the same time, other knowledges were cast aside.

Foucault developed the concept of 'Governmentality' in later lectures, presented at the college of France in the late 1970s, where he explored how practices (of knowledge) reproduced power (Foucault, 2008). He noted that, rather than needing to preserve the sovereign in liberal societies (including through force), the focus was to manage and preserve the population identifying which groups to manage and the techniques used to manage them. This was on the one hand, for their own wellbeing, but also for 'productive' purposes. Governmentality, rather than domination, presupposed the individual's freedom to act, and so governing was achieved through authorities, practices, as well as through government of the self. This raised questions of how governing occurs, such as the established practices, regimes and the rationalities that underpinned these regimes. This involved for Foucault, a critical analysis of past and present, of the discourses and programmes or strategies that had attempted to shape a population, according to a political rationality: in short, how people were governed, and how they governed themselves. Foucault described where the population became governable, following on from previous feudal and sovereign systems of rule,

"*The population now represents more the end of government than the power of the sovereign; the population is the subject of needs, of aspirations, but it is also the object in the hands of the government, aware, vis-à-vis the government, of what it wants, but ignorant of what is being done to it. Interest at the level of the consciousness of each individual who goes to make up the population, and interest considered as the interest of the population regardless of what the particular interests and aspirations may be of the individuals who compose it: this is the new target and the fundamental instrument of the government of population: the birth of a new art, or at any rate of a range of absolutely new tactics and techniques* " (Foucault, 1994c, 217).

Policy and programmes

We can see from the above, that policies and programmes organise groups and individuals, and regulate their conduct to meet the specific deliberate objectives of government (McKee, 7, 2009). Foucault stated that, at a collective level, this was to manage the population "*in its depths and its details.*" (Foucault 1994c, 219). To illuminate this, according to Foucault, the health service was an intervention at the collective level of the nation. In recording disease and vaccination it was, he noted, a continuation of poor law as it signified obligatory medicalisation, contributing to the control of the so-called needy classes: it made the poor fit for labour, and a less dangerous threat to the wealthy (Foucault, 1994d, 154).

Marxist theorists have similarly evaluated welfare policies as being concessionary, with the ambit to secure capitalist profitability '*state supported capitalism*' by reconciling demands of the organised working classes and militant labour movements (Mizen, 2004, 16). Marx described the need to maintain the unemployed in a state of health and job readiness to serve the interests of capital. A reserve army of labour, with irregular employment as an '*inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour power producing a surplus of profit makes them disposable [...] a mass of material always ready for exploitation*' (Marx 2013, 58 {1865}).

Fairclough (2000a, 52), who has drawn on Foucault and Marx in his work, claimed that governments' aims have been to produce '*docile bodies*' to meet the '*modern demands of economic production*'. The docile body produced by techniques of discipline and surveillance has an increased economic use, (Foucault, 1991 {1977}, 138). This is pertinent, because as is discussed in Chapter Two, work and welfare have been conceived and problematized according to economic and ideological shifts throughout history, and the unemployed, especially young people, have acquired statuses of 'truth' that have informed policy 'solutions'.

The role of discourse

As discussed, policies appear to offer solutions to problems, based on certain knowledges for technologies of government, interventions that govern (including policy and practice) to be legitimately placed (Lemke, 2001, 191; McKee, 2009; Gordon, 1994), unless they are challenged by another political rationality (Brown, 2015, 121).

Discourse here, and from the work of Foucault, is understood as the ways areas of knowledge are structured. For example, changes in the use of language reflect wider societal and cultural changes (Fairclough, 2000, 3). Discourses represent aspects of the world; they constitute knowledge and, as such, are effects and instruments of power. Power is achieved through discourse, accepted knowledge and the reality that we are presented with (Foucault 1991a). Fairclough (2000, 11) explains that discourse structures knowledge so that '*Changing discourse (practices) contribute to the change in knowledge (including beliefs and common sense)*'. Discourses are frameworks of meaning and, as a mode of political practice and thought, sustains the site of power struggle, but is also a stake within the power struggle: "*Discursive practice draws upon conventions which naturalize particular power relations and ideologies, and these conventions themselves, and the ways in which they are articulated are a focus of struggle.*" (Fairclough, 2000, 67).

Systems of power produce, sustain, and induce regimes of truth. That is what is acceptable, and understood as common sense. Political problems then can be viewed through this prism of apparent truth. For Foucault, the concern was not to find the truth, (it was governing in power already), nor was it to change peoples' consciousness, but his aim was to detach and change regimes of truth, to destabilise and denaturalise the '*political, economic and institutional regimes of the production of truths'* (Foucault, 1994e, 131). Because power is dispersed through discourse, policy and practice, contradictions and contestations within the 'dominant hegemonic ideologies' (articulations of Governmentality) can give scope to other ways of thinking, that have otherwise been ruled out and restricted (Larner, 2000; Lemke, 2001, 191).

Problems are not based on a neutral knowledge, but are 're-presentations' reflecting political rationalities and priorities, and are historically (and spatially) contingent. As noted, political rationalities operate through and within discourses and practices that induce the effects of power, but also importantly, individuals articulate discourses through their own actions and attitudes (Foucault, 1980a, 39). This is relevant to this research, because governing occurs not only through government policy and practices, but also within the public sphere, through individuals' behaviours, and norms of social life (Hajer, 2006, 70). Political power is held not only within government but also within people's consciousness (Hall 1997, 55; Muncie 2008, 242).

Government can manage people's actions through techniques and processes, such as policy, but individuals manage their behaviours too, as 'techniques of the self'. This is the 'conduct of conduct', where people do the work of government and govern themselves according to appropriate norms (as well as through institutions and programmes). As Fraser and Gordon (1994, 310) state: '*The terms that are used to describe social life are also active in shaping it'* and become normalised contributing to self-governance as the individual carries discourse, and constitutes the effects produced of discourse.

Individuals are represented and judged according to assumptions, which also structure discourses; what everyone 'knows'. For example, Cruikshank (1999) illustrated how women were assumed to collect payments through fraud, and 'abuse' welfare. This fed into the discourse of the 'welfare queen'. Introduced by then president Ronald Reagan in the 1980s, the 'Welfare Queen' served as an '*ideological and strategic scapegoat'* and directed

conversations on poverty, legitimising the design of welfare policies according to those who were seemingly deserving of welfare (*ibid*, 110). However, the pervasiveness of this discourse led to the 'Welfare Queen' being perceived as real, and policy solutions were to mobilise women to participate in programmes and become 'empowered' to represent themselves and develop self-esteem, assuming they had none. Similarly, in the UK, Tyler (2013, 162) has referred to a 'culturalization' of poverty and disadvantage, a framework which enabled the legitimization of the 'punishment' of the poor, as poverty was viewed to be the fault of the individual, whilst promoting meritocracy, success through merit and individual effort. Anyone can achieve if they try hard enough. The problem, of course, is that individualising disadvantage obscures the need for wider structural discussions. To valorise work, and the work ethic within policy, discourse and discussion renders the nature of work unchallenged, but defends against the so-called 'scrounger'. It also follows the need to argue for fewer barriers to work. As Valentine and Harris, (2014, 87) demonstrated in their research, individuals (from a range of socio-economic backgrounds), did indeed associate others poverty and disadvantage, as caused by personal failings.

Although the focus here is on Foucault, it is worth noting sources of his position, such as Gramsci and Althusser who drew on similar concepts to the conduct of conduct. Gramsci used the term hegemony to understand the power and dominance of one economic class over others, achieved through coercion and consent, a precarious and unstable state, with struggles for the reproduction of social relations over others (Simon, 1985, 21-28). Similarly, the replacement of violent coercion by nonviolent coercion in regulating bodies was recognised by Althusser (1971), as the (exploited) worker learned to submit themselves to the elite: managers learned to convey rules as auxiliaries or manipulators, and exploiters learned to be one of the elite class. However, the individual had to be 'constituted' and steeped in ideology, '*appellated to see themselves as the subject*', to be successfully exploited by the capitalist class, and to reproduce the conditions of production (*ibid* 169), so that they carried out their tasks conscientiously: '*there is no subject except by and for their subjection*' (Althusser, 1971, 169). Bourdieu wrote of 'Doxa', the common sense, taken for granted that left alternative and contesting discourses undiscussed.

'*The instruments of knowledge of the social world are in this case (objectively) political instruments which contribute to the reproduction of the social world by producing immediate adherence to the world, seen as self-evident and undisputed, of which they are the product and of which they reproduce the structures in a transformed form.*' (Bourdieu, 2011, 164).

The construction of a reality is imposed, and the more stable the 'objective structures' the greater the field of doxa and the more the taken-for-granted would be reproduced by individuals appearing self-evident and natural (Bourdieu, 2011, 166).

Foucault understood that power was not negative; it did not force the individual to go against their wishes, as individuals conducted themselves according to what was normal and acceptable; through disciplinary power, and discursive practices that are always changing. As he stated,

"*We must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms: it 'excludes', it 'represses', it 'censors', it 'abstracts', it 'masks', it 'conceals'. In fact power produces; it produces reality; it produces domains of objects and rituals of truth. The individual and the knowledge that may be gained of him belong to this production*" (Foucault, 1991, 194 {1977}).

However, it is important in these discussions to recognise that individuals are not helpless, nor powerless victims of an overbearing, dominant discourse, but can negotiate their own positions and relations to these discourses. In short, people are not cultural dopes, they have agency that can appear to be lacking in Foucauldian thought. Judith Butler (1997) goes beyond Foucault in her questions about power, and discusses subjection; the process of becoming a subject, and becoming subordinated by power. Power works, not only discursively but also reflexively, through the individual. Power is uneventful, as if invisible (banal) and constructs objects of knowledge.

Outline of Thesis

As described, this research set out to explore experiences and perceptions of work and welfare from young people and front-line workers in employment support and mentoring roles. Additionally, I wished to trace shifts and continuities of work, welfare, and rationalities before identifying the dominant discourses of welfare and work. Therefore, presented below is the structure of the thesis, with reference to the research objectives.

Chapter Two documents some broad historical changes in work and welfare, discourse and policy, to illustrate shifts and continuities. The particular focus of this chapter is from the time of the Thatcher Government (1979), with neoliberalism underpinning work and welfare policies, until the 2010-2015 Conservative led Coalition Government. Neoliberalism,

discussed later, can be understood as a political discourse and rationality that facilitates governing individuals from a distance: '*a form of reason that configures everything into economic terms*' (Brown, 2015, 21; 117). Exploring historical legacies, the economic and social contexts that shaped the knowledge of work and welfare, serves as an analysis of what made certain practices acceptable at a time: what was said, done, and the rules and reasons where '*the taken-for-granted meet and interconnect*' (Foucault 1994c, 225). Historical events and conventions govern how an issue has been understood: what has been excluded and repressed and how economic requirements have organised the '*experience of a truth*' (Foucault, 1994f, 255).

Chapter Three uses critical discourse analysis, which is traditionally associated with Governmentality approaches, to highlight the ambitions of government. Previous research is explored, looking at discursive strategies of the Conservative led Liberal Democrat Coalition Government, and is followed by an analysis of four political speeches made by Conservative ministers, 2012-2015, during a time of welfare reform. This chapter explores the discursive frames employed to legitimise their welfare reforms and their common sense understandings of work and welfare.

Chapter Four describes the empirical research and analysis, and presents an outline of narrative interviews, as well as epistemological concerns. As indicated previously in this chapter, power does not always achieve its effects, and individuals are not solely constituents of discourse (McKee 2009, 14). This chapter also discusses the research design and process, including ethical considerations, reflections on participant recruitment, interviews and methods of data analysis. This chapter additionally outlines short profiles of the research participants. These were young people who were in precarious work or unemployed and front-line workers working in employment mentoring and support practices. This sets the scene for the presentation of empirical findings.

Chapter Five presents the findings from the front-line workers narratives, and offers insights into their roles, experiences and discourses. The following key themes within this chapter are presented with related subthemes (in brackets): 'Processing 'numbers' ('The Norm of Precarious Work'), 'Maintaining the Paper Trail' ('Managing Processes: Financial', 'Managing Processes: Anxiety', 'The Regime of Signing On'), 'The Deserving…and the Undeserving', 'Confidence Through Work' (Schemes) ('Employer is King'), 'Moulding the Docile Body' ('Sanctions').

Chapter Six presents the key findings from the narrative interviews with young people, and presents important understandings into how work and welfare was experienced and understood both by young people, as a 'litmus paper' of social conditions. This chapter is structured around key themes, and related subthemes (in brackets) under the headings 'Transitions from school' ('On the Making Table', University Norms: square pegs, round holes) 'Precarious Work' ('Competition', 'Self-employment') and 'In Work Being Out of Work', ('Maintaining the employable self', 'Financial Costs', 'Treading Water: navigating the benefits system', 'Benefit sanctions', 'You know the type': deserving and undeserving', 'Being judged' and 'workschemes').

Chapter Seven conveys the discussion of the findings from the previous chapters, in particular the findings from the front-line workers and the young people interviewed for this research. This chapter explores the shared key themes pertaining to both the young people and frontline workers, and relates these findings to the wider literature and theoretical discussion.

Chapter Eight is the concluding chapter. This chapter summarises the research and considers its limitations. Here, the need for a new discourse as well as evidence of other approaches in conceptualising work and welfare are discussed, alongside policy implications and suggestions directed towards future research.

Finally, the appendices and a complete reference list are found at the end of the thesis.

Chapter Two: Historical legacies and rationalities.

Introduction

This chapter documents broad historical developments in work and welfare policy and discourse, with a specific focus on the late 1970s, in the United Kingdom. As will become clear, this time saw the rise of neoliberalism under the Thatcher government from 1979. It is beyond the scope of this chapter to track all historical details; therefore, the developments presented are those that I perceive to be significant in the context of the research. The aim of this chapter was to delve into the historic shifts of work and welfare policy, to investigate the transformation from a collective provision logic of welfare to residual provision and the implications for young people, especially those leaving school.

This chapter is an important backbone to the thesis because political ambitions change, therefore the policies; programmes, strategies and techniques that have governed specific populations with specific ends are 'social artefacts' (McKee 2009, 5). Policies can be read as a response to a (historically contingent) problem, such as unemployment, and purport to be a truth, as if constructed from objective knowledge. They therefore naturalise the 'subject' of policy (the unemployed) when in fact these have arisen from the '*interplay of larger social forces*' (Waganeer, 2011, 5). New 'truths' emerge as ways of thinking; these give rise to new discourses, social practices and discursive formations (Hall, 1997).

Looking to the past can destabilise such naturalised, common sense understandings. For example, Fraser and Gordon (1994) presented a genealogy of 'dependency' excavating assumptions and connotations of this term throughout US history, to critique the present common sense understandings. The authors acknowledge that dependency has been an ideological term, evoking beliefs of 'the poor' as having moral and psychological conditions (failings) which in turn carries powerful images recognised through stereotypes. As discussed below, there have been shifts and continuities in policy organising for the problem of 'the unemployed'. There have always existed notions of deserving and undeserving, and although 'work' has been politically and culturally central to society, it is only relatively recently that the work centred society has become naturalised as if inevitable (Frayne, 2015, 29).

In Chapter One, concepts from Foucault's work were introduced, and these are relevant to this chapter. Foucault described governmentality as a type of power that existed through apparatuses and forms of knowledge. This was as he stated,

"The ensemble formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principle form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security." (Foucault 1994c, 219).

Additionally Dean (2013, 18) described shifts in aims and priorities of government, recognising that different rationales (and knowledges), underpin the techniques used to govern populations: through knowledge taken up by 'agencies' and the individual for specific, albeit unpredictable, ends.

"Government is any more or less calculated and rational activity, undertaken by a multiplicity of authorities and agencies, employing a variety of techniques and forms of knowledge that seeks to shape conduct by working through desires, aspirations, interests and beliefs of various actors, for definite but shifting ends and with a diverse set of relatively unpredictable consequences, effects and outcomes." (Dean, 2013, 18)

Therefore, the following section traces the management of labour and the unemployed, to outline the changes that have occurred, and provide a broad genealogy of work and welfare and the structural, political and social changes. At its core, this involves a historical analysis of the structural, political and social changes, as well as of young people leaving school, policy and experiences. The chapter ends with an outline and discussion of welfare policy developments from the 2010-2015 Conservative led Coalition Government.

Early interventions: Poor Law to Second World War

One of the earliest of forms of legislation (in England) relating to labour was The Statute of Cambridge, also referred to as the first Poor Law Act of 1388, introduced to prevent labourers from being mobile and subsequently, prevent them from demanding higher wages. The parish were authorised to collect money from the community to support the community poor, thereby establishing formal categories of *worthy* and *unworthy*. The subsequent 1601 Poor Law Act defined deserving and undeserving categories. The deserving were the aged, chronically sick and blind, deemed as worthy, entitled to assistance. By contrast, the undeserving were those who refused to work, and who entered a 'house of correction' as a punishment (Fraser, 1984, 33). Yet, despite giving only minimal relief, the Poor Law was perceived as *causing* dependency and preventing individuals from helping themselves, and inducing an incentive for recipients to have more children: in short, people were paupers

because it served their own interests. In the early 19th century, poor relief was reduced and a work test introduced, based on the questionable evidence that the allowance system demoralised people, depressed wages, and invited idleness and dependence. The new Poor Law (1834) used the workhouse to supply relief, and the principle of less eligibility; the conditions in the workhouse were worse than the conditions outside. The symbolic message propagated was that the pauper should receive less than the labourer. This law was more to compel the individual to serve industry rather than reduce poverty. In the 1820s, local reformers, including George Nicholls, later an influential member of the Poor Law commission was a protagonist of the deterrent of stigma, and the 'dread' of the workhouse, which he thought accounted for the successful reduction of poor rates. "*I wish to see the Poor House looked to with dread by our labouring classes, and the reproach for being an inmate of it extend downwards from father to son…for without this, where is the need for stimulus to industry?*" (Quoted in Fraser, 1984, 41). The Royal Commission subsequently adopted these reforms in 1832.

With the onset of industrialisation in the UK, there was an increased demand for labour, and rates of pauperism declined. As outlined by Fraser and Gordon (1994), because work was assumed to be available, then the Poor Law was regarded as being for the workshy. This contributed to the stigma associated with being out of work. With waged labour becoming the norm, and leading to financial independence, those without wage labour personified dependency. Receiving poor relief was associated with moral/psychological traits alongside the emerging (Darwinian) hereditary/eugenic knowledges, and a man's will was 'sapped' through reliance on charity. Fraser and Gordon note in their genealogy of dependency, (1994, 316) that these discourses of independence through employment were both 'illusionary and ideological' as dependence on labour was required to sustain capitalism, but concealed the reality that only few working-class men were able to earn enough money to be economically independent and thereby support their family (*ibid*, 319). The realities of work were poor conditions, temporary, often insecure, employment, as trade fluctuated. Workers, bound by the clock, received pay for their working hours, and labour was, for the first time, co-ordinated through practices of surveillance of punctuality (Frayne 2015, 28).

In the Victorian era, poverty became presented as a problem that arose because of individual misfortune or laziness, legitimising the stigma of the poor law and the belief that improving one's circumstances should be through self-enterprise and hard work, (rather than the state), assisted by the family and voluntary charities (Thane, 1996, 14). Middle class values of self-

help, combined with the popular ideas of Darwin, pervaded the attitudes and practices of the middle classes. The fittest would reach their potential, and paupers would pick themselves up, find work and gain independence, albeit with some short-term discomfort. These middle class values reflected in the collective efforts such as friendly societies, represented an amelioration of poverty, rather than 'revolutionary social policy' (Fraser, 1984, 108).

Several political developments in the 1880s brought concessions to working people: the socialist league, Fabian Society and Trades Union Congress (TUC) all enjoyed increasing membership, and the Labour Party was established by Keir Hardie (1893), one of many MPs with roots in the mining towns, and socialism. Organised labour began to influence policy, and as it did, a new concept of citizenship developed alongside such working class 'victories' (Fraser, 1984, 153). This further entrenched the perception of dependency on waged labour, as independence (Fraser and Gordon, 1994, 315). Labour and discipline was valorised, work was virtuous; it embodied puritan values of morality (Frayne, 2015, 25). According to Weeks (2011, 42-7), in addition to the disciplines that tied people to labour - penalties, surveillance and clock punctuality, workers submitted themselves 'irrationally' to these 'norms' of work and the work ethic, governing themselves according to the puritanical 'moral fortification' of work. It was at this time that Weber asserted that a protestant work ethic, encapsulating the 'morality' of work, enabled economic exploitation within capitalism (Weber, 1905).

By 1921, the "Seeking Work Test" came into place, based on a presumed system of abuse, and that increasing benefits and making them more accessible would exploit 'tax payer'. Therefore, claimants had to prove that they were seeking work, a policy that reduced claims by three million (Fraser, 1984, 188). The test was heavily criticised by the collective National Unemployed Workers Movement (NUWM), (see figure 1) because it signified an intrusive state disciplinary technique).[2] With persistent unemployment in the late 1920s, the economist and social reformer, William Beveridge stated that unemployment was a disease to be eradicated (Fraser, 1984, 189). This was reflected in the 1929 Liberal's election manifesto: "We can conquer unemployment" (figure 2), advertising their policy to generate employment through national development schemes, such as road and house construction, thus also saving

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[2] The NUWM, set up in 1921, by some members of the Communist party, campaigned for better support for the unemployed, and helped to support employment claims. In 1932, one of their national marches received public attention, when it converged in London. The government condemned them as a threat, some were imprisoned, and others injured following police confrontations (Working Class Movement Library WCML n.d.)

on benefit expenditure. When Labour came to power, they did reverse the genuinely seeking work clause in 1930, making benefits easier to claim (Fraser, 1984, 191). However, by the time of the 1931 currency crisis and budgetary deficit, the unemployed once again became the focus for savings. The Government introduced a 10% cut in benefits and a means test to qualify for benefits, carried out via the Public Assistance Committees (PACs). This test signified an *individualised* disciplinary relationship between the state and the claimant, and was resented, regarded as intrusive by those subject to it, and disallowing many from receiving benefits.
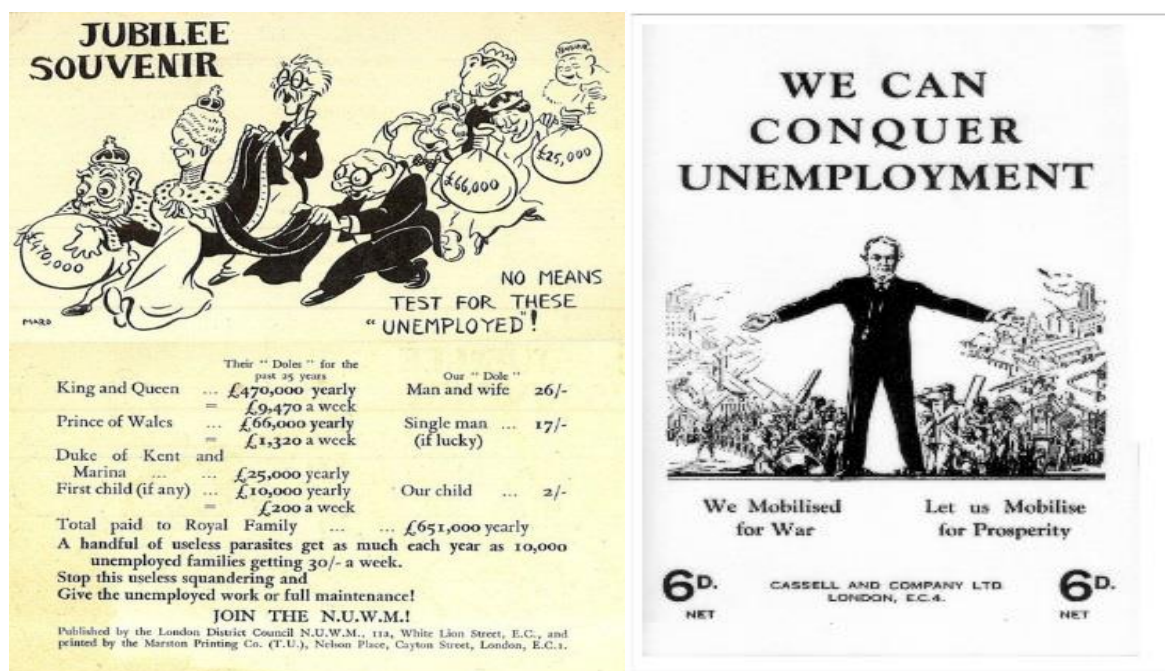
Figure 1. (left) National Unemployed Workers' Movement (NUWM) leaflet from libcom.org (n.d.). Figure 2. (right) 'We can conquer unemployment policy' document from: Liberal Democrat Voice (2014).

Following social investigations into poverty and industrial advance, unemployment and poverty began to be associated with economic fluctuations of the market economy, rather than with individual idleness. Charles Booth, in his survey of poverty 'Inquiry into Life and Labour in London' (1886 – 1903) concluded that only the deserving (too old, or disabled to work, or living in an areas of insufficient jobs) should receive state support. The undeserving, on the other hand, needed punitive treatment. Booth proposed that the elderly and incapacitated be removed from the labour market so that there would be a more efficient industrial and economic performance. Casual labour was expensive for the economy, unreliable and efficient, and perceived as encouraging idleness amongst casual labourers

('casuals') who could not find regular work, and were often incapacitated or demoralised (Thane, 1996, Whiteside, 2017). Regular employment, and alongside this the standard work contract, was encouraged as casualization was regarded as a threat to the economy and future prosperity, linked to poverty, irregular work habits, and the potential to cause economic and social degeneration. This early welfare state introduced pensions, (preventing elderly labour being forced to work) with the publicly supported old age pensions bill in 1908, paid through the post office to separate it from stigma of the Poor Law. Government policy attempted to prevent individuals from resisting full time work; including the Labour Exchange denying employment to any seeking part time work, and the 1911 National Insurance Act that meant that employers who used casual labour would be subject to higher tax (Frayne, 2015, 28). The unemployment benefit claimants could be sanctioned for up to six weeks for not being available for work, leaving their job through 'misconduct' or leaving work voluntarily (Adler, 2016). Previously, employment was commonly found through rumours and the factory gate. However, this benefit administration was coercive discipline; it defined and divided the unemployed into the deserving 'genuine working man' and undeserving, 'mere loafer', reflected in a statement by Churchill, at the time. *"I am quite sure that those who know the sort of humiliation to which the genuine working man is subject, by being very often indistinguishable from one of the class of mere loafers and vagrants, will recognise as of great importance any steps which can sharply and irretrievably divide the two classes in our society."* (cited in King, 1995, 23).

The Labour Exchange was a space that afforded the 'deserving' men some dignity (women had already undertaken their 'natural' work in the home). They constituted a 'waiting space', and confirmed the identity of the job seeker, publicly positioning them as workers in waiting, accorded with a higher status than the jobless pauper who was associated with the stigma of Poor Law (Cole 2007). There were collective demands for employment at this time, that led to marches, such as those mobilised by the National Unemployed Workers Union Movement (see figure 1.) The largest, in 1932, was condemned by the Government, because any suffering in or out of work was to be endured for the good of the nation (Fraser 1984, 196). In addition, during the 1930s, amidst the dearth of employment, British Labour camps operated to separate the unemployed 'residuum' from the respectable working class and remove the 'unemployable' from the labour market (Fletcher, 2015). The Ministry of Labour established centres for young unemployed men who were perceived to have lost skills and become 'soft' through unemployment. These camps were associated with stigma, and as damaging to a

young person's employment prospects, and so were to be avoided. Furthermore, the unemployed did not embrace them, because there was no regular employment afterwards. Fletcher (2015, 335), cites the story of a man who refused the offer of selling ice cream from a wheelbarrow in London, with the option of joining the army more favourable: '*Hell, I've just come back from Brechfa [a labour camp] man, I wants a decent job in Swansea near. He told me dole was stopped and he pointed his finger at me and he said, ''Join the bloody army'' . . . There wasn't much I could do, and I thought that the army couldn't be much worse than Brechfa so I went to join up*'.

The 1934 Unemployment Act had made attendance at these work camps compulsory with benefits withdrawn for non-compliance, albeit through the discretion of the unemployment officers, who volunteered men. Similarly, leaving the camps resulted in a benefit 'sanction'. The camps purpose was of training, to enforce work-like discipline and 'maintain morale' for those regarded as living at the expense of the public was ensured by giving the men tasks, such as clearing forests, digging trenches, and breaking stones to keep them in good working condition. In reality, it was not the schemes that returned the men to work, but the economy, as many found jobs following the economic upturn, at the start of the Second World War in 1939, with the armed services and in war production (Thane, 1996, 173).

From World War Two: A Golden age?

World War Two exposed poverty, children were evacuated and rationing was a universal policy, providing a subsistence provision no longer only for the stigmatised poor. Contributory insurance remained, mobilised by assumptions that people did not want charity, money for nothing but wanted to contribute to society, as their right: "*the capacity and the desire of British people to contribute to society are among the most impressive social facts of today*" ('Social Insurance and Allied Services' in Lowe, 1993, 127). The Beveridge Report (1942) introduced a means tested safety net. This was, in many ways, the first inception of social security, namely to tackle the 'five giants': want, disease, ignorance, squalor, and idleness (in Lowe, 1993, 126). This too came with the explicit proviso that it should not deter the individual from providing for himself:

 "*The third principle is that social security must be achieved by co-operation between the State and the individual. The State should offer security for service and contribution. The State in organising security should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility, in*

establishing a national minimum it should leave room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual to provide more than that minimum for himself and his family" (Beveridge, 1942, 9).

As detailed above, there was always the taken-for-granted assumption that welfare would be abused, taken as a right without responsibility. The development of social security, following the Beveridge report, was not without criticism, with assumptions that it would disincentivise and prevent individuals from entrepreneurial risk-taking and discourage hard work. Beveridge refuted such criticisms, indicating that the welfare state enabled a more productive workforce, with better mental and physical health, to maintain and maximise conditions. Being part of the work force implied individual independence and personal responsibility (Lowe, 1993, 130). Despite criticisms and ideological differences, all three main political parties supported the post war welfare state. This was alongside the understanding that the government should meet their responsibility to provide full employment (Lowe, 1993, 100). It signified a collective contract: a fair distribution of wealth and the opportunity for everyone to contribute – collectively supported aspirations (Hall and O'Shea, 2013, 14).

Despite the apparent safety net of social security welfare, Townsend and Abel Smith in the 1960s identified the working poor and poverty, as well as individuals deterred from claiming means tested benefits because of the associated stigma (Hill, 1990, 38; Lowe, 1993, 145). The government publicised the range of benefits, renamed national assistance as supplementary benefit, and simplified applications to combat welfare stigma and encourage uptake (Lowe, 1993, 145). By 1975, there were forty-five major means tested benefits. However, this led to large administrative costs, and affected front-line service provision, as staff lacked the knowledge of policy implementation and some discouraged people from making claims to reduce their workload (*ibid*, 148). Nonetheless, beliefs persisted that welfare dis-incentivised individuals, was too expensive and reduced capitalist investments in jobs (Greer, 2016). In response, in 1971, a three-day waiting period for benefits was re-introduced and claimants could be disqualified if they could not prove that they were genuinely seeking work. Jobcentres run by Manpower Services Commission were to be an active force in the labour market from 1973, based in the high street to ameliorate the stigma (of employment offices), symbolising a normalisation of rehabilitation of unemployment, and the unemployed (Cole 2007, 137).

By 1976, rather than a commitment to full employment, inflation dominated policy. The New Right began to target state bureaucracy and Keynesian 'demand management' with solutions

of control of money supply (monetarism), state retrenchment and market discipline, particularly associated with the establishment of The Centre for Policy Studies in 1974, by Keith Joseph, who went on to become the Secretary of State for Social Services. Once again, with assumed dependence on welfare at the expense of society, in a similar vein to the poor law reformers of the 1930, social security was to maintain the work ethic, and social policy orientated towards helping re-moralise society. New right discourses challenged Beveridge's right to adequate benefit and redistribution, in particular for the low paid and women (Lowe, 1993, 303-313). This was encapsulated by Keith Joseph, who stated that: "*The only lasting help we can give to the poor is helping them to help themselves; to do the opposite, to create more dependence, is to destroy them morally, whilst throwing an unfair burden on society*" (quoted in Lowe, 2003, 303). This was a paternalist discourse: welfare was morally wrong – it led to dependence, it 'destroyed' people and 'society' had to bear the costs. The state's role conceived increasingly to compel or coerce the poor to help themselves.

Alongside the public sector strikes and 'winter of discontent' under Labour in 1978-9, the Conservatives ran an electoral campaign (see figure 3). This featured a queue of 'normal people' at the Jobcentre, and reflected Conservative support for full employment. However, following this campaign, the Conservative Government elected under Margaret Thatcher made no urgency to reduce unemployment. Indeed, securing electoral success was no longer dependent on the eradication of unemployment - and consequently discourses of work and welfare policy shifted considerably (Lowe 1993, 308). Monetarist economic policy was in place to control inflation, but it did so by allowing the growth of unemployment.

Figure 3. Conservative Party election campaign poster by Saatchi and Saatchi from 1979 (The Telegraph n.d.)

1980s and Neoliberalism

Neoliberalism began to supersede the hegemonic status of Keynesian economics and collective welfare provision from the late 1970s. Before briefly outlining neoliberalism, it is pertinent to add that its origins can be traced much earlier. In the 1930s in Germany and Austria, Ordoliberalism was to promote the role of the state to facilitate competition and protect moral values, as a reaction to fascism and Nazism. The Chicago School of Economics in the 1950s, developed theories of human capital as a reaction to New Deal Keynesianism (Brown 2015, 60) and, later on, neoliberalism was an experiment imposed on Chile by Pinochet after the overthrow of Allende (see Harvey, 2007).

Neoliberalism is theoretically complex, and as Peck describes, '*increasingly promiscuous in application*' (Peck, 2013, 133). It is commonly associated with promoting individualism and as a form of political economic governance, has at its basis the extension of the markets with inherent competition, choice, efficiency, deregulation, and privatisation (Larner, 2000). In the 1980s, these were translated into 'economic techniques': transferring public utilities to the private sector, outsourcing, underpinned by incentivisation, competition and entrepreneurialism (Brown, 2015, 124). Its character was to reduce the role of the state, strengthen free market operations and stimulate the individual's independence and self-reliance (Hill, 1990, 55). As discussed further, duties to demonstrate work searches, or take any available work replaced any welfare rights (Deeming, 2014, 2). This was mobilised by the concept of fairness to the taxpayer, and validated by common sense appeals to break up the post war consensus and substitute market approaches: personal effort over collectivism (Hall and O'Shea, 2013, 16). Stuart Hall (1988; Hall and O'Shea, 2013) proposed that neoliberalism under Thatcher was so successful and achieved a hegemonic status, including working class 'acquiescence', because it articulated the interests of many different social groups. That is, it noticed the ideas held traditionally by the working class, such as to avoid being patronised by a regulatory state, and articulated their desires. Although, it is interesting to note public attitudes between 1979 and 1989 show a rejection of the conservativism ethos that people should 'help themselves' and the 'government should be tough, not caring', with the public instead favouring 'public interest and a managed economy', over 'private interest and the free market' (Lowe, 1993, 312).

The Conservative Governments 1979-1997

The political discourse between 1980 and 1995 reflected older concerns; dominated by criticism of the welfare state with the belief that it fostered dependency, and undermined a work ethic and family values (Jensen 2012, 27). This further legitimised the belief that welfare recipients needed to be moved away from dependency (on welfare) to independence (through paid work). The Manpower services commission, the 'active force' of the labour market in 1973, was abolished because it was believed that the '*genuinely* unemployed' had 'lost touch with the jobs market' (Hills 1990, 136). The Benefits Office and Jobcentre merged, justified by the Department of Employment, in 1988 because, '*There has been no opportunity for Jobcentre Staff to advise them regularly and individually on jobs, training and other opportunities available. It is in no one's interest that unemployed people remain out of touch with the jobs market, and become passive recipients of unemployment benefits.*' (quoted in Hills, 1990, 136). By 1992, these were (public sector) Jobcentre Plus offices.

The Conservative Governments discourses of state (and welfare) retrenchment were developed in parallel to employment being reconfigured as flexible, alongside low wages and reduced collective power, to enable a competitive labour market (Mizen, 2004, 19; Wacquant, 2010, 212). Trade union membership reduced following its peak in 1979, followed by tightened legislation under the Thatcher government and the closure of manufacturing industries (Moylan, BBC News 2012). Young people were not particularly favoured during this de-industrialisation as unions adhered to a first in, first out policy (Mizen, 2004, 55).

Despite these neoliberal discourses of rolling back the state, reducing taxation and apparent welfare dependency, public expenditure increased (1979-80 and 1986-7), and remained high due to increasing unemployment (Lowe 1983, 309). What is interesting is that unemployment and joblessness fell in news value, and the government were reviewed only in 'monetarist terms' (Seaton, 1986, 23). The media fuelled the discourse of unemployment as the individual's fault, publishing stories of welfare scroungers, rather than the slack in labour demand (Allen and Waton, 1986, 15). Where the media portrayed unemployment, this was frequently through stereotypes and images of the 'criminal' unemployed, a problem of scroungers and moral outrage for the taxpayer, creating a concern rather than reflecting one. Media images presented unemployment as a 'social threat' and not a 'political problem' depoliticising and personalising it (Seaton 1986, 27). Golding and Middleton (1982) discuss

the rise of this 'moral panic' (Cohen, 1985) and the 'scroungerphobia', which contributed to increasingly unsympathetic attitudes to the unemployed, alongside the negative press coverage (*ibid,* 172).

Those who were unemployed experienced feelings of stigma and shame. Sinfield (1981, 35) for instance cites an apprenticed tradesman who became unemployed in 1979, who then stated empathetic attitudes towards others: '*It's changed my attitudes to the unemployed. I used to think they were just skivers and was quite a lot against them, but now I've experienced it, it's no joke, man' and 'once you've been on the dole yourself, you begin to think differently about the other people there. You can't help it, and you realise that perhaps they can't either*'. Campbell (1984, 19) in her book retracing Orwell's 'Road to Wigan Pier' wrote: '*The scourge of scroungerism has converted the unemployed into the poor, the poor into the undeserving poor, and sympathy into suspicion*'.

Young people

The UK so-called economic boom 1945 – 1975 saw wages rise and output increased. Young people stayed on at school, until 16 in 1973, and job opportunities and apprenticeships were common for many school leavers, particularly working class boys (Ainley, 2016, 13-15). It was alongside the decline of manufacturing and industries in the UK in the 1970s and 1980s and rising unemployment, that there began the steep decline in paid entry-level jobs, youth employment, and apprenticeships. Whereby in 1955, 40% of the labour force were employed in manufacturing industries, and 45 % in services, by 1984, this was 26% and 65% respectively (Finn, 1987, 163). These service sectors from 1970s initially embraced part time students, and women returning to work after children. These were the newly flexible workforce (Mizen, 2004). The abolishment of the fair wages resolution in 1985, and exclusion of young people from wages' council regulations in the same year were underpinned by the assumption that lower pay would make more jobs available, and that those (under 21) would 'price themselves into markets' (Adnett 1989, 205).

When financial boom became bust, it was not the instability of the markets that were blamed but the interventionist state, which lay the foundation for welfare reforms, underpinned by beliefs that the state undermined incentives and eroded the work ethic (Mizen, 2004, 18). The Government's post war commitment to full employment halted and there was a return to high unemployment. There were no longer 'jobs for all', which led to significant repercussions for young people leaving school; they were the target of policy interventions

presumed to be deficient. Indeed, within broad welfare policy shifting from a safety net to a facilitator of individual responsibility, a stricter benefit regime followed, with requirements for claimants to demonstrate they were actively seeking work, to police the perceived workshy. The 1989 Social Security Act formalised the requirements that the claimant should demonstrate actively seeking work, and supply evidence of their 'back to work' plans. There could no longer be any refusal of work on grounds of suitability, backed up by a benefit sanction (King, 1995, 170-173; Mizen, 2004, 86-7). Students and 16-18 year olds lost entitlement to Income Support, when in 1986, the Social Security Act altered means tested benefits so that young people were unable to claim benefits, unless they were in 'severe hardship' under special circumstances; for example, if unsupported by a parent (Hills, 1990, 137).

Policy reforms as above were to prevent the presumed exploitation of the system, despite their high implementation costs, influenced by New Right interest groups that lobbied Downing Street's Policy Unit (Lowe, 1993, 315; King, 1995, 170). At the same time as the political outlook shifted from a collective view of welfare, to one of individual responsibility, private enterprise, and a more fluid and flexible labour market, there was deregulation of industries and a reduction of trade union powers. The increase in flexible labour and insecurity 'non-standard work arrangements' expanded the labour supply. Employers stopped recruiting and cut back on training, and compulsory work schemes were introduced; the Conservatives sought to blur the distinction between being unemployed, and being on a training course, and emphasised the individual within the labour market, over the collective trades unions. The Department of Employment launched their employment Training programmes (King, 1995, 170). In 1988 'Restart' programmes were introduced for claimants unemployed for over 6 months, to discuss the problems that *they* faced getting into work, and offering employment training in the private sector, including a £10 per week enhancement. Single parents were entitled to £50 per week for costs incurred, such as travel and childcare, and there were financial bonuses upon completion of the scheme (Hills 1990, 137). Sanctioning had already been part of the 1911 National Insurance Act, (for six weeks, as discussed), but this was increased to 13 weeks in 1988 (Adler, 2016, 198).

It is also important to note here that the Conservatives had continued where Labour had left off. In 1976, Labour PM Callaghan had already emphasised schooling needed to serve employers and industry, rather than young people and communities – despite employers not knowing what they needed from the young, other than basic literacy and numeracy (Mizen,

30, 1004). Labour had implemented Youth Opportunities Programme (YOP) in 1978 whereby young people were guaranteed a place on a training scheme or work experience, rather than work or apprenticeship. Significantly, this was believed to be a temporary solution, only in place until the demand for youth employment resumed (Mizen, 2004, 56; MacDonald, 2011). Nevertheless, employment demand did not resume, and many young people left schemes unemployed (Roberts, 2013). These work schemes became embedded within policy hereafter: The Youth Training Scheme (YTS) expanded in 1988 as there was no longer a government promise of jobs for all, but a scheme for all, as unemployment benefits were withdrawn. As high unemployment remained and opportunities for young people were sparse, youth unemployment continued within political agendas, accompanied by discourses of unemployed youths as potential threats to the social order. Youth unemployment as a focus for policy initiatives centred on assumptions that young people did not have the skills for the economy (a deficiency model), which further developed a perceived need for training and learning experiences of a 'market based work ethic', despite this not being grounded in evidence (MacDonald, 2011). Rather than addressing the availability and quality of work, young people became the focus of policy, viewed as deficient in finding and sustaining work (Mizen, 2004, 59). Education and youth training schemes were instrumental in attempting to shape the young working class, they were not vocational apprenticeships, but rather cultural apprenticeships that alongside education, inculcated social discipline and focused on values of self-improvement (Cohen, 1984, 105; Hollands, 1990).

Young, working class experiences in the 1980s typified by 'shit' jobs, meant that getting into work was to avoid stigma and to receive pay, more than to fulfil an intrinsic need to work (Coffield *et al*, 1986, Campbell, 1984, 116-128). Young people wanted real jobs with living wages, and envied those in work with a regular wage. Cohen, (1984, 112) remarked that those in work did not celebrate, but looked forward to breaking up the monotony of the day and envied those unemployed who did not have to get up early in the morning. Mizen writes that in the 1980s and 1990s, young people were aware of the 'meaningless' work which they faced and, alongside the prospect of low pay, this contributed to a collective restlessness, and ambivalence to work schemes (2004, 57 -73). Being aware of the repetitive unpleasant and unrewarding work, they would often change jobs. He states that the state's response was to regulate this behaviour and it did so through policies that enforced the discipline of training for young people (Mizen 1995, 18). Nevertheless, young people were deeply ambivalent about the many work schemes in the 1980s and early 1990s (YTS, YOP and Employment

Training) and many left them before completion (*ibid.*). Similarly Standing (2014a) argued that the young unemployed assumed a positive and collective identity, in recognition of the poor jobs available to them during the 1980s and 1990s and, coupled with high unemployment, led the youth to 'embrace the dole' - reflected in popular culture. Indeed, there was some strong opposition to these youth employment schemes, from young people themselves. In 1985, schoolchildren went on strike - including 10 000 in Liverpool, who walked out of their schools, in protest at the Youth Training Scheme as "cheap labour with no guarantee of a job" (Jeffries, 2016).

The experiences of schemes, typified by hopes of in-work mobility, were menial tasks and boredom as opposed to quality training. Viewed as an ideological project, the aim was to commodify the young (working class) person, and teach them how to sell their labour power. It did so in emphasising the need for the individual to work on himself or herself: that self-improvement could fix their predicament of unemployment, as opposed to looking at structural effects. This political management of youth led to widening social inequalities (Mizen, 2004, 17- 21), and contributed to a constant reserve army of labour, that could be drawn upon to fill low paid, insecure employment (Grover, 2003). Young people *were* aware that GCSEs and A levels would offer a way out of training schemes and 'dead end jobs', being qualifications that were valued by employers (Mizen, 1995, 82). This warehousing of young people in the 1980s continued in the 1990s, through further work schemes, and Higher Education (Mizen, 2004, 43).

New Labour: 1997-2010

Whilst there had always been an expectation of actively searching for work to receive unemployment benefits, the introduction of the Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) in 1996 replaced unemployment benefits, and exemplified a shift in perceived rights and responsibilities of the claimant (Fletcher, 2015, 330). The Job Seeker's Agreement represented a contract that the claimant had to take steps to make themselves acceptable to the employer: for example by taking a course, or work search activity, or even altering their hairstyle, demeanour and jewellery. Sanctions were in place (benefits removed) for up to six months enforced for non-compliance (Mizen, 2004, 89). In 1996, the then Conservative Prime Minister, John Major, introduced 'Project Work', aimed at those unemployed for over 2 years, alongside the Job Seekers Allowance, so that people could move 'from dole with

dignity' (Bevins, 1996). This offered an additional £10. If no employment was found following the scheme, the individual would be offered a three-month work placement on a community programme. As Major explained, this was so that, "*Those who don't want to work are exposed, but those who do want to work are helped*" (*ibid*).

When New Labour were elected in 1997, their discourses of work and welfare continued in the same vein as the previous Conservative government, maintaining that their policy would be to 'rebuild the welfare state around work' (DSS 1998 in Frayne, 2015, 103). This was despite their previous criticisms of Project Work as 'workfare' (a concept brought over from the US, indicating working for benefits). They too, like the Conservatives before them, sought to fight a 'dependency culture'. By now, the spectre of an 'underclass' had gained prominence in both the popular and political imagination, described by American Sociologist, Charles Murray, as a '*subset of poor people who chronically live off mainstream society (directly through welfare or indirectly through crime) without participating in it'* (Murray, 1990, 5). Labour set out to solve the problem of social exclusion in their electoral campaign. The unemployed were already problematized as deficient for avoiding work, or being unemployable, which underpinned beliefs that the present system of welfare encouraged dependency, social exclusion and poverty; was expensive, and that money was lost through benefit fraud. Welfare, according to these beliefs, needed to be reformed (Fairclough, 2000b, 173; Trickey and Walker, 2001, 181). The Green Paper: 'New Ambitions for our Country: A new contract for welfare' included phrases such as '*making work pay*' and '*work for those who can; security for those that can't* (work)' (*ibid*). Thus began the focus on training and flexibility of the workforce and removing 'voluntary' claimants, not only young people, as before (Trickey and Walker, 2001, 181).

It is relevant to point out that New Labour did begin their term with an initial rhetoric that focussed on job security and full employment. However, this was dropped following their limited success in influencing labour demand. Instead – discourses of employability and work as the best form of welfare became prominent. Work was for young people to 'take control of their life', it represented a 'foundation' towards self-worth and independence (Trickey and Walker, 2001, 192), and programmes now were described as 'client centred', as if to serve and support the jobseeker (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005, 214).

New Labour borrowed from the ideas of Lawrence Mead, (a politics professor from the U.S) that encapsulated beliefs that work was the best form of welfare, individuals lacked work and

social skills needed to hold down a job, and that there was a 'culture of poverty'. This problem of the unemployed called for 'paternalistic welfare' espoused by Frank Field (then minister for welfare reform), whose ideas were influenced by those of Mead (Field, 1998, 60-61). Put simply, because the unemployed were presumed to be offered opportunities or work and support, then the 'taxpayer' should only fund welfare to those who behaved in an appropriate manner (*ibid*, 62 -64) and those that did not comply could be legitimately sanctioned.

New Labour developed Welfare to Work programmes. Similarly, to the training schemes as before, the Jobcentre Plus and Public Employment Services led these. These were the 'New Deal' and 'New Deal for Young People', initially funded by windfall taxes on excess profits of privatised utilities companies (Daguerre and Etherington, 2014, 20; Trickey and Walker, 2001, 191). The aims of such programmes were to 'promote work orientation', which in practice entailed intensive job search, an options period with education or training, entry into subsidised jobs, and/or intensive support (Trickey and Walker, 2001, 192-201). New Deal programmes were introduced for those previously peripheral to the labour market: lone mothers, the disabled and long-term unemployed (McQuaid and Lindsay, 2005; Sage, 2012). As part of the programme, full time education or higher qualifications were permitted if likely to result in immediate employment, plus an allowance. Subsidised work was paid at the going rates, to provide training without displacing existing staff or subsidising a cash profit for the company and a job was offered to those who demonstrated aptitude and commitment. The self-employment option gave claimants £400 fortnightly, plus training for a business plan.

This was a policy shift which intensified the monitoring of job seeking behaviour (Adler, 2016, 199), also evident throughout other countries (Lodemel and Trickey, 2001). In the UK, the focus remained, not on vocational training, but on behavioural change, more aligned to the US work-first welfare to work policies, (Peck and Theodore, 2000a). Behavioural change promoted, to avoid an assumed welfare dependency, whilst at the same time, 'protecting' the taxpayer. This presumed fairness was encapsulated in the Department of Work and Pensions report, in 2008 'Realising Potential', where 'personalized conditionality' was proposed and the: '*over-arching objective is to influence the behaviour of as many working age benefit recipients as possible, in order to move them into work, avoid long-term benefit receipt and protect the tax payer*' (Slater, 2012, 957).

The concept of employability too was central; it captured the suggestion that there were individual choices within the labour market, and job security. In fact, there was a deregulated labour market, 'flexibility' and reduced job security. There was the withdrawal of benefits (sanctions) for non-compliance of participation in Welfare to Work (e.g. New Deal) programmes, an increased welfare conditionality to move people into any available work (Peck and Tickell, 2002). The welfare contract of the 1997 Labour Government had the aims to rebuild welfare around the work ethic (Adler, 2016, 199), and did so through intensified monitoring of the unemployed claimant's behaviour, and the threat of sanctions. Benefit sanctions prior to 1998 were applied to the unemployed, for leaving or losing work mostly, but after 1998, they were extended to single parents, the long term sick and disabled, for failure to participate in work schemes ('training') or in missing an interview and with a maximum length of to up to three years (*ibid*, 202). These were the new 'employability' regimes, that rather than protecting the individual's universal rights, supported the free market, and boosted the pool of labour reserves by increasing their closeness to the labour market (Grover, 2003, 18). This did so by complimenting the neoliberal work first 'orthodoxy' that any job was a good job, and to succeed in the labour market was to join it immediately. The unemployed formed the low wage labour supply for the increasingly precarious and low paid work (Mizen, 2004; Muncie, 2008, 247).

This continuation of the move away from welfare as a safety net, in policy and discourse, was a deliberate strategy. James Purnell, then Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, in 2008 made a speech to the Employer's Conference where he reflected on the new title 'Work and Pensions' as an ideological break with the previous 'Social Security', and a return to the 'common sense' truths of hard work contributing to personal wellbeing and financial security:

"What a telling name: security as something handed down; welfare as bureaucratic transfer; people as recipients of funds. The title said nothing about people's actual lives and ambitions, nothing, in fact, about the best way of securing their welfare/ The new title, Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, tells a wholly different story. It tells you that work is the best route to personal welfare and well-being: it tells you that if you work hard and contribute then you deserve your retirement to be free from anxiety about money/ For a long time we lost sight of these common sense truths. If you'd ever said to William Beveridge that work could be divorced from welfare he would have been astonished. Yet, until this government put the two back together again, that was exactly the cul-de-sac we were in/ For Beveridge, the very notion of welfare was bound up with the idea of independence. That was what was so depressing about the debate that ran, and in some quarters still runs, about

welfare dependency/ The welfare state was conceived as a way to support human flourishing. To foster independence, to give people the support they need, not so that they became dependent but precisely so that they would not." (Purnell, 2008).

To contribute to society was to be through 'hard work', in turn collated with personal welfare, and independence. Welfare, considered as preventing individuals from flourishing, was therefore counter to social justice. This provided grounding for cost effective solutions, such as the delivery of employment services, a neoliberal shift based on presumed market efficiencies, client centred support and individual responsibilisation,

"To that end, we will follow through on David Freud's ground breaking report on reforming the welfare system. That means using the best provider, whether they are from the private, public or voluntary sectors. I want to create an effective and growing market for these services – because we shouldn't be ideological about who provides the service we should just work out who is best at providing it [...] Social justice through independence, not a socially regressive culture of dependency." (Purnell, 2008).

These Welfare to Work programmes involved competitive tendering, and non- state organisations (Third Sector Organisations and the private sector) for job matching and counselling services (see Egdell *et al*, 2016). They were significant in promoting the neoliberal ethos: public sector support withdrawn in favour of private sector free market. The term 'welfare' had shifted from being neutral, essential, and universal to means tested, within the political discourse of the 'Third Way'. As Fairclough (2000b, 173) pointed out, New Labour, articulated both social democratic and Thatcherite 'New Right' discourses. Welfare provision shaped by a language of clients, empowerment, choice, and service users (Peck and Theodore, 2000a), led to the unemployed becoming cases to be worked on according to knowledges: 'an object for a branch of knowledge and a hold for a branch of power' (Fairclough 2000a, 53).

With the unemployed now problematized with behavioural deficits and as having inappropriate welfare dependency, and a lack of incentive, they were assumed to require appropriate interventions. Their welfare rights should only given upon their demonstrations responsibility and appropriation of the work ethic. This meant that there was little scope for a critique of work (Deeming 2014), which too took on a new meaning within political discourse. Whereas older labour party texts discussed work with 'out of work', 'right to work', 'health and safety at work' and 'democracy of work', New Labour's common collocations included 'desire to work', 'back to work', 'welfare to work', and 'opportunities

to work' (Fairclough, 2003, 131). It was, Fairclough argued, reflecting the language of those governing, and not the governed (Fairclough, 2000b, 172). Trickey and Walker noted that within New Labour policy there were no references to a lack of available employment (2001, 199); barriers to employment were perceived as individual failures, and discourses of motivation, morals and justice became central to policy (Crisp, 2008).

Alongside political discourses and policy that focussed on a (lack of) individual responsibilities (poor attitudes and behaviour); there was at the same time a shift in public attitudes, which increasingly hardened towards welfare and the unemployed, from the 1980s over a decade earlier (Taylor Gooby, 2013; British Social Attitudes, 2012). The new contractualism of rights and responsibilities suggested that the state had provided opportunities (rights of work), and that the claimant had not met their responsibilities (Sage, 2012; Donohue, 2013). Alongside this, the media and political rhetoric increasingly condemned benefit 'scroungers' (Taylor –Gooby, 2013) just as they had in the late 1970s and 1980s. However, it is pertinent to add, that was never a golden age of welfare acceptance from the public, as evidenced above. Hudson *et al* (2016), who using other survey evidence, also indicated this point, demonstrating that attitudes to welfare in the UK fluctuated before the 1980s, and prior to the British Social Attitudes survey, which began in 1983.

Education

Widening participation into education was high on the agenda under New Labour, promoted to increase competitiveness, labour market investment and social inclusion and, as Antonucci (2016, 21) notes became central to many contemporary welfare states, including the UK. The belief was that increasing education and training for young people would lead to a demand for a new generation of newly employable knowledge workers. Young people were required to stay on at school post 16, to upskill and gain opportunities in the new globalised economy (Ainley, 2016, 21-34). As polytechnics merged with universities, and participation rates increased, this marked a shift of education from the few, to the many. Increasingly young people opted for university where there were few alternative opportunities, despite the introduction of fees of £1000 in 1998 (*ibid*, 25- 27). As grants were abolished under the Teaching and Higher Education Act (1998), and replaced with loans (re-introduced in 2004 with a targeted income threshold) (Antonucci, 2016, 39), this signified a more individualised approach that shifted the cost of higher education onto the individual and their family, and represented a 'privatisation of social risk' (*ibid*, 48). Education policy substituted

employment policy, as young people, faced with restricted benefits and student loans, had to acquire employability traits (Carpenter and Freda, 2007, 96). Many young people moved between welfare to work schemes and unemployment (*ibid*), but, whereas two thirds of young people who left school went into employment directly in the 1970s, in 1997 only one in five left school to go directly to work (Mizen, 2004, 55).

The Conservative led Liberal Democrat Coalition Government: 2010-2015

New Labour's welfare reform and activation policies had introduced new modes of neoliberal governance emphasising personal responsibility over rights (Fairclough, 2000b; Sage, 2012; Donohue, 2013), which contributed to the belief that citizenship was dependent on an individual's economic participation (MacDonald and Marston, 2005 378). Welfare to Work programmes were contracted out to private providers and delivery was based on reaching targets. Larner (2000) stated that there is a neoliberal project, which operates through ideology, practice and governmentality, alongside paternalistic interventions, which are therapeutic, encouraging individuals to pursue certain values. For example, for job seekers to conceive of work as worthwhile, and focus on their employability, but with sanctions as a 'paternalistic backstop' where there is non-participation in these 'values' (Whitworth and Carter, 2014, 105). By the time that the Conservative led Coalition Government came into power in 2010, neoliberal paternalism was already embedded in welfare policy: the (neoliberal) 'elevation of the markets' twinned with 'compelling the poor to act as good citizens' (paternalism) through valorising paid work (*ibid*). These enhanced knowledges of work and welfare, continued under the coalition. Work, as in labour market participation, was increasingly valorised, and the scrounger rhetoric continued to gain traction. This is outlined in relation to policy here, and discussed later in relation to discourse in Chapter Three.

Policy developments

In 2012, the Coalition Government introduced the Welfare Reform Act. This solidified the paradigm of activation and conditionality, strengthened the use of sanctions (the removal of benefits for non-participation), and reduced availability of benefits. The aims of government were to encourage personal responsibility and 'activate' those in receipt of out of work benefits (Wiggan, 2012). New Labour's future jobs fund policy that had included some state provision of employment, was abolished and replaced with welfare to work schemes, reliant

on market forces and private sector job creation, such as the Mandatory Work Activity (Wiggan, 2012, 392). Such programmes were to promote the individual's work ethic and work related behaviours, and make them more appealing to the prospective employer. These included 'Employability Programmes' extended to single parents with the youngest aged 5. The Work Experience programme: individuals receiving job seekers allowance, working for 2 – 8 weeks, 25 -30 hours a week, to '*improve their opportunities to find work*', with sanctions for those leaving their placement more than one week after starting. Work experience (for ages 16-24), work trials, and the community activity programme were conceived, to develop work disciplines and skills as well as to help with job searching throughout the programme (Gov.uk n.d. a).

The Work Programme was the Coalition's flagship programme. It was a scheme that individuals could enter voluntarily, or be mandated to join if unemployed for over a year (over 25), or unemployed for 9 months (under 25) (Gov.uk 2012a). This was delivered through non-state companies paid by their results to provide support and move people into work, proposing a flexible and personalised service suited to the individual. With European Union (Social Fund) funding, it used public, private, and voluntary/third sectors to help get people into work, asserting that value for money is given to the 'tax payer' in the provision of this service (Gov.uk 2012a). As a payments-by-results model, it was a 'black box' delivery of employment and training services, meaning that company discretion could be used. It involved contracting out to private organisations in a competitive tendering process, and was underpinned by managerialism and contractualism, the Government considered it to be both efficient and innovative contributing to a normalisation of outsourced delivery of employment services (Rees *et al,* 2013). The use of Third Sector and private sector organisations was a neoliberal model, driven by costs and efficiencies, and performance measures. They were also argued as closer to the needs of local populations (Whitworth, 2016, 13), clearly outlined in the Work Programme policy document:

"All these incentives are designed to help more people at risk of long-term unemployment into sustained work, and to help deliver value for money for taxpayers. High performance by service providers will lead to reduced benefit payments for government; some of these savings will be used to help fund the programme". (Gov.uk 2012a, 8).

However, this raised concerns that the payment-by- results system led to parking clients less likely to find work, and creaming clients more work-ready to achieve targets (and payments) easily (see Egdell *et al,* 2016). Additionally, these interventions provided very little evidence

of success, with few individuals gaining and sustaining employment following participation on the Work Programme (Fothergill, 2013).

Sanctions

To receive the Job Seekers Allowance, the claimant needed to demonstrate that they were actively seeking work, and be willing to take up *any* employment immediately. There were sanctions given for those deemed not to adhere to the rules set out in the Jobseekers Agreement, and the Jobcentre was cast as supplying a supportive role in helping claimants meet their responsibilities to look for work. The Claimant Commitment in 2012 and the introduction of Universal Credit, slowly rolled out, replaced this. It was not easy to refuse jobs or participation within programmes, due to increased conditionality and the sanctioning regime, as detailed below:

 "The Claimant Commitment strengthens the ability of Jobcentre Plus staff to support claimants back into work at the earliest opportunity and redefines the relationship between the welfare state and claimants. In return for state support, we expect claimants to do all they can to meet their responsibilities to return to work." (Gov.uk 2013a).

Claimants needed to register with the online Universal Jobmatch web site, under surveillance by Jobcentre staff. Then work and pensions secretary, Iain Duncan Smith, explained the underlying rationale:

"If you choose not to take a job that matches you, then the adviser will look at your reasons, and if the adviser thinks 'actually, these are pretty specious reasons', he may call you in and say 'I think you really need to be applying for these jobs': "*If they're just not playing ball, they will be in front of the adviser. These are little trip wires, if we think they're not applying for it. There are lots of things the adviser can do…We have some interesting programmes like mandatory work activity if the advisers think they're having trouble getting out of bed, if they're not playing the game*" (Iain Duncan Smith, quoted in Mason, 2012).

This implied that there was paternalistic support by the state, and that people needed to play by the rules, here adopting a language associated with criminal behaviour. The new sanction regime introduced in October 2012 looked upon job seekers as potential criminals, subjects that needed directing:

"The new JSA sanctions regime, which was introduced in October 2012, encourages people to engage with the support being offered by Jobcentres by making it clearer to claimants what they are expected to do in return for their benefits – and that they risk losing them if they don't stick to the rules. It also makes sanctions more proportionate: with shorter sanctions for minor offences and tougher ones for repeat offenders. Repeat offenders can lose benefits for up to 3 years". People who are in a job know that if they don't play by the rules or fail to turn up in the morning, there might be consequences, so it's only right that people

on benefits should have similar responsibilities. […] This government has always been clear that in return for claiming unemployment benefits jobseekers have a responsibility to do everything they can to get back into work. As part of the government's long-term economic plan, we are ending the something for nothing culture and supporting those who want to work hard and play by the rules'. (Gov.uk 2014a)

Refusing jobs if they did not match an individual's aspirations or qualifications inferred an ungratefulness, even if the job potentially dampened their prospects of finding other employment (Standing, 2014, 131). There were sanctions given when a claimant did not demonstrate improving their chances of finding work, or keep to the Claimant Commitment, and claimants could not turn down a job or training course, or leave a previous job or training without good reason (Gov.uk 2014a). Whilst sanctioned, the claimant would need to continue work search activities, or be subject to a longer sanctioning period. [3] This claimant commitment involved the expectation to spend 35 hours a week to look for or prepare for work, and included mentoring and coaching with a work coach, with failure to meet responsibilities resulting in a benefit sanction (Gov.uk, 2016). Despite the sanction-based conditionality to coerce and ensure appropriate behaviour, these mandatory programmes were framed by paternalistic discourses, emphasising the state's role in helping the individual (Rees *et al* 2013, 3).

The Labour Market

The work available in parallel to welfare reforms was characterised by 'lovely and lousy jobs', featuring a two-tier polarized work force (Goos and Manning, 2007; Bonoli, 2012; Sissons, 2011; Whittaker and Hurrell, 2013). There were increases in temporary and involuntarily part time employment, and decreases in full time 2008 – 2012, with more people looking to increase their hours, due to unsatisfactory pay, or the ending of their present job. Additionally, there was an increase in self-employment, a category including a high percentage of low paid, low hours and low skilled work (ONS, 2014, Bell and Blanchflower, 2013). Working practices with non-guaranteed zero hour contracts doubled between 2007 and 2013, (ONS, 2014), with nearly 700, 000 people on zero hours contracts in the UK, 100, 000 more than in 2013 (Inman, 2015). Almost half of the 1.4 m zero hours contracts in 2012 were in the so-called service sector, such as catering, tourism, and food

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[3] The sanctions given for leaving or not taking part in an employment scheme were, lower level 4 -13 weeks for not actively looking for, or being available for work. Intermediate level 4 -13 weeks, for being dismissed and leaving a job without good reason, and a higher level sanction 13 – 156 weeks for not taking a job offered or not applying for jobs offered by a work coach or adviser (Gov.uk. n.d.).

sectors (Whittaker and Hurrell, 2013). Poor quality jobs, characterised by insecurity and flexibility, temporary work and low pay was a persistent labour market trend (Keohane and Hupkau, 2014) notable amongst the young and unqualified (Bell and Blanchflower, 2013)[4]. Pay for workers under 30 had collapsed by 11% since the 2008 financial crisis, and wages for young people under 25, had not increased within the National Living Wage. Low paid work represented stagnation, rather than a stepping-stone into better-paid and secure employment (Keohane and Hupkau, 2014; Hurrell, 2013, 5), and was found predominantly in private sector industries: retail, accommodation, food and care services and leisure (Hurrell, 2013, 27), that also featured the lowest union activity, less likely to recognise unions (Bryson and Blanchflower, 2008). Wage rates remained low from 2005.[5] Welsh workers being the lowest paid in the UK, but nonetheless, demonstrating high levels of work commitment – possibly through gratitude for having a job, knowing there were few other alternatives (Davies *et al,* 2012). However, in comparison to the rest of the UK, Wales saw an increase in union activity, a possible spill over from the highly unionised coal and steel industries (Beynon *et al,* 2012).

Young People

By now, many young people were faced with the option of zero hours contracts, self-employment, subsidised temporary or low paid 'training' and 'apprenticeships'. They could also opt for higher education, accompanied by student debt. Higher education did make a difference to employment outcomes, those with few qualifications were more likely to experience unemployment (63% with Level 2 or below) (Simmonds 2015, 7; Demos, 2011). There were increases in the numbers of young people entering higher education despite rises in university fees in England. Numbers declined in Wales (by 2.1% in 2013), despite the Welsh Government making up the deficit in fees above £3, 500 perhaps reflecting a belief that a university education could not guarantee a job (BBC News Wales, 2013). With more graduates, and a limited number of high skilled/ knowledge jobs, graduates were no longer guaranteed 'middle class jobs (see Ainley, 2016, 26), they were 'running up a down escalator' (*ibid*, 63). The supply of young people with qualifications, outstripped demand as

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4 In September 2014, 22% of total UK work force was in low pay2nd to the US (Keohane and Hupkau 2014)
5 15% drop in wages for those in their 20s in comparison to the 6% drop experienced by the 31-49 age group. (IFS 2014). For 25 and over £7.20; 21-24: £6.70; 18-20: £5.30 under 18: £3.87 and an apprentice: £3.30, one in five workers on a low wage defined as £7.62 threshold hourly wages; 2/3 below national median wage and 1 in 8 (over 25) remained so for at least 12 months, a rise from 58% 2005- to nearly 75% in 2013. (Hurrell 2013; Whittaker and Hurrell 2013).

the graduate premium assuring well paid secure work was less certain (MacDonald, 2011). The growth in A level and university routes led to graduates taking jobs not previously associated with degree qualifications: intermediate, technical and sales (Parliament. House of Lords, 2016, 37). This was associated with a bumping down of jobs, as graduates (individuals with qualifications higher than A level-ONS definition) entered jobs for which they were overqualified.[6] With insecure and part time employment for graduate and non-graduates, the latter 'bumped down' the former equating to a 'pear-shaped' class structure (Ainley and Allen, 2013). The Employment Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for 16-19 year olds was abolished in England, but retained in Wales; a £30 income-assessed, means tested weekly allowance paid fortnightly, without affecting any household benefits received for those in further education (Student Finance Wales n.d.). Young people making fast transitions into the labour market, rather than continuing into education, risked poverty, unemployment, and homelessness compared to 'slow track transitions' through higher education (MacDonald 2011).

Young people (18-24) made up a large proportion of Job Seekers Allowance claimants, but only a small proportion of the long-term unemployed, due to finding work quickly (Simmonds, 2015). To receive benefits (Income Support) those aged 16-17 had to claim exceptional circumstances. Nonetheless, young people continued to be conceptualised as lacking in employment because of a lack of work experience and opportunity, as opposed to a lack of employment opportunities. As Crisp and Powell (2016, 2) point out, young people under the Coalition Government were particularly targeted with tighter eligibility, punitive welfare, and reduced benefits, at a time where they were in fact more employable, enjoying increasingly higher levels of education in the name of formal qualifications (in comparison particularly to the 1970s and before). The beliefs that young people needed to gain work experience, rather than paid employment underpinned the deficit model central to welfare policy: '*The work experience programme helps young people gain the experience they need to get a job. Some young people have difficulty finding a job because they do not fully understand the world of work or have not had a chance to prove themselves.*' (Gov.uk 2015). Young people were perceived to have not yet '*proved themselves to employers as valuable, and therefore they needed to 'understand the world of work*' (*ibid*).

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[6] Gardiner (2014) Hidden Talents: Totalling Hidden Talent: youth unemployment and underemployment in England and Wales

With the onus on the individual to make themselves more attractive to employers and learn how to work, there was a pre-election promise of three million more apprenticeships by the Conservatives in 2015. The reality was that most apprenticeships were low skilled, filled by adults, or 'dead end', with no employment guarantees or opportunities to progress. Those apprenticeships known to lead into a good destination (BT and Rolls Royce for example) were being over-subscribed and in high demand, standing in contrast to post war apprenticeships for school leavers, predominantly in manufacturing (Ainley, 2016, 85-86).

Devolution and Wales

It is relevant to note that there are differences in policy and political discourse between the Westminster Governments and the Welsh Government. Whilst there is not scope here to cover in finer detail the history and policy, ideological divergence accompanied Welsh devolution in 1997, which brought devolutionary powers to areas including health, third sector services and education. For example, with no free schools or academies in Wales and healthcare not divided along the purchaser provider split, as it had been in England. Welsh policy aims were set out to reduce social exclusion and health inequalities amidst challenges of UK welfare reforms (e.g. Welsh Poverty Action Plan, Davies et al, 2011; Drakeford, 2012), and Wales has been said to maintain a collective ethos, promoting sustainability and efficiency in a climate of austerity, whilst not adopting marketisation (e.g. Williams report 2014). The coalition Government's austerity measures bearing little resemblance to the party representation found in Wales' devolved government (Jeffery *et al,* 2010). There have been policies specific to Wales, such as the European social funded Jobs Growth Wales for 16-24 year olds, paid at or above the minimum wage, for a minimum of 6 months, and at least 25 hours a week and a contract of employment given. However, despite these purportedly collective values, and promotion of social, and economic wellbeing eliding Westminster governments (Williams 2011), these may not have necessarily translated through to policy delivery (for example, see Baker *et al*, 2013).

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to investigate the broad historical shifts and continuities within work and welfare developments within the UK. The principal aim has been to illustrate how work and welfare have been historically conceptualised, and the ways in which the residues of that

history have shaped our current understanding. This has presented some key findings in relation to policy, practice, and discourse. Historical trends have been shaped, influenced and re-established under the (2010-2015) Coalition Government. Governments have varied their techniques of governance closely linked to the demands of the capitalist economy, whilst maintaining assumptions of independence through labour. This has been through stigma, sanctions, and discourses of the work ethic enforced within welfare policy, as welfare policies attempted to maintain work placed behaviours. In addition, notions of self-help and independence have been persistent underpinning welfare reforms with assumptions of individuals making poor life choices and suffering from a poverty of aspiration; the poor and feckless unemployed (Welshman 2006, MacDonald *et al* 2013).

Notably there has never been a 'Golden Age of welfare' as there has always been presumed system abuse, and techniques to enforce the individual to maintain a close proximity to the labour market. The British Social Attitudes survey did show a hardening of attitudes towards those in receipt of welfare over the period of 1980s to 2015, but as Hudson *et al* (2016) pointed out, attitudes to welfare have fluctuated over time, and the 1980s may have been in fact a time of softening of attitudes. As Welshman (2006) notes, the unemployed became an object (of governmentality), defined and problematized as having shared cultures of dependency and worklessness, inherent behavioural deficits and moral character traits, categories of deserving or undeserving policy. These have ignored the realities of individuals in receipt of benefits (Wright, 2012, Frost and Hoggett, 2008).

One key development that has remained has been the work scheme. The labour camps of the 1930s mandated men to ensure that they did not lose their soft skills. They also categorised the unemployed as deserving or underserving, a discursive space alongside the physical reality of the workhouse, labour exchange, and job centre. By the late 1970s, as entry-level employment declined, alongside manufacturing and industry, young people became the focus in policy intervention. This opened a space for new knowledges, that is, that young people were deficient in finding work, and therefore needed to be worked on to make themselves attractive to employers. They were amenable to intervention as new policies, such as training schemes, emerged that sought to make young people 'work ready'. This did little to address work availability or conditions, but shifted the onus entirely on the individual, although met with some resistance by young people. Nonetheless, work schemes became part of the policy landscape in the United Kingdom, mirroring the new US workfare state, as did the deficiency model. Young people had previously found employment well without them, but these

schemes served to individualise the problem of unemployment, and maintain the young people's closeness to the labour market. At the same time of declining entry-level employment, there was a widening access to higher education to ensure that the young person became employable, although the grants which were to make up the loss of earnings were no longer only lost, but loans and fees were introduced. Increasingly, the financial costs were to be borne by the individual. With no guarantee of work a job for life, globalisation required flexible labour for competitive markets, to compete in the global economy (Cooper, 2012; Bonoli, 2012; Peck and Tickell, 2000a; Beck, 2000; Standing, 2014, 43).

Key goals have been to return or introduce people to employment despite this being increasingly precarious and low paid. This is very different to the policy goals of the 1930s, which were to prevent casual labour. The neoliberal shift maintained a tight focus on the individual, who must adopt work like behaviours, and discipline. Whilst this is not new, declining pay means that in work poverty is a feature in Britain (e.g. Shildrick *et al*, 2012). Furthermore, the notion of 'work' paid and unpaid labour market participation (such as through workfare like schemes), is increasingly valorised, for individual well-being and social mobility. This was evidenced in New Labour welfare policy, and continued under the Coalition Government, where such work schemes no longer accompanied by payment, became mandatory, backed up by sanctions for non-compliance.

Chapter Three: Government speeches as discursive practices

Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to identify the assumptions and common sense constructions of work, welfare, and the welfare recipient by the Conservative led Coalition Government (2010-2015), as well as some of the discursive strategies employed to legitimise their welfare reforms. As I made clear in Chapter One, a key aim of this research was to investigate the elite (political) discourses surrounding work, and welfare. Therefore, this chapter begins with a discussion of discourse and common sense, and the relation to political speeches and discursive practices. It includes a review of existing literature of the Coalition's discourse, followed by an analysis of four notable political speeches given by Conservative members of the Coalition . The main themes are presented, and their relevance to the research questions and theoretical underpinnings is highlighted.

As already discussed, discourses are open to change in the future, and it is important to recognise that they are not permanent or stable, but are socio-historically variable (Fairclough, 2001a, 57). Whereas the previous chapter was to investigate some of the changes of work and welfare and the social conditions under which these occurred, the aim here is to identify the ways of thinking –the representations of work and welfare, and assumptions behind them. Discourse refers to the different ways that knowledge is structured (Fairclough, 2000, 3), and language is a form of 'social practice' determined by social structures, within which certain discourses are promoted. It is worth remembering that Foucault did not ascribe to beliefs of ideology, as he saw power as dispersed, held within different groups and institutions within society, in flux. However, he saw that knowledge did associate with power in assuming to be 'truth', therefore each society had regimes of truth, and discourses accepted, at that time.

Additionally, as noted in Chapter One, power was productive particularly because it was hidden from view – so that it was not forceful, but regulated people through knowledges (as truth) and the associated technologies, such as through policies presented as for the good of the nation, and individual, rather than oppressive. As Foucault stated:

"*We live in a society in which the formation, circulation and consumption of knowledge are something fundamental. If the accumulation of capital was one of the fundamental traits in our society, the same is true of the accumulation of knowledge. Furthermore, the exercise,*

production and accumulation of knowledge cannot be dissociated from the power mechanisms with which they maintain complex relations that must be analysed" (Foucault 1994f, 291).

Discourse and Common sense

Discourse is a form of social practice, as language is used to describe phenomena it constructs meanings and is therefore active in shaping the social world. Social communication is dependent on shared common ground, the commonalities of understandings so that discourse is constructed according to what is presumed to be shared, normalised and presupposing as common sense (Fairclough 2003, 124). Common sense is a form of everyday thinking, and presented as if arising from experience: it is what everybody knows and by asserting that everyone already agrees, there is the hope that this will in turn produce agreement (Hall and O'Shea, 2013, 8). Importantly, discourses are most powerful when they are naturalised as common sense, they appear neutral and can be rationalised (ibid 76-77). Certain key terms or expressions can carry unspoken assumptions, taken for granted as common sense, and become unchallenged (Gordon and Fraser 1994, 310).

Within politics, there is the struggle to define what the social reality is: opposing political parties posit their discourse type as the most common sense, obvious and shared, to gain public acceptance and legitimise their policies. Fairclough (2001a, 75) provides an example of this, whereby the UK economic crisis in the 1970s was accounted for by Social Democratic, liberal and communist discourses; the dominant discourse in the 1980s was Thatcherite Toryism, a discourse that articulated the interests and appealed to many different social groups, as previously discussed.

There can be overlapping political discourses. For example, the term 'hard working' has been consistent in discussions on welfare policy by both Labour and Conservative political parties. These two parties have presented non-competing discourses surrounding work and welfare, both by being on the '*side of hard working people*' (Conservative Party Conference slogan in 2013), and addressing '*hardworking families*' (Labour's 2001 manifesto). These shared discourses reflect the pervasiveness of normative assumptions of work: citizenship inclusion through the participation in work (Deeming, 2014, 20) and illustrate how embedded common sense 'truths' can be. Quoted in The Guardian Labour's Rachel Reeves commented: "*We are not the party of people on benefits. We don't want to be seen, and we're not, the party to*

represent those who are out of work…Labour are a party of working people, formed for and by working people." (Gentleman, 2015). This view also reinforces the idea that being unemployed and in receipt of benefits is a cultural choice and not a transitory state, a belief similarly espoused by Reeves two years previously: "*Nobody should be under any illusions that they are going to be able to live a life on benefits under a Labour government*." (Reeves, quoted in Helm, 2013). Both political parties, who have run campaigns against benefit fraud, have shared the label of the welfare scrounger. They have urged the public to 'do the right thing' and report benefit cheats, with poster campaigns (BBC, 2014), under New Labour (Conner, 2007), and supported by a media campaign, to 'Shop a scrounger' in 'The Sun' newspaper (Sloane, 2010). Furthermore, both Labour and Conservative manifestos and policy documents have featured descriptions of cultures of welfare dependency and assumptions of the wilful non-worker and benefit 'scrounger' (Taylor –Gooby, 2013).

The solidification and circulation of discourses has helped to legitimise Government interventions. This often involves a simplification of types, a symbolic representation that excludes the actual experiences of those to whom policy is directed. For example, using terms of worklessness evokes the workshy. Crossley (2017) has written how the classification of poverty as 'problem behaviour' (workless households and troubled family discourse) has had implications for policy interventions, in particular, with Iain Duncan Smith arguing that increasing benefits would further 'entrench' poverty (2017, 79), a point returned to later.

The producer of discourse must operate within assumptions for the audience to be receptive to what they are saying. However, the more (ideologically) diverse that the audience are, the less likely that there will be a shared understanding of precepts of common sense (Fairclough, 2001a, 73). Public opinion and political diagnoses of welfare reform can be constitutive of each other. Furthermore, anti-welfare sentiments expressed through the media can also reproduce discourses, a self-supporting production of knowledge through language and representations (Pykett, 2014). Common sense assumptions have informed UK welfare policy solutions, and contributed to the continuation of a discourse of scroungers (e.g. Standing, 2014, 77; Tyler, 2013). These negative images and emotive condemnations of the unemployed within political discourse and media can contribute to how texts are interpreted (Taylor –Gooby 2013), affecting the audiences' mental representations – what people already know, as a consensus framework. Jones (2011) has famously referred to stereotypes within popular culture giving rise to terms such as 'chav', a denigration of the white working class.

Similarly, teenage mothers have been assumed to lead chaotic lives, legitimising policy interventions and shaping public policy, despite alternative discourses: young women making decisions based on economic circumstance and community expectations (Pykett, 2014). Documentary programmes such as 'Benefits Street' and 'On Benefits and Proud' - a genre of television known as 'poverty porn' have been followed by televised debates featuring representations of welfare recipients as if known, real and established, with no input from social scientists (Jensen, 2014). These constructions are generally articulated by the 'affluent and the privileged' as Crossley (2017) reminds us in his research of the re-presentations of poverty and place. Work goes into creating discourses that appear natural and popular. Furthermore, the naturalness of the discourses serve to deflect the attention from the sites where these discourses have been created, the voices of the most powerful, and distract from the consequences of actual policies (*ibid*, 2017, 11). The following section discusses the mobilisation of such commons sense assumptions within government discursive strategies.

Discursive Strategies

Figure 4: The changing political discourse of unemployment from Conservative political campaigns: From unemployment a problem of the state in 1979 (left) (The Telegraph n.d.) to unemployment a problem of the individual in 2010 (Conservative poster in Jeffery, 2010).

Discussed already is that common sense changes historically, according to government's aims and rationalities, in a response to specific problems posed as reality (Hall and O'Shea, 2013, 9). To illustrate this in the context of welfare policy, the comparison of political campaign posters (see figure 4), demonstrates truths as historically contingent. Here the campaign poster used by the Conservatives in the run up to the 1979 election depicts unemployment as a problem of the state. This is an acceptable common sense that normal people are queueing to find work, as described in the previous chapter. Whereas, in 2012, it

is both legitimate and common sense, to understand the unemployed as problematic, they refuse to work, and there is unity suggested between us and them, as Cameron calls to ('let us') cut benefits for a supposed refusal of work. The implicit suggestion is that the welfare system encourages a (morally inappropriate) dependency on benefits, which although not a new assertion, appeared by now, a commonly acceptable statement.

Certain discourses have been dominant within political texts pertaining to welfare reform under the Coalition Government. As such, these have legitimised policy 'solutions' that promote work, and call for individuals to take more personal responsibility, a shift aligned to the US style welfare system (workfare), (see also Wacquant, 2009). Translated into policy, The Welfare Reform Act (2012) heralded the decrease in benefit availability, increased sanctions, greater conditionality, and obligatory work activity to break habits of worklessness, and prevent benefit dependency (Deeming, 2014; Standing, 2014, 247).

Slater (2012, 957-82) observed that the Government's White Paper on welfare reform outlined the need to tackle poverty and welfare dependency but contained no reference to the availability of jobs, or the prevailing post-recession economic climate. Wiggan (2012) and Conner (2011) have illustrated how discourses of competition, privatisation, free market efficiency and individual failings have been mobilised alongside descriptions of an ineffective costly welfare state within Coalition Government UK policy briefings, reports and ministers' speeches. These stories, reproduced in Green and White policy papers, have contributed to shaping a problem of the unemployed, and formed part of a discursive strategy for welfare reform: workless populations entrenched with cultures of dependency lacking personal responsibility; maintained by expensive and ineffective state interventions (Wiggan, 2012).

The Coalition Government's spending review in 2014, used categories of the tax payer and welfare recipient (Mason, 2014b; Hills, 2015) to depict, 'where your tax goes' using a bold infographic, further mobilising assumptions of 'us' and 'them'. The Government posted tax breakdowns to 'tax payers' showing how tax revenue was spent, broken down into various categories – the largest being welfare, whilst state pensions was a separate category (see figure 5). Welfare however included 'personal social services': long term care for sick, elderly, child benefits, pension credit and winter fuel allowances, pensions to those other than state pensions (public service pensions). The presumption given was that welfare and not pensions was the highest spending category. The state pension, promoted as a separate cost

was misleading, and this 'creative' presentation of data, discursively contributed to anti-welfare sentiments and public support (Stanley and Hartman, 2016).
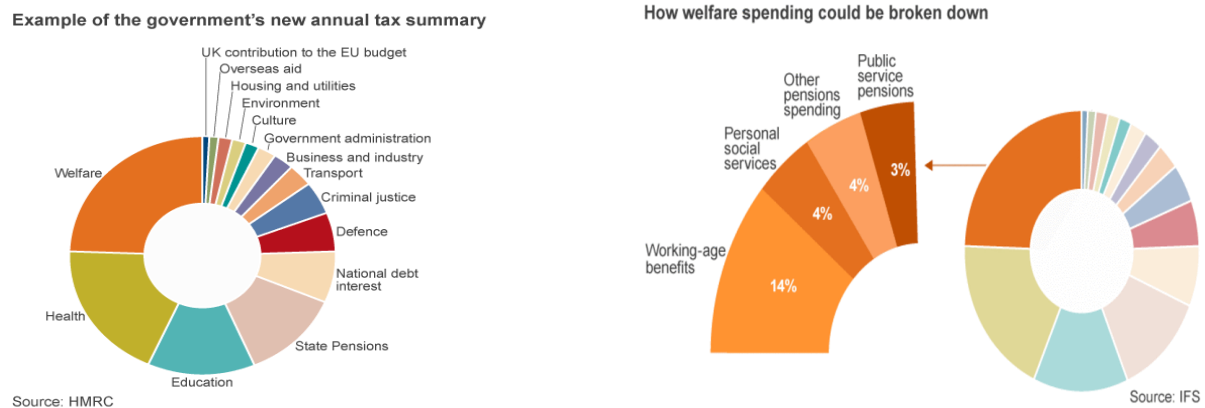
Figure 5. Government tax breakdown. Source: BBC / Milligan (2014)

Another discursive strategy devised was the DWP leaflet that used stories for 'illustrative purposes' to 'help people understand how the benefit system works'. The pictures (shown in figure 6), were since changed to silhouettes of people rather than the stock images used.

Figure 6: Sanctioning leaflet released by DWP. Source: Rawlinson and Perraudin (2015)

This provided the assumption that sanctions were necessary, and useful, in directing individuals towards the right course of action, and the individual has been helped by this

paternalistic intervention. This 'reality' of a true case was revealed as fake, following freedom of information requests from campaign and welfare news publication 'Welfare Weekly' (Rawlinson and Perraudin, 2015).

Critical Discourse Analysis

The following section moves on somewhat, to explore prominent speeches made by the 2010-2015 Conservative led Coalition Government. This period marked the initiation of the Welfare Reform Act (2012), and the empirical research was conducted within this Government's rule, but also this time covered the approach of a general election (2015), when main political parties needed to make their positions clear on policies including welfare, for potential voters. These speeches are valuable in enabling an understanding of the perception of a shared normality, the perceived problem and subsequent solutions, the 'shared conceptual frames' within which work and welfare was understood.

The aim of my analysis was to understand how speeches attempted to inform discourses of welfare, and work. Political discourse is thematic, it relates to political ideas and activities, and discursive practices involve the production, distribution and consumption of texts. The political speech is a semiotic way of interacting and communicating discourses dialectically related to other social processes: these speeches are an element of social practices (Fairclough, 2012, 11). Political speeches are found within other texts, such as within newspapers, press releases, transformed into news reports and media commentary in a process of 'generic chains' (Fairclough, 2000a, 85).

This chapter followed the approach of critical discourse analysis (known as CDA), which assumes that discourses are historical, and understood within the context of political, cultural and societal components (Wodak and Meyer, 2010, 15). The main principles of CDA are that language is a form of social practice through which the world is represented; language is not powerful by itself, rather, dominance, and control are manifested within language. Journalists, teachers, writers and politicians then, are influential as they use language in the public domain and can reproduce dominant knowledge, 'elite' discourses, legitimatising and sustaining them. The role of CDA is to interrogate and interpret text and talk, and to question its legitimacy, rather than simply explain it (Van Dijk, 1993).

There is no methodology of CDA that is recognised as consistent, and the guiding theory and methodology therefore are 'eclectic' (Wodak and Meyer, 2010, 29). The methods here follow Fairclough (2000a, 2001a, 2001b, 2003, 2012), informed by beliefs that discourse is a political practice that shapes, sustains and changes power relations, and that texts are central to discursive practices as part of a discursive strategy that delineates what is acceptable – what can be said, and is socially and politically viable. Fairclough recognises the dialectic relationship between language and other social practices and that discourses represent social life. He also addresses the ideological nature of discourse, critiquing the social reality that is positioned within the texts, and identifying the discourses that contribute to obfuscating other discourses. Therefore these dominant discourses, common senses and 'commonsensical construals' not only attempt to define the 'inequitable social order' but also sustain them (Fairclough, 2012, 10). This is important, because constructions of reality become effective when they are embedded and naturalised as common sense (Fairclough, 2000, 87), and because power secures consent through ways that appear to be universal, and legitimate, when in fact mystifying and obfuscating (Hall, 1997, 56).

CDA is not without criticism, for example, it presents a 'biased interpretation'. This is from the texts chosen for analysis, to the ideological commitment of the analyst behind the analysis - the analysist is not outside of discourse, as they too carry societal values and norms (Wodak and Meyer 2010, 17, 34). Also acknowledged is that only four speeches were analysed, and that the audience are not passive recipients of discourse; there are differences in their outlooks and beliefs of the audience; however, this analysis was to explore the basic framework of consensus.

Texts Used

Government ministers have the power to exercise speech, which represents the 'cognitive collaboration' between situations and talk or text. The producers of discourse in this context are the Coalition Government, and this analysis covers the period 2012 -2015, (corresponding with the empirical research) drawing on speeches as texts for analysis. Speeches were purposively selected based on their dates, speakers, and subject. The speeches were also selected to include the key architects of welfare reform and Conservative Ministers, (the leading party in the coalition), and to include the Prime Minister, David Cameron, the

Chancellor of the Exchequer George Osborne, and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith.

The Government website Gov.uk was used to obtain speeches, and I searched for the following terms: announcement type <speeches>, policy area <Welfare>, and and department <Department for work and pensions> and location <UK>, within the date range <2010-2015>. Three speeches were selected based on their inclusion of the subject welfare and or/benefits and fulfilling the specified criteria. A fourth speech was found outside of the Government website, but was included because it had been widely reported elsewhere in the media, again pertaining to welfare and welfare reform. This was another speech given by the PM David Cameron. The full text of speeches, which ranged from 3500 to 5000 words,   are given in appendices 5, 6, 7 and 8 respectively.

A: 2012 '*Welfare Speech*' (Gov.uk 2012b), delivered by the then Prime Minister, David Cameron on welfare at Bluewater Kent on Monday 25th June 2012. This speech was a precursor to the welfare reforms that included cuts to welfare budgets.

B: 2013 '*Chancellor's speech on changes to the tax and benefits system*' (Gov.uk 2013b), a speech delivered by then Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne given on 2 April 2013 to Morrisons supermarket in Kent.

C: 2014 '*Setting out a vision for Britain's welfare state*' (Gov.uk 2014b). A speech delivered by then Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Iain Duncan Smith on 23 January 2014 at the Centre for Social Justice, the right of centre think tank he established himself (Wiggan, 2012).

D : 2015 '*Welfare reforms'* (Cameron, cited in le Duc, 2015) setting out the Conservatives welfare reform plans, was delivered by David Cameron at Blatchington Mill School in Hove, a constituency described as being one of the 'key battle grounds for the Conservatives and Labour' before the 2015 general election. The full text of this speech was printed in the Brighton and Hove news online, in the South East of England where the speech was given. Excerpts of this speech were widely trialled and reported in the media including The Guardian, The Telegraph, The Daily Mail, The Times and The Mirror, and on ITV, BBC and SKY news.

Analysis

The speeches were coded for easy referencing (A, B, C and D), and then read and re-read several times and the themes of work and welfare searched for within and across the texts. Because of the relatively small amount of data, as well as personal preference, the texts were hand coded using highlighting. This enabled analysis within and across speeches. Firstly, I began searching for the predefined terms of work and welfare (apriori coding). Secondly, I looked at the interpretation and representation of work and welfare, the discourse strands throughout the speeches. Here, areas were highlighted specific to work and welfare, aggregated to explore latent meanings that reflected 'favoured interpretations', such as the assumption of collective identities constructed to further political discourses (e.g. plural pronouns 'us' and 'them'), passive and active phrases, word groups, and collocations of nouns, verbs and adjectives, which created specific meanings. Assumed 'commons senses' were noted that gave the speeches, and discourses coherence, that is, the discursive moves that attempted to naturalise and present statements as fact. For example, 'we all know…' imposes common sense and contributes to making sense of what follows next, as well as adding a notion of belonging (between speaker and receiver). This is important, because there is a dialectic relationship between the text and the recipients of the text, who are not passive but have their own means of interpretation, as noted above. Discourse must appeal to its 'members' resources' - it must be located in a world already known to the receiver, a pre-supposed common ground with no need of explanation. Assumptions of common sense appeal to the audience, what they already have in their heads. This can be mobilised and supported by cues such as images and stereotypes to work with 'members' resources' (MR) including mental representations (Fairclough 2003, 58), for example, describing a type that everyone knows. Presuppositions, that is the propositions perceived as already known by the audience, can be mobilised with such stereotypes (Fairclough 2001a, 121-127). Furthermore, metaphors can normalise a subject's positioning. Activation and passivation are significant too, activation assumes a capacity for controlling others, whereas passivation assumes a subjection to processes, for example in the case of welfare that is active, while the recipient is passive (Fairclough, 2003, 150).

The analysis focussed on the following questions: What are the dominant discourses, and how are they appropriated and disseminated? What are the elements of member's resources that are normative, easy to interpret and clear, and is there any creativity? What are the assumptions made about work and welfare, and how does the text convey these meanings?

This includes the normative discourse (that everyone knows); how has discourse been normative or creative (what people ought to know), what was presented as self-evident, and what was missing and ignored (obfuscated).

Findings: Exploring texts for discourses of work, welfare and the subject

This section presents the themes and discourses that appeared consistently across the speeches, and are presented as follows: (i) 'A Welfare state too expensive to sustain', (ii) 'Unfulfilled potential', (iii) 'Work as a duty', (iv) 'Them and Us', (v) 'Structural factors ignored', and (vi) 'In work being out of work'. Throughout, extracts from the speeches are included to illustrate key issues, and their source is indicated with a letter corresponding to each of the speeches as above (A, B, C, and D).

A welfare state too expensive to sustain.

Where ministers talk about welfare reform, it is noticeably to denote a retrenchment of welfare, underpinned by the concept of austerity. As Levitas (2012) describes, austerity was ushered in alongside descriptions of a wasteful public sector, cultures of welfare dependency and of undeserving entitlement; legitimising welfare retrenchment. This was despite debts incurred by an unregulated financial sector in 2007-8. The previous Labour Government is held responsible for over spending, and this provides a legitimizing backdrop to welfare 'reform'. Metaphorical representations are used to express this, as public finances have been:

'*Left in tatters by the last Government*' (C).

'*Frankly, to quote the last government, there is no money left [...] But anyone thinking we can keep endlessly pumping money is wrong*'. '*We can't just throw money at the problem and paper over the cracks*' (A).

The system: '*not just unaffordable. It was fundamentally broken*' (B).

The argument that the previous government was responsible for over spending on welfare has been challenged, with austerity linked instead to "a banking crisis pure and simple" (Wintour 2015). However here, the economic crisis is depoliticised, and people are not victims of economic austerity. As previous research has shown, newspaper coverage of the financial crisis has presented individuals as market citizens 'dehumanised consumers', and the

economic crisis depicted as an almost natural disaster, within this neoliberal framing (Temple, 2015).

Within the context of austerity, government expenditure is juxtaposed in relation to defence spending. This helps to visualise public finances as household finances, and mobilises priorities and presumed choices to be made: expensive working age welfare, or the nation's security:

"*We're already spending one pound in eight on working age welfare – twice as much as we spend on defence'* (A).

In the later speech, there is less emphasis on economic instability as a driver for welfare reform. After five years of being in government, a picture of some success is depicted and a partial economic recovery presented, as it is suggested that an economic plan (notably austerity) was put in place, and is 'working', conveyed metaphorically too to convince this argument ('pistons' are 'firing'):

"*Our long-term economic plan is working. Last year we were the fastest growing major economy in the world. We've created a thousand jobs a day. There's a record number of businesses in Britain. The pistons in our factories are firing. The orders in our companies are rising. The plan is working*" (D)

This partial success has also been recognised by Ainley (2016, 53) who referred to this 'Cameron - Osborne' austerity plan' presented by the government, continued so that a partial recovery was 'engineered' in light of the forthcoming 2015 election. This backdrop of government success, evident in the latter speech three months before the general election, goes onto depict that with money now saved and austerity working, the aim of government is now shifted – enabling the focus to be on reforming welfare to change people's lives, rather than to save money:

'*Yes, we need to reform welfare to save money but this is also about changing people's lives*' (D).

For this to be invoked successfully, work must be presented as inherently good for the individual, as discussed below.

Unfulfilled potential: work is good

Within these speeches, there are two conceptualisations of work presented. One is that work is fulfilling and individuals are denied their opportunity to work by the welfare state; welfare is damaging, and holds people back. The second is that work is conceptualised as a moral and civic duty, and the individual will avoid work, and is therefore a scrounger. This is explored later, but here, the former is discussed, where work is valorised, as common sense that everyone adheres to:

"*[…] for work is about more than just money. It's about what happens to us, lifts our families, delivers security, and helps rebuild our communities.*" (C).

"*[…] allowing that person who has never had a job that moment of incredible realisation – that their first step into work is the first step in the rest of their lives.*" (C).

Benefit recipients are presented as not having had the fortune to work. The previous system was unfair to not only tax payers, but to the benefit recipients themselves. They are described as being 'parked', their aspirations 'squashed'. Work is discussed as more than money, but as contributing to self-confidence and self-esteem, and as 'security' and 'incredible realisation'. Therefore, work is given what Patrick (2016a, 57) has referred to as 'transformative potential'. It transforms people and communities, and is posited throughout as unproblematic and good, with presuppositions presented, as a common sense shared truth:

"*Everyone here knows what a difference a new job can make to peoples' lives. It's not just the money. It's the feeling of security, of making a contribution. We're making historic changes this week to cut tax and reform benefits; and we won't stop until we make sure that everyone has the opportunity to enjoy the peace of mind that comes from having a job. […] The pride. The purpose. The self-esteem.*" (D).

Work is not associated with a wage, but with opportunity, contributing to society, and security. Any issues relating to the conditions of work are ignored, and this obfuscates the reality of a labour market that has been increasingly insecure. Therefore, work is a propulsive force and backcloth, drawn on to understand self-fulfilment and achievement, similarly to Proccaci's description of poverty as a 'reservoir of motives and a propulsive force', tapped into in a political economy based on wealth (Procacci, 1991, 154). It is important to note however that it is the context of welfare 'reform' that work is valorised. As discussed in Chapter Two, drawing on Weber, this has served capitalism very well, harnessed within the

concept of making a contribution to society. This assumption, that no one wants 'charity' from the state underpinning policies historically. Furthermore, this is creative discourse, where a job is synonymous with a feeling of security, as discussed in the introduction, job security is increasingly unrealistic especially for entry-level jobs. The idea that work, as in labour market participation improves self- esteem and is therefore a form of welfare in itself existed within New Labour policy and discourse, and was taken up with gusto under the Coalition Government.

With work assumed as inherently good, for the individual (for all but money), welfare is not perceived as a safety net, rather it encourages dependency. People are trapped, unable to reach their potential and opportunity, and the welfare state is regarded as inhibiting people, as illustrated in the extract below:

"I want to show you that we would have wanted to reform the welfare state, even if we had no deficit. As conservatives, we should hate the idea of people with unfulfilled potential languishing on welfare. Welfare reform is fundamentally about opportunity and life change…cutting the cost of social failure by transforming the life chances and outcomes of those on benefits…restoring fiscal stability and restoring lives at the same time." (C)

This statement provides evidence of unemployment (on benefits) as a deficient state, where individuals are deprived as their potential is unfulfilled and they 'languish' on welfare: a word associated with losing or lacking vitality and becoming weak (Oxford Dictionaries n.d.). Indeed, welfare reform is described as providing an opportunity to actively reduce 'social failure' – to 'restoring lives' and this is through the welfare reforms (to recall, more conditionality and sanctions).

The government are the metaphorical paternalistic figure, steering this population to make the right choices, based on the correct values. Lakoff (2004) describes this concept of 'framing' a debate, with moral values that subsumes other issues - standards of work, pay, and housing costs, a discourse of a work, and common sense fulfilment through employment (as well as responsibility, and fairness – as discussed below) . Lackoff referred to US social welfare programmes in the 2000s, that were presented as 'immoral' within political discourse, because they preventing independence, inhibiting the individual from helping themselves to prosperity. Similarly, here the presumed damaging effects of welfare are

evident, in preventing people in helping themselves, but also in encouraging immorality and irresponsibility:

"In a world of fierce competitiveness – a world where no-one is owed a living – we need to have a welfare system that the country can properly afford. It also trapped people in poverty and encouraged irresponsibility." (A)

Throughout the texts, welfare is construed as active, it encourages inappropriate behaviour for some individuals and 'traps' people, whereas people are portrayed as passive. Activation assumes a capacity for controlling others and passivation assumes that there is subjection to processes (Fairclough 2003, 150). As well as work being good for you (people are trapped and unfulfilled), there is the reminder that no one is owed a living – that you cannot get something for nothing. This assumes a passivity, and an assumption that enables the imagery of 'sitting at home all day'.

"The system we inherited was not only unaffordable. It also trapped people in poverty and encouraged irresponsibility." (A).

"Is it kind to sentence people to never going anywhere, of letting people in their teens and twenties sit at home all day slipping into depression and despair?" (D)

"I believe there is no kindness in a benefits system that's traps people, leaving them in a twilight world where life is dependent on what is given to you, rather than what you are able to create." (C)

Unemployed claimants are framed as passively waiting for their benefits, and this has been steadily extended to single parents, as discussed in Chapter Two. New Labour targeted single parents as passive recipients of welfare, not working, and requiring 'help' back to work. This has resulted in mandatory work focussed interviews and active work search with the youngest child 5 years old, a decrease from 15 years old in 2008.[7]

It is particularly interesting that this positive construction of work also needs to be supported by the conceptualisation of work as a duty, paradoxically, that no one would do if they did not have to. This draws on images of stigma, shame and unfairness, concepts that have been used throughout history, such as the stigma of the poor law and the 'scroungerphobia' of the 1980s. However, young people too are a target population assumed to be left behind, as

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[7] When the youngest child is 1 -3 years. The age of the youngest child for parent to claim income support has decreased from 15 to 12 years in 2008-9, 11 to 10 years in 2010-12, from 9-7 years 2010-12, from 7 to 5 years in 2012. mhttps://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/286997/islp-by-jcp-district.pdf

welfare actively sucks them in, so that they are unable to escape. Young people are at risk of being "*sucked into a life on welfare" (D) "No-on should be left behind"* (D)

Work as a duty: mobilising the scrounger

Here, the second conceptualisation of work is discussed. As above, the principle of fairness to the individual is mobilised as people are denied their opportunity to work because of welfare. Fairness is also drawn on to suggest that individuals decide not to work and unfairly receive benefits paid for by the working taxpayer. This provides a different common sense conceptualisation of work to one that is valorised, for here, work is a moral and civic duty that no one would do if they did not have to. Work must be a chore for this fairness to be mobilised, something that no one would do if they could claim benefits at a higher amount:

"*Why an earth would someone go out to work if that's the case*?" (B).

"*Why would you get out of bed on a cold morning for that? No one would.*" (D).

"*Why has it become acceptable for many people to choose a life on benefits?"* (A).

There are assumptions here that many people choose a life on benefits. This is a presumed acceptance of a cultural life choice, associated with welfare as a moral hazard, actively encouraging people to avoid work and live off the state. The vision of the collective hard working tax payer is appropriated and mobilised to support the notion of subsidising people that will not work. This has been reinforced by ministerial statements such as: "*It's certainly not fair to taxpayers like you, who get up, go out to work, pay your taxes and pay for those benefits/ back hardworking people, sort out welfare so it pays to work*" George Osborne (The Spectator, 2014).

This discourse of fairness is aided by the use of simple definitions and accessible categories of striver and shirker: those who are disciplined, responsible, work and pay taxes - and those who do not (also see Hoggett, Wilkinson and Beedell, 2013). Simple binary categories of working and not working are useful for the social discipline they stoke, the cultural myth of deserving upstanding citizen, and the morally dubious undeserving (Frayne, 2015, 99). The understanding of words depends on their relationship with other words. The collocation of working hard with doing the right thing, working hard synonymous with 'correct' moral

behaviour: '*we back those who work hard and do the right thing*' (D). These are assumed known categories: those who get up in the morning, work, 'do the right thing', and those who do not work, stay in bed, and do the wrong thing. This is a depiction previously drawn on: '*Where is the fairness, we ask, for the shift worker, leaving home in the dark hours of the morning, who looks up at the closed blinds of their next door neighbour sleeping off a life on benefits*' (George Osborne 2012, speaking at a Conservative conference, cited in Frayne, 2015, 99).

Crossley (2017) describes how this image, whilst not dependent on exact details, has encouraged people to imagine the person next door to them, in close proximity, so that the scenario feels more tangible. Familiarity breeds contempt: the shift worker who goes out into the dark night (moral worker) whilst paying for the neighbour able to relax in bed. Although, even here there is 'sympathy' for the person who is 'sleeping off their life on benefits' and so is missing out in life (which can be achieved by work). The individual who has been 'rewarded' with benefits is therefore immoral; they did the 'wrong' thing:

"*For too long we had a system where people who did the right thing – who get up in the morning and work hard – felt penalised for it, while people who did the wrong thing got rewarded for it.*" (B).

As discussed, 'known' categories of deserving and undeserving have been appropriated previously, alongside discourses of shameful dependencies in the same way that the Poor Law was for the workshy. In appropriating fairness, there is an assumption that the family is an unproblematic site of welfare:

"*Hardworking young people were stuck living with their parents into their 30s while others got a council house straight from school that created a sense of deep unfairness.*" (D).

Here, apparent real-life stories are used which can be understood widely, and these tap into the feeling of resentment, which obfuscates the need to address other factors. As Hoggett *et al* (2013) note resentment is constructive in uniting individuals in a common, shared indignation. This resentment is mobilised by fairness and extends to the family and responsibility: those working hard should save before having children:

"*Quite simply, we have been encouraging working age people to have children and not work, when we should be enabling working age people to work and have children.*" (A).

"They're both working full time and together take £24 000 after tax. They'd love to start having children – and they know they'd get help from the state if they did so. But with the mortgage and bills to pay, they feel that they should keep saving up for a few more years. But the couple working full time but deciding not to have children as they wish to save beforehand and a couple with 4 children that haven't worked for a number of years […] Can we really say that's fair?" (A?)

This presumes that having children is an economically rational decision only, and it is only when there is any financial security that having children should ever be entertained. This is also a moral decision, because having children with state support is a shameful dependence. With welfare actively encouraging people not to work - looking after children, as dependents, is not 'work'. This is similar to the Poor Laws before, which were perceived as causing dependency, despite providing only minimal relief. To recall, the Poor Law was criticised as being an incentive for families to have more children, subsequently poor relief was reduced, and a work test introduced. Similarly, welfare is criticised as sending out damaging signals, and fairness is easily appropriated through assumptions of shared resentment towards those who put in no effort:

"It gave us millions of working age people sitting at home on benefits even before the recession hit. It created a culture of entitlement. And it has led to a huge resentment amongst those who pay into the system, because they feel that what they're having to work hard for, others are getting without having to put in the effort." (A).

Where welfare actively encourages dependency and 'traps' people, dependency on work or the family does not have negative connotations, as this is normal 'good' dependency. Just as the Poor Laws stated that the family or paid employment was always the first stop, the state should only intervene as a last resort. However, this invokes the principle of less eligibility, the condition of those out of work should never be better off than the one who is in paid employment. The idea that there is a culture of dependency, assumes that there is a generous welfare state, for those who do not put in any effort. Those who work hard are encouraged to resent those who do not, which diverts the questions of wages and conditions of work.

Them and us– mobilising the 'we'

"We're trying to make the system fair on people like you, who get up, go to work, and expect your taxes to be spent wisely." (B).

"The system wasn't fair on hardworking taxpayers, paying out ever-increasing amounts to sustain others in lifestyles they could barely dream of affording themselves." (C).

As described above, for the concept of the scrounger to be viable, work must be depicted as a chore and a moral obligation. Welfare is regarded as a moral hazard, encouraging people to enjoy a life on benefits. This is presented as a new phenomenon, alongside the golden age of collective responsibility: a previous era, of trust that has since been eroded *because* of the welfare state:

"As well as the good intentions of governments, there was that assumption of trust at the heart of the system. That people would do the right thing. That they would use the system when they fell on hard times but work their way out of it. This may have worked when the welfare state was born, when there was a stronger culture of collective responsibility in this country, but as I've argued for years, the welfare system has helped erode that culture." (A).

"People didn't tend to take advantage of the system. But over time those values got eroded. Welfare became a system of giveaways." (D).

This image of a post war collectivism is mobilised, a cue to members' resources to recall and reminisce a time of traditional values of the welfare; an imagined past, underpinned by values of trust and hard work that feeds the discourses of fairness and unfairness. Young people are presented as particularly receptive to these new values:

"You could leave school, sign on, start getting your benefit, start getting housing benefit and the contribution asked for was minimal." (D).

Assumptions of young people are discussed further below, but as noted in Chapter Two, the argument that their work ethic is eroded because of state welfare has been drawn on many times previously, as well as the assumption of an unproblematic path to welfare, with no conditionality.

The use of pronouns within texts is useful to explore where members' resources are mobilised (Fairclough 2003, 149): 'we' as a first person plural pronoun stresses unity with the audience, and supposes the authority of the speaker to speak for others. It implies solidarity with a common cause, so that dominant interests are mobilised as the interests of society through the concept of fairness (as discussed above) which relies on public

resentment. Within the speeches, this is used to summarise the 'problem' of welfare, which needs to be resolved by the Government:

"*It's about doing what is right for our country […] It's about the kind of country we want to be – who we want to back, who we reward, what we expect of people, the kind of signals we send to the next generation.*" (A).

"*I think people in this country understand that the welfare system needs to change […] Because defending benefits that trap people in poverty and penalise work is defending the indefensible. The benefits system is broken; it penalises those who try to do the right thing; and the British people badly want it fixed. We agree – and those who don't are on the wrong side of the British public.*" (B)

The audience, who are the recipients of the speech, must identify themselves with the 'us' - the nation imagined as a collective of moral citizens. There is no representation of welfare claimants (other than the scrounger or the unfulfilled worker), which is a significant shift from the 1979 Conservative electoral campaign poster (see figure 4, Chapter Two), where the queue of people to the unemployment office are depicted citizens, and no apparent moral judgements made. Furthermore, a collective 'them' and 'us' infers a British public as a unitary concept used to suggest shared dissatisfaction with a benefits system that needs reform (it is 'broken') and claimants are cheated of their right to work by this system:

"*Those who campaign against a cap on benefits for families who aren't working are completely out of touch with how the millions of working families, who pay the taxes to fund these benefits, feel about this. We are on your side […] Tax payers don't think the welfare state works properly anymore*". (B).

The presumed need to 'reform' welfare (reduce spending) is mobilised as a collective effort, for the security of the country and draws on the understanding that all political parties subscribe to reform of welfare. Therefore, welfare reforms are not alien, but common sense, and there is no alternative. Within this discourse, it is explicitly understood that people need to service a flexible economy in a competitive market:

"*We all accept the need to continue the process of welfare reform – and the next government will have to make further changes. […] Common sense should tell us that Britain cannot run a modern flexible economy, if at the same time, so many of the people who service that economy are trapped in dependency on the state unwilling or unable to play a productive part […] Spending less on benefits, so we can invest more in creating more jobs.*" (C)

Those who refuse work are unwilling (scroungers) or trapped (unfulfilled). The unemployed can be blamed for economic problems; they are responsible for a lack of jobs, again drawing on parallels to household budgets and one pot of money. What is evident here is that business, low pay and working practices are never criticised. To recall, from Chapter Two the focus from the 1980s was to remove barriers to 'economic progression' such as collective pay bargaining and increase flexible labour and 'non-standard work arrangements'. This is a continuation that signifies work practices that are to be '*modernised*' to '*create a more flexible and responsive economy, it is important that this is underpinned by social change*' (C).

In other words, the individual must be accommodating to the needs of business and employers as the importance to business is underlined, and rather than addressing pay, it is welfare that needs to be euphemistically '*sorted out*'.

Structural factors ignored

Implicit common sense assumptions provide a framework for the receiver of the text or speech (the audience, or reader), so that they can be understood, without having to be explained. This maintains a coherence to the discourse, and deflects attention from other perspectives on welfare. Any challenges to the common sense dominant discourse is made less credible; made by enemies to the state (us and them).

What is interesting is that the onus is on welfare and welfare recipients, which obfuscates the discussion of structural factors: pay, job security, employers, house prices and rents. It is not asked why people cannot afford to have children when they are in paid work. People '*fall out of work*', and consequently '*fall into*' '*dependency, hopelessness and despair*'. High rents are subsidised by workers pay, despite housing benefits being received by the landlord, and not the individual claimant. Rent and wages are passive, they do not warrant discussion, ignored as if unrelated to government policy. Where there is minor acknowledgment of working people struggling, this is to foreground a debate on the (unfair) rise of the financial level of benefits, masking any discussion of low or stagnating pay. Struggling to make ends meet is a completely banal assertion that is unrelated to any government policy.

"*We need a debate about the limits of state provision. There are national questions we have to ask. This year we increased benefits by 5.2 per cent. That was in line with inflation last September. But it was almost twice as much as the average wage increase. Given that so*

many working people are struggling to make ends meet we have to ask whether this is the right approach." (A).

Individuals with drug addiction, alcohol problems and obesity are collocated with worklessness and welfare dependency, to assume individual behavioural problems. These are states that people 'fall into', or they are 'dealt a bad hand'. The presumptions made are that there is help and support available that individuals wilfully eschew. Stereotypes, which are useful for drawing on members' resources, are used to enforce this reality:

"And yes, that means looking at whether people should have the threat of a reduction in benefits if they refuse to engage with a recommended treatment plan." (D).

"In neighbourhoods blighted by worklessness…where gangs were prevalent, debt and drugs the norm…families broken down…those living there had one thing in common; they were for the most part dependent on the state for their daily needs."(A).

" […]worklessness and welfare dependency…family breakdown…educational failure…debt…or addiction…these are multiple and overlapping problems that cause people to find themselves in difficulty in the first place." (C).

" […] fall on hard times or are dealt a bad hand we are here for you" (D)

As noted, structural influences are not included in such concerns, rather there are problems subtly specific to the individual, which enables paternalistic discourses based on the presumption that people do not make the right decisions and need intervention. Therefore, the individual is legitimately targeted, rather than government policies that would address inequality and a lack of jobs, for example. Individualising discourse is also evident where language pertaining to crime is used. Those who do not adhere to the 'rules' are deviant, but it is the fault of the broken system that can be reformed, to make a better citizen: '*the present system makes criminals out of those trapped in its clutches*' people feel '*pushed into crime*' (C). Waquant (2010) identifies the retrenchment of welfare and extension of the penal system, particularly in the US, and notes that a criminalising focus, centres on those at the lower socio-economic ends of society; the neoliberal state increasingly incarcerates the poor and marginalised. The use of crime metaphors in welfare policy has been in place throughout references to welfare, as shown in Chapter Two, from punishment for those refusing to work entering a house of correction (1601 Poor Law), and New Labour's sanctioning regime for those who refused to 'play ball' and a zero tolerance on (benefit) fraud. As discussed above,

metaphors help to frame debates, and draw on collective experiences to enable an accessible and shared understanding. Here, it is that welfare actively pushes people into crime - individuals become criminals because of the present system, because welfare enslaves people, rather than supports them. The powerful metaphor of a 'culture of dependency' and related discourse is used to support these representations of people in receipt of benefits. The uncritical use of the documentary Benefits Street (Channel 4, 2014) within speeches helps to construe this as a factual depiction, drawing on assumed known types and communities to reinforce this as truth:

"[…] the true nature of life on some of our estates. For too long we let these problems be ghettoised as though they were a different country. Even now, for the most part they remain out of sight – meaning people are shocked when they are confronted with a TV programme such as Benefits Street. […] Short term policy making created damaging long term consequences, destroying the ethos of a whole section of our society, left behind in workless households and those deprived estates that I described at the start." (C).

"We're trying to restore hope in those communities who have been let down by generations of politicians by getting them back to work. […] Once it becomes the norm in an area not to work, welfare dependency can become deeply entrenched, handed on from one generation to the next." (B).

Types and places are presented to resonate with members' resources, what they already know, where worklessness is normalised and culturally inherited. This stigmatising and 'symbolic unshackling from economic inequalities' already present, was nurtured under New Labour's discourses of welfare as discussed, where disadvantage and poverty was culturalised, hard work elevated, and there was moral panic surrounding council houses (Tyler 2013, 162). As described previously, these are flawed 'realities', myths that are not grounded in evidence, and where empirical research in fact presents a work ethic rather than intergenerational worklessness and in work poverty (Shildrick *et al* 2012, MacDonald *et al*, 2013). However, work the best way out of poverty, cultures of dependency and work as always available are 'key narrative threads' that have been appropriated as common sense (Jensen, 2014, 3.4).

Where statements are presented as truth, they help to silence potentially dissenting views and criticism. Within these speeches, alternate opinions are pre-empted, simplified and discredited. Work is posited as available and 'decent', and any rebuttal of these claims is described as a 'myth'. For example, of a secure jobs environment:

"So there is work – and it's decent work – for people to take […] over 80% rise in employment is full time working, and zero hours jobs accounting for less than 1 in 20 of all jobs […]. Go online, open the papers and you will find a record number of vacancies." (D).

Additionally, in the discussion of poverty, the suggestion that this is due to a lack of money is rebutted, poverty can not to be addressed by income re-distribution, but by giving people the 'chance':

"So this government is challenging the old narrow view that the key to beating poverty is simply income re-distribution" (A).

"Compassion isn't measured out in benefit cheques – it's the chances you give people…the chance to get a job, to get on, to get that sense of achievement that comes from doing a hard day's work for a proper day's pay". (A)

Any view of income distribution is pre-empted, and posited as patronising:

"Attacking the complacent, patronising view that said all millions of working age people were good for was receiving from the state. And saying: no – self reliance is in everyone. Industry is in everyone. Aspiration is in everyone. No-one is a write off." (A)

"You can give a drug addict more money on benefits, but that's unlikely to get them out of poverty; indeed, it could perpetuate their addiction. You can pump more cash into chaotic homes, but if the kids are still playing truant, they're going to stay poor in the most important senses of the word." (A)

"[…] the accepted wisdom of the last government being that poverty is about money, and more state money should solve it. As a result, Labour ratcheted up welfare bills by an enormous 60%" (C).

With poverty a state unlinked to a lack of money, solutions of income redistribution can be legitimately dismissed. Iain Duncan Smith, Work and Pensions Secretary adhered to and disseminated discourses of welfare dependency, worklessness, drug and alcohol addiction, educational failure, and family breakdown - individualised problems that reconstruct, and re-present being and staying poor (Patrick, 2016, 64). This is a continuation from the so-called underclass, and the forgotten people, that Tony Blair within New Labour had previously described. These are what Crossley refers to as 'Westminster effects' (2107, 42-54): simple narratives of individual states and stigmatised places, which emanate from those in Westminster and deflect from other structural factors. Welfare dependency can be more readily presumed and conflated with pathological dependency, where it is recognised as an individual problem. Rather than a financial predicament, it is not the responsibility of the government to 'pump more cash' into 'chaotic homes', but for the individual to take

responsibility without restrictions of welfare. This prepares the ground for apparently neutral medical and psychological discourses to be mobilised, focussing on the individual. Fraser and Gordon (1994, 325) point out that where welfare dependency is supported by psychological and medical discourses outside the world of welfare, they contribute to stigmatising assumptions of welfare claimants, for example, as addicts of drugs or alcohol.

In work, being out of work

"*Welfare should be seen as no different from work itself […] the state supports you – you are in work to find work.*" (Iain Duncan smith - Gov.uk 2014b).

There are two conceptualisations of work, and of the benefit claimant, as discussed. Firstly, work is fulfilling and people are held back by welfare; therefore, paternalistic guidance is needed, and this includes policies that incorporate conditionality and sanctions that nurture the individual's aspirations. This is evident in the discursive strategy of the sanctioning leaflets, shown previously, where the claimant appears to be grateful for having their money suspended, because now they know the right thing to do. The second conceptualisation of work is that it is a chore; a moral and civil obligation that no one wants to do, so that (working) taxpayers maintain the lifestyle of scroungers, who wilfully and wrongfully eschew work. These two seemingly paradoxical perspectives are united by welfare policy and practices that emulate being in work whilst out of work. This is because they ensure that the benefit recipient maintains their individual responsibility and conditionality to receive their benefits, and therefore maintains fairness to the taxpayer.

Young people are presented as damaged by welfare, and require more discipline to move them closer to the labour market. The tightening of the benefit screw has been directed at young people since the decline in employment opportunities, as documented in Chapter Two. To recall, this has included their removal from the Wages Council in 1986, so that they could price themselves into the labour market, and the development of training schemes, based on a presumed deficiency of work ethic and participation (rather than actual work availability). As young people's opportunities to (well) paid work and access to welfare have declined, they have been problematized as deficient, needing to work on their efforts to make themselves more employable and attractive to employers. A 'real life' situation is presented within the speech, which suggests that young people are passive recipients of welfare, and have an

uncomplicated route an untroubled transition from college to jobcentre, with automatic entitlement to benefits:

"*That well worn path – from the school gate, down to the Jobcentre and on to a life on benefits has got to be rubbed away […] They drift from school to worklessness to benefits and not enough is asked of them.*" (D).

"*She's only 19 years old and doesn't have a job but is already living in a house with friends. How? Because when she left college and went down to the Jobcentre to sign on for Job Seekers Allowance, she found out that if she moved out of her parents place, she was automatically entitled to housing Benefit. So that's exactly what she did. Again, is this really fair?*" (A)

This presents an assumed smooth trajectory for young people, as they 'drift' from school to worklessness, but also this also implies that family support is available. Young people who do not continue to education are problematized as needing specific policy interventions. David Cameron (D) specifically outlined this in his speech, where it was announced that access to Job Seekers allowance would be abolished for 18-21-year olds, as they required 'work experience' (not paid work):

(Young people) "*They need work experience. They need the order and discipline of turning up for work each day. So a Conservative government would require them to do daily community work from the very start of their claim, as well as searching for work.*" (D)

With the claimant problematized as not looking for work, presuppositions can draw on a shared common ground within 'members' resources' – what they already know:

"*Because governments wanted to give people dignity while they are unemployed – and while this is clearly important, it led us to the wrong places. To job seekers being called 'customers' instead of claimant and to conditionality being set at a bare minimum.*" (A).

"*Those in work have obligations to their employer; so too claimants a responsibility to the tax payer: in return for support, and where they are able, they must do their bit to find work.*" (C).

With the presumption of a lack of effort, and that paid employment and support is available, the term customer is disparaged and claimant is preferred, and it is assumed that work, and pay is unproblematic and continuous. There is an individualising discourse, as people '*crash out of a job*' because they do not know how to handle money, and leaving a job is due to the

individual mismanaging finances, and so a monthly and reduced income is to help the individual develop budgeting skills:

 "*Surely we should help that minority to develop their budgeting skills, easing that transition into work…instead of simply waiting for them to crash out of a job because they couldn't cope with managing their money over a longer period.*" (C).

Conclusion

My aim in this chapter was to identify assumptions and common sense constructions of work, welfare and the welfare recipient by the Conservative led Coalition Government (2010-2015). In doing so, this chapter has investigated discursive constructions of problems of work and welfare, that is, what has been considered a problem for there to be government action. This has identified themes, and discourses of work and welfare using text as data. The language and vocabulary as discourse represents and orders, to legitimise policy. The main limitations were that only four speeches were used, and the analysis of discourse was relatively limited. Nonetheless, the main purpose of the chapter was achieved, to investigate and uncover the creative and assumptive common senses of work and welfare.

The government is dependent on ways of knowing, but certain knowledges must be assumed common sense, to frame and give coherence. This questions certainties, such as how constructs acquire a status of truth, and assumptions normalised, a 'discoursal common sense' that helps this to appear neutral, and naturalises it (Fairclough, 2001a, 89). These speeches as a means of the production of power, have been critically analysed, for what is considered to be truth and unquestioned, and what has been ignored. This chapter demonstrated 're-presentations' by those in government, their voices representing a reality that individuals can understand. The use of images and metaphors encourages people to think about, or imagine known people. What these discourses do, is offer a set of potential truths through powerful images that are drawing on what people already know, are difficult to contest. These discourses however, are also potent, in that they serve to displace others. They open the space for people to be judgemental through discourses of fairness, whilst ignoring structural factors that are responsible – low pay, as they 're-present' depoliticising and reconstituting structural factors as a personal matter. Job availability, pay, working conditions, as well as the rising costs of housing and living expenses are ignored and unquestioned. The focus remains

strongly on the individual. As illustrated, discourses gain legitimacy uniting the audience, becoming obvious without need of explanation, and obfuscate the need to address and challenge structural disadvantages linked to inequalities. Common sense discourse renders alternative views as unnatural, even despite evidence that suggests contrary: the valorisation of work despite in work poverty, and culture of dependency thesis despite a lack of evidence. Tyler (2013) refers to Pierre Bourdieu (2011, 164) and his term 'doxa' to describe the apparent self-evidence presented that requires no questioning. She notes that this common sense enables the state to be absolved of any responsibility. Therefore this is, as she sees, a class project of neoliberalism that increases the polarisation of economic wealth. Slater (2012, 962) too suggests there is a '*wilful and deliberate shielding'* from the public of alternate causes of poverty and unemployment. He uses the term 'agnotology', the study of ignorance, to describe the emotive terms and common sense understandings of welfare dependency as a lifestyle choice, deliberately deployed by the Conservative think tank Centre for Social Justice (CSJ). As Jensen (2014, 3.4) remarks, this is specialising in 'doxosophy', that is, commenting on representations as if they were real. The point here is that non-evidenced assumptions divert attention from structural factors, including causes of poverty, and enable punitive reforms such as sanctions, to appear logical, even paternalistic. In sustaining public ignorance, this constitutes a deliberate ploy to direct the debate on UK welfare reform, focussing on the unemployed diverting attention from policy shifts that push the risks onto the individual (Soss *et al* 2011, 36).

One of the main themes discovered here, was that work was valorised, so that the individual was cheated of their opportunity to fulfil their (natural) work ethic. This is an argument that does not extend to wealthy non-workers, but those reliant on out of work benefits (Patrick, 2016a, 69). It is explicitly a solution for individual deviance and dependencies of the lower (and underclass). Welfare was not presented as a safety net, but collated with being trapped, dependency, that people needed to 'break free' from. Reforming welfare then has the purpose of transforming individual's lives. Therefore, work is eulogised, but 'non-work' experiences ignored. This defends the individual's right to work, and employers meet the needs of the individual, rather extract surplus value (Weeks 2011, 53; Cole 2008, 34). The government has a moral obligation to supervise the individual, for his or her own good, and punish, through sanctions, when there is resistance for the good of the individual, and society. Policy responses that motivate and mandate individuals, being in work out of work, and sanctions and conditionality are legitimised. These paternalist interventions assume that the

individual has mismanaged their life, and is offered the paternalistic guidance of the state (Whitworth 2016). This is similar to a child not knowing what is in their best interests, and lacking the self-discipline to act, as has been described by Soss *et al* (2011, 23) with reference to US welfare interventions.

At the same time, work must be presented as a chore, a civil duty, and (working) taxpayers fund 'scroungers' who do not apply any effort to finding work, mobilised by the concept of fairness. The scrounger, the type that everyone knows is unquestioned, and drawn on through stereotypes. This has been persistent as evidenced by the hardening of public attitudes towards those in receipt of benefits (British Social Attitudes, 2013; Whitworth, 2016, 7). Fairness to the tax payer has been consistently mobilised to further a neoliberal agenda, as well as to reduce worker collectivism. For example, the government celebrated a decline in the number union representatives (from 200 in 2004, to 20 in 2011) under the headline '*Reducing the number of full-time trade union representatives in government departments is saving taxpayers appropriately £6 million a year*' (Gov.uk 2014c). Yet, this resulted in a decline in the number cases brought forward for unfair employment practice (Bowcott, 2015).

What is important here is that these discourses are not new. As discussed in Chapter Two, the concept of individual employability and the scrounger rhetoric was pervasive within New Labour's policy and discourse, alongside rights and responsibilities, and to work hard was to contribute to society but also contributed to personal wellbeing. Here too, welfare was considered as inhibiting personal development. Previously, Thatcherite discourses of the welfare state were successful because they built on anti-bureaucratic and anti-state discourses that were already popular (Fairclough 2001a, 76). For example, that the state prevented individuals from flourishing and reaching their potential, there was less bureaucracy needed, and less state intervention (the neoliberal objective).

The following chapter presents the methods used in the empirical research I undertook with young people, and those front-line workers, as employment advisors and mentors.

Chapter Four: Methodology

Introduction

This research sought to explore young people's early labour market experiences, and their perceptions of work and welfare. An additional concern was to understand the experiences and discourses of front-line workers involved in employment and support practices. The research was underpinned by the recognition that work is increasingly low paid and precarious (insecure), especially for young people. At the same time of writing, conditionality and benefit sanctions increasingly constitute welfare. Governmentality is aligned with the production of knowledge, which becomes normalized through discourse and practices. Individuals can be regulated through discourses, but a precondition is that individuals also regulate themselves.

This chapter presents the principle research methods used to address the following research questions:

(i)   Do young people and front-line workers (in employment or mentoring roles), reflect and reproduce dominant (political) discourses within their narratives?

(ii)   What are the experiences of young people that are unemployed or in precarious employment?

This chapter describes the use of narrative interviews, and considers their application in this study. Here, I address some epistemological concerns, including ethical considerations and sampling methods, followed by my reflections on key aspects of the research process including participant recruitment. Details of the sample and respondent profiles are included, followed by a reflection of my experiences in using narrative interviews with both front-line workers, and young people. Finally, I present the method of data analysis.

Narrative methods

The rationale for the empirical research within this study was to gain knowledge of the experiences and discourses, of work and welfare, from young people and front-line workers. Through the narrative interview, the researcher can learn of people's perceptions, values, and opinions, as well as their experiences and how their events have shaped their lives (Gubrium

and Holstein 2001). Narratives as spoken accounts of experiences can provide insights into power/knowledge because they are a snapshot of what can be said at a given time and place. This part of the chapter then considers narratives in research and narrative interview methods, as well as key epistemological issues.

A brief history of narrative use

Narratives are data that explore the knowledge of everyday life experiences and the meanings behind these. Narratives represent people's own accounts, in their own words. Previously, it was the role of others, as 'experts', who would relay stories of otherwise unheard groups or individuals. Although asking and answering questions, and sharing experiences is not new, the formalised interview is (Gulbrium and Holsten, 2001, 2). In the nineteenth century, for instance, Henry Mayhew documented stories, in depth experiences, of the unheard poor from their own perspective and of their social world in London. Before this, accounts of the poor - the 'humbler classes' - were not officially recognised. Rather, it was observations from society's elite as 'experts' used to define their experiences (Gubrium and Holstein, 2009, 3). American sociologist Clifford Shaw in 1930, similarly drew on 'own story material', with the belief that individuals owned their story, and as such, should be the ones to recount it. His book, The Jack Roller offered a view inside the social world of a young 'delinquent' named 'Stanley' (Shaw, 1930; Gubrium and Holstein 2009, 7-8). In the UK, when the standardised survey was used to gain public opinion following World War II, the individual began to be recognised as commentators of their own experiences talking to a stranger, the interviewer (Gubrium and Holstein, 2001, 3). It was by the late 1960s and 1970s that oral histories and personal accounts began to be embraced, with the recognition that experiences (and analysis) of those otherwise marginalised could not be truly understood through social surveys (Chamberlayne *et al*, 2000, 3).

Narratives have been used to elucidate the feelings and knowledge that organise an individual's (or society's) life that would otherwise be difficult to directly access, including an individual's explicit and 'tacit and unconscious assumptions' (Wengraff, 2001, 115). Narratives can be used for exploratory purposes, to understand a topic of which little is known, as well as to understand why the storyteller has told them, the ultimate aim of which is to develop an understanding of the lived experiences of groups of people and individuals (Gubrium and Holstein, 2009, 18). It is a useful approach because stories generally can be

told, irrespective of educational background or language ability (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000).

The narrative interview encourages the interviewee to reconstruct events, from their own perspective, with minimal interruption from the interviewer, in order to reveal their motivations, belief systems, experiences, and assumptions. They are useful for research that relates principally to social problems: as they contribute to understanding the construction of powerful discourses, and actions (Chamberlayne *et al* 2004, 25). Of particular interest here is that narratives can also include 'wider cultural narratives' – that is, they reflect what can be said, what is acceptable and normal (permissible statements). As Silverman (1993, 108) indicates: "*By analysing how people talk to one another, one is directly gaining access to a cultural universe and its content of moral assumptions. From a methodological point of view therefore, what is important here is that we are seeking to explore public, rather than simply private, narrations of normality*".

To illustrate this point, Cederberg (2014, 134) explored the role of public discourses within the biographical narratives of migrants in Sweden. Exploring two case studies, she found for example, that female migrants' narratives carried public discourses of immigration. They criticised immigrants for not making the effort to integrate, but emphasised their own agency and responsibility, strength and determination. Rather than highlighting any structural obstacles that immigrants faced or that they experienced themselves, they saw problems created by migrants. This research is an example of narratives carrying dominant discourses that can constrain and shape an individual's accounts. The individual makes sense of themselves, as well as others, through their narratives that can carry dominant discourses, rather than being counter hegemonic. Narratives can be explored for common senses and moral norms, as they are social products that circulate within social, cultural, and historical settings. Drawing on another example, Nettleton *et al* (2013) explored the narratives of recovering heroin users, to explore articulations of normality, and the tensions and contradictions of what being 'normal' meant for them. This research exposed the extent to which common sense knowledges were shared, and provided an accessible platform: '*a repertoire from which people can produce their own stories*' (*ibid*, 178).

Narratives then, carry artefacts of knowledges as discourses, and insight into individuals' experiences, norms (common sense knowledge at a time and place) and connections between

knowledge and power. Such commons sense, dominant discourses are maintained and constructed as normative, and acquire a 'status of truth', as illustrated by Foucault,

"*[…]my problem is to see how men govern (themselves and others) by the production of truth, (I repeat once again that by production of truth I mean not the production of true utterances, but the establishment of domains in which the practice of true and false can be made at once ordered and, pertinent.)*" (Foucault, 1994a, 230).

Epistemological concerns

The narrative interview method can yield important and hitherto hidden data. This can be used to understand the experiences of the individual from a phenomenological perspective, but it can also be employed to explore discourses, in this case in compliment to Foucauldian perspectives of governmentality, that government extends beyond politics, and is found in all facets of life (Foucault, 1994c; 2008; Miller and Rose, 2011, Dean 2013). Discourses are frameworks of meaning through which phenomena are made sense of. As previously discussed, power is dispersed and can function in banal and uneventful ways 'common sense' understandings, norms and assumptions (Chamberlayne *et al*, 2000, 17). Here, it is essential to address some epistemological concerns in relation to experience and discourse, and the nature of this research.

Narrative interviews assume that the interviewee is a knowing individual, and these narratives provide insights into their world: their views, and experiences. A phenomenological approach aims to explore how the social world is perceived and personalised. Associated with Alfred Schutz (1972), the phenomenological epistemology gives experience primacy. The individual's description of their social world and personal meanings, that is knowledge about the world, comes from people's experiences that can be accessed for example, through narrative interviews. Therefore, this poses methodological and philosophical tensions for interviews associated with using a broad Foucauldian approach, and eliciting constructions of meanings (Fadyl and Nicholls, 2013). These are described below.

The Foucauldian view of the subject can be considered as one who cannot stand outside of this power/knowledge prism, as they are constituted by, and of discourse; drawing on the discursive systems through which they are formed (constructed) to exert agency (Olssen, 2004). If the subject is not a 'key player' but a product of discourse, then the research

interview is only participation within this discourse; a conductor with little agency, shaped and influenced by discursive structures such as institutions.

Discourses have causal power; they make a difference to the social world (McKee 2009, 12). If the subject cannot step outside of power relations, and are products of discourses, then there is no 'truth' only discourses, albeit privileged ones, and solutions constituting a 'truth' derived from within narratives of the governed (or oppressed) is problematic - particularly for emancipatory research. Foucault did not perceive there to be one truth, and was more concerned with the questions 'how', rather than 'why', following beliefs of the plurality of power (policy, practices and discourses). However, the individual too has autonomy (Elder-Vass, 2012, 10) they are not solely constituted by discourse but can be reflexive, influenced by their experience, demonstrating resistance and constraint, contrary to hegemonic convention and over determinism (*ibid*, 18-19).

For this research, I wished to reflect on personal experiences as well as discourses carried within narratives, with the guiding principle that individuals are not solely constitutive of discourse. Indeed, studies employing discourse analysis to uncover (political) discourses are relevant, as exploring ideas and concepts individuals give to phenomena can help to understand how and where political thought exists, and how it is (re)produced through the (micro practices of) everyday life (MacDonald and Marston, 2005). Discourses do have 'causal powers' but so do subjects - individuals are reflective and have the capacity to make choices (Elder-Vass, 2012). Their language highlights what can be said, reflecting cultural truths and norms and therefore is a 'technique of the self' (Rose, 1999). Discourses normalise (as a historically contingent truth) giving an opportunity to denaturalise and decentre the individual as determining their own path and to focus on the role of social structures that may constrain the individual. Therefore, as Cederberg argues, the use of narratives is helpful to understand the role of dominant discourses in, decentring the individual as key to their experiences, and can illustrate power relations (Cederberg, 2014, 145). However, crucially, narratives are not free floating, they are attached to reality, and as Winlow *et al* (2017) recognise in their exploration of working class politics, they are attached to a meaningful and harsh reality of insecurity that '*demands the constant testing of all political narratives and promises against them*' (*ibid*, 56-7).

Sampling

As noted, the empirical research that informs this thesis, explored the experiences and perspectives of two distinct groups: (i) front-line workers involved in employment advisory or mentoring and support practices, and (ii) young people who were unemployed or in precarious employment. Therefore, a purposive sampling strategy was appropriate to recruit participants (Ritchie, *et al* 2003). I needed to be pragmatic because these were difficult to reach groups, and in addition snowball sampling was a useful approach to reach hidden, dispersed populations, who it transpired, *were* difficult to find in this research (*ibid*, 94, Sixsmith *et al* 2003). In practice, this entailed asking participants who had already taken part in the research, and potential gatekeepers if they could pass my details to others who might participate. The recruitment processes for each participant group is provided below.

Fieldwork

I focussed the research within different areas across North and Mid Wales as I did not wish to be too closely associated with only one location. Fieldwork commenced following the University ethical approval process, and potential participants were provided with a study pack that included an information sheet that described the aims of the study and the likely nature of their involvement, an informed consent form (found in appendix 2).

Front-line workers

I identified potential front-line workers as those people working in employment and support practices. Recruitment involved contacting managers of organisations including Jobcentre Plus offices, employment advisors (including those delivering the government's Work Programme), and other employment and support programmes (charitable and Welsh Government funded). This involved direct contact with staff, visiting offices, phone calls and sending many emails, including forwarding the details of the research, and participant information packs.

Young people

As noted, I wished to recruit young people who were in either precarious work or unemployed, and not in full time education. This is important since young people that do not go onto higher education are more likely to be precarious employment, defined by job insecurity, temporary employment, low pay, and lack of collective bargaining, union

representation, self-employment, and underemployment. Therefore, I looked to the organisations that worked with individuals (including young people aged 16-24) in an employment and support capacity. I did so via online searches, phone calls, and visits to offices, to explain my research. I found many contacts and recommendations from organisations including Jobcentre Plus offices, employment services and various local community, charity and voluntary organisations, Further Education (FE) colleges, careers advisers, Citizens Advice Bureau, Job Clubs, and Careers Wales. I asked staff if they would be willing to pass on the details of my research (the participant recruitment pack) to young people, along with my contact details. I supplied organisations with bilingual (English and Welsh) copies of the information sheet (appendices 1a and b) explaining the nature of the research, as well as leaflets and posters. This information was, with consent circulated on websites of community organisations, within libraries, employment offices and Further Education colleges.

Ethical issues and Informed consent

It is essential that ethics are considered in narrative research, as this involves data collected directly from participants, conducting interviews with young people (over the age of 16) could reveal some potentially sensitive issues surrounding (upsetting and negative) experiences of work and welfare. I was aware of the implications for the conduct and the management of the research. The need to recognise the ethical considerations and welfare of both the researcher and participants is important, and good practice and high ethical standards requirements were followed always, as set out in the ESRC ethics framework (ESRC 2012), which has since been updated (see ESRC 2015). It was upon approval for the research, from Bangor University College of Business, Law, Education, and Social Sciences ethics committee (see appendix 2) that I prepared recruitment packages consisting of information for participants about the study, and letters of invitation to participate (appendices 1a and b).

It is an ethical requirement that where participants consent to take part in the research, they do so freely, and are fully informed of the purposes of the research, and what is expected of them as a participant. Therefore, the purposes of the research were presented clearly in a participant information sheet (appendix 1). This included details of the research, anticipated time required for the interview, addressing managing anonymity and confidentiality and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. There were two different information sheets, one for front-line workers and one for the young people.

Privacy and confidentiality are important in the interview process, from an ethical perspective, and contributing to building trust with participants. As part of the ethical and legal obligation, it was stressed that their details and interview data would be confidential, as well as the fact that they had taken part in research. This was important as it provided necessary reassurance that no benefits would be affected, and there would be no repercussions in the workplace for taking part. Confidentiality however, is not absolute and there are circumstances under which it would need to be broken, such as a risk of harm, disclosure of malpractice or illegal activity, and this was outlined in the information sheet.

It is an important requirement and principle of research ethics, that unless the participants are otherwise informed, the data collected for research is anonymous. Therefore, participants were made fully aware, in the information sheet, and prior to the interview that they would not be identified in the PhD thesis or any outputs arising from the research, and any potentially identifying details were removed. This included all names, places and organisations.

Managing upset/harm

Narrative interviews deal with the real lives of people for the purposes of leading to a better understanding of the phenomena being researched. Therefore, ethical considerations require us to consider both the risks and effects on the participant as well as researcher, and minimise risk and harm to both. My interviews with the young people and front-line workers, took place in an office, or in a public space (café or park), and a responsible person was informed before I left to meet a participant.

Every effort was made to minimize any risk to participants, sensitive topics were not broached or pursued, and regular breaks were offered. The narrative approach gives the participant control over the discussion of sensitive topics. They can provide a description of their thoughts, activities and feelings, whilst the interviewer is to provide a well-planned, encouraging format and an objective, yet caring attitude. A full range of experiences can therefore be given potentially (Gubrium and Holstein, 2001; Weiss, 1994). The participant information sheet explained that in circumstances where it was suspected that the participant or another individual would be at harm or serious risk, relevant information may have to be disclosed to the Local Authority, and was made aware that they could discontinue the interview at any time.

Secure storage of research data (electronic and hard copy)

For all participants, it was explained that in order to comply with data protection legislation, their details and interview data would be stored securely on a password-protected folder within the University's M drive computer system. Hard copies (their written consent form and participant contact information) were stored in an unshared locked space that only I, as the researcher, had access. The recordings of the interviews were also stored on the password protected M drive of a University computer.

From planning to practice

I had hoped to secure several interviews early in the research, and had not imagined that it would be so difficult to recruit young people and front-line workers. Because of this prolonged negotiation of access to participants, I found this part of the research demoralising, especially since the social researcher must be bold, and have patience. I had planned for the fieldwork to take place over six months, but because access was extremely challenging, I continued to attempt to secure interviews after this time. I conducted my first interview in October 2014, and the remainder of the interviews took place in 2015. I did not attempt to recruit following this time because I wished all interviews to take place during the time of the Coalition Government before the next General Election in 2015. This longer timespan collecting data meant that analysis was a protracted process. I did not stock pile the data, but began thinking about codes early on in the fieldwork. With each interview, I began to see patterns developing, as participants spoke of similar themes. For example, stigma, the efforts needed to sustain benefits, education, confidence, and work schemes.

The section below details the processes and challenges that I experienced during the fieldwork, in attempting to secure interviews with young people, and front-line workers.

Young people

I had originally wanted to interview young people aged 18-24. This age group has been used to define young people in welfare policy. Following the 1986, Social Security Act, Income Support could only be received for under 18 if in severe hardship and unsupported by a parent (Hills, 1990, 137). Moreover, the age group 18 – 24 is formally ascribed a category within welfare policy, including for New Labour's New Deal (Trickey and Walker, 2001)

and subsequent governments' policies, for example, the Work Programme (Gov.uk 2012a). However, I was also mindful of the need to be flexible in my research design, especially as recruiting individuals was a slow process.

Shildrick *et al* (2012, 55-56) also reflected this in their research also considering precarious work and unemployment. They write about their challenges in recruiting individuals, specifically those 41-60 years who had recent experience of no-pay unemployment, and low-paid jobs. They used many techniques, including placing recruitment posters within shop windows, newsletters within libraries, as well as contacting gatekeepers and welfare to work agencies. Additionally, they undertook opportunistic sampling, referring to 'street leather ethnography', associated with the Chicago School sociologist Robert Park. This entailed 'hanging around' Jobcentre offices, estates, libraries and approaching some members of the public, and offered £20 expenses for some participants. Considering their resources (research team and funding), they recruited 60 participants, retaining those individuals that did not fit their sample exactly, but did provide valuable insights into the lived experiences of poverty within the context of social disadvantage and the local labour market. Similarly, I attempted to make contacts through encounters as they occurred in the field (Ritchie *et al*, 2003, 81), and was open to serendipitous findings. For example, a visit to a food bank led to me meeting a participant who volunteered there, living in sheltered accommodation, and receiving Income Support due to special circumstances. She was two months away from her eighteenth birthday, and as there was no ethical requirement for me to interview only individuals over the age of eighteen, she could be included as a participant. Another participant was age thirty at the time of interview, and was the only participant who had attended university. He had been unemployed for two years subsequently. Both interviews provided accounts of lived experiences of welfare, stigma, and the perceived value of work.

Gaining access to any population for social scientific research can be problematic and dependent on the shared characteristics of the researcher with the participant. Access is an 'emergent process', one that depends on the researcher characteristics, the participants as well as the context of the researcher (Carey *et al* 2001, 2), and is often subject to negotiation, and renegotiation. As Sixsmith *et al* (2003) recognise researchers are implicitly involved from the outset with the research process: their attitudes moreover, experiences, and there are complex processes in gaining access to participants. An insider with shared characteristics and social background of the participant can create a feeling of empathy. I had had previous experiences of long-term unemployment, homelessness when younger (17-21) and of precarious work.

This had in part, driven my motivations for the research, but I did not share this information beforehand, and I believe that I was considered an outsider, that is, with no present, shared experience. Although the young people I sought to interview could not be considered a community, there is some possible advantage in being an outsider. This can lead to a trusted and a reflective interview, as the interviewer may appear to be neutral, and not associated with any peers. As Dwyer and Buckle (2009, 59) point out, rather than being an insider or outsider, what is core to the research is the ability to be 'open, authentic, honest, deeply interested in the experience of one's research participants, and committed to accurately and adequately representing their experience.' I believe this was achieved, as many interviews, when secured, continued for over an hour, and young people and front-line workers were open and shared much meaningful information about their own perceptions and experiences.

Bonevski *et al* (2014) in their systematic review exploring barriers to sampling, recruitment, and participation of socioeconomically disadvantaged groups identified challenges sampling 'hidden populations'. Barriers included a lack of trust and uncertainty from participants, and a fear of authority. Here, they suggest strategies including using peer or known recruiters, 'respondent driven sampling', and working with community organisations with access to the targeted groups. I did manage to recruit young people predominantly through community organisations, and through snowballing, respondent driven recruitment. Additionally, the authors suggest using 'friendly' words such as 'study' and 'conversation', rather than 'research' and 'interview', and I amended my information sheet and used a less academic language generally too, which may have been useful. However, the authors suggest financial incentives and gifts to maintain participant involvement. I did not offer financial payment as an incentive to participation, although used successfully in other studies (e.g. Shildrick *et al* 2012, 55). This was primarily because I did not have sufficient financial resources, (self-funding throughout the research), but I did buy a drink and offered food when in a café as a thank you for meeting with me.

It is pertinent to point out that DWP rules state that someone on JSA can earn £10 in a fortnight and this does not affect benefits. Undeclared income is regarded as benefit fraud, and risks the claimant's benefits stopped (sanctioned) as a result. For volunteer work, it is stated that 'you must not be paid money or anything else for volunteering' (Gov.uk n.d. c). I addressed this when talking with a Jobcentre Plus manager, who informed me that only a £5 payment for the participant's time could be given to anyone claiming JSA, and all income must be declared as earned income. At the time of research, there had been a sharp increase

in benefit sanctions for young people under 25 claiming JSA (Webster, 2013, Watts, *et al* 2014). Indeed, some young people I spoke to told me that they were sanctioned (wrongfully) because of suspected fraudulent behaviour, including undertaking a training scheme, and voluntary work. Additionally, front-line workers told me that many young people were very fearful of sanctions, and suffered anxiety because of this. Throughout my fieldwork, 'gatekeepers' and front-line workers informed me that young people had confidence issues, 'gone through the mill' and been subject to unwanted interventions from authorities, for example, at school, and the job centre. Many believed young people's previous encounters with authority had cemented their perceptions of 'them' and 'us'.

The front-line workers explained to me that recruiting some young people would be difficult, because of fear of authority and distrust, and a lack of confidence, particularly those not in education or employment. They spoke of these being subject to a surveillance 'gaze' of professionals, and that other projects that had attempted to recruit young people 18-24 years to hear their views, had been difficult. On the other hand, some organisations informed me that they were frequently approached, and asked to 'supply' young people, for research, or for a project to support young people into employment. Many wished me luck in my research particularly because of these access issues.

Most young people I interviewed did in fact discuss 'being young' as affecting how they were perceived as not being trusted, and front-line workers seemed also to support this self-perception and described and spoke of the young people they encountered as often being suspicious of formal situations. Ben, an employment mentor relayed this to me, and linked such a disposition to 'social problems'; and Carl, a young person interviewed, alluded to young people being viewed differently by the 'older generation',

 "*Lacking in confidence and all that, and all the issues that they've got, they might have been abused, all the social problems and they carry them all on their shoulders, and they're at the bottom of the pit and I'm at the top of the pit and I'm helping them out of the pit, well what I say is look, I can help you out the pit but you've got to climb half way, I ain't coming into get you, you know.*" (Ben, employment mentor).

 "*I mean I think people don't know how to interact with young people at all, especially the older generation, maybe that kind of divide has decreased maybe in the last sort of 30 years or whatever but yeah, young people are viewed as a different race because life is so different for the 21st century.*" (Carl, 23)

Field notes were written as soon as possible after encounters, to understand and reflect upon some of the recruitment challenges and stay upstream of any potential problems in going forward with my research. From these I identified three possible factors:

Firstly, young people had a fear of possible recrimination. For example, John, in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance told me that he would talk to me: "*Yeah ok, I won't give you it all, but I will give you some of it*". On another occasion, a friend of a young factory worker recounted recruitment practices where on a contract, workers turned up in the morning to be chosen for a day's work. If you were not selected, you were sent home. This suggested both competition with other workers, and gratitude for being selected to work. My details were passed onto the factory worker, but I received a message back, that no one would talk to me because: '*They're scared of getting the sack*'.

Secondly, there was a possible lack of interest or confidence, as meetings arranged did not go ahead. People did not turn up, I was given wrong contact numbers, and other times, the person pulled out just before hand. Many phone calls and texts were either not returned, or the participant said that they would get back to me, but did not. I did follow up communication to reschedule meetings, but I was mindful of overstepping ethical boundaries, that is, that the individuals may have begun to feel coerced into participation rather than voluntarily taking part in the research. As a doctoral student at the University, and possibly as a 43-year-old woman, I may well have been viewed as an authority figure, and the interviews regarded as potentially intrusive or with an expectancy to deliver 'correct' answers.

Thirdly, many service providers and organisations told me that there were fewer people unemployed, and finding people to interview would be difficult, young people in precarious work and or in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, are a hidden population, occupying a transient status. Young people are rarely long term unemployed (Hills, 2015, 91), and it is unlikely that young people would conceive of themselves as being 'unemployed'. As Foucault noted, marking an identity is a form of power, and as discussed later, in the findings, is one that is instrumental in governing.

 "*This form of power that applies itself to immediate everyday life which categorizes the individual, marks him by his own individuality, attaches him to his own identity, imposes a law of truth on him which he must recognize and which others have to recognize in him. It is a form of power which makes individuals subjects.*" (Foucault 1982, 781)

The stigma associated with unemployment and benefits, as discussed, suggests individuals are not likely to identify themselves in this category. As Shildrick and MacDonald (2013, 295) note '*the unemployed thus constitute a virtually unique reference group. Its members, almost to a man and woman, do not want to belong to it*'.

Front-line workers

Front-line workers also appeared mistrusting and there were challenges to recruitment here, as I discuss below. The obvious place to recruit front-line workers (as well young people), was the Jobcentre Plus office. This is where those who are unemployed must attend as a requirement for Job Seekers Allowance, and there are public sector front-line staff who deal with unemployed individuals on a day-to-day basis. I contacted different Jobcentre Plus offices, and on one occasion, a uniformed guard requested my full name and purpose of visit, asking me to remain whilst he found the manager. This gatekeeper signified a first barrier of access to individuals in claiming benefits. Similarly, Patrick notes how the security guard at the Jobcentre Plus office reflects the way that claimants have become regarded as threatening population (Patrick, 2016b, 249). The manager was helpful and sent an email to the staff regarding my research, copied to me. I did not receive any further information from this communication however. I followed this up with another visit and spoke to someone who introduced themselves as the new manager and told me that clients would not want to be interviewed: they would not be truthful, or forthcoming with any information, and would associate me with the Jobcentre, which I was told, was disliked. They did not think it was appropriate for me to interview any of their staff either, who I was told, were 'actually very good' at catching people (claimants) out.

At another Jobcentre Plus office, one staff member stated that it would probably be fine to interview staff as one person dealt directly with young claimants (18-24 years old). I left my details and information here as requested. I then received a reply that it would not be appropriate for me to interview anyone there. No other explanation was provided. I contacted another Jobcentre Plus officer manager after meeting at an event focussing on welfare reform. I discussed my research and provided an email address; however, I received no further communication. Another interview previously arranged with an employment provider did not go ahead as they did not turn up to meet me at the prearranged time and place. I followed this up, but received no reply. Looking through the fieldwork notes, there were many unreturned emails, and missed meetings: people did not turn up and did not return calls. One

employment adviser was happy to engage in informal conversation, albeit in hushed tones. They spoke of a changing climate and were uncomfortable pushing people to work, instructed not to engage clients in any discussion of their health, but declined to be interviewed formally and expressed concern for their job – despite me giving verbal and written assurance of anonymity and confidentiality. Some front-line workers I did interview told me that what they would say would be negative; one noted that employment advisers, particularly on the Work Programme, felt scrutinised and fearful for their job:

"They might be a little bit afraid, cos obviously the service that they offer is under the microscope and from feedback I'm getting from clients…it's not all good, um….so ….I think they might be a bit worried for their own contract."

However, I did eventually manage to secure seven interviews with employment advisors, and mentors who were willing to talk to me. Further details about the sample are provided in the respondent profiles below.

Sample

The final sample comprised of two groups: 7 front-line workers and 15 young people. These two groups shared criteria relevant to the research questions: that is, front-line workers working with unemployed individuals, and young people in precarious employment, or unemployed. All participants were resident in Mid or North Wales. The sample included other distinctions that enabled comparable analysis (for example, young people living dependently, and independently; front-line workers who were working on the Work Programme, and others who were employment mentors).

The concept of class has been apparent in the previous chapters; I discussed in Chapter Two how young people's trajectories from school have altered and working class youth could transition to adulthood via often unionised, full time and relatively secure and well paid jobs, without a university education. There was a strong self-identifying working class, with trade union affiliation during the interwar years, but class composition has changed. I did not directly ask the young people in this research, questions relating to wealth, income, and parent's occupation, and about their cultural social and networks - information that might have been a useful indicator of their social class. For example, Savage (2015) draws on Bourdieu to understand class and the concept of capitals: economic, cultural and social capital, that is,

financial wealth, education and cultural dispossession, and social networks (Atkinson, 2010, 420; Bourdieu, 1984).

As a researcher, I had to use my judgement to ascertain what I thought was appropriate to ask the participants. Here, it was important to establish a rapport with the young people, through trust, sensitivity, and respectful communication. Furthermore, because of the challenges I experienced in recruiting the young people, I did not want to jeopardise losing their interest or alienating them by asking questions that could have appeared intrusive and potentially sensitive. Despite this, participants did voluntarily share information with me throughout their uninterrupted narratives that alluded to chronic financial insecurity, waiting for benefits or payment, and of unemployment, transient employment, and/or receiving welfare benefits. Their narrative accounts revealed some differences, for example, some owned a car and lived independently on a low income without state support, whilst others were entirely reliant on state support.

Savage (2015) asserts that the concept of class has changed and that the definition of class does not focus solely on occupation, and like Standing (2014), recognises a precariat class that have few resources. Standing does not explicitly relate to issues of class and social division in his analysis of the precariat, as Antonucci (2016, 133) notes, but he does remind us that only the already wealthy benefit from precarious working arrangements, the 'grinners'. Shildrick *et al* (2012) in their study, categorised participant's social class according to occupational histories, and mapped their income over their working lives, but they also included the participant's own definitions and experiences of welfare, moving in and out of jobs through their interviews (Shildrick *et al*, 2012, 59). Similarly, although the young people interviewed for this PhD research had relatively short occupational histories, they *all* experienced financial insecurity, employed in precarious work; self-employed, short term and/or zero hour contracts, constituted by job insecurity, with low pay or little opportunity to improve it (McKay *et al* 2012), or were unemployed. As a part of a 'precariat' class as discussed above, they all also lacked a clear worker identity and collective voice in the labour market. As Standing (2014a) states, the precariat are not a homogeneous group but are mostly young, lacking labour market security and protection against arbitrary dismissal. They may have few opportunities for upward mobility in status and income; they do not have the assurance of a stable income and representation– a collective voice (for example, through trade union membership) and lacking in financial support when needed for example, state benefits. Therefore, this group offered interesting and nuanced insights into relatively diverse experiences.

There are debates about the validity and the reliability of qualitative methods where only small sample of participants are involved. For example, to what extent can the findings be extrapolated to the larger population, how representative are the findings? However, considering this, Crough and McKenzie (2006) argue that small samples (less than 20) based on in-depth interviews are useful for research. It is not the 'number of hits' but the thematic strands identified (conceptual, and interpretive) which enables the researchers to find out *what* exists, rather than how many. Indeed, 10 interviews may provide as much valid information as 100, when seeking to explore discursive forms as this enables a fine-grained analysis of 'common place phenomena'; even one case is an instance of social reality (Potter and Wetherhall, 1987, 493). Additionally, smaller scale research is useful for close attention to details, and continual data monitoring; going back and forth between transcripts for example, as large samples can result in being 'bogged down in too much data' (*ibid*, 161).

Respondent Profiles

This section presents the pen portraits of the frontline workers and young people interviewed. To protect the identities of the individuals, pseudonyms have been used, and potentially identifying characteristics and personal details have not been included.

Front-line workers

The front-line workers all dealt with young people in a mentoring or support capacity. They had varying degrees of authority and discretion in their role; for example, some mentors were not target driven, unlike the employment advisors, who also had the authority to sanction their clients. These front-line workers were to some extent, then, at the 'coalface', processing and directing young people. In this, they were similar to the street level bureaucrats described by Lipsky (2011).

Anne worked as an employment officer for a firm providing employment services, including for the Work Programme. I met Anne in her office, where she had been based for several years, and she described to me how she had witnessed many changes in welfare over this time.

Bea was an employment officer and Work Programme adviser. She described her role as receiving referrals of unemployed individuals from the Jobcentre, "to move them forward", by working for them. She had been involved in this role, supporting individuals into employment, for a number of years.

Ben worked as a mentor to young people under 25, helping in transitions from unemployment to work. The project he worked for was lottery funded and required funding through a bidding process.

Leah was a support and peer worker for a charity organisation that worked with young people. Her role was specifically to offer support and help in employability and housing. Her colleague, a peer mentor also working in the charity, joined her.

Dave worked at a Welsh Government initiative, called 'Job Club'. He explained to me that people were not mandated to be involved in the Job Club but his role was to help people through interview techniques, applications, CVs, and support.

Matt worked on a Welsh Government initiative. He described his role as being in economic development, helping people into work, training, employment and education. He noted that the Welsh Government would describe the programme on which he worked as an anti-poverty programme, which entailed getting people off benefits.

Chris worked for a Welsh Government initiative dealing with young people, mostly referred to him from the Jobcentre. He noted that many job opportunities would be available to young people in the future. He finished the interview by asking me if there were any young people, I knew who would come along to an open day for recruitment on his initiative.

Young people

Below are pen portraits of the young people who participated in the research. I was mindful not to besiege them with questions beforehand. I was interested in their stories, and asked how they described themselves and their age.

Dan was 21, and worked in a café and restaurant. Following the completion of his A levels, he went onto university. He stayed there for one and a half years, before leaving because it '*didn't feel right*'. He returned to the job in which he had worked as a student, on a casual (zero hours) basis, and had a short-term contract there, which he was glad of, but did not want to work there long term. He lived with his parents.

Sam was 21. He was unemployed, and I met him whilst he was undertaking a three day vocational skills training course. He described leaving school at 16 and then taking college

courses. Six months before he was 18 he had asked for financial help from the Jobcentre Plus, but had received nothing. He had borrowed money from his family instead, and at 18, had signed on, and had been involved in various courses and unpaid workplaces. He told me that he had been sanctioned for taking part in the training course (not his first time of being sanctioned).

Liam (20) and **Adam** (18) were interviewed together at a college of further education, where they were enrolled on an IT course. Liam 20 had sporadic employment working part time for a builder earning £40 per day. He had left school and taken a course in joinery at college. He did not sign on now and worked two weeks per month. He, alongside Adam, were giggling throughout the interview and did not wish to be recorded, although readily gave (written) consent to be interviewed. Adam was quieter than Liam, and worked part time as a cleaner. He told me it made no sense to work more than 16 hours a week, as any more and '*they take your benefits off you*'.

Owen was 24 and described himself as unemployed and seeking work. He told me he had mobility problems and although he was not clear what it was that he received, he stated that he had financial support, which helped him get out of the house. This I learned later was Personal Independent Allowance, benefits that did not require mandatory attendance at the Jobcentre. He was living with his parents and did not drive.

Carl 23. He described himself as self-employed, but also as 'between jobs' having finished a contract with a company, working in social media. He was looking for more work, and said he was hopeful that he would find some, because he had contacts in the social media industry, arising from his previous employment. He also worked voluntarily with young people, at a youth club. He did not receive any unemployment benefits, and was sharing a house with a friend, paid for with savings from his previous work, which he believed might not last for long.

Holly was 17, six weeks away from turning eighteen when I interviewed her. She described herself as a young carer to her mother up until the age of 16, when she then left home, following a break down in the relationship with her mother. She had been living in a hostel since, where she was completing her 'A' levels and hoped she would go to university. She was in receipt of Income Support, and volunteering at a food bank when I met her.

John 22 was unemployed and receiving Job Seekers Allowance. He was living independently and in receipt of Housing Benefit. He had previously lived in London, and had moved to Wales during his secondary school education. He described himself as having some disabilities, associated with mobility that meant that he occasionally fell. He had been looking for work for the past two years, and had been unsuccessful in securing anything. He was involved in voluntary work with a homeless charity.

William was 18 and described himself as not looking for employment but was involved in an unpaid apprenticeship in woodwork and carpentry. He lived at home with his mother. He described himself as a late learner, not academic and liked to work with his hands.

Gina, 19 was in college, taking a course in catering. Following from school, she had worked in a number of places waitressing. She had left these due to the costs incurred travelling (it was too far) and because of poor working conditions in her waitressing job. She had found employment again waitressing, and worked whilst studying. She lived with her parents, drove and owned a car.

Alun was 24 and worked 4-5 days of a week in building and carpentry. He described himself as self-employed. He had completed A-levels at school, did not go to university, and went on to work with his father, who also worked in building, taking an apprenticeship in joinery. He lived in a rented room in a shared house. His was a joint interview with his long-term friend, Brendan below.

Brendan was 24, and described his employment status as recently self-employed (in graphic design). He had left school at 16 and moved into employment, but had signed on for three months previously when 18. He had lived independently before, in a shared house, which had proved too costly to sustain and now lived at home with his parents.

Judy was 23 and described herself as recently unemployed. She had left home at 16 and lived in a hostel for two years before living in independent accommodation. She received Housing Benefit and Job Seekers Allowance. She had worked in many precarious jobs, insecure and zero hour contracts, but was looking forward to starting a college course and was hoping to go to university.

Non was 20, and had a 12 month old child. She described herself as unemployed and wanted to return to education. She had previously been involved in courses in photography and childcare. She explained that she was jointly claiming Job Seekers Allowance with her

boyfriend who was looking for work. He had been made redundant from a painting and decorating company when the company relocated. He could not drive and was finding it difficult to find work, but was hopeful that being involved in employment schemes arranged by the Jobcentre would help.

Rhys was 30 and the only respondent who had gone to university and gained a degree. He was working in retail (five hours a week minimum contract), and was self-employed in administrative work. He had worked as an outdoor instructor, based around short-term contracts, and had enrolled on an Access course and university, to boost his skills and find more secure work. He had subsequently been in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, as well as Employment Support Allowance.

The Interview process

I sought to recruit and interview study participants over a period of 12 months (2014-2015). The interviews took place in cafes and parks, and for some front-line workers, their place of work. I explained once more, at the start of the interview, the purpose of the research, and assured again anonymity and confidentiality, followed by written consent to audio record the interview. In all but one case, consent to record the interview was given.

The narrative interview must initiate a story; it needs to activate the interviewee for them to tell a story, which then develops alongside the interest of the interviewer, their audience, based on their factual descriptions. I had intended for the interviews to follow a three 'subsession' method, following Wengraf (2001, 119) and Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000). Here a single opening question frames the introduction to allow the participant to 'impose their own system' on the story (Wengraf, 2001, 121). The main narration follows, whereby the interviewer listens attentively, and actively, with verbal interest (I see, hmm, yes….), constituting the free flow narrative, with no interruptions and topics noted discretely, to come back to later. The end of the interview is the questioning phase where any topics and events needing clarification are covered, and any prepared questions asked, not previously addressed.

Gubrium and Holstein state (2009, 42), '*tellable material does not constitute narrative wholes'*; narratives are produced within social contexts. This is important, as the researcher must open the space for the participant to produce a story, allowing for 'pregnant' pauses,

and non-verbal listening skills showing empathy as 'un-intrusive mirroring' (Wengraf, 2001, 128-129). I was mindful not to present any negative forms of listening or judgement about the participant's life, or encourage, or direct their narration for example by saying 'that's good', or 'that's bad' (Josselson, 2006, 547). This was where I supressed drawing on my own personal experiences of being on benefits, and looking for work, as I recognised the feelings of being demoralised in not finding work, but also in signing on, and taking part in schemes.

When young people referred to their experiences of being sanctioned, or being the recipient of unfair work practices, they became more reflexive recounting these seemingly for the first time. I made sure that I maintained attentive listening, but did not provide an opinion so that I did not skew their narrative to meet a perceived agenda. I was transparent in my focus of research, but recognised that welfare is potentially sensitive, associated with stigma (Baumberg *et al*, 2012, 2016; Patrick, 2016). It was clear from the research title that I was exploring perceptions and experiences of work and welfare, the opening question was experiential to the interviewee, to hold their interest, slightly different for each group (see schedules). As part of the research design, it was important to ask about the participant's life; the interview is designed with the aim to improve knowledge, and has special features, requiring preparation beforehand Wengraf (2001, 3), therefore, I prepared a schedule for participants, a separate one for young people and front-line workers (appendices 3 and 4). The generative question for the front-line workers was, '*Could you tell me about your role within your work*?', and for the young people, '*Could you tell me about your experiences from leaving school*?'

Reflexivity of the Interviews

In narrative interviews (unlike semi structured interviews), the researcher relinquishes control over the interview, hoping that it will be led by the participant, who has no expectation to say the right thing. Although the interviewer needs to interact to elicit the story the individuals can speak in their own voice throughout, a story constructed, rather than a 'neutral account of a pre-existing reality' (Hollway and Jefferson, 2000, 303).

As mentioned, I began interviews with young people, highlighting that I was seeking the views and experiences of young people and asking them to provide an account of their life following school, followed by prompts and turning to the schedule, asking if they could

expand upon their answers. I chatted before interviewing, hoping to offer something that gave a secure footing from which to talk, as one participant reflected at the start of the interview: '*what do I talk about…?*' I appeared not to share any commonalities, but I was able to listen attentively. There were times when pauses signalled the end of the interview, as they felt uncomfortable rather than 'pregnant' pauses that were a precursor to a story. These were different responses compared to the front-line workers interviewed. Therefore, I gave many cues for encouragement, such as '*uh-huh*', and '*yes, I see…*' There appeared to be little understanding as to why I would want to talk to them, despite explaining the research. Young participants appeared nervous or anxious, giggled and confused as to why I should want to interview them. As Bauer notes (1996, 14) the 'salience and direct involvement in events are necessary conditions for a successful narrative interview'.

The interview process, like recruitment, can impose an identity on the participant – one that they may not recognise themselves (Fadyl and Nicholls 2012, 26). I wished for young people to tell me about their previous experiences in employment, and if applicable, when they were unemployed. I did not want to assume that they had challenges, or impose upon them a status of *outsider* or *victim*. I was aware that I needed to avoid appearing to pejoratively judge young people and (subconsciously) solidify and reproduce constructs, particularly a worker/non-worker binary construct. For example, when interviewing a mother of a young child, who was in receipt of benefits, I asked her about finding work. This question therefore positioned her as a worker in waiting. This is a criticism that Tyler (2013, 169) makes of Jones (2012) in his book 'Chavs'. Jones leaves out the way that young women feel they must define themselves, away from pejorative stereotypes. Jones in his book, questions a young mother's willingness to work, that results in her defence: '*I do plan to go back to work. Definitely. I'd go back now but he's too young*'. In some interviews, young people defended themselves from the outset. For example, 'I'm only just unemployed now'. One front-line worker reflected on this defence against the stigma of unemployment, noting that, "*They basically think, I've got a label on the top of my head that says useless, scrounger you know and all those other connotations that are attached to being unemployed*".

I interviewed one young participant over the telephone after offering this as an alternative to meeting him in person. Young people's normative use and ease of mobile phone use has been documented, being more relaxed than older generations, although texting is more common than calling (for example, Forgays, *et al* 2014). The telephone interview provided advantages of flexibility where he was reluctant to commit to an interview time. Holt (2010) was

reflexive of this method in her research and found that participants gave positive feedback to the process: for example, 'like talking to one of my mates on the phone...'; as power relations and social differences can be silenced in phone interviews, and differences in age or background are less apparent (*ibid*, 116). The social context of the interview is important, as the participant might feel that they should deliver an expected answer (Antaki *et al*, 2003). When this participant told me about going for a job, and being in competition with others for a place on an (unpaid) work-scheme, and his experiences of being sanctioned, I was surprised and angry. As I was not face-to -face with him, he could not see my response, which was of astonishment. This helped to maintain a neutrality, free from any interviewer bias that could have influenced his narrative and distorted the data. As an interviewer with no facial expressions to encourage the participant, I did have to express more verbal utterances to encourage talking at times over the phone.

Narratives make every day experiences familiar, and the detailed information gives plausibility to a story (detailed texture), the participant selects which accounts are relevant to be told (relevance fixation) and they close their story (closing of Gestalt) (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000). However, narratives may be easier for those who feel that they have something to say, and can tell a 'good' story. Narrative research requires the researcher to engage with their (prospective) participants, they 'politely intrude' on them, so that the participant can help answer a (research) question and the researcher can learn something from them (Josselson, 2006, 538). Additionally, the interview can contain a range of experiences, but participants will only tell what they want to the interviewer, therefore it is essential that the interviewer is able to listen well. The interviewee may feel that they have exposed parts of their life to the researcher that they may not have otherwise. This suggests that the interview should end on a positive note (*ibid*, 544), therefore I followed each interview with thanks and a debriefing, inviting the participant to ask any questions they may have.

Throughout the interviews, I used prompts echoing the respondents' own words or phrases, to avoid misunderstandings, for example 'on jobs' (on Job Seekers Allowance). Any contradictions within the narratives were not pointed out, as I wanted to access the participant's spontaneous presentation of rationalizations to understand these (Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000). For example, where some participants considered individuals to be a hard worker, and deserving of benefits, whereas others were not so deserving. Some young people alluded to not being prepared to take any work if they thought it was rubbish, whilst later discussing how people were too fussy and should take any work.

The participant may assume that the interviewer knows something about their story, and therefore may not mention anything about it; it appears taken for granted. There were occasions when the interviewee presumed that I knew what they were referring to, and I had to ask them to clarify. Occasionally, I conferred a lack of knowledge during the interviews so that the participant could explain to me, with their own understanding, what this meant. This was illustrated where young people assumed that I had an awareness of 'jobs' (being on Job Seekers Allowance), and of going for a job (going for an interview for a work placement). During each interview, I had to stage a naivety, so that they could tell me in their own words about the processes. To understand their perspectives and encourage speaking around a subject, I had to keep a neutral stance throughout in each new interview (Bauer, 2006). This is 'pretend play', as Jovchelovitch and Bauer (2000, 8) state: '*Each interview demands that the interviewer presents themselves as ignorant, whilst in fact, their actual knowledge is increasing from one interview to the next'*. For example, when a young person mentioned a shop that was offering a job, I recognised the name of the shop from previous interviews. I therefore did not assume that was paid employment, but gently probed for further details. This enabled me to establish that some young people were in fact, referring to unpaid work-schemes as jobs.

Narratives are social products produced within social context dependent on the situation, and it is important to acknowledge the interactional processes in interviews, and to identify any possible researcher effects (Burck, 2005, 126). The influence of the researcher may lead to different information offered, compared to that offered to a co-worker or friend. For example, a group of four unemployed young men, during a work training day, recounted tales of sanctioning and searching for jobs, and the seasonality of employment, with few inhibitions. However, following this meeting, I only managed to secure one interview. The discussion that had previously taken place with people with similar experiences and knowledge, was not easily transferred away from this social situation. This highlighted the insider/outsider status previously alluded to, whereby I felt that I shared no characteristics that may have gained me better access and an initial rapport with young people.

Front-line workers appeared more motivated to tell their story than young people did. This may have been because they were talking in the context of their work role, which provided a platform from which to make sense of themselves and others, and yielded them with the resources and motivations that make up their narrative reality (Gubrium and Holstein, 2009, 161). The opening for the interview began with '*can you tell me about your role....*', and by

situating the interview within this context, they could begin to talk about their role, professionally and formally defined. The interviews progressed with greater reflection as I used the prompts, from the schedule and their own narration, to ask them to tell me more about certain areas they had mentioned. The interviews were longer than I had initially anticipated and most lasted for over an hour. This was possibly because, as was suggested in the interviews, they had an opportunity to discuss some of the challenges in their work role as well as the cases, which they had seen and managed. Some front-line workers hoped that the research would highlight and resolve some issues, for example, Matt, an employment mentor stated,

'Can I add one more thing, I've gone on a lot, partly because you're a safety valve…and if it's going to inform policy, and I hope that that this might do, one thing I'd like to add is the paperwork we do with people.'

Nevertheless, the interview process was described as a cathartic experience, as far as it was good to talk to someone, suggesting that this method was appropriate, not intrusive and the interviewees appeared keen to tell their stories. However, another advisor briefly interrupted one interview with an employment advisor – defensively asking me, do you agree with her? The interviewee was discussing how some clients did not want to work. I replied that my role during the interview was not to challenge, but to listen. At this point, the colleague left.

The importance of reflexivity

As Bazeley (2013, 7) acknowledges, it is a personal curiosity that can motivate a researcher through their work, but it can also become a source of personal bias. This can affect how the researcher interacts with participants and conducts the analysis, and from the very outset of the research and meetings with participants, the researcher's own interpretation is present. I acknowledge that my personal history, as noted in Chapter One, informed my decisions to undertake this research topic, and prior experiences have influenced the selection of this topic of research interest, and the research questions. I have been homeless at 17, in receipt of Income Support, working part time whilst studying for A-levels, and then claiming Job Seeker's Allowance, prior to becoming a student at university. Additionally, I have worked in many zero hours contract jobs. I wished to present an accurate picture of the participants' experiences as well as the discourses that surrounded work and welfare. Therefore, the research questions guided data interpretation and analysis, and writing and awareness of areas

of interest began from the outset of data collection, in that field notes taken following correspondence and meetings with participants. This was useful as it contributed to the analysis – the notes recounting the difficulties in recruiting participant's reluctance, fear of participation for both workers and front-line workers but also detailed interactions and emphasis within stories. The themes that I wished to code were notably work and welfare, additional notes helped form codes during analysis. For example, front-line workers referring to turning a blind eye emphasising remarks would be off the record. Many front-line workers, including ones not interviewed referred to a pressure on local services due to funding cuts, public transport, and lack of internet access, but also that many young people had issues of stress, anxiety and depression, not understanding the new welfare arrangements. They described a low paid and seasonal local labour market, with qualifications essential to get into any job. When looking at the data these were repeated themes.

I transcribed all interviews immediately after recording them, so that paralinguistic features could be incorporated, such as laughter, and long pauses, which affect the meaning of what was being said. I listened to the interviews, and read over these several times, and this immersion led to the identification of patterns, coding ideas and potential themes. This enabled me to get closer to the data, to remember and make additional notes, as well as comment on the interview process where applicable, to inform and improve for subsequent interviews (as suggested by Jovchelovitch and Bauer, 2000).

The data analysis of the verbatim transcripts was an iterative and reflexive process, encompassing the fieldwork notes and as discussed above ideas of themes formed during this time. This was however an extremely lengthy process, that I began without using any software. However, because of the volume of data generated, it became clear that a systematic data management would be useful. I used the software package, NVIVO (version 9) which helped with the data management, primarily the retrieval and search facilities.

Thematic analysis

In investigating lived experiences as well as discourses, I chose a thematic analysis to reflect reality, but also to 'unpick this surface' of reality as described by Braun and Clarke (2006, 9). This involved focusing on the specific themes across the interviews and making cross comparisons between cases. This was to develop an understanding of the experiences of

individuals and their assumptions and perceptions of work and welfare, and the role of dominant discourses, as norms that may govern what was said.

Analysis is a 'recursive' and not a linear process, and themes do not 'emerge' from within the data, but involve the researcher making choices: what to include, discard and interpret. Therefore, the analysis was driven by the research questions that asked, what were the young people's experiences and perceptions of work and welfare, and did they reflect the dominant discourses already identified within Chapter Three. This was valuable, as to recall from Chapter One, the 'missing middle' that do not continue into higher education are often overlooked in research; and their narratives are useful as if a 'litmus paper' to explore broad aspects of social change and norms of work and welfare. Front-line worker perceptions and experiences too were of interest, and the effect of welfare practices. The coding process described below was used for the two groups, front-line workers, and young people.

A traditional narrative analysis focusses on themes and stories, derived from a realist position. This includes grounded theory as an analytical method, to understand the lived experiences of the participants, and deriving themes from their accounts. Narrative analysis, associated with a realist tradition is premised upon how people construct accounts of themselves, the narrative retains a sense of continuity throughout an individual account, and the contradictions and consistencies are revealing (Burck 2005). Discourse analysis, is part of a social constructionist tradition that demonstrates that phenomena thought of as natural, is socially constructed. Meaning and language are socially produced and reproduced, rather than from within the individual (Braun and Clarke 2006, 14). Foucauldian analysis envisages the subject constituted by and of discourse, with no or little agency. For pure discourse analysis, primacy given to talk – its construction, and the interview is analysed to measure consistency within responses (Potter and Wetherhall, 1987, 164). As noted previously in this chapter, Nettleton *et al* (2013) used a Foucauldian inspired discourse analysis to identify discursive repertoires from interviews with recovering heroin addicts to discover how they articulated normality. Their research followed narratives as social products, circulated by the individual but not originating from them. This is relevant, because I looked at the lived experiences and discourses, which rather than conflicting, can be compatible: discourses as well as subjects and social structures do have causal powers: the statements made, and the rules that govern what can be said (Elder-Vass, 2012).

The interviewee is a knowing subject of their experience, as well as carrier of everyday normal, and common sense discourse, as discussed above, and thematic analysis focusses on themes and stories, with the understanding that experiences can be effects of governmentality (McKee 2009, 14). I attempted to avoid both circularity (making undue claims of discourses) and under-analysis (isolating and presenting themes as self-evident rather than analysing them). One danger of research is to solely give voice to participants and/or take sides and sympathy. This is not analysis and distorts the data (Antaki *et al*, 2003). During the analysis, I was careful not to present sides, scold, nor select material that might appeal to the reader as a co-sympathiser. It is worth noting however, that these are 'methodological troubles' relevant to qualitative analysis generally.

A thematic analysis was conducted, to explore the ideas and assumptions that inform the data. This can overlap with discourse analysis in that it is not the superficial level of the semiotic content explored but also a constructionist perspective. This refers to the meaning and experiences reproduced by individuals, in other words, how they speak about their experiences. Therefore, this was taking their experiences as lived narratives, not only as truths, but also as windows into mundane understandings, and common sense discourses. For example, the influence of stereotyped welfare recipients, and how the young people negotiated themselves and others accordingly. This was relevant, because one aim was to explore the extent that dominant discourses as identified in Chapter Three, were reflected in the narratives of young people as well as front-line workers, recognising the role of discourses in society, and the implications that these may have.

The thematic analysis involved reading and re-reading the data, to identify codes within and across the data. Here, many sections were coded as potentially interesting; however, these were not assigned a label early on. This was so that no data could be 'forced' into codes, and because it is easier to code than un-code. The process continued moving between the coding, raw data, the transcripts themselves, and field notes. These codes were labelled and with them, large chunks of data to retain their context, and then sorted into potential, different themes. Here, I summarised each theme, describing what each was about, and was of interest in relation to the research questions. Bazeley reflects that the process of analysis involves a process of 'Read, Reflect, Explore, and Play, Code and Connect, Review and Refine' throughout the data (2013, 15). Indeed, this reviewing and refining continued, with the feeling that this process was unending. When the interviews, as data were coded, I identified patterns that were repeated across the narratives. NVIVO (version 9) proved useful, as noted

above – because it contained the coded material as nodes for returning to for further sorting and rereading. For example, I was able to review some initial codes, financial costs, psychological costs, sanctions, travelling to find work and to the job centre, and recognising patterns– developing the theme which encompassed these, 'work being out of work'. When codes were collapsed into overarching themes, others were housed in a miscellaneous section so that these were not lost, to be later included in the themes if perceived relevant to the research.

Conclusion

This chapter has set out the methods adopted for the empirical research, and has included the rationale for using narrative interviews in operationalising the research questions. It has detailed the processes that were involved in carrying out the fieldwork, and how this was not a straightforward but rather a complex and at times, frustrating experience. The recruitment process was far from linear, demotivating and demoralising; experiences that often led me to question the reasons for undertaking this research. There is also the potential issue that those who did speak to me were self-selecting, coming forward to speak to a researcher. However as noted above, the issues in participant recruitment were interesting findings in themselves. This chapter has also included pen portraits of each participant interviewed, and I was very grateful for front-line workers and young people's participation.

Managing participant expectations of research is the researcher's responsibility. It is an ethical concern that the participant may believe that the research will directly change policy and perhaps, their circumstances, for example, where a front-line worker expressed hope that the research might change policy. I was transparent in communicating that interviews would inform my PhD research, and not directly influence policy. For the young people especially, I wanted to give something back and doubted if a 'listening ear' would be enough, but some did thank me for being someone who listened. The processes did yield several participants, their profiles presented in the following chapter, and some extremely relevant and insightful data as narratives, which when analysed, provided the findings for the empirical section of this research. These findings are presented in the following chapters below, Chapter Five (front-line workers) and Chapter Six (young people).

Chapter Five: Findings: Front-line workers –helping clients to 'wave and not drown'.

Introduction

This chapter presents findings from the narratives shared by front-line workers, and offers important insights into their roles, experiences and discourses. The front-line workers had roles in mentoring support or employment service provision, and worked within a charity, a Welsh Government initiative, or a private organisation. They shared characteristics in providing advice to young people who were out of work. In this chapter, where there was consensus given among all front-line workers, this is stated; otherwise, their specific role, as employment advisor or mentor, is given. The main themes are presented as follows, with each of these containing related subthemes (in brackets): 'Processing 'numbers' ('The Norm of Precarious Work'), 'Maintaining the Paper Trail' ('Managing Processes: Financial', 'Managing Processes: Anxiety', 'The Regime of Signing On'), 'The Deserving…and the Undeserving', 'Confidence Through Work' (Schemes) ('Employer is King'), 'Moulding the Docile Body' ('Sanctions').

Processing 'numbers'

Front-line workers spoke of the unemployed young people that they met in their roles as employment or support advisors, as often having low self-esteem and low confidence, which they related primarily to their educational experiences. They spoke of young people as disengaged from school, not 'academic' and having no or few qualifications. This led to challenges within their work role of 'moving on' the young people, as those that had done well at school were more easily processed, placed into work, enabling them to reach their targets, or tick boxes. However, the frontline workers also recognised that some young people were not academic and perceived there to be a lack of vocational opportunities for those that did not want to return to school:

"They've got more confidence if they've achieved something in school, to have achieved something in life, but you've got the ones that aren't achieving in school you know they need to be providing more vocational stuff at a younger age, you know, like exposing them to stuff where they can work with their hands say, if they're not academic whatever" (Ben, employment mentor).

They believed that many did not want to go back to school, which they associated with a narrow academic focus, contributing to low confidence and literacy issues, that affected their ability to negotiate the benefits system and labour market. This is an important point, considered later, as employment advisor, Bea noted:

"Some are very quiet, very nervous 'cos they've just left school they don't want to go back to school…. they haven't got academic… They've left school they didn't apply for college or they didn't go in so they think well we're not going to go back into that, anyway they can't read and write, there is places for them to go but they don't want to do it cos a, they think it's a stigma, its holding them back. One lad, he couldn't read or write, he couldn't spell his address, didn't know what his postcode was, um, I said who does your applications…'me girlfriend who looks for the job', I mean you don't realise what a barrier it is um can't read….The ones that are unemployed 90 odd percent are either the ones that have not worked, they haven't got the capabilities they can't read or write, they've been truanting from school, um the basic skills are very low." (Bea, employment advisor)

In contrast, those who had been to university were perceived as 'work ready', confident and with skills and a bank account. As Anne, an employment advisor also on the Work Programme pointed out, this meant that the client was amongst the 'greens' that is, they were easier to move onto jobs:

"3 different customers on the work programme, the, er, the greens ambers and reds, you know the traffic lights system, the greens are ready to go into work, (Graduate) would be green, as he's got all the skills doesn't need any workshops, quite confident in interviews, quite confident in applications, got his work references, got his ID, got his own bank account." (Anne, employment advisor)

Because the Work Programme advisors needed to demonstrate reaching their targets, they were told by their manager to concentrate on the 'greens', such as graduates, who had CVs ready, and a bank account. This is known as 'creaming', and has been found elsewhere, alongside 'parking', where those who are further from the labour market are most likely to be left aside due to prioritising job ready clients (for example, Newton et al, 2012).

Some front-line workers recalled how they had to monitor their clients, and/or maintain targets, according to the contract, which was difficult considering that many jobs *were* precarious, and because the benefits regime deterred individuals from taking these jobs. Bea who also worked within the Work Programme, referred to targets. She spoke of the challenges presented in attempting to meet set targets, preferring to measure success more subjectively:

"Sometimes they do say,(meeting targets), but I don't worry about it, cos I think to myself I, in my own way I've helped them, I may not have bums in jobs, but that's not what it's all about, it's about making sure that person is ready to work it's no good to me sending you to work a, a job you don't want, building you all up to do a job hating it, you leaving and if you leave a job you don't get benefits for 6 weeks you know you're gonna love me aren't you..? And they're gonna think, don't want to work with her any more she put me out on a job and I hated it so why should I go, I've lost 6 weeks money now and got into arrears because of her." (Bea, employment advisor)

Here she discussed dilemmas that she experienced in being on the front-line. That is, to meet her targets by sending her clients to a job they did not like, losing six weeks benefits, and holding her as responsible. However, Anne noted that 'numbers' coming into the Work Programme had decreased since its introduction in 2011. With fewer people unemployed and coming through 'their doors', this had enabled her to work more closely with her clients, but threatened her own job security as she needed to have clients to secure funding. This she discussed in terms of meeting targets:

"The targets they set are ridiculous, it's going to get worse...everything's uncertain, we just don't know (quietly) [...] we only get a job outcome if they've been in employment for 6 months continuous ...now that's hard. It's just that we've never been a target company, but now the targets are there, and we have to reach them [...]. (The targets are) very unrealistic, some of the months, they give us the same targets in the winter as in the summer and we'll probably have no jobs in the next 3 months, but we'll still have the targets to reach, and then they'll be on our backs, you know why haven't we reached the target and so on. They got no idea have they [....]. Because the numbers have gone down, there's not as many clients coming in, so obviously there's not as much people coming into work, so obviously there's not as much finances coming in." (Anne, employment adviser)

Matt and Dave, working for a Welsh Government initiative, spoke of needing to provide 'results' that is, to demonstrate that the programme was working, moving someone to a new job, as described by Matt:

"I can forget about my last crap job' he says, but it doesn't count as a result for me cos he wasn't on benefits to start with, so I can't tick a box with him. You've done something positive that changes someone's life in a way, or helped them change their own life is a better way to put it but it doesn't tick any boxes, we can't show it, we can't evidence it we can't show enough of a 'distance travelled', can't show his aspirations have changed, his attitudes. [...] along will come somebody she's already got a job in the chippy but she wants something better than that and she wants you to help her, but I can't help her put her down then." (Matt, employment mentor).

Needing to meet and maintain targets set included benchmarks, such as demonstrating that a persons' aspirations and attitudes had changed, to show evidence of 'success', as well as intrusive practices such as contacting the young people to obtain copies of their pay slips, as evidence of them now working:

"We are making it difficult for ourselves to achieve targets cos people aren't going to bring in payslips to me and they won't bring them into me so they won't count as targets." (Matt, employment mentor)

"It's quite difficult to track them down, (young people) we need to track them down cos we need to get their outcomes so, so, it is an important part of my role. When I do eventually track them down its well, how are things going and 99 times out of 100 its fine, um but um you know I always say to them part of my role is to support you within your job (Dave, employment mentor).

The requirement to reach targets was not necessary for all front-line workers, and one employment mentor described how he was not constrained by targets. Unlike other frontline workers, he did not need to supply evidence of clients' successes and with a relatively laissez-faire approach from his manager; he believed that he was able to deliver a more personalised approach, tailored to the individual. Despite this, he was fully aware of practices he depicted as being 'tick box exercises':

"We get monitored, we get our outputs that we need to meet; as our manager said, don't worry about your outputs. I don't know what my target is, Ian (a colleague) doesn't know what his target is…I think it's a brilliant way of working […] I work closely with other schemes and it's cringe worthy sometimes, it's just a tick box exercise isn't it…" (Chris, employment mentor)

Anne, an employment advisor explained that the work search behaviour of clients was subject to surveillance practices and monitoring, and this included the 'job log'. This was a form provided by the Work Programme that the client needed to fill in with details including the date and job applied for, company, letter sent, result of action, and the follow up action and date.

"They have to do the job searching they have to give us a job log. They do need to be looking 30 hours a week job searching […]. Jobcentre would monitor that, not us no, we have a job log which we have, they bring in every two weeks, jobs they've applied for, so it's the date that they've sent, source of vacancy would be either computer, word of mouth, or whoever employer's name or address, their contact number. We ask them how many spec letters you've sent, who to, follow up calls when you've sent your applications do you phone up the employer to check that they've received …? And then other activities would be what job sites

they went on, what newspapers did they read? Which shops did they go in and ask, who did they ask…?" (Anne, employment adviser)

This surveillance essentially documents, monitors and measures the individual's 'work ethic', as defined by their demonstration of looking for work - regardless of their skills or ability to match with the job. However, in practice this meant that some young people were applying for jobs that they could not attain, as unemployment advisor, Bea explained:

"There's not x amount of jobs, yes there is but not suitable for everyone, and I was finding that some of these were applying for some of these jobs which was like one wrote applying for chefs, and I said, oh have you done any cooking and she said yes…she'd done a prevoc course where they're below level one teaching you how to make cups of tea and how to make breakfast, and she was applying for head chefs!" (Bea, employment advisor)

The Norm of Precarious Work: Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea.

Front-line workers acknowledged a predominance of precarious work within their local labour market, with banal assertions that the jobs available were rarely full time and often seasonal, and/or a zero hours contract. For Anne, an employment advisor, there were fewer people on the Work Programme now compared to when the programme was first introduced, because of the increase in jobs (mostly part time and short term). Front-line workers noted that many claimants, including young people, did not want to go back to the regime of 'signing on' once they had left a job. Anne described how those unemployed were more likely to prefer to undertake a succession of short-lived, precarious and insecure jobs rather than signing on.

"There's definitely an increase in jobs, there's a lot of part time jobs going, very rarely now you see full time jobs going - I mean, a lot of the jobs available are sort of, the cleaning jobs, shop assistant jobs, um, labouring jobs, a lot of labouring jobs about but a lot of them are on short term contracts like […], they had so many people unemployed at the time 3 ½ years ago the numbers were really high so they had to do something with them there's not so many people unemployed anymore, and what we find is people go into employment quicker now. People don't sign on either, once they come out of work, they don't want to go back to that regime of signing on." (Anne, employment advisor)

Matt too recognised chronic work insecurity that many young people faced, and noted that most of his young clients were already in work but wanted to find 'better' work than their present job; this better work was described as more interesting, with higher pay, and job security. This he illustrated recounting his clients concerns:

"People that have got jobs already they want to move onto a better job or they're worried about their existing job being insecure and they want something a bit more stable, […] I've got a feeling I'm going to lose my job gonna be kicked out' 'I need to find another job, (from the chip shop) I just wanna change, I just wanna change of direction, I wanna go into retail'" (Matt, employment mentor)

The responsibility for managing any risks associated with a precarious labour market was firmly assigned to the young people, who needed to manage themselves better, 'plan ahead', 'get their head around it' and make contingency plans. Despite this individualising discourse, there was no suggestion given as to how young people should manage the risks implicit in the unstable labour market, other than having to make plans, or to accept this, illustrated in the quotes below:

"Today it's a service industry we've got now isn't it…and that's about as stable as a clown on one leg (laughs) there are no stable industries left anymore, and that's the nature of the beast so to speak, that young people now have got to get their head around from an early age from when they're in school." (Matt, employment mentor)

"People hope for the best, hope they are going to be retained but don't make contingency plans or back up plans, plan B young people don't tend to be very good at making a plan B (laughs) which potentially you or I might be very good at you know if funding's coming to an end but yeah young people don't tend to think in those terms." (Dave, employment mentor)

One contingency plan described was that young people in seasonal work went 'off on sick', when seasonal work was no longer available over the winter months. According to Anne, an employment advisor, going off sick was common practice, as it gave the young person six months of 'security', before the Work Capability Assessments - carried out by ATOS. [8] Accordingly, young people could start work again in the summer months:

"In the winter times you'll see a lot of them transfer to ESA over winter…so they'll go to the doctor saying they've got an issue and be put on ESA for 6 months knowing that the ATOS is taking 6 months to assess if they are fit for work or not. If the doctor agrees with them, then they've got 6 months of a security there […] and then they're back in work come spring again." (Anne, employment advisor)

To go 'off sick' was seen as a rational response, a practical strategy that offered (temporary) financial security because it did not require the interventions and regimes of signing on. Therefore, their clients were regarded as knowing and playing the system, so that they could have relative financial security at least until Work Capability Assessments. It is worth noting

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[8] ATOS healthcare being a subsidiary of the multinational company ATOS, an outsourced provider introduced under the 1997 Labour Government to assess claimants of ESA Employment Support Allowance (Warren et al 2014).

that these assessment have been described elsewhere as impersonal and not fit for purpose, following seriously ill claimants being found fit for work (Butler, 2014; Warren *et al*, 2014).[9]

Some front-line workers recognised that a number of young people refused to engage in insecure, short-term employment because they knew that the job would not be full time, and the complexities of the benefits system would mean that they would lose benefits in taking the work:

"I've got one lad now who has taken a job in ASDA, even though its 16 hours a week or whatever, he'll probably work more than 16 hours a week, but it's going to affect his benefit straight away, and I've advised him to take it, and I've said look, you know, you've got to take a chance, it's going to be difficult, but I'll help you work out, negotiate around the benefit system in terms of seeing if you are entitled to stuff [...]. I tell a client, I say, well this job, ok, its temporary say, say its temporary, with a possibility of getting maybe a job at the end of it. They also know that their employer can get rid of them at any time so not having that security knowing they are coming home with x amount of money every week." (Ben, employment mentor)

As described, being in work could be problematic because it meant negotiating the benefits system, and the young person was aware that they *could* be dismissed as any time. It was up to the young people to prepare themselves for this omnipresent uncertainty, a normalised privatisation of risk, as they must manage themselves appropriately. Ben (as well as other front-line workers) spoke of assisting clients to find out which benefits they were entitled to, highlighting the complexity of claiming benefits.

Maintaining the 'paper trail'

It was understood that young people required 'skills' if they were to sustain their already low income, received through Job Seekers Allowance. This included creating a 'paper trail', and maintaining the right attitude and commitment to job searching. Front-line workers recognised the cognitive work that was involved in negotiating the benefits system, which included navigating the online system, as well as filling in forms and providing evidence of work searches.

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[9] 50,580 ESA recipients died between December 2011 and February 2014 and of these 2,380, 4.7% received a fit for work decision. The decision to appeal taking months. Another 7,200 claimants died after being awarded ESA placed in the work-related activity group claimants, identified as unfit to work but able to return to work in the future (Butler, 2015)

"The benefits system isn't easy to get through in any stretch of the imagination, so if somebody perhaps doesn't have the confidence or ability to go through the benefits system and apply for it, they're gonna need support for doing that and the support is sometimes difficult to find" (Dave, employment mentor).

"Some of them confidence issues, don't know how to apply for a job, don't know if you've noticed, but a lot of job applications are applying on line and a lot of them don't know how to use the computer at all" (Chris, employment mentor)

"Jobcentre, some of them do a paper one because they are not computer literate...the ones who are on the universal just do it on the computer, they don't have to do a paper one: people who aren't computer literate. They have to do it in the diary." (Anne, employment advisor)

In fact, front-line workers discussed that part of their role was to help young people *develop* the skills needed to sustain their client's already low level of benefits. For example, Dave, an employment mentor, recounted how individuals receiving Job Seekers Allowance needed to demonstrate job seeking 'skills' as part of the contractual agreement. This entailed giving advice to take certain steps to prevent being caught out, and getting them 'skilled up' to receive their benefits:

"We work with a lot of young people who have that threat of a sanction constantly. What I advise young people is that they've got to take certain steps, it could be volunteering it could be applying for a job online, also it's got to be evidence that they have done that as well. its no good turning up and telling them I..I ..I applied for 10 jobs this week, you know, they've got to have a paper trail as it were, or a digital trail to show that they've sent those emails um, so again working with young people to get them skilled up to understand that process whilst they are unemployed, they need to develop skills with us to sustain the low level income they are currently on really." (Dave, employment mentor)

There was the common understanding amongst the frontline workers, that young people needed to be prepared and required help, to negotiate the complex processes entailed in receiving benefits. The requirement to keep a work search diary, as evidence of job searching, could lead to a sanction if not completed correctly. Front-line workers noted that some people did not claim benefits because of these welfare processes; for example, young people who lacked confidence, or literacy skills and individuals with learning disabilities, who might have resisted asking for assistance because of stigma:

"Quite often they're not applying for certain benefits cos it comes to, they haven't got the confidence to do it, even filling in the form, the online application form for jobs seekers allowance is a nightmare, takes you about an hour to fill it in […] I had a woman in Jobcentre treating my clients, she was going to sanction him for not filling all his paper work correctly, on line, and er, he had learning difficulties, you know, and I, I went in and spoke to

her and I said, do you realise he's got learning difficulties and she looked, no, and I said, did you ever think to ask him if he had any issues with the on line process? He's not going to come out to you, he's too embarrassed as it is, coming to sign on, to come out and tell you he's got learning issues." (Ben, employment mentor)

The issue of stigma is addressed further below, but additionally, it is the online application process that was described as a 'nightmare'. It is an example of the mandatory use of digital technology that transfers the responsibility of support from the government, and places it directly onto the individual. Accordingly, it was a common sense understanding that front-line workers were complicit in managing young peoples' risks and in maintaining their confidence to apply for jobs. As Anne explained, to help them from 'getting hassle' from the jobcentre:

"We try to do that to make sure that they don't get any hassle from the Jobcentre, just to make sure that that is done right before they get any hassle of the Jobcentre but some of them are what do you want to look at that for, but we are trying to help them." (Anne, employment advisor).

One employment mentor Matt describing his role in helping clients negotiate the benefits system, noted that young people wanted help in finding more secure employment, and were often already in a job. It was the older people; aged 42-62 that wanted his assistance to help them maintain their benefits following a lifetime of work,

"The ones who say help me with a CV tend to be 17 through to 24 25, and they largely tend to be in work. You've got another group who are...maybe 45 -62…3. They come to me because the Jobcentre have forced them to… guy 62 from the flats up there came to see me before Christmas, 'can you do a cv for me. So I say, what have you done, and he's done a lot in his life, he's managed a factory and all sorts of stuff, and he's been on the dole about 3 years now, and I say, how many copies do you want me to print off, he says 'I've been working since I was 15, I'm 62 now, why can't they just leave me alone now'. I get a lot of that." (Matt, Employment Mentor)

Whereas younger individuals, already in (precarious) work were described as requiring support to find other work (doing their CVs), older individuals who were unemployed and in receipt of benefits, wanted to be 'left alone now' - free from mandatory intervention according to this front-line worker, Matt. Similarly, Dunn (2013) in his research, found that older people felt that they had 'done their stint', and believed they should avoid negative moral judgements about them going back to work. Marston in response to Dunn (2013, 822), argued that older people rejected work because the jobs market discriminated against older people. However, the older people here (45-62), appeared to want support to be left alone, and to avoid sanctions. This response suggests a rejection of the normative values of work

(and the work ethic), as reflected in the government discourse, and follows possible experiences of a long working life constituted by 'doing all sorts of stuff', that has not resulted in either wealth, social mobility or job satisfaction.

Managing processes: Financial

The governmental discourse, as identified in Chapter Three suggested that there was an uncomplicated route to the dole from school, and that support was available. These were presumptions, contributing to 'common sense' solutions that young people should earn or learn. However, front-line workers reflected on the limited access to training and support, particularly a lack of financial support for skills training, and for continuing work:

"The majority of them would like to do the CSCS, and obviously round her, the labour market is um, construction, that's the majority of work for the men. They can't do it, cos they can't afford it. We try and get them to do anything to build up you know, if you go and do this, you get x amount of money and you can put it towards your CSCS training or what have you. Up until 6 months ago we paid for everybody to do a CSCS....but because it's gone up to 150 pounds...we can't do it!" (Anne, employment adviser)

Anne reported how she encouraged her male clients to take any work that might enable them to save up and contribute to paying for the CSCS card (Constructions Skills Certification Schemes), evidence of proof of training and a qualification, which would then enable them to work in building work. Again, the cost of upskilling, to insert themselves into the labour market, was borne by the individual, costs that were rising and making it difficult for young people:

"There's a lot of individuals that come in and they'd like to have CSCS is one, obvious one which had now gone up to 150 pounds where it used to be just £17.50 6 months ago. HGV licences, that's 500 pounds, CIA license, which is the security one, that's nearly 4, or 500 pounds. Taxi driver would have to have the hackney license, the CRB and the medical, which comes to nearly up to 250 pounds. They don't have the money to do that." (Bea, employment advisor)

Similarly, Matt spoke of a client who was already in work but on a short-term contract. He could only have his contract renewed when he provided evidence that he was 'drug and alcohol free'. Only then could continue to work; however, the certificate was costly:

"He has to have a piss test, a drug and alcohol test every year to work on the railway and if you fail it you're banned for 7 years, you can't go into the job, he has to be able to show this

certificate and, basically, if you are in a job, the employer will pay for it, something like 80 quid, you can do it locally, but by this time he had been a few months out of work and his drug and alcohol certificate had lapsed, well you can't get a job now he didn't have his test, can't afford to pay for it". (Matt, employment mentor)

Other costs incurred in trying to find work included having to take the bus to access necessary services such as the Jobcentre to sign on, and to buy clothes to remain presentable:

"In terms of Jobcentre plus, so if somebody wants to sign on they've got to go travel to [place] and back on the bus. It's 5 pounds, which is 5 pounds out of your, you know, JSA money, quite a lot of money, you know the budget for each week um, er, if they want to go and get clothes, there's no clothes shop in town so again you have to go to [place]." (Chris, employment mentor)

"Accessing services, you know the services which used to be in the town, there used to be some, you know, some form of that service in the town, they tend to, because of austerity and cuts or whatever, have moved back down to the big towns, the bigger cities really, and people have to travel more, and that's creating financial, I would say." (Dave, employment mentor)

This was the only time that a participant had raised austerity, and it was unquestioned, as if natural. Additionally, finding the money needed to 'afford' to go to work, was difficult for some, as Leah explained:

"It is hard, if you can't afford childcare then you can't afford to go back to work, [...] it is one vicious circle cos if you don't have the family members you have to pay for childcare and it is ridiculously expensive..." (Leah, peer mentor)

Front-line workers spoke of the provision of services, for people out of work, and in receipt of benefits, and identified their role as one of pastoral support, for example, directing clients to foodbanks. In fact, Dave an employment mentor proudly listed additional services that they now offered within the 'Job Club', for people who were in receipt of benefits a 'one stop shop'.

"We recently launched a foodbank which is a referral only from other agencies. We've got our income money maximisation officer, and she's able to look at peoples benefits and give advice about maximising somebody's benefits. We've got our emotional wellbeing officer as well, who sits within the job club, so if someone had lower-end mental health issues, issues with self-esteem or confidence. If they had issues with some lower form of mental health he'd be able to do some form of one-to-one with them, or direct them to the services really which are needed, so I suppose the job club has become a bit of a one stop shop" (Dave, employment mentor).

Already noted above, is that front-line workers felt they needed to help provide skills to young people to negotiate the benefits system. Like the foodbanks, claimants discussed

additional support as a 'good thing', suggesting a normative understanding of being in work, whilst out of work. With the work involved in obtaining benefits a mundane reality, front-line workers spoke of giving out vouchers to enable a food package, and foodbanks were given positive appraisal.

"We use foodbanks a lot - I think they would steal, it (if they weren't there)…I do think the foodbanks are fantastic." (Leah, peer worker)

This indicates that foodbanks have become potentially normalised, regarded as a welcome additional and providing a 'good service'. This was also apparent in government discourse, referred to as a part of the so-called 'Big Society'. Then Prime Minister, David Cameron praised the role of the volunteers who help those who 'struggle to pay bills':

"First of all, let me echo what the Right Hon. Gentleman said about volunteers and people who work hard in our communities, part of what I call the big society, to help those in need. It is a good time of year to thank our volunteers for what they do, but I do share the Right Hon. Gentleman's concern about people who are struggling to pay the bills and to deal with their budgets". (HC 2012, 555).

It is telling that there was no reference in the media, to foodbanks before 2008. It is only since 2012 that the number of foodbanks have increased, and have become evident within media reports and conversation (Garthwaite, 2016, 3-16). The non-governmental organisation, the Trussel Trust that operates foodbanks, saw their numbers rise from 29 (local UK authorities) in 2011-2, to 251 in 2013-4 with delays in benefits, sanctions, and welfare cuts cited as the key reasons for increasing rates of parcel distributions (Loopstra *et al*, 2015).

Managing processes: anxiety

In addition to identifying the need for practical support, front-line workers discussed their young clients as suffering from low confidence and anxiety. Lack of confidence already linked to experiences at school, was also associated with a fear of failure in obtaining interviews and/or work. Ben, an employment mentor, referred to a young person who he had helped to get ready for an interview but had failed to turn up:

"Confidence - massive, anxiety, we had one last week. We thought he was ready, he was saying that he was ready, got him an interview with a local company, he was successful with his interview, when it came to his first day of work, didn't turn up, he just built up the anxiety, it came back." (Ben, employment mentor)

As well as anxiety, a defensive and hostile exterior was alluded to, where young people would choose not to put themselves in the position where may be told that they have failed. As Dave explained below, it was easier to 'not bother trying':

"A lot of self-esteem issues, a lot of low confidence, even some of the very aggressive behaviour sometimes is low confidence sometimes; it's sort of a front they put on. I think it's going into the unknown and going into the unknown for anybody is daunting, it's risky, its filled with failure, and nobody likes to fail so if you've somebody that's really hard to reach, somebody that hasn't chosen life as it were, for them to take that step can be incredibly daunting, incredibly difficult for them to do on their own cos if they get knocked back that can be a very strong knock back yeah, so in some respects it is easier for them not to try because fear of failure is you know it's easier to not bother trying." (Dave, employment mentor.)

Matt, an employment mentor, described going through an interview process with a client. He had sat beside and witnessed a young woman apply for a job over the phone for a large DIY chain store:

"I told her this is what they will say, what's your name, what's your address, what's your phone number, and can you do the phonetic alphabet and she says no, but I said, don't worry about that…just make sure when you spell you keep your letters separate, cos what I've been told is that initial contact forms part of your interview. And then they will promise to phone you back in five days. And she's holding the phone going bright red, and I'm saying, right shall I press the button now, and I says, 'I've never known you in my life be afraid of anything' 'I am now' she says, 'you'll be ok' I says, 'I'm right next to you, if you need anything and I'll put it on speaker if you need prompting, I'll prompt you', so she went through it, she handled herself fairly well and right we'll call you back in 5 days. Didn't. Didn't call her back. Didn't call me back either, cos I applied for a job on the same day, council's phone so it didn't bother me, but, 23 minutes before somebody picked up. Now, a job seeker, you can't expect anyone to hang around for that long on the phone. The amount of courage it took her to do that, and the amount of difficulty on our part to persuade her to do it, and the guts it took her to do it, and the next time it comes to asking her, 'do you fancy trying for this', she'll say 'nobody bothers me anyway'." (Matt, employment mentor)

As well as highlighting the financial costs incurred in applying for jobs, this illustrated the attempt to maintain the young person's confidence in spite of apparent rejection. In fact frontline workers recognised that many young people, their clients, did not hear back following their applications, described as leaving some young people feeling disillusioned and fed up, and it subsequently affected their job searching.

"I took a client out last week and he said, 'I get fed up of people making promises to me' and there's so many people offering what we do, but not actually fulfilling any promises." (Ben, employment mentor)

"Someone applying for a job, and saying yes you got have an interview, brilliant, or no, you haven't got an interview, I'll deal with that but when they're just left in limbo and not told yes or no, I think that's quite destructive for young people cos they get very quickly, they get disillusioned with the process and then they say to hell with it." (Dave, employment mentor)

Front-line workers acknowledged that their role in part, was to help young people 'manage' the risks associated negotiating the benefits system. Furthermore, they encouraged their clients to 'sell themselves' through the 'CV drop', change their CV to make them more desirable to employers, as well as to participate in unpaid work experiences and work schemes.

"People we work with see those job adverts coming out, see those job adverts coming out week after week after week, and they've been applying for that job, and you know the deadline's gone and they've not been called for an interview, they've reapplied for the job and they've not been called for interview, and we might sit there and we might tweak their CV and say 'well what is it that needs to change on your CV, to make you more desirable to the employer?', and that's still very, very, frustrating for young people." (Dave, employment mentor)

Therefore, front-line workers had to instil confidence to keep young people applying for jobs, or work schemes, and again they referred to a lack of confidence:

"Part of my role is to try to help reinstall that confidence that motivation in the system." (Dave, employment mentor)

"…, it's a learning curve, you build up on that time and time again, even though it can be quite soul destroying, we all know that we've all had interviews where we've been turned down, it is a confidence boost thing I think, you build that up all the time." (Anne, employment advisor)

However, this was not easy, because the jobs on offer in the local labour market,

"A lot of jobs on offer now, at the moment are seasonal, so the client knows, the chances are that they'll be coming to an end, um, so that sometimes affects their commitment to it, when they know it's not going to last forever. I had a client gave a job up, because his attitude was, I knew it was going to end anyway (they feel let down), so because within the hospitality industry it is seasonal." (Ben, employment mentor.)

The understanding was that jobs were seasonal, but the client needed to be kept buoyant, to maintain their commitment. Within a competitive jobs market, this meant ensuring that young people recognised that they were competing against others for jobs, as demonstrated by Dan:

"I think they have sympathy, they don't look at other young people as competition, they don't look at that other young person, is unemployed and that's competition for me getting a job. In this town what they see is that's joe blogs, poor joe blogs, he's in the same boat as me. There is a massive degree of empathy and some sense of we're all in this together, yeah, you know

they don't seem to realise, and part of what I am talking to people about is that you are actually competing against people, er, it's not nice, but it's what you've got to do, yeah, you know you are naturally in a competitive world for right or wrong, if you want to get this job." (Dave, employment mentor)

The role discussed above was to construct a competitive neoliberal body, by moulding the conduct of the individual and instilling a form of awareness and identity (Gordon 1994), to sustain and improve the individual. This pastoral influence and 'continuous exertion' was apparent from all front-line workers, as they guided young people to the correct behaviours of job seeking, getting them to reflect on their own behaviour, a self-examination, to identify what they could do better to gain employment.

The regime of signing on

As well as financial costs and anxiety incurred in finding work and negotiating the benefits system, the frontline workers highlighted the processes of 'signing on'. Bea, a Work Programme advisor, recalled a time when a client approached her in tears. This was because she was in debt and in constant receipt of letters about her benefits, which had led her to become anxious. It had, as Bea described, 'stopped her doing things':

"She's frightened of opening them (envelopes) yes, but she's getting better now. She came last week, there was nothing bad cos everything was bailiffs da de da de da ded dad ded dah, ...so,..its cos its stopping her doing things isn't it, you know it was stopping her doing things, she was crying, she was like this" (Bea, employment advisor)

It is interesting to note that Bea stated there was 'nothing bad' which suggests some normality of the situation (and of the bailiffs). Garthwaite (2013) has written about the 'fear of the brown envelope', associated with receiving official looking correspondence from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), to describe the anxiety that benefit claimants have experienced. Bea went onto describe how fear had affected her clients' perceptions of the Work Programme staff:

"What they think, they get an appointment going to the Work Programme, they must attend, and they're really nervous. I had one girl, she came in, she was crying, she was really nervous, she came in crying, she didn't know what to expect, she'd had a letter to come to the Work Programme. She must have put a picture in her head, she was so relieved she came here she cried, she said 'oh your nothing like I expected'. I wish they would tell 'em before they come here, we are quite approachable, we're not here to put barriers in their way and to be nasty with them and say do this, we are here to bring down the barriers and help them move forward." (Bea, employment advisor)

Ben, an employment mentor, noted that young people often displayed hostile behaviour exhibited to maintain their own self-esteem. This was, he believed, because they felt like a scrounger, and were uncomfortable with the formality of the Job Centre.

"Quite often young people are hostile going onto the Jobcentre is because of fear, it's because they're petrified; they're not used to those formal situations and being spoken to and being, basically feeling as though they are going there cap-in-hand, and basically they feel like, they feel like scroungers" (Ben, employment mentor)

Anne noted too, that her clients felt alienated and unsupported by the Jobcentre, with the staff being unhelpful and unsupportive. As an employment advisor, her role involved 'mopping up' what the Jobcentre would not do, and this resulted in her 'customers' not wanting to return to the routine of signing on:

"They don't feel like they are getting any support from the Jobcentre anymore, they just feel like they are passing the buck. Um, and that they are literally there for two minutes checking that they are doing their Universal Jobmatch that they brought in, however if there's any issues with the Universal Jobmatch, they won't do it with them. They send them away and say go to your Work Programme provider and get them to sort it, and it's not our programme so we don't know how to solve some of these issues, but they just don't want to know with the customers, so that's alienated a lot of the customers now, they don't want to go back to that regime, they don't like the staff." (Anne, employment mentor)

Bea reported that many individuals that she saw in the Work Programme wanted to work, but were in fact, not fit to. She described 'street level bureaucracy' in managing a client who she believed was not fit for work, and who had been taken ill in the Work Programme office:

"They come and they're on jobseekers they're not fit are they, who'd employ you…so I might just say, (whispers)' why don't you go and see your doctor and see what they say', and if they don't I might just say, 'right then, shall we just say, shall we just say, can you just drop your CV somewhere then', because I don't think they are going to get a job, but there again, I don't want more pressure - they're on jobs, (Jobseekers Allowance). Had a young girl this morning, she's 18-24 she fitted terribly here last week, week before, she was really , really ill, she had 3 massive fits out there rang the ambulance, they said they were going to take an hour oh it was horrendous, […] she wanted to have work and she can't." (Bea, employment advisor).

Although Bea had helped to prevent this woman from being sanctioned, what is telling is that despite being ill, the woman was described as wanting to work, but was unable to, perhaps illustrating the pervasiveness of the norm of work and work ethic, the stigma of claiming benefits and the pervasive threat of sanctions.

Confidence through work (schemes)

With young clients assumed to be lacking in confidence, or experiencing anxiety and low self-esteem, it was work, as in labour market participation, that was identified as the solution. All front-line workers regarded work as important. This was perhaps unsurprising given that their role was primarily associated with moving people into work, described 'as moving people on'. The front-line workers task was to 'transform' their clients into cooperative subjects because work was implied as giving young people self-esteem, to help them to fulfil a purpose, and as a social activity. This contributed to the perception of being unemployed as being deficient. Underpinned by this positive rationale of work, clients were encouraged to strive towards any work, work experience, or work schemes. These were discussed as 'opportunities', despite being unpaid and despite the awareness of a labour market consisting of predominantly precarious employment. Front-line workers assumed that young people lacking in confidence would be further excluded from a 'world of work':

"Confidence issues for a lot of them, the girl who's 15 and pregnant, her little group, if she does and decides she wants a job, she's gonna have loads of confidence issues 'cos she's not done the world of work, ... some of the youngsters as well, like Kaz, she's no reason to lack confidence, but she does, in some situations she doesn't lack confidence at all, like squaring up to a police officer, um…" (Matt, Employment Mentor)

Importantly, work experiences were directly associated with helping to build a young person's confidence, to learn work related behaviours:

"It's about giving you the confidence to communicate with the boss, giving you the confidence to get your head around the job description, the confidence to help you get up in the morning, the confidence to believe in yourself again, that you can actually achieve stuff, that you are actually worth more than people might give you credit for, people in the Jobcentres that look down their noses at you. Work experience is absolutely the lynch pin to help develop young people into a position, so they do think that they have something to offer the world, and there should be more of it." (Ben, employment mentor)

Work was symbolised as much more than earning money, it was therefore common sense that work schemes were unpaid, because they benefitted the young person: they *learnt* appropriate (work based) behaviours, and attitudes. Front-line workers justified their interventions and advice, as enabling by practicing the routine of work and learning people skills, with work placements predominantly within low skilled service and retail work:

"Work placements, voluntary work, to gain your skills and confidence definitely, we like that 'cos there a lot of people haven't worked a long time, they don't have the people skills they

don't have the people skills. So, going out and meeting people is important, and knowing how, a pattern of work, again knowing what to do and getting into a routine of work, that's important to people" (Anne, employment advisor)

"The way in which the recruitment process takes place at the moment, you know CV, job interview that's yes or no, personally I think needs to be replaced with work placement, four week work placements, people finding out what they're interested in and then on the back of that employment would be offered" (Chris, employment mentor)

Employment mentor Ben, too employed this discourse in promoting more schemes – particularly for young people:

"I think they should have a specific policy for under 25 year olds and say right, this is this specific structure, this is what we do when somebody comes to sign on, and this automatically kicks in. It's not just coming to sign on, it's what you are obliged to do, you've got to apply for x amount of jobs per week and, if you don't, we sanction you." (Ben, employment mentor).

This emphasis on the importance of unpaid work schemes and experiences highlighted its common sense acceptance as an appropriate solution for the 'problem' of unemployed young people. As well as helping develop a young person's confidence, young people were perceived as needing to learn work based behaviours and employability skills - communicating with the boss, getting up in the morning, being presentable and receiving orders, as well as having something on their CV. Furthermore, to be on a scheme was to be doing something (rather than living a life on benefits at the expense of the taxpayer), and extremely valuable for young people, because it demonstrated to potential employers their proficiency as a worker. These unpaid schemes were also referred to as 'work tasters' or 'work experiences' because it led young people to learn and think about work:

"I mean it makes them think of work, that you get up, get up and prepare for work like I said I think the work experience is one of the best tools." (Bea, employment advisor)

"Even if the employment didn't work out during that voluntary employment, then at least that young person can say, well at least I've got 4 weeks of work experience. I think that is the way to go around skilling up young people, it will also get them used to getting out of bed, and staying in that full-time position [...]. What employers are looking for, to see if they have been able to sustain a job in the past, I think what we've seen in job club where even people with qualifications, because they've had no employment history, they've had no idea of what it would take to hold down a full time job: getting up in the morning, being presentable, um, it goes without saying, those are the things you have to do to hold down a job." (Dave, employment mentor)

"We don't get the perfect job, you know it's very rarely you get your perfect job very first job isn't it...you have to learn, you've got to get up in the morning." (Anne, employment advisor)

Front-line workers justified their practices as enabling, and unpaid work experiences were promoted within a discourse of potentiality, '*having or showing the capacity to develop into something in the future*' (Oxford Dictionaries n.d.). Drawing on a meritocratic discourse of working hard to achieve an eventual perfect job, their role was to maintain individuals within this state of potentiality, to keep them buoyant, valorising work and practices of work experiences. They also stressed the importance of work (paid or unpaid) with the belief that work would help the young person's presumed lack of self-esteem. Similarly, Cruikshank (1999) in her research of US welfare programmes, noted a centrality of work underpinning discourses and practices, and self-esteem promoted as a 'technology of citizenship'. As such, discourses of empowerment and self-improvement that are maintained through practices, aim to shape individual subjectivities, so that welfare claimants adopt the 'correct' behaviours, maintaining the work ethic and 'doing the right thing' (*ibid,* 82). These practices and discourses encourage the individual to improve themselves in ways orientated to the norm: to be responsible and active in seeking work and maintain themselves as employable. However, where front-line workers noticed that some young people were oblivious to this norm, then it was their role to point it out to them, teaching them to be competitive, willing to improve themselves and change potential employer perceptions towards them.

"You have to put yourself in the best position, whether that's through skills, training, qualifications, experience, you know, you need to maximise what you've got on offer to put yourself in the best position, to trump that person that is also going for the job, and that comes as a bit of a shock to young people (laughs), saying it like that, um, because they've never thought of it in those terms." (Dave, employment mentor)

Common sense feels coherent, but contains contradictions, and these can signify resistances to dominant discourses. There were some tensions and dilemmas within the narratives of front-line workers who spoke of the importance of schemes and their role in maintaining confidence and self-esteem, but at the same time, touched on the notion of free labour. Matt reflected on the temporary nature of the scheme, calling it an insult.

"Sometimes I think we are insulting people, we work close to the Jobcentre now…and …you get…we've got Jobs Growth Wales now, but…it's basically a temporary job isn't it" (Matt, employment mentor).

He continued, telling a story of another work placement, using the term 'lead ins' and 'voluntary work':

"Lead-ins and voluntary work, before they're even considered for a place. There was one, and we get this: they want a young person turn up at the timber yard, half 7 in the morning

and it says they'll help out on the desk, customer service desk, and they'll help stacking timber in the yard, for 6 weeks and it says, and for candidates that show exemplary performance, it didn't say adequate performance, there MAY be a placement, though the employer cannot commit to this at present. I wouldn't want to insult a young person with that, they should tell them to eff off basically, ...they should tell them to F off, if I put that in front of them, I said before about motivation to work, but at the same time, if that's the sort of stuff they're being presented with, then well, who can blame them, you know." (Matt, employment mentor).

When some young people had to go on a work trial, to be given a work trial, this practice was regarded as demoralising for the young person ('they say, you can stick that'). Nonetheless, these schemes were not criticised *per se*, but maintained to be an essential practice. Nobody referred to these schemes as 'unpaid labour', 'workfare' or 'welfare to work' schemes which may be indicative of the pervasiveness of the positive discourses surrounding work, which all front-line workers ascribed to which, did not always include financial 'reward':

"I mean some employers are really, really taking the mick out of young people […] for instance, um, offer work trials, but they, you need a work trial to do a work trial, so you go there and they give you a work trial, unpaid. But then to decide whether or not they're gonna give you a month's work trial. So, I've had clients go there and be rejected on the work trial to do the work trial. If they pass the work trial to do a work trial, they're employed for a month without anything, without pay, I've seen it a few times […] young person then, becomes very disillusioned, becomes, er, very er, self-critical if you like, because they start to look at themselves and say, what is it about me that they don't like? What did I do that made me so unattractive, and so, when I suggest a work trial, they say, you can stick that, I've done that, and I'm not doing one again." (Ben, employment mentor)

Here, Ben alluded to young people internalising this failure of obtaining employment following their unpaid work scheme (work trial), referring to the young people being self-critical and questioning why they are 'unattractive' to the employer. Anne, an employment advisor recognised the changing nature of the work schemes. Despite young people mandated to attend schemes, Anne still referred to the individual as the customer –as if in receipt of service and having a choice, and that the employer would not get the best out of the customer:

"When they finish with us, they get mandated into a 6 month placement of a 30 hour a week and they get no choice where they go. I don't think they'll get the best out of the customer there if they are forced in to something they don't want to do […]. The Jobcentre have moved the goal posts there, some of them are offering up to 3 weeks um placements unpaid, which is a lot….Some can do a little bit longer, they do change it depending on the employer and so on, we wouldn't like to do any more than 3 weeks, taking advantage then of the customers" (Anne, employment advisor)

'Employer is King'

Where work and work experiences were presented as benefitting the young person, the employer was perceived as a kindly benefactor. Employers were regarded as benevolent, giving young people the opportunity to *prove* themselves even if the employment was not secure, or no work was forthcoming thereafter. These schemes, described as competitive and sought after, suggested that young people were lucky if they had this opportunity to enhance their value to attract employers. Furthermore, compliance to the discourse of employability was ensured by the need to impress the imaginary future employer (Frayne, 2015, 76). This is the notion that I describe here, as 'employer is king', maintained through policy, discourse and practice. Dave, an employment mentor illustrated this point in the excerpt below, where he highlighted how young people needed the opportunity to prove to the employer their worth, but also, how the chance to get this opportunity of a work scheme was so valuable:

"We work with a lot of young people that if they were given the opportunity, a lot of employers would be pleasantly surprised at the level and the ability of some of the young people, but getting that chance is difficult; which comes back to what I was saying, which was, come and prove yourself, prove how good you are. That work placement needs to be renamed as in job interview instead of a work placement for 4 weeks, have a job interview and prove to this potential employer that you are employable, that you can get up on time, that you can do all of those things, because that is the best way that you can change the perception of who you are as a young person, is to go out and do it. The difficulty is that young people aren't given the opportunity to show that." (Dave, employment mentor)

Front-line workers noted that they had a close relationship with employers, who were key to providing opportunities for young people. They were aware of the employers' needs and appeared grateful to employers, for providing work trials. There were references of competition to secure employers for potential work trials and to entice them to offer unpaid placements. This was the role of the employment liaison officer, based within organisations, who was to secure work trials from companies.

"We have got an employment liaison officer upstairs, and he goes around companies locally and he would ask if they've got any vacancies, and he would bring the vacancies back here and they would be specifically for our customers so sometimes, the Jobcentre don't even get to know about them, it's just for our comp....., our ...you know....client base here, so that's one bonus that we've got really [...]. Do the short list for them, get the CVs off everybody who's interested and he would interview them and see who's suitable - specific jobs but they would always have to have a work trial." (Anne, employment advisor)

There was an ambiguity associated with the term 'work placements', which were also referred to as 'work experience' or 'work trials'. Employment advisers told me that

individuals were not obliged to take these, but would need a good reason not to attend an interview for a work placement position:

"We call them work trials, Gwen does that, she goes out and she'll….we had a young lad, he was 18 in that category, he'd been to college didn't like the course he was doing did a plumbing course didn't know what he wanted to do, so we discussed [shop] or whatever and er, [...], she knows all the employers and she says can this lad have a trial or work experience, anything, cos he doesn't know what he wants to do or anything." (Bea, employment advisor)

Securing work placements was beneficial to the front-line worker's organisation, which reflected the competitive element to get clients into work trials. When I asked an employment advisor which industries would be most commonly associated with work trials, I was informed that these would be within retail, production, and service industry, jobs likely to be precarious with low pay, insecurity, and lack of in work mobility. These were the same placements as the young people noted – pound shops and low paid catering and factory work. Ingold and Stuart (2015) similarly reported repeat vacancies in their research, explaining that the funding model of the Work Programme meant that it was better for an organisation to pursue continual engagement with the same, larger employers.

Front-line workers were keen to emphasise getting business employers 'on board' and gaining their trust, to give their clients work placements, matching the right person to the right job:

"I see our roles as working closely with business getting their trust on board really and the matching the right person to the right business for that job interview, or one month placement, whatever you want to call it." (Dave, employment mentor)

These practices involved surveillance, with the employer monitoring the individual's behaviour to identify areas that needed to be 'challenged':

"We specifically say right, it's just three weeks or whatever, get something out of it, and we also expect a, er, um, a feedback…what they've done (from the employer..?) yeah, so then we know as well, cos they're gonna say oh we enjoyed it, but employer said oh didn't turn up 2 days, blah de blah… so, just shows us what they can and what they can't do doesn't it, now they're working, they need a lot of challenging you know." (Bea, employment advisor)

This point of young people resisting work schemes by non-attendance, and the need for the frontline workers to address their 'deviant' behaviour, rejecting the norm of work albeit unpaid is returned to below. However, here employers were discussed in terms of being 'really good' for taking on their clients, and retaining them:

"Retail and production, we've got the [meat] factory, x have taken on they do packing and bakeries and so on. [Shop] have been really good, they've taken a lot of people on ..yeah..so they do hang on to them." (Anne, employment advisor)

Illustrating the employer as benefactor, Dave recalled a client with confidence issues, working in the service sector, referred back to him to be improved because their lack of confidence was affecting the business. The need to 'improve' the worker was highlighted:

"He said to me 'if this person doesn't sort out this confidence issue, it's going to be very, very, difficult to retain her, cos its such as barrier in the job which she's doing', for her to be able to continue, 'cos this was a very customer service, front of house position you know, it would affect his business [….]. A lot of others managers may not have been sympathetic because what she has was a confidence issue, the same as if you had a lack of health and safety knowledge, or manual handling. It's a skill and he was willing to improve that. He was very good for seeing that." (Dave, employment mentor).

As well as the ease with which the employer could 'let go' of this young person, which was not regarded as an issue, this highlighted the importance of the young person to work on themselves, to come across as more confident. This exemplifies the performative requirement that is especially notable in the service sector, where the worker must develop and demonstrate their confidence at the front of house – or be rejected. An apparent normality demonstrates a compliance to the discourse that the employee must bring aspects of their personality to the job, change their attitude to fit the workplace, or leave. That this job may not be appropriate for her was not discussed, however managing her conduct was.

As noted, it was not always easy for frontline workers to match clients with employers' needs. This was resolved with the front-line worker mediating with the employer for the individual to have a work trial:

"Employers, first thing they ask is do they drive, and I say no, they go out on public transport, and they say how are they going to get here on Sundays? Buses run 10 'til 4 on a Sunday and you have to go in (how do you negotiate that?) sometimes you have to put your hands up and say, he can be here by ten to 11, are you willing to give him a work trial?" (Chris, employment mentor)

With the issues of transport described as a barrier for young people getting on an unpaid work scheme, the front-line worker was a broker to the employer in negotiated how the young person could attend. This is an example of front-line workers, through discourse and practices, working on 'the capacities of citizens to act on their own behalf' (Cruikshank, 1999, 39). Soss *et al* (2011, 28) refer to how the neoliberal state makes the poor available to serve low skilled labour; they are available to employers and on the terms of the employers.

However, the state must teach the poor to conceive of themselves as a market actor available to employers. Where the young person is problematized as needing to learn work based behaviours, work placements do offer a common sense solution; employers are meeting the needs of the individual, and supplying them with an opportunity rather than 'extracting surplus value' (Weeks, 2011, 53). The unpaid work experience was perceived as a reward for effort, but also the employer appeared generous in giving the young person an opportunity.

Two employment mentors mentioned the Jobs Growth Wales scheme. This was a Welsh Government initiative from European funding, and unlike the other work experience schemes, it paid young people at, or above, the minimum wage. This was regarded as good at providing opportunities for young people, and the mentors reflected that this scheme gave a 'definite possibility' of paid work, on completion of the six months, and also confidence:

"Gives somebody work experience even if it only lasts 6 months, it gives them so much self-worth and confidence, it's an invaluable scheme, it really is, it really does help a lot of people [...] with a definite possibility of having a full time job after 6 months." (Ben, employment mentor)

"Try to get young people into work placements, and on the back of those work placements, be moved into the Jobs Growth Wales scheme with the expectation that hopefully, they'd be able to sustain that after the 6 months and that job would become permanent really." (Chris, employment mentor)

However, these short-term schemes, which lasted six months, again, did not promise any job security – they were considered invaluable because they offered the *possibility* of a job.

Moulding the Docile Body

This section discusses the front-line worker perspectives specifically in relation to their work with their clients. It is here that clients, who were not receptive to welfare practices and the norm of work were noted, and some front-line workers spoke of needing to motivate listless clients for whom the '*light had gone out'*.

Institutions and practices shape or guide actions 'in ways in which we act upon ourselves' (Cruikshank, 1999, 4) and according to Standing (2014a), the workforce and precariat must be maintained as presentable, flexible, accessible, and eager for work. However, the front-line workers recalled how some young people did not want to be 'transformed' into the

worker and they refused to be 'persuaded' to continue to job search despite the efforts of the employment mentor. They eschewed low paid or precarious work and were perceived by the front-line workers to be fussy; they did not understand the importance and fulfilment that work would bring (even unpaid). These were 'difficult to mould' according to front-line workers. These all stressed the importance of getting their clients to open up to them, to gain the individual's trust, unburdening them and bringing them into a domain of power, as it was here that information was collected about the clients, specifically about their lifestyle. As Anne described:

"I give them a welcome interview go through everything, I'll give you a pack, and then they have an action plan. In that action plan it says they must attend this appointment minimum once every 2 weeks, if you do not attend without letting me know, we will have to notify the Jobcentre, that is what we do, so say they have to sign and say yes, they are aware of that, that is important [...]. Overtime they'd open up a bit. Because it takes time, again maybe for them to trust and open up a little bit more…in the first interview because we are on our own with them sometimes there's a crowd." (Anne, Employment adviser).

As a technology of power, the 'welcome interview' is akin to a confession so that the individual can have their habits worked on, to produce the docile body. Here, the practices of governing were evident as those clients who resisted or refused work were regarded as difficult to mould. The client, mandated to job search, had to be more creative in their solutions to find and sustain work, even where there were challenges of travel:

"18-24s, they don't drive do they, so they think, and they don't want to move so far from here to [place] , it's a long way isn't it, it's from here until the end of the world, I'm talking about my clients in [place]. As I said, they are of an ilk of their own, they won't mix with people in [place] it's like a big gang thing, people in [place] don't mix …and they tend to just walk round you know, looking for something round here…'what do you want to do?' 'Labouring', there's no labouring round here, they can't see above the box." (Bea, Employment Advisor)

Bea highlighted the demands that her clients had, in wanting to remain in the area to work and to do labouring work. As Standing states, individuals (as docile bodies) must not have 'excessive wage demands or job expectations and must act in specific ways to access benefits.' (2014a, 78). Those who resist bring punishment upon themselves, of their own free will, as they have governed themselves wrongly. Importantly, individuals that resisted working free (work trials) had, s, failed to recognise 'opportunities' according to these front-line workers. Their resistances were associated with their lifestyle, and generational and educational experiences:

"Kicked out from college 'cos they were in with the wrong crowd. Um, they expect the jobs to come to them, they are not willing to come to it. These are the ones not willing to do the work trials, you know, why should I do it for nothing… they are a difficult group… they are a difficult group, because you can't mould them." (Anne, Employment Advisor)

The role of the mentor or officer was to change clients' perspectives, through advice, to construct this 'docile body', to be receptive to welfare practices, and suppress challenging behaviour. Clients described as being stuck in their own 'bubble' were assumed to have not yet experienced the pleasures of work; their social life could not replace the joys associated with working:

"Yeah, they don't want to come here, they don't particularly…a lot of them are quite happy being in that little bubble, which is a shame cos they can't see past, they can't see why people go to work, they can't see the benefits, they can't see that a, your mixing, you're doing, your meeting different people, you're thinking different once you get a job you get new skills, they can't see that a lot of them." (Bea, employment advisor).

"Talking to a young person the other day asking 'how can we track young people like yourself?' We've got this jobs growth allocation now, and that will be like a 6 month job there for you guaranteed, if you impress the employer, where are these young people? He said…'oh yeah, they're having flat sessions' (drinking in their flats) that's the term, how can you attract them here?" (Chris, Employment Mentor)

Dunn's research (2013) similarly explored activation workers' perceptions of the (long-term) unemployed. He found that the frontline 'activation' workers described their clients ('service users') as being choosy. This, Dunn stated, was beneficial to both the employer and employee because it provided the best match for the job. However, Dunn also argued that in being choosy over a length of time, and not accepting any work available, equated to being unemployed by choice. In his research, he noted that activation workers spoke of job seekers having 'unrealistic expectations' and lacking in self-confidence. However, those that do not work, and refuse any job, may be showing a reluctance to experience low job satisfaction, low status, pay and prestige that they recognise as associated with these jobs, without a ladder of opportunity or respect. Crossley (2017, 62-64) highlighted this by drawing on the ethnographic research of Liebow (1967), 'Tally's Corner' that addressed why men refused the work offered. He argued that the refusal of low pay and low value jobs is a reflection of society; if society does not hold certain jobs in high regard, then why should the individual not turn these jobs down? A lack of secure, well-paid, interesting jobs may be a reason why these young people prefer not to work, a refusal to accept the work ethic and the morality of working.

Dave, an employment mentor, had found that young people had a 'lack of aspiration' and believed that they were not aware of the opportunities available to them. This he had witnessed following a focus group with young people:

"'What's your dream job, what's your… you know, what's the job you want to do…?' And I was expecting them to say, you know, astronaut, physicist, um you know all these jobs which realistically for that group of young people in the room would be difficult, you know very, very, difficult for them to obtain, you know not impossible but very, very, difficult, um, and what we came up with, working aspirations were very low, you know, truck driver, cashier, cleaner was one of them, which was ok, that's fine, those jobs have to be fulfilled in society, we know that, but what is it your dream job, what is it you want to aspire to be? And what we actually got out of that was young people's aspiration are very, very, low. They don't see, well one day I might like to be a teacher, or one day I might like to be a lecturer in university, so all these different um, jobs mean absolutely nothing to people because they have no aspirations to get them whatsoever because they don't know what they are." (Dave, employment mentor)

Frontline workers in relaying the positive functions of work persuaded their clients of the benefits of work that did not necessarily equate to a wage payment. Bea stated that she needed to promote a more positive appraisal of work, which was challenging to relay to some young people, particularly as benefits stopped when they started a job, and they needed to wait for their wage:

"Their perception of work I think a lot of them are negative, they just don't seem to, not interested somehow, lack motivation […] It is difficult, it's trying to put the pros and cons…you will be financially better off come 4 weeks so, […] they've got the housing and they've got the council tax paid, so it's just the food." (Bea, employment advisor).

Here, not having any money, a wage payment, was presumed to be acceptable, because it was 'just the food', the housing and council tax was already paid for. The lack of motivation and interest in work was also a concern for Anne, who perceived not working as not doing anything. She similarly articulated this and she drew on the figure of someone staying at home all day, and watching television:

"Less heating, they're not watching the telly all day, they are out meeting people, they're doing something and there's always the offer of overtime somewhere, so there are benefits of it somewhere, they may not become obvious but there are benefits, of actually doing the work for the same money….possibly […]. They shouldn't be worse off, they may well be exactly the same ….and to me that's not worse off, because if you're gonna be the same, you're not losing out but you are gaining more in your personal skills….so you're winning, but you're not gaining, ok money." (Anne, employment advisor)

Work was revered, not for the wages received, that is the productive time exchanged for a wage (Frayne, 2015), but for the chance to gain 'personal skills', self-respect and confidence, and as an essential stepping-stone to eventual pay. Insecurity and uncertainty of hours work were not issues, with work perceived to improve a young person's mental health, even if they did not recognise these themselves, as Dave highlighted:

"We all know obviously about young people and the sort of correlation between self-worth, it improves their mental health if they're doing a job gets them out of the house they're not as isolated, but how young people perceive it themselves…" (Dave, employment mentor)

Young people who dropped off their CVs personally, or took unpaid work to show that they were willing, presented their work ethic, displaying the ideal welfare subjectivities and demonstrated their potential to be employable. Nevertheless, young people could not be too aspirational, and some front-line workers noted that young people must not 'expect' too much, they had to accommodate the uncertainty and insecurity to 'get their foot on the ladder':

"They just want to miss out like miss out the first 15 years and just get to point B. Before, they've gone from point A, and a lot of young people are like that, they want to jump over the bit, the sort of nastiness of the uncertainty and just go straight into the security of knowing that they are going to be fine in the future. But then there's no security in life anymore, in the old days, gone are the industries that gave communities that security and there are no industries are there now […]. Ultimately, you need to get your foot onto the ladder (Ben, employment mentor)

"For young people, they don't have experience and most of the ones here, they don't know what they want to do, so I need to find out what their short term goal is. Don't know, haven't got a clue….they've not actually thought even at that stage what they've got, so I think young people are sometimes harder to move forward because of the indecisions, they don't know what they want to do…right." (Bea, employment advisor)

There was advice given that encouraged the client to become 'docile'; for example, as Ben noted those who resisted their subjection in the Jobcentre had to 'grovel':

"It's a hell of a thing to say, but to get the best out of that service, that Jobcentre, you need to grovel and they go in and they grovel and they get treated really well, and the advisors will then really help them to the best of their ability… trying to get a young client to grovel is not always easy, and I don't blame them for being resentful, why should I grovel for a service that they're being paid to deliver?" (Ben, employment mentor)

Lipsky (2010, 11) in his study of 'Street Level bureaucracy' argued that clients were required to exhibit certain behaviours to receive public benefit. Where clients had to develop suitable attitudes, then the front-line workers enforced these, which constituted a function of social

control. As above, young people had to be receptive to this help and advice, but some young people organised their time and activities away from the labour market, through the informal economy, or hanging out on the street:

"They are very blinkered, this is what I want to do and they won't move the goalposts. If they're willing to try, then you'll work harder with them, any opportunities which come up, you'll think of them, but if they're people that can't be bothered and don't want to try then the opportunities don't got their way as much. [...] I think they are a difficult group this age because…. there is a lot of attitude with them and they don't want to do it." (Anne, employment advisor)

*"We arrange work tasters if you like, there's always a handful who don't turn up on the day. They speak the speak, you know, they want to do it when it comes to the day they don't go. A lot of them can't be bothered, or they've changed their mind, or they've decided or spoken to someone oh I wouldn't do it for 2 weeks with no money oh I'm not doing it either...so, yeah there's a lot of talk." (*Anne, employment advisor)

Bea similarly drew this on:

"Getting out of bed isn't it, having to get out of bed, 'oooh and we won't get paid'. They think the minimum wage is …pfff, rubbish, and bear in mind a lot of 18-24 now have children…they have a lot of responsibilities...they live in their own, they have to pay rent, and this, that, and the other, so if you, we, do a calculation and see how much better off they are, that's, well, they come and see. Between 18 to 24 they don't get any working tax credits you see, so they fall back on that one, they don't get um any child tax credits so they're not, they are thinking 20 pound a week better off, do you think I'm gonna go work for £20 a week I'm not going to do that pffff." (Bea, employment advisor)

This highlights a refusal of work and of the minimum wage. Strategies of refusal have been found in other research, with claimants refusing to be engaged in welfare strategies denoting a form of resistance (Prior and Barnes, 2011), and refusing to accept their apparent needs which were defined in welfare policy (Cruikshank, 1999). Here, if the client resists, they are being difficult, highlighting the disjuncture between political rationalities and the effects 'on the ground'. For example, McDonald and Marston (2005, 394), discussing welfare reform in Australia, highlighted how some clients refused to adopt the subjectivities imposed on them and '*refused to be 'gracious' about the identities they were asked to adopt'.* Matt, an employment mentor, relayed how he had clients who resisted work, but attempted to draw on his help, to keep the Jobcentre off their backs:

"Lad will come to the office same day as he signed on getting hassle from the Jobcentre come to the office say can you help me look for a job, help me look for a job, I'm desperate I need to get a job I need to get a job…. Ok fine, tell you what, I'm with someone now, come back at

*4, then we'll put some thing together, never see him, then 2 weeks later, Matt, Matt, help us find a job, 'you never turned up last time jack' yeah I know but something turned up, I'll be there tomorrow and you know they won't." (*Matt, employment mentor)

Power works through discourse, policy and practice, and through the frontline worker's client, the welfare claimant. Any refusal to adopt the subjectivities is a form of disobedience that is pre-empted with the omnipresent threat of sanctions. The client, as described above can perform the role of an obedient willing jobseeker, to prevent incurring a sanction; they are in effect, performing desistance.

Sanctions

Practices of sanctions and surveillance of job searching behaviours signified compliance to the norm of work. The sanction was to encourage and compel the individual to adopt the correct behaviour, and as such, represented the 'ultimate backstop of paternal reforms' (Whitworth and Carter, 2014, 105). Claimants must have resources such as a computer, be available for work and have confidence to negotiate the benefits system, and had importantly, signed a contract (Claimant Commitment or Job Seekers Agreement). This presumes some freedom of choice, and a benefit sanction warranted, for breaking this contract. Front-line workers referred to the young people as their clients, or customers, as if in receipt of a service, yet sanctions were perceived to be a legitimate practice, caused by breaking contractual obligations, and they emphasised the responsibility of the individual to maintain the correct behaviour, and oblige their contract. The individual had to 'abide' by the rules as set; for example, they had to be ready to travel to any available work, because the agreement had been made, despite the rurality and issues of transport:

"They have to be prepared to travel because they've signed that with the Jobcentre agreement 90 minutes travelling time is what they've agreed to do so none of them like it you know cos the buses are ridiculous in a rural area, I mean our way, […] way the buses are every 2 hours, so if you've missed it then you've got no chance getting into work otherwise." (Anne, employment advisor)

People who were sanctioned were either 'undeserving', they did not bother to turn up to sign on or keep their appointment; or 'deserving', exhibiting the correct behaviours but had been subject to administrative errors. Leah a peer worker for young adults spoke of sanctioning as a normal procedure, similarly to all front-line workers:

"Sometimes it's just because they can't be bothered turning up to the Jobcentre, and they know if they're not going to turn up they're not going to get their money; other times it is a genuine mistake, and I have had it once where we've appealed and we've had it accepted so it's gone the other way, it's been completely fine...so I think it just depends on the situation." (Leah, peer worker)

What was notable was that the decision to sanction was described as 'completely fine', because it was successfully appealed. The sanction was normalised and legitimised as a practice. Sanctions could be given if there was a belief that the claimant was taking other work, including a voluntary job, as all information had to be supplied to the Jobcentre. As Chris, an employment mentor noted, alluding to the scheme that he was involved in,

"It's not a bad thing that they're volunteering with us, it doesn't affect their benefits, that's ok for them to be doing that…. they have to have, they have um, they have to sign a form in the Jobcentre that confirms that they are volunteering and not getting paid for it." (Chris, employment mentor)

With any volunteering, the Jobcentre Plus must be informed of any activity; any expenses declared, receipts kept, and any money on top of expenses are to be counted as earnings and declared (gov.uk n.d. c).

The (Work Programme) employment advisers had authority to sanction their clients, and they justified their decisions in doing so, with only the 'undeserving' received sanctions:

"They try it on first thing see if they can get away, say, they think oh she's quite easy going [...]. Say their appointment is in the morning, I'll wait until about 4 o'clock until I hit that fail to attend button. I give them leeway, other staff, I don't know about other people, or I'll wait till about 3 and I will try and ring them myself. Oh, they are terrible, they don't answer their phone, oh, but they've got mobiles haven't they, they've all got new mobiles every other week, but will they answer them? The minute I do their fail to attend, I have to ring provider direct … they won't stop your money till a decision maker…so they still get their money sometimes it may take 6 weeks, so sometimes they might think, oh got away with that." (Bea, employment advisor)

There was no suggestion given that some circumstances were beyond the young person's control, and therefore sanctioning was an appropriate practice to discipline the client who 'tried it on'. With the belief that young people had new mobile phones 'every other week', this suggests that young people wilfully eschewed her reminders, and broke the contractual agreement. However, Bea also reflected on the personal consequences: how a client might then perceive her, and referred to it being 'what she was paid to do':

"I hate doing it, but if they are habitual then I have to do it. I hate doing it but that is what I am paid for, otherwise I'm not doing my job. I raise the paperwork and that goes to [...] you

don't know but depends the reason they get and if they think it's a good reason. So, I don't, I can't stop them it's up to the decision maker, but they think we do so I explain to them, I do not stop the money." (Bea, employment advisor)

Here, Bea attempted to absolve herself from the process. Similarly, employment advisor Anne explained reasons for sanctioning and distanced herself from the process:

"The majority of sanctions we do are for people who non-attend for appointments every 2 weeks, so if they don't attend on that day, we're obliged to say on the computer, no they did not attend, and it's an instant sanction some of them are ill, or they've forgotten, but unless they contact us on that day we close that appointment down, we close the appointment down at the end of that day, we close them all down. Its just a yes no on the appointment, and if it's a no its an instant sanction, its automatic, the process is there then, we don't have the power to say no we can't do that sanction." (Anne, employment advisor)

The contractual obligation is part of the neoliberal discourse that limits any discretion potentially given by these front-line workers. This is similar to the findings of Soss *et al* (2011, 2219) whereby front-line welfare workers in the US highlighted the welfare contract to deflect clients' demands, and stated that they themselves could lose their job if they did not follow the rules.

The Deserving…and the Undeserving

The normalisation of a discourse type occurs through social practices and political discourse, determined largely by those in power, aiding cultural constructions to appear common sense. This 'crafting' secures anti welfare common sense according to Jensen and Tyler (2015), and contributes to a conceptualisation of the ideal welfare subject: one who adheres to the rules, and contractual obligations, and who should feel stigma and shame in not working but claiming benefits. Lipsky (2010, 9) described how 'street level bureaucrats' such as front-line staff, can judge welfare recipients according to their own evaluations. Clients are categorised as types that are naturalised and framed as common sense, and front-line workers subsequently justify their interactions with clients, according to these types. Similarly, Marston (2013, 820) argued that it would be surprising if front-line workers *did not* adopt a 'dominant position' of a dependency thesis, as this has been (historically) dominant throughout political discourse, culminating in individualistic approaches to understanding and managing, poverty and unemployment. The narratives of the front-line workers reflected this. Some clients were perceived as deserving; they had confidence issues, they were natural

'grafters', or, because they knew these clients well, they were not lazy. Others however, judged as undeserving of benefits, gave other claimants a bad name. They did not want to work, and were happy to sit around and watch television. Matt, who gave a description of two of his clients, illustrated this:

"Johnny is a grafter and he hates being out of work. He was working, yeah confidentiality, he was working on the side, and I said don't do it mate, one day you're gonna get caught, you do it 5 days a week, you're gonna get caught, but his response was yeah its money, but I just can't be doing nothing at home being idle doing [...]. And then you look at Paula, in the flats, and she feeds her kids on pizza and micro oven chips, and you ask a sociologist why she's like that and they'd say poverty but what makes them different it's just interesting, Johnny is a grafter and he hates being out of work." (Matt, employment mentor)

Matt had described Johnny as 'working on the side' and therefore being involved in the informal economy, in effect, committing benefit fraud. However, he was not pejoratively but described as being a 'grafter' who outwardly displayed a work effort. In comparison, Paula, in receipt of benefits and feeding her children 'microchips and pizza' was held in a negative light. Paula did not outwardly display stigma in not working; looking after children was not been perceived to be work. Matt went on:

"Paula, no stigma at all…my fucking right innit…excuse my language but that's what she'd say...this other guy, never worked a day in his life, bloody hell Daily Mail would have a field day… all the stereotypes, the widescreen TV and that Bobby, he wouldn't feel any shame." (Matt, employment mentor)

The deserving client should openly demonstrate a work ethic, and feel shame and stigma. Another front-line worker noted that one client had turned down a full-time position she was offered. However, she was not characterised as undeserving of benefits or lazy because she had conveyed and maintained the appropriate characteristics of a potential hard worker, having role models, getting up early, being intelligent and not being work shy:

"You know that's not lazy, I can tell she's not a lazy girl, she gets up early she's intelligent, she's had good role models, and she's not work shy, it's just a fear thing, a confidence thing (Ben, employment mentor)

"There is a stigma out there about layabouts you know, sit there and stay at home, watch Jeremy Kyle and not wanting to work and that's true of a small percentage but I would say that actually the majority do actually want to work , and it's how they go about doing that really." (Dave, employment mentor)

These assumptions conceived in terms of behaviour, culture and place were so banal, that they were discussed in terms of types, that everyone (including me) would obviously knew:

"*...the majority of them would sort of live in estates, which are notorious, you know, never worked, don't want to work, always in trouble.*" (Anne, employment advisor).

The housing estate has commonly been a derogatory label, inhabited by certain 'types' of people. It has been a symbolic place, commonly judged as no-go area, in public, media and political discourse (see McKenzie, 2015; Crossley, 2017). Moreover, frontline workers commented that young people recognised 'types' and disassociating themselves from them:

"*I've got clients that judge scroungers themselves, say – 'I'm desperate to work, yeah, I want a job, I get pissed off with people' he says 'that are sat on their arses all day, people that are on sick and there's fuck all wrong with them, and I wanna to work'. I hear that quite a lot from clients... and so even unemployed people can be resentful of unemployed people cos they give them a bad name.*" (Ben, employment mentor)

The individual must be receptive to the norms displayed to them (Dean, 2013, 19) so that they question their own conduct according to these, for example, in presenting their work ethic, being the hard worker. This is illustrated in the extracts below, where the conditionality of benefits upon effort led to other claimants judging according to these norms.

"*'Oh, Mr jones you've been on benefits for 6 months now, you're gonna have to redouble your efforts now', 'what about him over there, he's never done a day's work in his life and he was in school with me, when are you gonna give him some stick?' or people come out with perceived unfairness, and I dare say it's there.*" (Matt, employment advisor)

Front-line workers noted many of their clients feeling 'looked down on' by benefits administrative staff; they had witnessed 'claims stigma' (Baumberg, 2016, 183):

"*They basically think, I've got a label on the top of my head that says useless, scrounger, you know and all those other connotations that are attached to being unemployed, you know, especially this whole thing now with the media and the government now clamping down on benefit fraudsters, I think society does judge people.*" (Ben, employment mentor)

Experiencing 'claims stigma' was also a key finding of Patrick's research (2016b). Her participants, who had encounters with Jobcentre staff and Work Programme advisors, also described an absence of respect and a sense of dehumanisation, as one of her participants recalled: '*They look at you like you're rubbish*' (Patrick, 2016b, 248).

The Government discourse, discussed in Chapter Three, was that of work conceptualised as an obligation that people would avoid if they could. Some front-line workers thought that some women had 'kids for a living', which they described as understandable because it allowed them to escape 'work':

"You are going to get some people who have decided that they're not going to work, there's no two ways about that, I've had, I've heard people say […], I have babies for a living, somebody said that to me once, she's got 7 kids, that I have babies for a living, and I'll say, whilst they are still a minority, there are still some people who have that attitude, and there are some people that exploit the benefits system, you know and that's understandable." (Ben, employment mentor)

Where a single mother appeared reluctant to find a job, or engage in any work search activity, they were regarded as having the wrong attitude, for example, in refusing to pay for childcare. This appeared unacceptable, because paying for childcare was the expected norm that everybody with children had to do.

"We have a lot of single mums obviously, that have just come off Income Support earlier now. They're adamant they can't work anything between 9 and 3 no school holidays, absolutely adamant you know they won't look at, you know, having to pay a school minder for school holidays, you know why should I have to pay for someone else to pay for my children…..but...everybody else have had to do that." (Anne, employment advisor).

Anne believed her work role was to change an individual's mind-set in thinking about work, and to encourage her clients to 'think outside the box' in order to participate in the labour market. They needed to take up this goal, and to act on it themselves:

"It's just a change of mind-set, they've got it in their minds, I'm at home, I've got a child, single parent, maybe they've got no family, got no friends look after the child at so and so time, they're not prepared think out of that box really, they're in school those are the hours that I can do. So it's trying to change their mind set, this is what's available, this is what you could do, there are school clubs, there are holiday clubs, it's just getting them to think about the options." (Anne, employment advisor).

Despite some recognition of issues of childcare, there was no reference to employers or policy accommodating to school hours. The individual needed to be flexible to accommodate the needs of the employer, with costs of childcare shifted firmly on the individual.

Where working and the work ethic were presented as learned behaviour, this led to assumptions that there was a 'non-work' ethic that was intergenerational. Some front-line workers spoke of being unemployed as being unlucky, but this 'luck' was couched in terms of individual effort; knowing and having a work ethic, passed on generationally. Anne captured this:

"None of my family have been unemployed luckily […] but I think that's more of the way they've been bought up and the way we've been bought up, you know…work is important you

just make them (children) more aware of that when they're growing up I think." (Anne, employment advisor)

Here, being in receipt of benefits meant that they did not have to work, and could receive 'everything free', thereby fitting with the dominant Government's discourse of a moral hazard of welfare:

"Families haven't worked and the grandparents haven't worked and they don't think they should work because they've had everything for free for years so they'd be silly to work wouldn't they? We know some families because we've worked with their parents and...their brothers and sisters and their uncles ...and so on. We have a lot of young people living at home who maybe their mum and dads aren't working you know, it's a generational thing... We have a first interview with them and we ask a lot of questions about their lifestyle questions if you like. Half an hour, 40 minutes...so a lot of them are generational, mum and dad don't work so I'm not going to work." (Anne, employment advisor)

"By the time you get to a stage, where somebody's third generation unemployed, telling them to get a job in ASDA café, you might as well be telling them to live on the moon or something, it's not going to happen, it's not going to happen, and they want me to target them. Jo, she's a really intelligent girl, scruffy as hell, but really intelligent girl....she's got good vocabulary on her, don't know where she got it from, not from her mum... we school her up, try and inspire her and build her confidence up." (Matt, employment mentor)

These narratives present an assumed, common sense decision not to work, passed down generationally despite in-depth research that shows evidence to the contrary. For example, there are only few families where two generations had never worked, in areas of high unemployment (Glasgow and the North East of England – Shildrick, *et al* 2012), and cultures of worklessness have not been found (MacDonald, *et al* 2013). Yet it is this assumption that has consistently underpinned the tightened conditionality to access welfare benefits, and legitimised the understanding that being out of work should be the same as being in work.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the front line workers experiences and their perceptions of their clients, as well as perceptions of work and welfare. Particularly compelling was the perception that taking any job, even if temporary and insecure, was worthwhile. The frontline workers valorised work, and work schemes, for their *potential of opportunity*, rather than of pay and security. These 'jobs' were believed to help the young person develop self-confidence and self-esteem. These findings are congruent to the government's discourse of

work as fulfilling, presented in Chapter Three. The young people that were subject to this discourse and these practices were specifically those that did not go onto education and had no financial resources, but they were regarded as either not having had a vision of work, or alternatively, they were regarded as being too choosy, wishing to enter well paid jobs straight away. However, work was also viewed as a duty, something that people must do, whether they wanted to or not and this underpinned their beliefs in scroungers, and underpinned their rationale for sanctions. This was not without its challenges as the front-line workers recognised the regime of signing on – it was not something that young people wanted to do. Navigating the benefits system was discussed as challenging for young people, but front-line workers described offering pastoral support, to help their clients' navigate these processes - sometimes backed up with sanctions, to guide the young person towards work, or unpaid work schemes. This chapter discussed how the front-line workers helped to maintain their clients, so that they were able to manage the regime of the benefits system, whilst encouraging them to apply for jobs, even where their clients felt demoralised. In effect, this was to help them to remain buoyant, 'Waving and not Drowning', and drawing on the importance of work, the frontline workers' practices were apparently benign interventions towards their 'clients'.

Chapter Six: Findings. Young People: Between the Devil and the deep blue sea? Experiences and perspectives of work and welfare

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the narrative interviews with young people who were in precarious work or unemployed. The participants were a diverse group as the pen portraits outlined, however; they all shared key life experiences that were relevant to the research questions, namely lacking secure employment. The themes presented below include extracts from the participant narrative accounts to illustrate key areas.[10] Three main themes were identified from the data, and related subthemes (in brackets): 'Transitions from school' ('On the Making Table', 'University Norms: Square pegs, round holes'); 'Precarious work' ('Competition', 'Self Employment'); and 'In Work Being Out of Work' ('Maintaining the Employable Self', 'Financial Costs', 'Treading Water: Navigating the Benefits System', 'Benefit Sanctions', 'You Know the Type', 'Being Judged', 'Work Schemes').

Transitions from school

Each interview began by asking young people to talk about their time following school. They provided interesting insights into their perceptions and experiences of education. It was here that individuals described themselves as not academic and some referred to being in lower sets. One described this as 'being on the making table'. Most blamed their school and teachers for not being able to keep control over their classes, and believed that teachers focused primarily on those pupils seen as destined for A-levels and university. The young people acknowledged that going to university was an important step towards securing a 'good job' that had pay, security and status.

'On the making table'

Some young people described themselves as 'non-academic', and mentioned that they preferred the creative subjects offered at school. These included photography, art, woodwork, and opportunities to 'work with their hands'. These were subjects that they enjoyed at school,

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[10] '…' signifies a pause in the participant's speech, and […] where some text has been removed, such as an identifying feature: a place or name, in order to maintain anonymity; or where there has been deviation or repetition.

but were also activities that they continued out of school. School was described as prioritising academic subjects, and pupils judged not to be academic were placed in lower sets. These sets were regarded as disruptive environments, associated with stigma and spaces where the teachers could not control the pupils. Sam illustrated this concern:

"Got very little done cos I was in a set and most of my class were very, very, disruptive and we got very little done, constantly screaming, yelling fighting with each other…I would have enjoyed it if we could have actually got round to doing some work." (Sam)

Sam noted a lack of pastoral support from school as the reason that he got into subsequent trouble:

"I was bullied repeatedly for 5 years, and I constantly told the school about it, nothing was done about, and the last week I decided to take the matter into my own hands and decided to have a fight with the person who was bullying me, and after that I wished that I had done it in the first place. […] I came away from school thinking what a waste of 5 years of my life." (Sam)

Similarly, John described school as a wasted opportunity. He stating that he did not receive the help from his school in Wales, having moved from London, which he believed he needed. This lack of intervention given as the reason why his grades were no longer 'good',

" School in London for about 2 and half years, they saw that I needed help and everything, so they gave me a lap top which helped and I got good grades and things, but when I moved up here in 2004 the secondary school up here wouldn't give me the help that I needed, started getting into trouble and I got…I started misbehaving in the classroom." (John)

Here, he identified himself as a troublemaker in class – primarily because of the lack of support at school to help him achieve good grades. Both Liam and Adam stated that school had not taught them anything useful. Notably, young people often blamed their school, and not themselves, for what they saw as not achieving good grades. In the case of Judy, she blamed her family for not conveying the importance of education to her:

"An inconvenience I think, that's how I saw it really. I was very bright, I was very good at school but I had other things I wanted to do with my time, it was never stressed to me that school and education was important in my family life." (Judy)

Young people positioned blame for not doing well at school, with the school or with their family, not with their individual effort. This was contrary to the young peoples' discussions about being unemployed or in precarious work, which was presented through discourses of individual 'effortfulness' highlighting their own work ethic and resilience, and other's shortcomings in relation to individual effort. This is discussed later in the chapter.

The narratives revealed a banal and common sense association between lower sets, bad behaviour and vocational courses. Alun and Brendan, interviewed together, highlighted this:

"There is a lot of people that spoiled a lot of classes in our school, getting in trouble." (Brendan)

"Ha-ha I suppose I didn't get into enough trouble (laughs) (to be sent to the vocational courses)." (Alun)

William had expressed a strong interest in woodwork. Alun, in building and construction, and he had wanted to go onto vocational courses with part days away from school, at a local college. He reflected that he had been steered away from this at his school by teachers and jokingly referred to being *too* well behaved to be considered for vocational subjects:

"They offer you like a vocational skill away from school, sort of like the age 14, 15 and they offer you a couple of days out at college. I specifically said, well I want to go and do this um, this um building stuff and he said, no, no, you don't want to do that, there's no point and I said, er, I do and he said no you don't, you want to be doing the designing and all the rest of it, I said, OK . He was saying you're not going to do this, you're going to stay in school and do this stuff [...] not everyone is geared to taking A-levels yeah, maybe you could say that I shouldn't have done A-levels but it was pressed upon me to go and do them. I guess that's where I thought I was different I did A-levels but I was going to go to work anyway" (Alun)

Rather than expressing an inevitability of going to university Alun wanted to go to work. He stated that he took A-levels, but did so without the intention of going onto university. Consequently, he described himself as different from the norm, initially eschewing A-levels to take vocational subjects, before being persuaded to take them within school, and deciding not to go to university.

Brendan too spoke of his preference for 'non-academic' subjects, with interests in music and art and in doing so, referred to his dyslexia and 'always making something'. Again, like Sam and John, it was the disruption in classes which he blamed as preventing him from doing well, and 'failures' such as in maths despite his effort. He blamed the teachers as he reflected on being capped in subjects which he believed he could have achieved a higher grade:

"I didn't enjoy school. I'm dyslexic so my marks were pretty poor, the only classes I did well in were music, I did well in art and maybe mathematics, there was a lot that I couldn't deal with in school I wasn't an academic kid, I'd always be into Lego, so I'd have the big towers everything was making something so.[...]. You couldn't concentrate in the class, but I always tried in school, and I always wanted to do good but I couldn't not because of these lads and stuff, but sometimes the teachers couldn't control them, they would just, the teachers were so, I mean shit, they couldn't fucking control them and with my, I was dyslexic, I was trying to

prove myself. I was in set 2 they capped me, I got told basically oh no, you're not allowed to do any better than this. There's set 1, like the good kids like the brainy ones, set 2, you're not thick but you sort of in the middle and like in the class you had like the lads, the hard lads, but they're still brainy and stuff and then you had set 3, which was like, just playing with pictures. I'm trying to say it nice" (Brendan)

Brendan stressed here that he always tried hard, aware of being dyslexic and needing to prove himself, but he referred to the teachers as not being able to control the classes. It is also interesting to note that he stated receiving poor marks, '*obviously*' because of this '*I'm dyslexic so my marks were pretty poor*', illustrating that for him, educational 'success' within school was narrowly defined and associated with traditional academic subjects. Set one was described as for the brainy pupils, and those in set three were, '*just playing with pictures*'. Even here, Brendan says he was trying to be 'nice' in his description and the established hierarchy of subjects is reproduced, 'making things' and creative subjects accorded low status. Carl also reflected upon this in recounting his experiences of volunteering at a youth club. He explained that he had witnessed young people, his friends who were talented and creative, becoming upset because they had received 'bad' grades:

"I've got some incredibly talented, creative lively friends sort of 16, 17 and …I'm seeing them in tears, shaking and crying cos their grades were bad and you're just like how does that work?" (Carl)

University norms: square pegs and round holes.

The young people were aware of the top sets in school for the more 'academic ones' who received more attention from the teachers, and were encouraged to go to university. Those perceived as less academic were in the lower sets, and they would not be encouraged to go to university. As Dan recalled:

"You'd see the students in those top sets, I wouldn't say they get more attention but… it's from when you start taking your GCSEs and stuff isn't it, and obviously the people in the lower sets they're encouraged to do the practical side of work, the college stage rather than the university A level stage […]. It's definitely forced upon, to ok you've got to look for uni spaces now, you apply through UCAS and things, which I suppose is what the majority of people do like to do, do it that way and carry on straight away … you're going straight from school and you're kind of thinking this is my right, you don't think I've got to pay for this, but it's there to be taken advantage of, not taken advantage of but, it's the norm isn't it." (Dan)

It was interesting that Dan referred to university as something to be taken advantage of, considered a norm, to the extent that those who do not consider this route (post A levels),

have it 'forced upon' them. As Christie (2009) writes, leaving education at 16 to go straight into the labour market is no longer the norm, and university is no longer associated with the middle class.

Dan had attended university, but left his degree course half way through as he said he did not enjoy studying, and spoke of too much academic work and not being able to finish assignments on time. He noted that others on his course, and the primary school teachers that he was on a placement with, also felt burdened with unnecessary paper work. He did not intend to return to education, as he explained:

"When I think of going down the educational route again, work type of things, I feel totally ill, totally demotivated" (Dan).

However, he reflected that in not attending university, he may no longer have a competitive advantage in the labour market, and was 'restricted' in his choices of employment:

"I don't know if that's restricted me in a way, to certain jobs like this, (hospitality) especially now maybe I could have gone for something a bit more, better pay or something with having maybe a year and a half with a degree, I know it's not much but it might have given me an advantage over someone else, I dunno." (Dan)

Rhys, the eldest participant at 30, had attended university. He had done so with aspirations of securing better employment, pay and conditions following a series of short-term contracts in seasonal shop work and outdoor pursuits, which he described as 'living out of a suitcase'. He spoke of going to university as a risky investment because he had giving up paid jobs to dedicate time to study and how following university, he had initially eschewed some jobs because he now held a degree:

"*I was worried about it, but I was also more confident 'cos I was always able to find work fairly easily. You know, I'd always been quite good in interviews, got a strong CV, um so I was quite confident…obviously there were some jobs I wouldn't go for at first".* (Rhys)

However, he had not found work and expressed regret in giving up his part time job to finish his degree, taking himself out of the labour market. This he believed had made him less employable:

 "I was in my third year and I was almost not going to get a degree I kind of gave up my part time work …which looking back was not a good thing to do, but then after I finished university, I was unemployed for about 2 years, and, er, it was probably one of the most difficult times really." (Rhys)

Working whilst studying has been associated with affecting studies, but the extent to which it does, can depend on the student's socio-economic status (Antonucci, 2016, 133). Some can engage in their studies without needing to work to support themselves, whilst others must rely on paid employment. It is since the introduction of loans and fees in higher education that individuals have needed to finance the costs of higher education themselves, or rely on their family. The widening participation in higher education since New Labour with the rhetoric of educational opportunity open and accessible to all has obfuscated social differences. Judy illustrated this. For her, going to university represented a potential opportunity away from precarious and low paid jobs that she had worked in since leaving school (mostly in retail and hospitality). Although excited by the prospect of taking a degree course, she was concerned with financial uncertainty and difficulties ahead, as well as living independently:

"I'm so, so, so excited, I couldn't be happier [but…] I'm nervous, I'm severely nervous, I'm not concerned about the amount of work I'm not concerned whatsoever I know that I'm capable of doing it, its supporting myself that I'm petrified about. I'll do everything I can, I'm quite happy to work but I'm concerned that even doing that I'm not going to be meeting what I need to bring enough money in." (Judy)

This was also a consideration for Holly, who also lived independently. She had pinned hopes on going to university and, like the other young people; she spoke of the importance of getting a degree, but was concerned that the Welsh Government would stop grants:

"(a degree) I know it's sort of essential in a way and there are easy methods of paying you only have to pay when you earn a certain amount and not too much […] the government are thinking of stopping the Welsh Assembly grants, so it's going to be pretty hard 'cos I live alone, don't talk to my other family really so I have no savings so I'm going to have extra loans to what people do now." (Holly)

Precarious Work

Some young people interviewed had non-linear progressions following school – entering precarious work, unemployment or college courses, before finding work through friends or family. Liam had worked for a builder who called him 'as and when' he was needed. He noted that most people he knew were in work, but only part time. Dan too had been in building work, work found for him by his brother. However, he described the insecurity of this work, which was mostly seasonal and dependent on the weather:

"Obviously once winter was coming the weather was getting poorer you couldn't guarantee work every day it's raining and getting windy you can't build walls, or plaster or anything. So I thought I'd look for more stable income, and obviously, from here before (his job in hospitality)...the stability and having an income every month, and the mention of having a contract rather than the zero hours obviously attracted me to come back here as well." (Dan)

Dan had moved back into the same job that he had worked in whilst a student, in hospitality. He claimed that the attraction of this zero hour work was the 'mention' of a potential contract, and having a stable income every month, even though, as he noted, *"the money goes down when you're on a contract"*. This suggests that a work contract that promised a monthly wage, pay for holiday and sickness, was not considered the norm, but valuable. Dan spoke of being 'rewarded' with this (one year) contract, because he had demonstrated that he was a hard worker:

"I did apply myself quite a bit so I think they appreciated that I did work hard and did a bit more rather, than like my friend here at the time. My best mate, I'm sure he wouldn't mind me saying, he was a bit more laid back and stuff, and you could see he wasn't getting asked for extra work because he didn't apply himself as much." (Dan)

The idea, of being rewarded with additional working hours, has been found elsewhere. Wood (2017) reflects on workers' perceptions of gaining more hours because they had put in the extra effort. From his ethnographic research, he discovered that amongst workers who were subject to 'flexible scheduling' - where managers have arbitrary power to give more hours and take them away, working hard and gaining favour were perceived as instrumental by employees, to gain further working hours. Additionally, Wood documents that because of such 'manager controlled flexibility' all workers would strive to secure more hours, resulting in competition for hours. This was evident within the narratives of young people, discussed below.

Competition

The young people on zero hours contracts, spoke of not being able to make plans, of anxiety and insecurity. Gina, who had worked in a café, reflected that the uncertainty of her working hours meant that she was unable to search for and secure other work. As she noted, she had an (unpaid) work trial with another café in the area, *"just to see if I was hard working and like to their standards sort of thing"*. Management at her current work place had put her name on the rota to work that day, and so she could not attend her trial. Additionally, Gina recalled how she always needed to demonstrate that she was available for and willing to work at any

time, so that she would be in with the chance to be chosen for subsequent shifts. This was difficult because she was always up against other 'favourites' making the 'competition' unfair. She described the uncertainty of hours given, but also referred to feeling scared in challenging decisions:

"Well, I felt scared telling them, like their reaction or whatever, but it was annoying like just putting me down and assuming I could do it. It wasn't clear at the start, but after a few months then, um, the bosses would treat every staff differently […], it always seemed to be me and sometimes they give you hours and sometimes they wouldn't." (Gina).

With perceived favouritism an issue, Gina went onto describe how tips were given only occasionally to the staff, and that some employees received 'preferential' treatment, for example, 'rest breaks':

"...they had some favourites some of them would get treated different, then some of them would get breaks, so like, who'd be there about 5 or 6 hours, wouldn't get a break […] Sometimes you'd get about 5 hours, then sometime I'd go in and I'd only be doing about 2 hours then they'd sent me home there wouldn't be any point me going in […] I'd be doing something and a member of staff would say to me, 'you can go now', which would be annoying cos I wanted to like, get money. Just doing an hour or two isn't enough" (Gina)

It is worth pointing out that workers do have rights to a 20 minute rest break after more than 6 hours working, and that this does not have to be paid - enforced through the working time regulations 1998 (Gov.uk 1998). However, Gina had walked away from her job because she was unhappy there, and did so with the support and encouragement from her parents with whom she lived:

"Then I decided, and my Mum and Dad decided that I shouldn't go back, cos they'd probably try to make me stay, and I don't stay somewhere where I'm unhappy, and my mum rang up and said I wouldn't be coming back, and she's going to take my uniform down." (Gina)

Gina drew on the notion of choice; she did not stay where she was not happy, despite the support of her parents. The family was a site of financial welfare, which enabled a smooth transitional period between jobs, as she did not rely on out of work benefits and would not be penalised for leaving her job. As Brannen and Nilson (2002, 517) note, young people's experiences of work are altered by the increasingly de-standardisation of employment, as their future planning and navigation of the labour market affected by work insecurity. Tellingly their research in light of this labour market insecurity showed that the young people who were more materially privileged than others were, exhibited a discourse of choice in their labour market decisions. This was apparent here, for example, Gina reflected that she

did not stay anywhere where she was unhappy. Judy, however, did not have the home or financial support from her family to make the choice to leave. Having family and financial resources made a difference to work outcomes as described below.

Judy was also employed in a zero hour contract, but unlike Gina, she lived independently. She was in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance and Housing Benefit, and had experienced challenges resulting in outcomes that varied from Gins. Judy described moving between various jobs, which were all low paid and insecure, including at a fast food outlet, found for her by a friend:

"I was on a zero hour contract wasn't it, so I wasn't contracted really to have anything, I think the work week went from a Tuesday to a Monday. Sometimes in the space of a week I could be working a lot more than 40 hours just because of the cut off in the middle, at made it so that it would be something else, at that point in time I was working so hard, that, I was travelling to […] and coming back, that added an extra hour, maybe two hours to my day and sometimes I had to work late on a Sunday waiting a long time to get buses, and by the time I got home, sometimes I would have to choose between having a shower or going to sleep […] Christmas came along, my hours cut, sometimes maybe 10 hours a week and I wasn't getting enough money, not bringing in enough money to support myself at all." (Judy)

Judy alluded to working hard before having her hours reduced. She did not leave, but continued working in the hope of securing more hours. The competitiveness for hours was evident where she referred to another job, at a supermarket, where she recalled how, when the shop first opened, additional labour was needed to stock the shelves. Later, as the labour demand dropped, she found herself '*fighting for overtime*', attempting to secure more hours amongst the other workers:

"When we first started we were putting up shop, stocking the shelves and put it together to begin with and obviously I had a lot of hours to begin with but then it, obviously it calmed down and I was back on 11 ½ hours and having to fight for overtime." (Judy)

The language used here of fighting for overtime despite being exhausted '*choosing between a shower and sleep',* is indicative of being in competition with the other workers. This is a labour elasticity, a flexibility benefitting the employer, described by Marx in 1865 as, '*A quick succession of unhealthy short lived generations will keep the labour market as well supplied as a series of vigorous and long lived generations.'* (Marx, 2013, 57). For the young person to remain employable they must constantly look over their shoulder with a '*restless sense of endless potentiality'*, the pressure to do so is even more powerful for individuals lacking in financial security (Frayne, 2015, 77). Therefore, this is an example of flexible

scheduling increasing competition between workers, and securing control over workers – even if not a conscious strategy by the managers.

Judy continued to work, but spoke of stress in competing for more hours, leading her to '*go off sick*', after attempting to challenge her manager about this:

"I went off sick cos I couldn't handle the stress, she was very unfair to me and when I, when I, was asking for extra hours, at first she was telling me I could have them and she give me extra hours, but it came to a certain week when people that had a stupid amount of hours, and I think I had about 20 hours, I, I, said I want this changed, I want an even share of hours, and her reply was, well I'm the manager and I will give out hours to whoever I see fit"

Where individuals compete, they work on themselves to be chosen for work, for example in favouritism, as a participant stated from Wood's research (2017, 10), "*...once your face doesn't fit, you don't get any more hours'.* To compete for more hours, or strive to be given a potential contract means competition with colleagues, the benefits gained being 'at the expense of others' and additional hours can be viewed as a gratefully received 'gift' from employers (Wood, 2017, 5). Competition can prevent collective measures such as challenges to work practices and, whilst competing takes prominence, this deflects from any scrutinising and potential critique of social relations, a conclusion drawn by Marx over 170 years ago:

"*The more he works, the more he competes against his fellow workmen, the more he compels them to compete against him, and to offer themselves on the same wretched conditions as he does; so that in the last analysis, he competes against himself as a member of the working class.*" (Marx 2013, 45 {1847}).

Judy recalled her first job at 18, working in a care home. A resident's relative had asked her whether she would leave her own Nain (Grandma) in the home. When Judy had replied honestly, 'no', the relative subsequently passed this on to the care home manager, who had taken action:

"I went to work the next day and staff members grabbed everything off me and told me I was in a load of trouble and I needed to get down to the office and I was absolutely petrified and it was the owners of the building and my manager sat in there and they ripped me apart basically [...]. The way that disciplinary happened, I wasn't offered anyone else in that room with me, obviously I didn't know at the time that I could have someone else in that room now with me, obviously I know now that that's procedure that I should be offered some one in that room with me, but I didn't know that at the time [...]. Obviously because of my age, I wasn't taken seriously and I think at this point in time, if I was to do this job again, I would be able to stand my ground again, but I think at that age, people weren't interested in my opinion you know, I wasn't confident enough to express it either." (Judy)

What this indicates is a lack of awareness of, or any support within the workplace to challenge perceived unfair practice. Not one of the young people referred to collective representation in the workplace. This may not be unusual considering the decline in union activity, as described previously, since the 1970s and the lack of awareness of labour rights and representations in the workplace. The industries with the lowest union activity include food, care services, and leisure and, as outlined in Chapter Two there has been a progressive tightening of legislation since 1979 including tribunal fees introduced in 2013 (Hurrell, 2013, 27; Bryson and Blanchflower, 2008). Anecdotal evidence indicates that asserting a right or challenging a decision is mitigated against by the fear of receiving fewer hours in a zero hour contract; employment tribunal fees may be a barrier to challenging practices, particularly for those on low pay (Williams, 2017).

Judy went on, to defend herself as a hard worker with a strong work ethic:

"I am a really hard worker, something I can say for myself, I am such a hard worker and um, I think at some point I asked if there was any chance I could progress to be in management and he told me that there wouldn't be any positions like that for me, again I was devastated." (Judy)

This is 'emotional labour', developing a presentable appearance and cheery disposition to work, which as Brown (2015, 65) notes is working on the self. Not only does this contribute to inequality becoming normative and legitimate, but also the failure to 'progress' was internalised, as Judy described, it left her 'devastated'.

Self employment

The increase in zero hour contracts has been accompanied by an increasing number of people in self-employment, which has entailed low pay, few hours and low skilled work (ONS, 2014). The UK has more young people in self-employment when compared to other large European labour markets (Jones, Brinkley and Crowley, 2015). According to Standing's observation (2014, 113), self-employment is symptomatic of the youth rejecting the previous generation's labourism, of a job for life. He suggests that people enter self-employment if there are no other options available, reflecting the reality of poor labour market opportunities as opposed to an entrepreneurial spirit. Similarly, Ainley (2016, 19) notes that the rise in self-employment has been due to individuals needing to supplement their income, rather than being driven by entrepreneurialism. Indeed, within this research, some young people spoke of

rejecting 'shit work', particularly 'stacking shelves' and supermarket work. Here, Brendan and Carl, who were both self-employed, illustrated this in discussing their motivations:

"I wouldn't do a job if I didn't enjoy doing it, if I had to sit behind a desk I would easily just be like, no, I've got something else I need to do because I do like doing stuff, I think I've got a lot of passion for things so that's like how I see my job it's something I'm passionate about and I've been able to turn it into a career, which I'm very, very, fortunate about a lot of people can't do that so…" (Brendan)

"I can choose to do anything I want if I set my mind to. I set my mind to doing this, it may not come to anything it obviously you know it wasn't some sort of weird universal give it to you stuff, but I didn't feel inhibited by you know you need to get a job in Morrisons kind of thing, you know and yeah, always been very blessed as well to be-able to work from home. I think work has to be fulfilling to me." (Carl)

These young people spoke of 'deciding' to become self-employed, referred to themselves as driven and having had the right attitude. However, it was clear from their narratives that they could be dependent on their family as a site of welfare and financial resources, and this level of security had given them some freedom to choose self-employment. They were not in receipt of out of work benefits associated with low levels of income and continuous job search activity.

"I just decided to, I think it was summer, um with a friend of mine, it was 4 o'clock in the morning and it seemed like a good idea just to record what we were playing, the game we were playing and put it online, and anyway it kind of diversified from there, and we did a video or more everyday, pretty much, for probably […] I was talking to some people that I kind of knew vaguely in the industry and they said, um, so what is it that you're exactly doing?" (Carl)

"On the day I had this interview, are you giving this job to me because my Dad's here…I don't like the sort of we're giving you this job because you know so and so […] then I decided to go self-employed, so I'm now here with my own clients and my own portfolio of work without the company I was in before, but I've got praise for [them] cos they treated me very well, I enjoy where I'm at now, well, I'm under a lot less stress." (Brendan)

"I worked for my Dad so taking work that he did and working with other people I found out that most people were earning better money were joiners, so I decided to go down that route." (Alun)

Those who had access to material resources presented a discourse of choice, self-responsibility, standing on their own two feet and having self-discipline. Similarly, Atkinson (2010) discussed the relevance of resources in shaping career decisions in his research exploring individuals' career trajectories. He reflected that the individuals he interviewed

who successfully pursued chosen work trajectories had 'plenty of capital' that is, they could draw on financial, cultural and social capital to pursue new projects; he discussed these through discourses of self-determination. Jones *et al* (2015) also noted that in most instances, success in self-employment is underpinned by access to capital, skills and experience, which many young unemployed people lack. For some young people, attempts to secure skills and experience were confounded by a lack of support and finance, not because of lack of effort.

However, for the young people who chose to be self-employed, financial instability and insecurity presented a challenge. This was captured by Brendan who took the decision to move back home with his parents following living in a shared house, so that he could build up his business, and Alun who looked to the future with concern about money whilst living in a shared house:

"I'm building myself up so my worry is just getting from month to month at the moment. I've not been able to work enough to be able to estimate my salary or anything like that, so it's just making sure I've got enough money to get through and stuff like that. I decided to move back home now, so I'm a lot more disciplined with money cos at the moment I'm waiting on invoices and some months I'm up, then down like at the moment I've got 100 quid to live for the month, but I live at home, so that's alright." (Brendan)

"I'm still trying to figure out tax and like everything like that [...] you sometimes think, how the bloody hell am I going to afford a mortgage sometimes but, when can I afford a new car, but yeah you just do it don't you, work until there's no work." (Alun)

Additionally, Carl noted that whilst choosing work that was satisfying, there was still anxiety and apprehension about future job security and an awareness of financial precariousness:

"When it ends, when your usefulness to a business like that ends unless you stand on your own two feet as some people are lucky to do, you are out on your ear… financially I don't feel secure but at the moment I'm talking to other companies and stuff and um…" (Carl).

Rhys had a different route into self-employment. He had initially become self-employed to avoid being referred to what he described as 'another agency' from the Jobcentre, whilst in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. This was the New Enterprise scheme. Here he was critical, stating a lack of support that added to his already anxious state:

" £65 for 3 months, then you get £30 something, and it's just not anywhere near enough for anywhere near long enough time period to, basically they want you to set up straight away with a company that's profitable enough for you to be-able to live off, but that's just doesn't happen. [...] I wasn't making any money and I knew it was just a façade basically…so I just felt like the stresses had been increased another level cos I had to make money out of this business plan that was not going to be making any money at all." (Rhys)

Following graduation and two years of unemployment, he was now working two jobs: a five-hour contract in retail and self-employed doing some 'admin work', found through his social network and not through the Jobcentre. He presented his newly found precarious work in a positive light in contrast to being unemployed; he was no longer stressed, felt more secure and was able to support himself financially.

"I've got 2 jobs and they're both going well, I feel fairly secure. It's a permanent contract in the shop as well, even though its 5 hours minimum, I have been doing up to 25 hours and I don't think I will ever be on 5 hours, I think I will be on about 12 or something, but then I've got the self-employment thing as well, which I think is fairly stable, so I feel fairly stable at the moment which is nice, it's definitely a good thing [...]. Being self-employed, it's quite complicated with national insurance, paying two national insurances and stuff, but anyway...I don't care because I'm supporting myself, but to start with that wasn't happening." (Rhys)

This is a significant finding because despite being in precarious work with no guarantee of hours, inherent insecurity and low pay, Rhys regarded this employment as more secure than 'signing on'.

'In work' being out of work

Research has shown that welfare recipients often have complex experiences in accessing benefits. Patrick (2015, 2016b), in her study situated in the North of England found participants getting by and getting on, with the objective of getting off benefits. Patrick's findings echoed those from the research of Lister (2004), who related similar responses of claimants actively trying to get off benefits. Furthermore, research in rural Wales highlighted that access to transport was essential to obtain welfare advice and information as well as employment, necessitating the reliance on a car or infrequent public transport (Williams and Doyle, 2016). This section describes the work that was involved in being out of work. It explores the cognitive, practical and administrative work that was involved in being out of work, needing to sign on and discusses the effects.

The young people who were in receipt of benefits had to present evidence of their recent job searches to demonstrate that they were actively seeking work, to the Jobcentre or Work Programme adviser. At the Jobcentre, this included the use of online 'Universal Jobmatch', a website run by a private recruiting company ('Monster'), which has been associated with

fraudulent postings, advertising jobs that don't exist (Mason, 2014b). Some young people described this resource as providing limited opportunities. For instance, Liam stated that Jobmatch was 'rubbish'. He instead referred to social media specifically Facebook, for finding work. John, who was in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance, had been searching for work and referred to a paucity of jobs available on the Universal Jobmatch site, similarly to Liam. He had found only very few that he believed were suitable for him:

"Universal Jobmatch, which is supposed to match the job with the skills you've got, but that website is not doing anything for anyone, I had more opportunities looking for jobs when I was doing a football course, I got more chances and I applied for more jobs through that than I did with the work related programme and Universal Jobmatch. It comes up with a list of jobs which suits your skills, like ...jobs and catering jobs and things like that, most of them are jobs that I just can't do ...like it's given me quite a few carpentry jobs which I can't do, and quite a few building jobs which I can't do cos I haven't got the qualifications for." (John)

Despite a lack of jobs, job searching through this website was mandatory. There was also omnipresent yet distant surveillance as Jobcentre staff checked to ensure continuous work search activity, via this website:

*"They check online. See what I've applied for... cos if you go on the website, they can actually see what you've applied for on the website." (*Sam)

This confirmed information shared during a visit to the Jobcentre, by a staff member, who informed me that Jobcentre staff had ways of finding out if claimants had actually applied for jobs. The Universal Jobs Match was described as a 'good way of catching people out'.

Where young people were applying for jobs, this was described as a complex, competitive process. Judy, who recounted her experience applying for a job at a local supermarket, described a competitive selection process:

 "Well I'm efficient in my work and everything else but I really don't like being on show anyway. So they were giving you tasks, and they put you in little groups, and they monitor you, they monitor you on how well, how you're applying yourself, whether you're leaders,, what kind of person they think you are in that job. As well, you have to be happy all the time, it's an unwritten part of your contract, you have to pretty much smile and be happy and bubbly all the time [...]. They gave you two items and you had to, like, sell these items. We had to find a way to sell it, but we had to make a little play as well, so we had to make a little play, to portray how we were going to sell this (stifles laughter), and we had to stand in front of the managers, and everyone else who obviously prepared their little plays as well, and you had to know what you were going to say, and answer questions on a presentation in front of everybody. It's one of the most daunting experiences that I have ever been in in my life, we

weren't performing arts were we. [The interview process was over] two days…it was really crazy. At the end of it you were given one-on-one interviews with different managers from different sections, even before this you had to be online, so you would have to fill in an online application and you'd have to have things like, an English test and a maths test." (Judy)

To demonstrate 'acting ability', confidence, and maintain a cheery disposition are performative requirements. The (potential) employee is measured by their character, and must display enthusiasm, commitment, and likeability to work with customers. These attributes are particularly notable in the service industry, where the individual needs to maintain an enthusiasm and faux positivity (Frayne, 2015, 104). This also illustrates employer expectations, and the demands that they make for their employee to bring emotional labour to work, to 'whistle while you work'. It is, as Standing notes, a key part of the work for labour that the precariat experience, in the hope that they will receive more work, as he describes – '*self-exploiting in the hope of mobility*' (Standing, 2014a, 24). To illustrate this point, Judy followed up her story by telling me that she had received a phone call to say that she had been successful in her interview processes, and had been offered a contract. This was for eleven and a half hours a week, to work at the supermarket, stacking shelves. She told me that she had taken this, with the hope that she would be able to get more hours. The practices of flexible scheduling affects workers, as Wood (2017) observed from his research. Workers need to gain favour from the manager and maintain observable efforts to be 'chosen' for subsequent shifts - taking on extra shifts and putting in additional effort with 'vague promises' of more hours.

Maintaining the employable self

The processes in looking for work were as described as demotivating, leading to low confidence and a lack of enthusiasm. Young people needed to sustain an enthusiastic disposition and needed to maintain the sellable self, to (potential) employers. This can be described as a labour on the self, that is, to present a willingness to work and present a work ethic or mimic it. This was summed up by Rhys, who as described himself as '*just pretending to fill the forms in'*. He experienced declining confidence and motivation when claiming Job Seekers Allowance, applying for jobs and not hearing back whether he had been successful. This culminated in him feeling unwell, heightened when there was a change in his circumstances, because this needed to be notified:

"I started feeling not very well anymore and then I was just kind of pretending to fill it in, not because I wanted to be unemployed but just because I'd lost all form of motivation and

confidence in myself er, it got to the point where I wasn't even getting interviews anymore for jobs. Er, and then my mood started dropping … every time there was a slightest change in circumstances, it would mess up all my benefits, and I'd have to fill in forms, and go down to…, I'd get a letter saying I was due in court so I'd have to ring them and say hang on, no, I've not been eligible to pay for the last such and such, and you know, when you're in that situation, you don't need letters like that coming through the post, and they are very quick to get on you aren't they!? *Receiving a letter saying oh you owe this amount of money and you're due on court now, and I'm like, hang on, you haven't sent me anything before this, this is the first I've heard about it, so that becomes the big drama then, as opposed to you know, something nice, or something more important because there's nothing else, that's all there is; you kind of become completely focussed on the benefits system, because that was my way of surviving."* (Rhys)

Other young people discussed the efforts required to sustain benefits. For example, searching for jobs was an everyday practice for the young people in receipt of Jobs Seekers Allowance, and they described their 'strategies' for example, taking CVs to shops and cafes, making online applications and repeatedly applying for any jobs. When there was no response received, and efforts were not recognised or rewarded, this this affected the young person's wellbeing, as Sam illustrated:

 "I have to go online, go round the shops if they have any temporary or full time work going, [what sort of response to you get usually] we don't have anything at the moment, but we'll let you know when we do. It's usually ok, but after 3 or 4 weeks of waiting it does sort of irritate you cos you don't know what's happening… and it just starts to make you feel miserable…getting no answers, no responses […] actually, I've not had one person get back to me …ever." (Sam).

"You just apply for them online. I've applied for cleaning jobs, I've applied for catering jobs, I've applied for jobs working in Tescos….just not getting anything back […]. Most of my friends are in the same situation as me, can't get jobs, are on Jobseekers Allowance, and things like that. They do have the same sorts of problems…applying and they don't hear anything back. I've gone into shops and asked, I've handed in my CV, I've filled out application forms, I've been to Jobcentre, looked for jobs, and I'm just not getting anywhere. […] I'm just tired now, I feel wired, I feel like what's the point of applying for jobs, if this is going to happen all the time, there's no point." (John)

The work search activity did not result in any response, which led to young people being demotivated and 'feeling wired'. Similarly, Standing (2014a, 34) draws on the concept of 'anomie', associated with Emile Durkheim, and described as a '*feeling of passivity borne of despair*' to describe the sustained defeat felt in looking for work, despite the efforts invested, leading to listlessness. However, the young people in this research described continuing their job search activity, not because of a threat of sanctions or because they were told to, but

because it demonstrated their willingness to work. These were efforts of their own volition, described as being '*off their own back*': actively seeking work, taking their CVs to potential employers as well as taking unpaid voluntary work which demonstrated that they were employable, and possessed a work ethic:

"Every shop in [...] had got one of my CVs (is that something that you are advised to do...?) No, I do that off my own back, its showing that I am willing to work and will do anything to get work I'm taking my CV in but I'm just not getting anything back." (John)

"They (Jobcentre) don't do any of that, I do it all myself" (Sam)

These are individualised discourses of self-reliance characterised by a free choice of effort; taking themselves to potential employers to do the 'CV drop' and using their own initiative. Holly illustrated this, noting that volunteering conferred a potential advantage in the labour market because it demonstrated a willingness to work, albeit without a wage. It was '*higher than work'* because it showed that you were not working *just* for the money and were putting yourself 'out there'. As Holly explained:

"Volunteering is sort of higher than work itself, cos you know you are using your time and you're not getting benefits for it; it's all cos you want to do it [...]. People when they work, they're just doing it mainly for the money cos they just sort of have to but when your volunteering you're putting yourself out there so, yeah, it's better." (Holly)

Volunteering, similarly to the CV drop signified that you were a good worker and suitable to be chosen by an employer.

Financial Costs

Where young people must enhance their values to meet the needs of the changing labour market, there is also the expectation to perform and self-promote without any faults, weakness, or limitations (Costea *et al*, 2012). The individual must be entrepreneurial, accessing volunteer work or working on themselves to make themselves more 'employable' but, as Brown notes, the neoliberal state will not '*shoulder the costs of reproducing human capital'* (2015, 27). This was reflected in the findings, where there was little evidence of any financial support available for the young person to enhance their employability or to 'upskill'. The financial costs in taking courses was a constraint, but also there were costs in accessing services, travel to the Jobcentre, and to work schemes as well as job searching. One example of this was where Holly, who had previously spoken about volunteering as being important (it made you appear more willing as

you are not working for a wage) could not afford the steel toecap boots required, to volunteer to do garden work, (at a National Trust site):

"*I could volunteer here [foodbank], recently I've been to [place] as well and got into being a gardener there, but I need to buy steel toe caps before I can do.*" (Holly)

Sam referred to trying to access a Construction Skills Certificate Scheme card (CSCS), to take up work in construction and building. Here he noted asking the Jobcentre for help:

"I kept asking them to go for my CSCS card test, but every time I asked them, they wouldn't help me. And the other one they got me, I been offered a job and all I needed was my licence and I would get the job immediately but they said can't give you the money for that which is really annoying what they didn't tell people, cos I found out in my little area, that they were doing free first aid courses and free license tests and they don't bother telling anybody." (Sam)

In addition to the money needed to access training, there were other references to 'work for labour' the costs incurred in attempting to secure employment. Non, who had a joint claim and a young child, referred to her partner:

"He's currently on a 5 weeks course now that, through the Jobcentre, I'm not too sure what that is but apparently they can help him, so just see what happens at the end. He used to work with [...] painters and decorators, he was with them for over a year and they started messing around with his payments and everything so, then they moved to [place] as well, and it was hard for him, they was based in [place], and then they moved and because he doesn't drive it was hard for him to get there so…." (Non)

The cost of transport in attempting to secure and maintain employment has been identified elsewhere. In particular, as a barrier to employment, particularly for rural areas in Wales (for example, Piette and McCarthy, 2007; Simmonds, 2015). Sam, also highlighted the financial costs borne by the individual, where he spoke of the travel costs incurred to attend the Work Programme:

 "I'm on this Work Programme I'm on now, I'm looking at £4 a day out of my own pocket just to get there and back a day which works out at £20 a week, out of my benefit which leaves me with £37 benefit to live off a week." (Sam)

Some young people wished to go onto courses and gain certificates as evidence of their skills, to show to potential employers. For example, Liam and Adam who were on a part time Information Technology (IT) course, told me that having a certificate was very important, to prove to a potential employer that you had been on a scheme. However, continuing courses without money was an issue, as described by John:

"I did a pre vocational course in college 2007 -2008, 2008 -2009 I did a catering course which I did well in, but I just couldn't afford to go back……er, I did a part time course, in the last 4 years I've been looking for a job […] I enjoyed all three of them, it's just a case of afterwards I just didn't have the money to go back… I wanted to carry on to the next level I just couldn't afford to do it." (John)

Furthermore, the financial costs of maintaining benefits was described, getting to the Jobcentre to sign on, and being held on the phone for long periods of time:

"It costs money, it all costs money. You know, when you don't have a lot of it, it's kind of upsetting really cos there's all these weird numbers you know what I mean, none of them are landlines or anything like that so it comes up on your credit rather than your minutes so, and obviously there's loads of waiting time as well. Sometimes I've been on the phone waiting on the phone for about an hour sometimes with silly music playing to me, telling me I can phone back later if I like (laughs) you know I'm already on the phone half an hour!" (Judy)

"The Jobcentre as well, it's like the centre of unemployment you may not have enough money, but you have to wait like 15 minutes, like it warns you that its charging you something like, the price may vary and stuff. But yeah, its annoying cos you don't know how long you're going to be on hold, cos its annoying […] so I was on the phone and then I was on hold for like, I think 15 minutes altogether, and I wasn't talking to anyone, this was just straight hold and it annoys me as well cos you know you are paying per minute." (Holly)

Holly referred to the Jobcentre as being the 'centre of unemployment', an important point as it signified a negative discursive space, and part of a regime that no one wanted to be part of. Holly was also aware of the cost needed to maintain herself since leaving home, and recognised that she managed to survive because she had retained some of her Education Employment Allowance. As explained previously, this policy was retained by the Welsh Government, for 16-18 year olds, for students on a low income. [11] She had relied on this whilst waiting benefits:

"When you first get benefits, it takes three weeks for it to come in. For these three weeks I had no food, as I had no money, so I would have, like, died of starvation. I was just lucky that when I was in college I just had some money from EMA but it's quite… it's like, horrible thinking back though, cos if I spent that money from EMA, I would have not had any money to buy food or anything. Three weeks as well it took me to get money in - if I hadn't had gone to college I wouldn't have had that EMA, say I spent it, I would have had no money to buy any food which would have left me with nothing. […] I mean I could have, maybe go to the foodbank, but even then, like that, I dunno. I don't like tinned food, that would have been awkward, I don't like pasta, I don't like any sauces, I only like carrots, I'm really fussy with food, it would have been really, really, hard." (Holly)

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[11] Household income £20,817 or less for one young person in the household, £23,077 or less if any additional young people eligible for child benefit in the household (Student Finance Wales) .

Here, Holly became reflexive as she recounted that she could have 'died of starvation' had she not attended college, thus the EMA to her was a lifeline that she was 'lucky' to have received. Despite the absolute subsistence, she spoke of the difficulties faced in having food preferences, but limited choices – specifically with the food that was given by the foodbank: tinned foods and pasta. This powerfully highlights the realities of a lack of choice from a low income. There is no room to be fussy. As Garthwaite indicated (2016, 79-80) following her research on foodbanks, although there is limited choice, the individual must display gratitude (they are then deserving) when in receipt of charitable donations. Holly's dislike of tinned food and pasta, as she noted, would have made it difficult for her to visit the foodbank. In fact, all who were in receipt of benefits recounted the lack of money. For instance, John expressed the temptation of spending money if Housing Benefit came directly to him:

"It's a case of, they are giving you 57 pounds a week, though foods going up, they still say you can live on 57 a week; bills, food, basically they are saying you can live on 114 every 2 weeks. The fact that I get all my Housing Benefit paid to them straightaway, instead of coming through my bank, that helps 'cos otherwise I would just end up going and blowing the money. I'm glad that they do that." (John)

Under the rules of Universal Credit, Housing Benefit is paid directly to the claimant so that they arrange payment to their landlord.[12] As John noted, if this was the case for him, he believed that he would spend it immediately. Tirado (2014), herself in poverty at one time, has alluded to the constraint of choices on a limited income. She recounted that with few small pleasures on a limited income, there is the pull to spend money when you know that you will have none in a few days anyway. This was something that Orwell recognised in the 1930s:

"Would it not be better if they spent more money on wholesome things like oranges and wholemeal bread or if they even, like the writer of the letter to the New Statesman, saved on fuel and ate their carrots raw? Yes, it would, but the point is that no ordinary human being is ever going to do such a thing. The ordinary human being would sooner starve than live on brown bread and raw carrots. And the peculiar evil is this, that the less money you have, the less inclined you feel to spend it on wholesome food." (Orwell, 2001, 88)

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[12] Universal Credit introduced in 2013, is a replacement of some benefits, and paid once a month into a bank account. As part of this policy, the claimant must start paying rent as the benefit comes directly to them. (Gov. UK n.d. a)

Judy noted that with no money following a sanction (described later), she had difficulties in affording to live, referring to borrowing money from her mum and friends. She was also keeping a cat, and spending the money on cat food while 'living off noodles' herself:

"I don't really know how I managed, I borrowed money from friends, I borrowed money from my parents, um, I had nothing you know, I think I was living off noodles, you can get noodles at about 7p, I think I went and got a load of noodles, I had a pet cat at that time and any money I had went to her food, and I think my mum bought me gas and electric cos obviously I couldn't do without that." (Judy)

Rhys revealed that he felt financially dependent on others and described himself as feeling like a 'parasite' being dependent on others, whilst unemployed and receiving Jobseeker's Allowance:

"I felt like I,....like I was a parasite in a way, you know what I mean?...I know it's a strong word, but, I felt like they were kind of...sort of caring for me in a way…huh, it's horrible, um…….so yeah, I felt like I could never he…if they were in trouble, I could never help them. I had time, endless time, but no money to kind of put petrol in the car, travel anywhere" (Rhys)

These young people had to negotiate processes with agencies, Jobcentre and job searches, with little or no money, and were reflexive during the interviews, that they had managed. Documented elsewhere are findings that cognitive work involved in managing on little money, can affect an individual's cognitive function, draining their mental resources to the equivalent of losing a night's sleep (Mani *et al*, 2013). In addition to financial worry, young people spoke of navigating the benefits system, which added another level of stress.

Treading water: navigating the benefits system

Young people referred to the strategies they used to find work and to receive their benefits. Here, smart phones were essential for looking for work and checking online social media particularly 'Facebook', for job opportunities including part time work. Liam, working for a builder noted there was occasional work available, which may have referred to the informal economy. Although having a smart phone did not guarantee success because online forms were not necessarily compatible. As Judy remarked:

"I don't have a computer so sometimes I have to go somewhere else because not everything's compatible with your phone everything's online now; I'm finding it really difficult to find work this time round now cos everything's online." (Judy)

Holly who volunteered at a foodbank described how many people she saw were in shock to find themselves there, and alluded to 'searching for a job to find a job' to describe the processes involved. Once again, the computer was essential for finding work:

"People that come here don't have computers and stuff and can't search for work, you have to search for a job to find a job, so people have all sorts of things happening but for most people it is a shock it doesn't just happen. I think they, or even if they knew they were getting less and less they don't assume it to be so bad, this is the worst case really, to come to a foodbank, I think it's a shock for most of them." (Holly)

Receiving food from a foodbank was also associated with the complexities of work searching, and signified being at the lowest point, the 'worse case'. People, who visited the foodbank as well as being at their lowest, were described as surprised that that they had reached a situation that they did not think would ever happen to them. In light of this, the Jobcentre was seen as unsupportive, as Holly indicated, it was the 'centre of unemployment'. Other young people similarly reflected on this sentiment. Young people recounted their experiences in attending the Jobcentre, where negotiating processes were 'really hard', complicated and impersonal:

"You have to go to several places, so I'd have to go to Jobcentre for Income Support cos that's what they'd deal with, then I'd have to go to the council and they say on the phone they can't help me with income support cos their systems are out of date, and things are changing now anyway, so they said I'd have to go to the council um so I know I'd have to go to the council anyway to deal with housing support, cos they have proper um support um housing benefit department thing there, anyway, I could go there anyway, that could be quite simple, but yeah, it's quite hard." (Holly)

"If you go into the Jobcentre they tell you they can't do anything for you, that you have to phone. You have to phone everyone now, you know, you can't. Every time I go into the Jobcentre for absolutely anything, they tell me I have to call someone else. I'm not even sure what they're doing there to be honest with you." (Judy)

"You're there because you are not really being able to do anything, not been able to do anything with your life. That's what it represents. You at rock bottom basically. and that it's a reminder that you're there and all the other people. There's no sort of solidarity with the other people there, claiming, claiming benefits and stuff, you know no one ever talks to anybody in there, ever." (Rhys)

These excerpts illustrate how the Jobcentre was seen to offer little support. Furthermore, they illustrate how the Jobcentre represented being at 'rock bottom'. This was also recognised by Dan, who himself had not signed on in the Jobcentre and noted that this was because he was 'lucky' – he did not need to. Furthermore, this 'luck' was associated with individual effort.

"Well, I've never been to the Jobcentre myself I've always been quite lucky...always like when I was younger when I was 14 onwards really, worked in pubs, 16, yes pot wash, 2 or 3 nights a week I've always done that type of thing really, working weekends so for me personally it's been quite good. I don't know if that relates back to how I apply myself to things, I'd rather just go out there and do it, quickly than maybe like go to the Jobcentre and look for things that way." (Dan)

Dan stated that he 'applies himself to things' and described an individualised effort that enabled him to avoid the Jobcentre, a space, and site of unemployment where no one wanted to go. Discursive spaces as sites of governance of welfare recipients are not new. In Chapter Two, it was noted that the poor house in the Nineteenth century was a discursive place, to compel the individual to serve industry, rather than reduce poverty, through the deterrents of stigma and dread. The Labour Exchange too was a discursive space that afforded dignity to the worker, the 'deserving', as it confirmed their identity as a job seeker and not a jobless pauper. The Jobcentre, separated from the Benefits Office in 1973, also constituted a shift towards the rehabilitation of the unemployed (Cole, 2007).

In addition to the Jobcentre, the Work Programme was looked upon with dread, as Rhys spoke of feelings of anxiety in anticipation of further interventions. He described how the fact that he could not secure any job interviews resulted in a low mood. He was concerned that he would be transferred to an 'agency' that he had heard 'bad things' about:

"It got to the point where I wasn't even getting interviews anymore for jobs. Er, and then my mood started dropping...then I was eventually... I, I was kinda forced to...uh.....cos of the way it was all going, ... I was about to be um, transferred from the Jobcentre I think, to another agency, er, the name escapes me now,...because after two years I think you get referred to somewhere else I don't know who they are called. I didn't want that to happen cos I'd heard bad things about this company" (Rhys)

Benefit sanctions

Benefit sanctions, the temporary withdrawal of benefit income, had been a feature for all young people who had been in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance. This is perhaps not surprising considering that there has been an increase in the number of benefit sanctions since 2012 disproportionately affecting young people. The most common reasons given for sanctioning cited in the literature are being late for, or missing appointments, followed by a lack of job search evidence (Wright and Stewart, 2016). Sanctions worked discursively, as an omnipresent threat, and meant managing yourself well and being careful; the prospect of a

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sanction was always present, to ensure the correct behaviour was adopted. This was evident from Rhys, who noted that he had never had a sanction:

"I was always very careful to make sure I was on time ...but it does add another degree of stress, to the whole experience if you know that you are 10 minutes late you're gonna get sanctioned." (Rhys)

Sam reported that he had received two sanctions, one when the bus had broken down on his way to the Jobcentre, and the other when he had to care for his mother who had attempted suicide. He had gone back to the Jobcentre to find the manager, for the sanction to be quashed, although gave little detail into how this was achieved. He described feeling 'furious' at the way he had been spoken to:

"When I came to sign on Wednesday I explained why, and they said if I didn't bring a letter of proof from the hospital then within a couple of days, they would sanction my benefits...I got the bus straight to the hospital, even though I was furious the way I'd been spoken to ...got the note saying she'd been there, gave it to the manager and they cancelled that sanction as well." (Sam)

Sanctions were described as commonplace, annoying and unfair by young people who had experienced them, because despite doing everything right, they felt unfairly punished. Sam had presented himself as having been treated unfairly, punished for something out of his control, and then having to go back to the hospital to gain proof of the circumstances he had reported. Judy's benefits stopped for three months following her dismissal from a care home. She described the sanction as an omnipresent threat to ensure that there was appropriate behaviour. Again, this sanction was referred to as a punishment because she believed that she had exhibited the correct behaviour:

"It's like a punishment isn't it...it's like a punishment [pause] for quitting your job...they say you know we're going to stop your benefits [...] I was mortified and obviously I'd lost all my benefits after that as well, so I had no money to live off for a long time. I wasn't given an opportunity to really defend myself. Copies of the things that my employers said about me, and basically, it didn't match up with the things I said, and that I was going to lose all my benefits....writing out forms, filling forms, writing state of events, and everything else - not one-on-one meetings." (Judy)

Judy referred to not having had any 'opportunity' to defend herself, and felt unfairly punished and 'mortified'. This is interesting because every young person had emphasised they exhibited the correct behaviour, had been obedient and followed the rules, such as turning up on time. The unfairness of the sanction was opposed, not the practice. This suggests a trust in

the 'law' of the sanction was upheld and the belief that sanctions were there for a reason, namely, to police those on benefits. Wrongful sanctions, Holly stated were likely because of an administrative error. She had not been sanctioned, but had witnessed those who had, visiting the foodbank where she volunteered.

"Well there's obviously a reason for them to be sanctioned I guess. I know there's problems as well, being sanctioned they don't have enough money so they come to the foodbank for food, which like we do 3 day emergency packages so they have enough for three days, but, erm, there's errors sometimes when people go to benefits office they get benefits sometimes there's errors processing it so sometimes they don't get money for a few times so then they come here, they get delays." (Holly)

John was reticent talking about his experiences of sanctioning. This may have been due to sanctions being associated with individual mismanagement and inappropriate behaviour. When prompted, he recounted his experience in a flat monotone voice:

"Jobcentre got the wrong information about me, and instead of chasing it up and getting it checked, they sanctioned me for about 4 weeks and then they came asking me about it […] someone had got my name and told them I was working in […], and when I told them about that. When I went to sign on I told them it weren't me, I hadn't applied or anything but they didn't check it up, or chase it, they sanctioned me for it cos they thought I'd got other payments and that, and then 4 weeks later they phoned me up and was like said that they were sanctioning me, then took me off sanctions and didn't pay me back." (John)

When I asked what the actual processes were, he described an impersonal process:

"Gave me a letter to say I was sanctioned for 4 weeks and then no money […] I applied for a hardship payment that gave me help to pay with the bills, but that wasn't that much money either, that was only about 40 quid for 2 weeks." (John)

John appeared to accept the sanction; suggesting that he did not have the energy to contest this, or was not aware that he could. He spoke of it, a quiet injustice, and an administrative error that someone had incorrectly told the Jobcentre that he was working. He was unable to defend himself against the sanction, and did not allude to any processes where he could. I discovered from Sam, that whilst under a sanction – not receiving any benefits, that a person had to continue to visit the Jobcentre to sign on and state that they were continuing to look for work. Therefore, despite not receiving any benefit income, the surveillance continued through monitoring job search activity, to ensure responsibility and the demonstration of a work ethic.

Being judged

With each of these young people, discussing their own attachment to work they also spoke of their own deservedness of welfare benefits, that rested upon a suspicion of benefits claimants. The young people who were unemployed, or had been recently, spoke of feeling stigmatised and judged, according to the norm of being in work:

"For me, cos I've always worked, the whole… unemployed thing and feeling like I wasn't contributing to society and all this, and people were judging me and all this, I found it difficult, really difficult, and even though I was doing everything I could, it seemed to be getting harder." (Rhys)

Judy similarly described how she felt that she needed to tell people that she had been in employment, rather than being unemployed *now*. This was spoken about in terms of being a hard worker - and needing to actively demonstrate this to people.

"I'm finding it really daunting now being out of employment, and I'm also feeling the need to tell everyone you know that I, I was employed for such a long time. You know what I mean? Because everyone just looks at you differently. It's really difficult to explain, but I think they judge you as someone that's lazy, as someone who doesn't really want work you know, [...]. I don't think you're really classed as a person if you're not in employment or anything, if you're not seen to be doing anything actively in the public eye, then I don't think you're looked at very nicely… but it's the same in all walks of life isn't it? I mean the way that people treat the homeless and things like that, you know everyone just judges people without really knowing situations, everyone's quick to judge [...] you haven't got any sort of title so who are you to be complaining about anything? You take what you're given don't you, 'cos you don't have anything anyway, and I am a really hard worker, something I can say for myself, I am such a hard worker." (Judy)

Judy was aware of her apparent 'failings', that is, that she needed to demonstrate that she was a hard worker, because she would otherwise be judged as lazy. Foucault referred to judgemental gazes, which direct individuals towards norms and normative behaviours, and contribute to self-transformation:

"The judges of normality are everywhere. We are in the society of the teacher-judge, the doctor-judge, the educator-judge, the social –worker-judge; it is on them that the universal reign of the normative is based; and each individual, wherever he may find himself, subjects to it his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes, his achievements" (Foucault 1991 {1977}, 304).

Furthermore, the concept of stigma is important, because it defines what marks an individual as deviant from the norm. Goffman described stigma as being where society establishes what

it means to be normal, by categorising people, and establishing complimentary attributes according to that stereotype:

"The standards he has incorporated from wider society equip him to be intimately alive to what others see as his failing, inevitably causing him, if only for moments, to agree with what he does indeed fall short of what he really ought to be" (Goffman, 1990, 15)

Baumberg (2016) also discussed personal stigma, as the feeling that an activity puts across to others a devalued identity, and stigmatisation, the belief that others will devalue your identity. Following from this, he referred to 'claims stigma' in relation to benefits, and the processes involved resulting in the feeling of being looked down upon when claiming benefits. This is tied to the notion of reciprocity, that if welfare benefits are perceived as gifts, those who are perceived as not reciprocating, that is, not trying hard enough to find work, will be judged as undeserving.

Work schemes

One illuminating finding of this research was how young people valorised work consistent with the Government's discourse, at the same time as being aware of the scrounger that would avoid work (was not effortful). This was conveyed particularly when talking about work schemes. Unpaid work schemes were perceived as valuable and always worth doing, despite these being in low quality, 'unskilled' work, which did not result in any subsequent paid employment. Additionally, unpaid work schemes were discussed using the same language and processes as paid work – a competitive recruitment process, being successful if chosen, and being 'let go from' when finished. In fact, I had to probe to find out whether the young person was talking about an unpaid work scheme or paid employment, asking for further details when they told me they were 'going for a job'. Sam illustrated this. He was on a training course when I met him; the three other young men and training leader were wishing him luck for an interview. When I spoke to Sam the next day, I asked about his interview and if he had heard back:

"I got my interview, and I started my work placement today, I started half 9 till 4 and I enjoyed it. For 4 weeks and after that I will get a job hopefully…"

(*so you've had an interview to do work experience at …?*)

"Yeah, they said if you do the work very well you have a fair chance of getting a job afterwards." (Sam)

Sam was very pleased to have been chosen for this work in a shop, which included stacking their shelves; furthermore, it involved a competitive process, described as going for a job. I

asked him about his previous work; where he went on to recall other placements. Here he described being 'let go from', and 'coming out of':

"...old pensioners lunches then, I was doing that once a week, after that the Jobcentre wanted me to do a work placement programme, so I did three months in a mechanical garage for that, which was full time, I came out of then. I then went to do a 2 month placement at [shop] after that I got a job, but after 2 months they let me go. Then I was put on a community placement programme which was 30 weeks and I spent 30 hours a week on the programme which was 4 days, and whilst on the programme all I was doing folding bin bags [...] I had to work the certain hours and the rest of my time I had to be looking for work. [Was that easy?] The hours I had to do, 'cos some weeks I had 5 days which didn't really give me much time, it gave me just the weekend really." (Sam)

Sam spoke of being in many work placements, although none had led to any paid work. The latter, 'community placement' he described as being a distance to travel. Additionally, he stated that he was required to look for additional work, during the unpaid work schemes. Throughout, he maintained a buoyancy by the expectation that the schemes might lead to work. What was interesting here was the perception of these schemes as fair, in particular that people should contribute labour in exchange for their benefits:

"What they should do if you are signing on, you should do is 10 hours a week, and that is 63 pounds which is a bit more than signing on, and if you done that, that's your basic, and you done more hours, then the Jobcentre pay you the difference the hours that you worked..." (Sam)

Despite Sam's experiences that involved participating in many schemes without securing paid employment, it was his work effort that he considered important. Furthermore, he understood that the Jobcentre should be responsible for paying 'the basic'; the employer was not considered - there was no discussion of them paying a higher wage.

When Adam (following Sam's interview) too spoke of being in work, in the same shop that Sam had mentioned and 'going for jobs', I asked for further details. Adam told me that he had had an interview and similarly to Sam, proudly stated that he was one of only a few people that had succeeded in getting an interview, therefore he was one of the successful applicants. This, it later transpired, had been an (unpaid) work placement, which had lasted for three weeks. He reflected that it was good, because it had been subsequently extended to a month. He had not received paid work following this. What is significant is that the competitive process involved in these schemes may have contributed to their perceived value and status. The young person had to work on their employability to be considered for these, to sell themselves to the

'employer'. Here too, parallel to interviews for paid employment, were notions of effort and reward; not hearing back whether they were successful, not securing an unpaid work placement was internalised as failure. John captured this in discussing work schemes, which he too had been on:

"They are a good idea cos most people get jobs afterwards from the same company…it's just a case of finding someone that'll take you […]. I've had 2 interviews, which was for [shop]. (Jobcentre) try and put me into another one because they want me to go into another one cos they know I'll do it and they know I'll stay and things like that but it's just a case of work placements just not taking me […]. The employers won't take me due to my disability and health and safety." (John)

Owen too alluded to work schemes, but not getting a proper job. These individuals blamed their disability for not getting on a work scheme. Whereas John was in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance and mandated to undertake job search activities, Owen was not, being in receipt of Disability Living Allowance.

"I did some work experiences in […] recently and they trained me, but I couldn't get like a proper job really, they didn't give me a proper reason just 'oh, we can't take you because of health and safety'." (Owen)

However, not all young people expressed this gratification. Judy recalled her experience of work placements, prior to the Claimant Commitment (2012), where there was less stringent conditionality, and recalled the option given to continue her unpaid placement, which she declined:

"I went on a work trial, a work placement with a group of people, that's what I did, and they gave you, I think, it was kind of like for your benefits […]. Well, I was given an option to continue onto placement, and I said, I'm not being funny, but I'm not going to work for free for the next 6 months, it's not going to happen….I mean in all fairness, you know. They said it was fine, I could continue onto job search… but it was irrelevant in the end because the manager of the café approached me and offered me a job after my placement anyway…(and did you….?) Yes, I took that job." (Judy)

Judy was offered an extension of her placement – which she had turned down, not wishing to work unpaid, but it was only after her refusal, that the manager offered her *paid* work. This is particularly interesting because the work placement appeared to have been a substitute for a paid job, which suggests a substitution effect, the employer using the worker on a scheme rather than employing them.

'You know the type': Deserving and undeserving

Despite the negative experiences referred to, by some young people themselves in receipt of benefits, all drew on the figure of the passive welfare recipient, and discussions of who should, or should not receive benefits. Those deemed 'deserving' of benefits displayed the appropriate effort in looking for work, whereas those 'underserving' were captured by the infamous figure of someone sitting at home all day, watching TV, and enjoying a 'lifestyle' on benefits. Young people saw themselves as deserving, because they overtly demonstrated looking for work. Nonetheless, they alluded to having to defend themselves from the undeserving. As Rhys stated, he would be associated with the same 'type' of person who pretended to be ill.

"It's like everyone's lumped together into the same thing, so I'd be ...the same kind of person as somebody who does pretend that they're ill and kind of limp around er,... so yeah, it was um, the stigma was very hard...and people believe it!" (Rhys)

Programmes such as Benefits Street (2014) were included in the young peoples' narratives to reflect a perceived reality of those who took advantage of welfare and decided not to work. In particular, single mothers were a specific focus of scorn viewed as having babies for financial reasons, a rational entrepreneurial response. Yet the labour involved in caring for children as dependents was not considered 'work'. Therefore, women were 'revolting subjects' a term that Tyler (2013) refers to in her book by the same name, demonised for being welfare scroungers:

"I do think some people do take advantage of it obviously and those programmes do open your eyes to a lot of people that do think that it's there as a right, so you don't have to work the more children you have the more benefits you can have." (Dan)

Gina reflected this view, and did so by drawing on the image of the single mother, who she referred to as getting money for nothing and watching TV all day:

"There's some on benefits who probably get more money and they're just at home doing nothing really, and it's just not fair and people who work like really hard and then people who just sit there watching telly all day, and getting money for nothing so its unfair? Yeah, like single parents like they get benefits and then ...they basically they just spend it they don't do anything, just at home." (Gina)

This discourse of fairness, also identified in the Government's discourse, suggests that there is a 'something for nothing' culture, and this stokes a moral indignation. Only those who work hard are deserving of money and leisure (sitting watching telly all day).

One young person, John, referred to immigrants taking people's jobs. This he explained, was a popular belief amongst his friends; however, he noted that this information originated from news and media outlets,

"*(me and my friends) we hear in the news that these foreigners are coming in here and getting the job […] I can't say what's true because I'm no there….er, I never believe my friends with the news because there's no actual proof to prove it is there?(what do your friends think?) My friends think it's the jobs, people coming over taking jobs, it's the news that is saying that.*" (John).

This interview in 2014, was two years before the EU 'Brexit' referendum, and associated campaigns. However, this does reflect the pervasiveness of immigration as held responsible for a lack of jobs. In 2011, Gibson highlighted in his research, that young people (14-16 years) perceived unemployment being due to high levels of immigration, however, they believed that being unemployed was the fault of the individual: it was because they had not tried hard enough to get a job. Gibson concluded that this discourse of 'effortfulness' meant that welfare rights were seen to be contingent on the individual's overt displays of effort, and therefore deservedness. Those that did not outwardly display 'deservedness' could accordingly, be justifiably denied their (social citizenship) rights. Similarly, a discourse of effort was drawn on by some young people, with the perception that some welfare recipients did not make any effort, or were too fussy when looking for work,

"*I think some people have got too much pride as well they won't do certain jobs for some reason, I know a lot of people who wouldn't do a certain job but they would happily go to the dole and claim their money […]. If you can't get that one job in WH Smiths, why stop there, why not try for a job in the bakery next door – I'm just making stuff up, but if you can't get a job in one bakery you've just got to push, push, push, push.*"(Alun)

"*There are people obviously that can't get work need money not obviously for people who decide not to work just expect money.*" (Dan)

Furthermore, being in work was associated with individual effort and having a strong work ethic:

"*I think we've got the mentality because we've gone into work, we've got the work mentality earlier.*" (Brendan)

"*I think I've got this thing in me that I have to work in a type of way I have to earn my money. When I was 13 I used to have a paper round and I always used to earn money for myself, I dunno just being given money for going in signing on, I feel that you should be doing something.*" (Alun)

Here, the symbolic figure of the passive welfare recipient, receiving state support for doing nothing was drawn on.

"(jobseekers) they complain that it's going to get harder to claim their money and it's like....what?! Well, they don't do anything anyway they're playing their computer game, or they get their money they sign on and they go out and just drink that money away, it's like, earn that money and you deserve that drink." (Brendan)

As discussed in Chapter Two, previous governments' reforms were justified by beliefs that the state undermined incentives, and eroded the work ethic. The strength of this discourse, and the perception of an unproblematic path to 'welfare dependency', with no conditionality required, continued under the Coalition Government, as described in Chapter Three. The experiences of young people on benefits, interviewed here, were not congruent with a lifestyle of leisure, but of financial insecurity. Nonetheless, the young people appropriated this perceived 'lifestyle' of a leisurely life on benefits, an easily accessible and common sense discourse. To recall Chapter Three, where George Osborne exclaimed: "*The system wasn't fair on hardworking taxpayers; paying out ever-increasing amounts to sustain others in lifestyles they could barely dream of affording themselves*" (Iain Duncan Smith, Gov.uk, 2014b).

For Brendan and Alun, who worked full time (self-employed), those in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance chose to avoid work, and did not have any claim to welfare rights, as they were assumed not to meet their responsibilities. Therefore, more out of work conditionality was the obvious solution for them. However, this was also reflected in the narratives of those out of work, in receipt of benefits. For example, Holly spoke of those who 'did nothing' and were not deserving of benefits: the government was giving money away to the 'wrong people' (the undeserving):

"People now on benefits…. and people don't do anything, which is their fault sometimes, I guess they are changing things, you could stay at home and do nothing um so yeah, they do need, that's why I like the Universal Credit cos it forces you to go out and help so that's good […]. I know some people do sort of lie about it they don't necessarily need it, they'll use that money for drugs, alcohol, whatever so that's why they're changing it getting more serious and stern about it which is important cos in a way they're spending millions and giving it away to the wrong people but I think they haven't thought about everything properly, fully enough." (Holly)

Rather than eliciting sympathy for what might otherwise be associated with a depressing and lonely activity, the potency of the image of sitting around all day was presented as a lifestyle

choice. This fed into the belief that anyone could find work if they wanted, and that work schemes were a good thing, as surmised by Holly and Sam:

"If I can't take that job I'll be at home doing nothing, but I'll still be searching for jobs. There are some people still out there who are getting benefits, they know it's enough to live and they don't do anything so I think it is really important that young people are forced to do some sort of community work because then, again they are getting into the routine of work and stuff so I do, I really do like that, it's *quite important."* (Holly)

"I think people who want £75 a week should do 12 hours a week for that money." (Sam)

Conclusion

This chapter has presented findings from the narrative interviews with young people, and has highlighted a number of important themes, including: ambiguity towards education, disliking school and feeling failed by it, but nonetheless, perceiving it to be important. In contrast, young people drew on discourses of individual 'effortfulness' in discussing securing employment, and work schemes perceived as valuable because they *could* lead to paid employment. Whilst some in precarious work saw themselves as having made a choice, despite having resources, the young people out of work and in receipt of benefits had few choices, experienced surveillance of interventions and welfare conditionality – 'in work whilst out of work'. Similarly, to the government discourses discussed in Chapter Three, benefit recipients were assumed to avoid work, and these were a type that everyone knew, judged according to their assumed poor moral behaviour. Young people presented themselves as deserving and effortful in and out of work: the deserving benefit recipient, the diligent jobseeker, and good employee disassociating themselves from the 'other' (undeserving) types, the norm of the scrounger. This can be described as an illustration of self-governance, where governmentality is extended (from government) to self-regulation, and a 'technology of the self' as individuals hold themselves responsible for their actions according to desired norms (Dean 2013, 87; Lemke 2010, 12). Indeed this stigma and the potential of employment, alongside competitive recruitment processes may have underpinned their willingness to participate in work schemes. This sentiment is similar to that expressed by Walter (Wal) Hanningon, in 1937, organiser of the National Unemployed Workers' Movement. "*If men are made to feel that they should be satisfied with a condition where they work for a labour exchange or U.A.B. [Unemployment Assistance Board] pittance, then the tendency will be to regard themselves as fortunate if they can get an ordinary job at wages fare below trade union standards.*" (cited in Fletcher, 2015,

337). Young people did not want to sign on, and be part of that regime. However, there was also in work insecurity, and a competition for more hours. Young people recognised that they had to be resilient, shoulder social risks and financial costs, as well as improve their skills and make themselves attractive to employers. They were essentially, between precarious work and welfare as the chapter title suggests, 'Between the devil and the deep blue sea'.

Chapter Seven: Discussion

Introduction

This chapter discusses the key findings from the narratives of front-line workers and young people in the context of the research literature, discourse and theoretical perspectives. Within this chapter the following common themes are defined and explored: Schooling and education, Work schemes, Front-line 'Managing' Practices, In work out of work, Working on the self, Stigma, Valorised work, Obscures and unshackles, and Resistance.

Schooling and Education

Schooling and education was a common theme discussed by young people and frontline workers. The young people narrowly defined educational success and were often in the lower academic sets, which were disruptive, and where they felt stigmatised, 'on the making table'. They alluded to the practices of streaming, that is separating students according to their perceived ability: into high, middle and lower bands, previously identified as affecting a student's confidence and motivation. The Select Committee Report (Parliament. House of Lords, 2016) reported that such segregation had led to students feeling demotivated and disengaged, subsequently affecting their self-belief (*ibid*, 134). The report also indicated that some students were supported to achieve a *lower* grade in schools: for example, to aim for a D, which disheartened them as they saw this a failure, knowing that they could not attain a C grade. Ireson *et al* (2005) in their research noted that students were moved into lower sets for behavioural reasons; and when sets had been formed, then mobility - pupils moving up or down, was unlikely; an inflexibility associated with the teachers' expectations of students. However, it is students from the lowest socioeconomic backgrounds that have been found in the lower sets at school, in England, with a lower quality of teaching. As well as achieving lower educational attainment, they described feeling stigmatised, disliking school, and seeking positive identities elsewhere (Francis, *et al*, 2016). Furthermore, with a narrow academic focus and an emphasis on retaining students for A levels to meet school performance tables, 'regardless of what is in the best interests of the young person' young people who do not intend to go to university have been described as feeling unsupported,

presented with few opportunities, following compulsory education (Parliament. House of Lords, 2016, 75).

Reay (2017) explored the English educational system, noting that here that academies and free schools are exclusionary to working classes, and that young people often internalised perceived education 'failure' as 'a personal lack' alongside an 'anxiety of failure' (Reay, 2017, 75). This is unsurprising perhaps, considering that if a young person is judged on, and defined as successful, according to a narrowly defined academic focus, those who are not 'successful' at school, appear to have had a rational choice, but have failed in their duty to learn. This Gerrard (2014, 876) described as a normalised 'common sense learner ethic'. Young people appear to be lacking in aspiration, which is associated with personal qualities (Stahl, 2012, 9). However, one key finding from this research was that the young people *did not* blame themselves for not doing well at school, but spoke as if cheated of success because of their school, their teachers and disruption of their lessons. They did not allude to a lack of their individual effort, and this contrasts with the more individualising discourses apparent in their discussion of their labour market activity, trying to get a job or work placement. It is relevant to note here that education is a policy devolved to Wales. Unlike England, in Wales, there are no free schools or academies (independent and not run by local authorities). Therefore, this contrasts with the English system, which has been discussed by Reay (2017) as impacting on student's wellbeing as they internalise the pressure to do well. Furthermore, Francis, *et al* (2016) described an English cultural narrative within education, where middle class parents, use their social, financial and social capital to further their children's advantages.

Meritocracy is as central to education as it is to work (see Littler, 2018), it is those who *already* have an advantage that will succeed in the labour market and education (Savage, 2015, 400). However, front-line workers did draw on and reproduce a meritocratic discourse that merit, hard work and ability would be rewarded with eventual labour market success, their young clients were seen as not having 'achieved' at school; they lacked aspiration and confidence, and were too choosy. A lack of aspiration is a neoliberal assumption, and poor social mobility 'failure', is a seemingly a fair outcome within meritocracy, Yet, research has shown that often a young person academic and vocational aspirations are likely to be shaped by their family dispositions, and perceived job satisfaction (Hoskins and Barker, 2016). Indeed, the young people interviewed here who did have access to financial resources, primarily from their family, did not need to sign on, whilst those without such resources appeared to have fewer

choices and needed to sign on between jobs. Nonetheless, going to university was for most young people interviewed, regarded as a route to getting on and out of 'shit jobs'; getting into debt to go into university was less of a consideration, although in receipt of benefits, were acutely aware of the associated financial risks involved in getting into university. Frontline workers too, believed that those who had a degree were easier to move on or find work. It is true, that higher education qualifications have been central to achieve upward social mobility; they can help avoid precarious work and prevent people from 'climbing down the ladder' (Antonucci, 2016, 23). Furthermore, non-graduates experience higher unemployment rates than graduates (see Standing, 2014a, 116; ONS, 2013). However, what is crucial here is to recognise that education has not always been so central to, and a 'holding pen' for, young people (Ainley, 2016). As discussed, in Chapter Two from 1945- 1975, school leavers had access to entry-level work, a route offered to them via trades unions and apprenticeships (albeit, mostly for males) (*ibid,* 13-15). Alongside the decline of manufacturing and industry and growth of temporary, insecure and low paid employment, fewer young people have left school able to become financially independent. Therefore, higher qualifications have come to represent a 'hygiene factor', that is, they do not necessarily guarantee a good labour market outcome, but not having them is likely to affect a young person's chances of securing employment (Antonucci, 2016, 23). Not having a degree is a disadvantage, but holding a degree has not necessarily guaranteed labour market success. There has been an oversupply of graduates resulting in competition for (graduate and non-graduate) jobs; since 2008/9, almost half of graduates (leaving education with qualifications higher than A-level) worked in areas where a degree was not previously required (Allen, 2013). But in addition to disregarding the reality of an overcrowded graduate labour market (Christie 2009, 129), if education is perceived to be for potential employability, rather than as enriching and fulfilling, it can lead to student anxiety and pressure (Frayne 2015, 80).

Work schemes

Unpaid work schemes, which were also referred to as work experiences and work trails, were well regarded by young people and front-line workers. They were perceived as beneficial because they made the individual more employable, desirable to employers, and would *probably* lead to paid employment. Work schemes are not new, and to recall briefly from Chapter Two, these have included British Labour camps in the 1930s, to enforce work and

maintain the morale of mostly young men, at a time of high unemployment. Schemes for young people were introduced as a temporary measure initially, due to entry-level job losses in the late 1970s. When entry-level employment did not resume, these schemes became embedded within policy and extended to lone parents and people with disabilities who were otherwise peripheral to the labour market, known as 'employability schemes'. Although such schemes occurred across Europe (as Active Labour Market Policies), in the UK the focus was on the assumed behavioural deficits; they were to *motivate* the individual into work. 'Welfare to work' schemes lost any additional benefits payment, and suited the employability discourse - good for the individual, good for the economy, whilst obfuscating actual labour market demand, pay and conditions. Both New Labour and Conservative governments have valued them as discussed in Chapter Two, and a workfare ideology and workfare values became embedded within the public's collective thought, and 'political psyche' (Deeming, 2014, 19). However, this workfare ideology not only divides workers, for example substituting a paid job, as was apparent for one young participant in this research, it also depoliticises capital from labour. This is where it is assumed that there is no need for a wage payment, a finding that was reflected in both the young people's and frontline workers' narratives. Indeed, as Standing argues (2014a, 131) internships and unpaid work experiences have become a 'right of passage', normalised to maintain the unemployed in a state-of-work readiness, and in close proximity to the labour market, as a reserve army of unpaid labour. Work schemes replace paid work as an accepted route to *possible* work, alongside the belief that young people need to be 'taught' to labour. As the frontline workers exclaimed, these schemes taught young people how to take orders and get up in the morning, and to work, albeit, without pay.

The work schemes described in this research emulated employment recruitment processes, with a competitive element and in some cases front-line workers stated that the person had to 'go on a work trial, to get a work trial'. Similarly, Garthwaite (2016) recalls in her ethnography of a foodbank, that Work Programme participants had to undertake continual work search activity, including participation in work schemes. She refers to 'Simon', who had an interview for a work placement who stated, "*I went for the interview, there were seven of us and we asked what the job prospects were at the end of it and he said 'Nothing'*". (Garthwaite, 2016, 100). What is particularly noteworthy is that Garthwaite emphasised the 'dead-endness' of the work placements that had no apparent job prospects, and not the fact that these work placements involved a competitive process. This suggests that competing for unpaid work placements may be a potentially accepted and normalised practice. Alongside the promise of a job or an

extension of the work experiences, the work schemes may have been associated with a dignity of work, away from the pervasive stereotype of the 'scrounger' by the young people. This is similar to the Labour exchange, discussed in Chapter Two, which gave 'deserving' men dignity; it elevated their status above the jobless pauper to 'workers in waiting'. Tellingly, Active Labour Market Policies (ALMPs) have maintained popularity elsewhere, because they do offer the public a reassurance that the unemployed are not passive, but are doing something (Hansen and Leschke, 2017, 236-237). Nonetheless, some young people felt proud when chosen amongst other applicants and front-line workers promoted these schemes. It is the competition for something that suggests that there is something worth competing, the apparent reward of being chosen is a regime of practice, and a form of productive power. The young person is to be transformed and improved, and conceive of themselves as a 'market actor' in their voluntary participation in the work scheme, making themselves both available and attractive to employers predominantly within the low skilled labour market (Soss *et al*, 2011, 28).

I discussed in Chapter Two how New Labour had reconfigured welfare, from supporting universal rights to workfare policies, making labour closer to the labour market and consequently, a readily exploited flexible workforce (Grover, 2003). In this way, work schemes maintain the desirable worker characteristics: the right attitude, docile and maintaining the participant as hopeful, permanently poised to take work. If we consider that the state, and capital's project is to maintain flexible and low wage labour, then the Work Programme, work first approaches and work schemes have been successful in disciplining and meeting the demands of labour. These practices instigate competition for perhaps otherwise undesirable jobs, rather than supporting individuals into secure and well-paid employment (Wiggan, 2015). Furthermore, they have achieved the government aim of directing the individual to work on their effort, and to propagate discourses of (valorised) work and (denigrated) welfare (Whitworth and Carter, 2014, 114).

With young people unlikely to be accepted into (paid) entry-level work following secondary education, or through apprenticeships, it is those without higher education qualifications or financial resources, who feature significantly in the unskilled, flexible labour market. Previous research has found that young people not going onto university have entered work schemes, flexible work and/or unemployment with restricted benefits (Carpenter and Freda 2007, 96). Shildrick *et al* (2012) found many individuals stuck within a repetitive cycle of low paid jobs, training schemes of poor quality, and unemployment, a finding that was reflected this research.

In effect, work schemes can be said to conscript young people to be precarious workers in industries with job insecurity; supressing wages and keeping them in check, whilst they strive for more hours, experiencing anxiety, uncertainty, and material deprivation (Tyler, 2013; Wacquant 2010, 2008). Employers are supplied with labour in the predominantly lower ends of non- unionised labour market, blurring any boundary between welfare and labour market (Soss *et al* 2011, 239). As such, these are young people may be, as Marx signified, a 'stagnant' reserve army of labour, with extremely irregular work that needs not only to be bigger to increase the potential for competition, but must also be employable. But this also serves as a weapon against workers because they are willing to work and accept any job, increasing job competition, a 'lever of capitalist accumulation' (Marx {1887}1974, 592; Magdoff and Magdoff 2004), as illustrated in the quote below,

"*A part of the active labour army, but with extremely irregular employment. Hence, it furnishes to capital an inexhaustible reservoir of disposable labour power. Its conditions of life sink below the average normal level of the working class; this makes it at once the broad basis of special branches of capitalist exploitation. It is characterised by maximum of working-time, and minimum of wages.*" (Marx {1865} 2013, 58).

It was discussed in Chapter Two, that the Coalition Government's aim was to serve the economy and 'modernise' work practices for a '*more flexible and responsive economy, it is important that this is underpinned by social change*' (Iain Duncan Smith, 2014). This 'social change' required the worker to accommodate to the employer's requirements. This notion of employer as 'King' was reproduced by the frontline-workers discourse and practices, promoting unpaid work schemes and actively locating employers to take on their clients. Workers must then be grateful, but also resilient in the face of these 'flexible and modern' working practices, a sentiment echoed by the front-line workers. In fact, the Conservative Government (2015) independent review on modern working practices 'The Taylor Report' (Gov.uk 2017) indicated a requirement for, and encouragement of individual 'resilience and character' in response to modern flexible working practices. It noted that, '*The Review is very supportive of work that is going on in schools and via third-sector organisation to develop non-cognitive life skills such as character and resilience*' (*ibid*, 87); but as critics have exclaimed, this review has been a missed opportunity to challenge insecurity and worker exploitation (Chapman, 2017).

Frontline 'Managing' Practices

'Neoliberal paternalism isn't about weakening the state; it is about strengthening the state as a disciplinary authority.' (Soss *et al*, 2011, 42)

As discussed earlier, the aims of government have shifted historically as government no longer promised jobs for all, the focus of unemployment as a problem became one of the unemployed, and in particular, youth unemployment became a 'problem'. This was accompanied by discourses of threats to the social order and practices of work schemes, originally proposed as a temporary solution. Young people were regarded as needing to learn work based behaviours, rather than learning on the job, and the focus came to be teaching a 'market based work ethic', as young people had the expectation to sell their labour power without this leading to employment (Cohen, 1984, 114-119). This new truth, of their 'deficiency' led to policies to train the unemployed, and an industry of 'quasi-autonomous agencies' with the purpose of helping individuals to get to into work. This was, as Millar and Rose (2008, 105) observed, a new territory, that was responsible for managing those 'on the margins'; the unemployed conceived as lacking marketable skills, as employment services and policies, the Job Centre and Work Programme, as well as other regimes of practice emerged to 'guide' people into work. They included competitive tendering and payment by results that effectively undermine cooperation between organisations, and promote competition for resources (placements and funds, and even clients). This was congruent to this research, where specialised in-house 'employment liaison officers' ensured that they could procure 'leads' to provide unpaid work experiences for their 'customers'. The front-line workers were keenly aware of the targets and chasing up clients, 'ticking boxes' as measurable outcomes that were sometimes at odds with their own perceptions of success, (although not all front-line workers were subject to meeting targets). They adhered to the neoliberal discourse of contractual obligations, and had to compete for funds or contracts by demonstrating their successes, sometimes experiencing dilemmas in relaying policies.

Research elsewhere has shown that Work Programme outcomes measured by job outcomes only, alongside low costs and high targets had a stressful effect on staff (Egdell *et al*, 2016, 10). However, these authors argue that this marketization was more common and 'advanced' in England, than in Wales and Scotland, noting that Third Sector Organisations (TSOs) in Scotland and Wales, were experiencing a 'rude awakening', and were underprepared for the profit led, contractual culture that expected. This is change of ethos was encapsulated by Anne,

a Work Programme advisor who exclaimed: "*we didn't used to be like this, only since this new programme came in*". This was indicated by Milbourne and Cushman (2015) who used the term, 'institutional isomorphism' in their study of voluntary organisations in England, to refer to the process organisations go through to conform to dominant arrangements which induce a mission drift, and cultures of compliance.

In Work out of Work: Work for labour

"Welfare should be seen as no different from work itself […] the state supports you – you are 'in work to find work." (Iain Duncan Smith, Gov.uk 2014b).

The Coalition Government's discourse as identified within the speeches in Chapter Three, was that work was essential to wellbeing and community. But also work was presented as an activity that no one would do if they did not have to, which mobilised the so-called scrounger, enjoying a lifestyle paid for by the taxpayer, and illustrated in the quote above. Therefore, being in 'work', whilst out of work, was a deliberate governing strategy that acknowledged that the conditions in claiming out of work benefits should mirror the same conditions as being in work. This symbolised fairness to the taxpayer, and with work conceived as always rewarding, fair to the individual (jobseeker) because they conditioned and prepared them for the 'world of work'. This was mobilised by common sense assumptions that those in receipt of unemployment benefits were passive and required activation, despite little empirical evidence (also see Whitworth, 2016, 6; Shildrick *et al*, 2012; Taylor-Gooby, 2013). As a paternalistic response, this especially suited young people, who were assumed to drift passively from school, onto claiming benefits. Welfare was presumed as easily available and accessible, therefore sending out the wrong signals to young people, as David Cameron then Prime Minister expressed in his 'Welfare Reform' speech in 2015: '*You could leave school, sign on, start getting your benefit, start getting housing benefit and the contribution asked for was minimal'* (Cameron, 2015).

An important finding from this research was that young people and front-line workers discussed the efforts required to maintain a low- level income on benefits and maintain a close proximity to the labour market (Wiggan, 2015, 372). As both the front-line workers and young people were aware, having access to a computer was important to maintain benefits – being 'digital by default'. However, young people and frontline workers described this as an

exclusionary practice for those without access to a computer, or the internet or the skills to use online technologies. The assumptions that everyone does have access reinforces relations of power and absolves the government from providing support (Fletcher and Wright, 2017). As Thornham *et al* (2016) note the rationale for 'digital by design', framed within government discourse is of cost efficiency, making 'much needed savings'. Despite this, reliance on digital technology can reinforce structural inequalities: those most likely to need to use this technology are those that are most likely to be excluded from it.

The front-line workers witnessed this 'work for labour' and referred to their client's anxiety, and their efforts to maintain their client's confidence and maintain their benefits. This is as Standing (2014a, 81) notes, 'work for labour'; negotiating benefit processes, demonstrating work search activities, attending work-schemes, and trying to maintain a positive disposition and manage stigma. Therefore, participants were not passive recipients of welfare, as presented in the Government discourse, in Chapter Three, unless demotivated. It was telling that some young people referred to the stresses and insecurity, in and out of work leading to demotivation and going off sick. Whereas an employment advisor noted that young people did go off sick over the winter months when summer work had ended, this was described this as a tactical strategy to maintain an income. Nonetheless, both young people who had signed on, and frontline workers ascertained that there was a regime of signing on.

It is worth remembering that welfare conditionality is not new; as described in Chapter Two there has always been the aim to retain the individual's closeness to the labour market. As such, Standing (2014a, 70) argued that any discussion of more stringent welfare and 'new regimes of conditionality', are in fact a 'fictitious recommodification'. In the nineteenth century, the principle of less eligibility kept benefits low, and the dread of the workhouse drove people into paid employment. However, the Beveridge welfare state attempted to alleviate conditions of unemployment and associated distress, to 'de-commodify' labour, and provide some protection out of work, away from waged labour (alongside unionization and worker protection legislation); social security *did* enable some level of sustainability outside of the labour market, providing a degree of labour power autonomy. The major shift towards greater conditionality: sanctioning, surveillance and deterrence occurred with the Jobseekers Allowance in 1996 (Fletcher and Wright, 2017). This was closely aligned to U.S. welfare policy, which as Lipsky (2010, 11) wrote, was designed and implemented so that people would avoid claiming welfare, and any work, however poorly paid, would be preferable to public assistance.

The unemployed as a target population are monitored and managed, through welfare practices. The Claimant Commitment, described in Chapter two, and the Universal Jobmatch 'panopticon' are as Fletcher and Wright observe, 'new paternalistic tools' that have replaced any previous support with 'digital self-help, coercion and punishment' (2017, 1-2). The claimant is brought under surveillance and supervision to access and sustain benefits, alongside disciplinary power of sanctions, to ensure correct activity. Mandating jobseekers to undertake job search activity entails intrusive government interventions which are, in fact, disproportionately directed at the poor, which makes this a technique of statecraft (Deeming, 2014, 4). As Crossley identifies in his book, discussing the imagined spaces of poverty, data from the poor and marginalised is amassed and stored by the state, to provide the information needed to decide on whether or not the individual should be sanctioned (Crossley, 2017, 110). Sanctions have a normalising function: as the individual must undertake the 'correct' behaviour (demonstrating a work ethic and commitment to finding work) of their own free will. If they do not adhere to this, they are penalised. This technique ensures that the individual regulates their activity, and more broadly, attempts to ensure the governing of an individual's conduct. This is similar to the surveillance of the panopticon tower (adopted by Foucault from Jeremy Bentham), that was to '*induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power*' (Foucault 1991, 201{1977}). This architectural surveillance, was able to assure the functioning of power, the prison 'inmates' were the bearers of power themselves, because of the panopticon's omnipresence, and therefore there was no need for constraint of chains. The impersonal processes of sanctioning, described in this research, is a technology of power; governing from a distance to increase the individual's receptiveness to welfare conditions, ensuring they are less likely to rebel and instead become more capable and productive (Lemke 2010, 5).

As discussed in Chapter Two, New Labour referred to sanctions for those who refused to 'play ball', and suggested a paternalistic response, to guide the individual to do the 'right thing'. Fletcher and Wright (2017) suggest that UK welfare policy is similar to that of the US, where both bear similarities in discourse and policy, of welfare claimant's 'criminal' behaviours, to legitimise punitive sanctions, to modify behaviours. They comment that '*Welfare and penal polices have increasingly become informed by the same behaviourist philosophy relying on deterrence, surveillance and graduated sanctions in order to modify behaviour.*' (Fletcher and Wright, 2017, 4). However, coercive welfare practices such as sanctions based on 'cost and compulsions' rather than facilitating autonomy have been shown

to contribute to social exclusion and disengagement, for young people (Carpenter and Freda 2007, 87-100). The stringency of conditions tied to welfare resulting in an increasingly stressful experience for claimants (Garthwaite, 2012). Nonetheless, one finding here is that all participants discussed sanctions as a *punishment* as if violating a law. What is important is that where front-line workers and young peoples' attitudes to sanctioning drew on individualised discourses of self-responsibility, free will and choice, this can contribute to perceptions of sanctioning as an appropriate practice; deserving for some who do not follow the rules. This may legitimise the so-called deserving and undeserving: the effortful job seeker exhibiting the correct behaviour, and those who do not. Sanctions are a coercive strategy, a threat of a punishment for not being compliant in demonstrating work searches, turning up on time, signifying an appropriate work ethic; thereby ensuring the correct behaviour.

Working on the self

Whereas the front-line workers had to maintain their client's resilience and confidence, and 'strengthening the capacity of the individual' (Millar and Rose 2008, 105), it was the young people who had to convince employers to take them on. This was through their own marketability: to insert themselves into the labour market and remain there. To do this they spoke of being enterprising and effortful, in effect, 'self-policing' (Frayne, 2015, 78). This refers to the voluntarily submission without coercion, appearing free and governing themselves, according to the norm of work, and the work ethic. Despite these efforts, young people experienced anxiety, and enervation, as continual job applications weakened their will to continue to job search. Nevertheless, they needed to work and rework on themselves continually: to upskill and become employable, hold certificates and participate in experiences to generate money, eventually, through paid employment. To demonstrate seeking work constitutes governing from a distance, because it persuades people to look inwards and blame themselves, which is evidence of what Brown (2015, 31) refers to as neoliberalism as a normative governing rationality that disseminates the model of the market to all spheres. Not only is this about generating money, but also about the *potential* to.

Fortier (2017) discusses power as working not only discursively, but also through the individual's anxious state. She found in her research, that immigrants would repeatedly apply

for, and often fail to get, citizenship. Drawing on Judith Butler's (1997) 'Psychic life of power', she suggested that this demonstrated individuals disciplined through cultivating an attachment, to their own subjection. This attachment was sustained when they, as applicants, continued to apply for the citizenship test. Similarly, the young people in this research were continually applying for jobs, but not necessarily because of the threat of sanctions, but because of a promise of eventual employment. It was this desirability of employment, taking the psychosocial form of anxieties, which sustained the individual, because job searching is evidence of a deservedness, and an attachment to the desirability to work, and is therefore, '*dependent on a discourse that was not chosen, but that paradoxically, initiates and sustains agency'* (Butler 1997, 2).

Front-line workers and young people noted that failure to secure participation in the work place was internalised, and this affected their confidence and not wanting to keep filling out the forms. Therefore front-line workers described their role was to maintain their client's happy disposition, and outward appearance of the work ethic and gratitude; helping their clients negotiate the benefits system and even 'grovel' to the jobcentre staff. They would work on their confidence and self-esteem; motivate their clients to join work schemes or any job, through the rationale that work was empowering.

Discourses and practices help to mould the buoyant and compliant, 'docile body' to adapt to 'modern' economic production via disciplinary techniques for example, the aforementioned surveillance and sanctions, but also through norms. Standing (2014a, 217) states that the 'precariat' experience stresses and strains, but rather than recognising and acknowledging structural factors, they are governed through discourse and practices, to work on themselves and experience 'injections' told that they should be grateful and happy to be in a job, and remain positive (Standing 2014a, 35). Similarly, Friedli and Stearn (2015) refer to 'labour on the self', and the use of psycho-policy interventions to guide the individual away from welfare and towards work, premised on unemployment as an individual psychological deficit.

It is important to note that these front-line workers were not aware of moulding the individual to serve capital, but believed that they were helping the young person. Indeed, as Fairclough (2000a, 90) has described, "*ideologies built into conventions may be more or less naturalised and autalised and people may find it difficult to comprehend that their normal practices could have specific ideological investments*". They could be described as devolved units of neoliberal governance in directing their clients towards the appropriate behaviours. As Brown states:

'*Contemporary neoliberal governance operates through isolating and entrepreneurializing responsible units and individuals, through devolving authority, decision making, and the implementation of polices and norms of conduct*' (2015, 129).

Stigma

Both young people and frontline workers recognised a stigma in claiming out of welfare benefits. Young people defended themselves against this, holding the social norms, of welfare stigma that caused them distress, in order to defend *themselves* from being a scrounger. They were assessing others through this dominant lens, as 'injurious interpellation' (Butler 1997, 104).

Stigma is a historically consistent form of governance, for example, through the Poor Law, and work camps, as discussed in Chapter Two, but as Tyler (2013, 9) notes, it is only recently that the young and unemployed have been stigmatised to become 'social abjects'. They are scapegoated, alongside immigrants, as 'revolting subjects' towards whom hostilities are directed, and, as a form of governance, this legitimises and reproduces inequalities and injustice. Stigmatised groups become 'ideological conductors', that is, they do the 'dirty work' of neoliberal governmentality, the governed undertake governing (*ibid*, 192). Stigma, as a technique of discipline and a mechanism of governance comes from within the individual who recognises a cultural norm, and governs themselves and others according to this 'abjection' of the other, a regulatory norm (Tyler, 2013, 36 -47).

The discourses of those who were 'deserving' and 'undeserving' were pervasive amongst both front line workers and young people. Women as lone parents receiving welfare (means tested Income Support) pejoratively judged, is a discourse that carries remnants of moral judgements and historical categories of deserving / undeserving, and conveys powerful images. Fraser and Gordon, writing in 1994, noted that single mothers were seen as the '*solo mother, who carries, as an individual, a moral and psychological problem, as much as being an economic problem and a stereotype, with many different meanings of dependency condensed into one, simple one*' (Fraser and Gordon 1994, 311). Gendered discourses about women as feckless and dependent on the state are evident within previous empirical research (Valentine and Harris 2014, and described in Skeggs, 1998). Indeed women have been a site of welfare interventions, with Poor Law Act of (1899) and Maternity and Child Welfare Act

(1918) being gender and class specific. That is, welfare was not aimed at *helping* mothers, but rather as *monitoring* them, to ensure that they reared children correctly (Skeggs, 1998, 44). Lone parents have more recently been 'encouraged' to enter the labour market earlier, reflected in changing policy.[13] In the government's discourse welfare was perceived as encouraging women to have children, to recall from Chapter Three, '*Quite simply, we have been encouraging working age people to have children and not work, when we should be enabling working age people to work and have children.*' (Cameron, 2012).

The Coalition Government have been complicit in generating and maintaining negative portrayals of claimants, and assumptions of unemployment as a lifestyle choice, people '*sitting on their sofa waiting for their benefits to arrive*' (e.g. David Cameron, 2010, cited in Frayne, 2015, 99). The lazy and undeserving of benefits, who do not present the effort as required, are presumed to be '*sat on their arses all day*'. Deeming (2014) has described a shift in public attitudes towards the unemployed. Young adults were more likely to believe that welfare conditionality in the UK was weak, those without formal qualifications three and a half times more likely to believe that the benefits system dissuaded people from taking paid work, despite, this group being likely to be unemployed themselves. There were structural explanations associated with unemployment in 1984, when the British Social Attitudes Survey began, but thirty years on, these tended to be explained by more individualistic explanations. This apparent lack of solidarity and lack of shared concern with material hardship is associated with the strength of political discourses. These have insisted that work is the best form of welfare, and that there are many benefit cheats and 'scroungers' , a label that with no oppositional discourse, individuals wish to disassociate themselves.

Young people and front-line workers drew on the concept of the 'scrounger' as 'passive' recipients of welfare, despite themselves experiencing, or witnessing benefits stigma. Stigma therefore fulfils a governing function, preventing the formation of a collective identity. For example, Shildrick and MacDonald (2013) found that those experiencing poverty themselves condemned the poor, to avoid feeling stigma. This also feeds into the perception of poverty as deserving, and that people are unemployed because they have not put enough effort in to find work (Gibson, 2009). Such dominant discourses of meritocracy and choice cement beliefs that

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[13] The age of the youngest child where a lone parent must actively seek work is five. With Income support introduced in 1988, it was 16, the threshold then reduced to 12, and then 10, and then 7 in 2010 (DWP, 2011). Under Universal Credit rules, to actively seek and be available for work once the youngest is three. To face work preparation and conditions to prepare for work when the youngest is one.

wealth and labour market disadvantage are due to individual failure (Tyler, 2013; Valentine 2014). Importantly, whilst this occurs, welfare retrenchment, labour precariousness and insecurity become increasingly normalised and not discussed critically. The rise in foodbank is an example of this. Food banks have been detached from welfare reform by government ministers, despite evidence indicating that low-level welfare payments; benefit delays, sanctioning *and* low paid, insecure work have been crucial factors contributing to poverty (Webster, 2013; The Trussel Trust, 2013; Garthwaite, 2016). Welfare minister Lord Freud in 2013, suggested that people visited foodbanks because they were free, and are an example of local welfare provision not a failing of state government support:

"Foodbanks are absolutely not part of our welfare system, in which we have other means of supporting people. There is local provision, and following the devolution of part of the Social Fund to local authorities, local authorities are now responsible for setting up local welfare provision. To the extent that they are interested in using third-sector groups, including foodbanks, that is entirely up to them. […] My Lords, yes, local provision that reflects the requirements of local areas is absolutely right. Charitable provision is to be admired and supported […] food from a foodbank—the supply—is a free good, and by definition there is an almost infinite demand for a free good." (HC Deb 2013, 1071).

Drawing on discourses that implicate the individual as being deficient in managing their finances, or even their ability to cook, (as was also presented by former Education Secretary Michael Gove, and Baroness Jenkin Butler, 2015), serves to deflect from broader structural deficiencies. Garthwaite (2016, 149) has also reflected this in her ethnographic research on foodbank use:

"Foodbanks would not need to exist if it weren't for the harsh benefits sanctions, precarious, low-paid jobs, and administrative delays that leave families without money for weeks on end"

Foodbanks stand as an emblem of the gradual erosion of the welfare safety net, but detached from structural concerns, and this has been discursive, not only in the government rhetoric, but in their advertising in supermarkets. Here they are presented as 'helping your community' and support a 'wide range of people who *find themselves* in desperate need of support', raising individuals' aspirations and 'bureaucratic errors' (Tesco n.d.). Foodbanks too provide a 'moral safety valve', relying on voluntary donations. This legitimises personal generosity, rather than encouraging changes to the system. Normalising foodbanks presence with a charitable status detracts from the state provision of welfare (Garthwaite, 2016, 157). As a continuation of a discourse of poor self-management, this is similar to the moralising discourses described previously, before the introduction of the Beveridge welfare state, at the

beginning of the 20th century. Collective efforts such as friendly societies, voluntary charities and self-help are encouraged, rather than the state addressing wealth distribution. This is consistent with the governmental discourse, to recall from Chapter three, with individuals presented as '*finding themselves in difficulty'*.

Valorised work

"Labour must be performed as if it were an absolute end in itself, a calling. But such an attitude is by no means a product of nature. It cannot be evoked by low wages or high ones alone, but can only be the product of a long and arduous process of education. Today, capitalism, once in the saddle, can recruit its labouring force in all industrial countries with comparative ease." (Weber, 1905).

Parallel to the stigma of benefits, were the perceived positive values of work and the work ethic, also reinforced by judgement and observation. Front-line workers discussed the importance of any work even if unpaid and young people emphasised that they were hard workers, and/or putting in effort to find work. These perceptions are in concert with the Coalition Government's discourses discussed in Chapter Three, which held work in high regard, emphasising aspects of self-worth, esteem and self-fulfilment. These common sense beliefs underpinned their paternalistic policy solutions, of sanctions and conditionality, to get individuals in work quickly, or schemes to learn work-based behaviours. Historically the work ethic has been significant. From industrial capitalism (as presented in Weber's quote, above) to neoliberal capitalism, it has encapsulated a moral responsibility to work. Through the discourse of hard work, individuals must become responsible, moral, and economically rational, with the assumed freedom to be entrepreneurial and competitive (Lemke, 2001, 1999). However, as Standing (2014a, 288) observed, '*If jobs are so wonderful, people should be drawn to them, not driven into them?'*

As previously noted, within welfare discourse and policy, it is the lack of employability that has become the focus, rather than the lack of employment (Standing 2014a, 78). This assumes that there is equal access and opportunities, a meritocratic discourse that cuts across structural barriers in the labour market. If getting a job resides with the individual's effort, then this obfuscates unequal access to money, resources, barriers to skills training, and the nature of work. Employability discourses also legitimise interventions that promote or mandate individuals to be in work schemes, and engage in 'flexible' and insecure employment. They

make the individual more employable, and any resistance to them, or to work, is resistance to common sense, so that whilst there has been an erosion of job security, the individual must still extend their efforts to remain employable (Chertovskaya, *et al* 2013). Therefore, the workforce is maintained as presentable and flexible, accessible, and eager which is in fact, enhancing government control without actually improving the employability of the individual (Eleveld, 2014, Standing 2014a). For governance to be successful, the individual must internalise, and hold themselves and others in line, with the values and norms dominant within society. This 'bio-power' of government, is where individuals' attitudes and conduct are shaped, according to that which is expected and desired (Foucault 1980a, 39; Cruikshank 1999, 39; Dean 2013, 26-27). Work, paid or unpaid, becomes virtuous, and held in place by the ubiquity of 'the normal', and the individual acts through a sense of duty, even in working without a wage (Ewald, 1990, 140). However, the work ethic gives the illusion of autonomy, because it emphasises personal responsibility, and in turn, helps to construct 'docile bodies' (e.g. Weeks 2011, 53), complacent, subjected to, and improved through policy interventions. As Milbourne and Cushman note (2015, 469), governing is achieved not only by policy targets and sanctions, but also through associated discourse, forms of accepted knowledge (Foucault, 1982).

Resistance

The pertinent question is, if education, work and work experiences do not present any rewards and there is a dearth of well-paid and secure jobs, how far are policy, practices and discourses that valorise work and denigrate welfare, sustainable? To what extent will this be accepted by young people – will they continue to adhere to, and reproduce these discourses, in effect, maintaining their own conduct of conduct? Frayne (2015, 113) remarked that, '*there is only so much that people will take*' suggesting a rebellion against the work ethic. Standing (2014a, 256) asserted that a new 'precariat class' was dangerous, restless and angry; however, he also noted that insecure people can become angry, volatile and support politics of hatred. Similarly, Hoggett *et al* (2013, 571) discussed the feeling of 'ressentiment', a form of resentment that is associated with populism such as racism, but also divides social groups and class. This 'ressentiment' occurs where people do not feel that they have a political voice, nor representation in politics and this can yield a feeling of political impotence. As such, this feeds existing grievances, amplified by the government's discourse of fairness, and harnessed by an anti-welfare populism. This consequently divides social groups and classes.

In the face of perceived unfairness and with limited opportunities to voice dissatisfaction, such 'political impotence' results in a turn to populist politics. For example, Winlow *et al* (2017) discuss the rise of the right, and support for English Defence League (EDL), as in part, a lack of representation from the political left for the working classes; the underemployed left behind by a neoliberal and post-industrial economic landscape. As one young person exclaimed, he and his friend believed that immigrants were taking jobs, although he questioned the validity of this in relying on the media for their information. Yet research elsewhere suggests that young people experienced a banality and acceptance of precarious work (for example, Burrows, 2013 and Lloyd, 2013).

All young people and front-line workers perceived that work based behaviours were the responsibility of the state and employers (for example, work experience) skills training had to be funded by the individual and employers were regarded as benefactors, in providing young people with the opportunity to *learn* how to work. There have been campaigns by organisations, including the Boycott Workfare (formed 2010) which have attempted to undo the legitimacy of unpaid work schemes (workfare). Graduate Cat Reilly, in 2013, challenged the government that she was unlawfully forced to work free, in the shop Poundland. She won her claim; the government had not supplied sufficient information relating to penalties for refusing unpaid work. The government's response was that she was a 'job snob' thereby defending the claim that any work is good work, and from which she defended herself as '*I hated being on benefits*' and '*it's easier to be quiet and angry'* (Malik, 2013). However, in this research there was anger, unfairness, frustration, and demotivation described for being sanctioned, not finding work, or being 'let go of', manifesting in some 'going off sick', with depression and anxiety, because of the individual effort that they had invested. There was little expression of resistance to schemes, nonetheless, the front-line workers spoke of some young people who did appear to refuse to engage in their welfare strategies of support, not wanting to go for low paid, insecure and temporary jobs, and not being 'receptive' to their help and advice offered. These were described as difficult to mould, refusing to be engaged in welfare strategies and taking themselves out of this technology of power. This, as a form of resistance shows the young people exercising their power in refusing to accept their 'needs', as defined in policy and through practices (Cruikshank, 1999) and highlights the disjuncture between political rationalities and the effects 'on the ground' (Prior and Barnes, 2011).

Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the key findings, comparing and contrasting the themes from the narratives of front-line workers and young people. The chapter outlined *being in work out of work*, a deliberate governing strategy experienced by some young people, and witnessed by front-line workers. This included the governance by stigma, and the regime of receiving welfare. Additionally, where both young people and frontline workers valorised any work, paid and insecure (precarious) or unpaid (work-schemes) because they *might* lead to further employment, this led to a discussion of a potentially new reserve army of labour: that is 'non-academic' young people without financial resources and therefore, most likely to be subject to welfare practices. In addition, the practices of processing 'clients', moving young people into work, affected the frontline workers. They had to adapt and adhere to neoliberal welfare reforms and exercise their own street level bureaucracy, often by determined by who they perceived to be deserving or underserving – according to their perceived effort in finding work, and displaying the right attitude. Perceived labour market failure was internalised by the young people as they focused on their efforts in finding and staying in work; however, unfavourable schooling experiences were not internalised as individual failure or effort, instead they blamed the schooling and teaching. These findings may not be surprising, considering the banal pervasiveness of the government's discourse, helping to shape the perspectives of both young people and front line workers. Nonetheless, this indicates internalised and individualised responses to labour market success or failure, an adherence to a meritocratic discourse - affecting the experiences of young people, culminating in an apparent lack of resistance by young people, to work and welfare discourse and practices.

Chapter Eight: Conclusion

Introduction

This concluding chapter begins with a summary of the research including a reiteration of the research aims and questions followed by an outline of each chapter that sought to address these questions. Subsequently, this chapter moves on to present the key findings, and as the thesis cannot claim to be representative of all young people in precarious work, or in receipt of out of work benefits, this and other limitations of the research are addressed. There follows a discussion of policy implications including issues of education and welfare. The thesis, underpinned by the concepts of governmentality and discourse, recognised that political discourse had shifting from the problem unemployment to the problem of the unemployed, as peoples' attitudes had declining in sympathy towards those on benefits. Therefore, this concluding chapter moves on to focus on how this may function to 'obscure and unshackle' the government from the effects of their discourses and policies. According to Foucault, power governs according to 'knowledges' as regimes of truth, norms circulated at a particular time and place. Because power is fluid and operates through social relations, for example by these frontline workers, and the young people this leads to a discussion of potential avenues for future research. This asks whether these findings might be reflected elsewhere, the potential of ethnographic research, how issues of class could be conceptualised, questions of resistance and education, and the merit in focussing the gaze 'upwards', towards those in power.

Summary of the research

The research took place in Wales, during the time of the Conservative led Coalition Government, a period that witnessed significant welfare reforms of benefit cuts, caps, sanctions, and increased conditionality. The aim of this thesis was to investigate the experiences and perspectives of work and welfare amongst young people who were themselves unemployed or in precarious employment, with the belief that their experiences could illuminate aspects of social change, social policy, as well as effects of neoliberalism. Additionally, this thesis sought the experiences and perceptions of front-line workers who worked in employment or mentoring practices, and were a part of the interventions that guided young people into work. Political discourse appeared to have shifted from one of

unemployment as a problem, to the unemployed, whilst employment became more insecure and low paid, and unemployment benefits more difficult to obtain. Overall, there has been a decline in solidarity with those experiencing poverty and welfare claimants – in particular young people's attitudes were declining in sympathy. However, there was lack of research in the UK that explored both young people's and front line workers' experiences and perceptions of work and welfare, alongside an exploration of the Coalition Government's discourses. Therefore, this research attempted to address this gap, recognising the need to understand further the lived experiences of work and welfare and changes in policy, practice and discourse, with the following research questions:

1. How have conceptualisations of work and welfare changed in the UK; what are the broad shifts in policy and discourse, with a focus from 1979 Conservative Government, up to the 2010-2015 Conservative led Coalition Government?

2. What are the dominant, governmental discourses surrounding work and welfare; how are these framed by the (2010-15) coalition government?

3. How do front-line workers, involved in employment or mentoring practices experience their roles, and do their narratives reflect and reproduce the dominant government discourses identified?

4. What are the lived experiences of young people who are unemployed or in precarious employment, living in Mid and North Wales, and do they reflect, and live up to the dominant Government discourses?

This thesis took the shape of the following chapters to consider the above research questions:

Chapter One provided an introduction and review of the literature and subsequent rationale for research. It went on to outline the relevance of discourse and governmentality, concepts associated with Foucault. This understood that government extends beyond state politics, as governing populations is achieved through technologies of power, policy and practice exercised and articulated through discourses embodied within everyday norms, and common

senses (Foucault, 1980, 93; Fairclough, 2001, 33). Language is active in fashioning knowledge and rendering it as a reality, normal and acceptable. This is relevant to policy, because there needs to be agreement on what is a problem, for there to be government interventions. This is in part, achieved through consent of common sense (Miller and Rose, 2011, 14).

Chapter Two traced historical developments of welfare policy. This discussed how the perceived problems of the unemployed, welfare and work have shifted according to different government aims and rationalities. Since the 1980s, young people faced lower pay and if out of work or education, were assumed to lack work-like behaviour. Thirty years later young people, especially those not entering higher education, were more likely to be in precarious low skilled employment; considered to be a significant part of the precariat in experiencing low income, job insecurity, and weak welfare entitlement (Standing 2014a; Greer, 2016, 167). At the same time, social protection had shifted towards underpinnings of neoliberal objectives of choice, efficiency, and individual responsibility. Unemployment was no longer a focus for intervention, instead, the *unemployed* were. Dominant narratives advanced throughout this time, of welfare claimed by so-called scroungers. Yet, despite increased conditionality to receive out of work benefits and overall reduced welfare availability, from the 1980s there has been markedly less sympathy for those in receipt of unemployment benefits from all political sides, and amongst the youngest age group. Stigma and the promotion of the work ethic have been consistent governing strategies to maintain the individual's closeness to the labour market. Discourses of morally inappropriate welfare dependency are not new, but the stronger focus on the individual as benefiting from work, that is labour market participation, is.

Chapter Three followed a critical discourse approach to analyse four political speeches made by key ministers of Conservative led Liberal Democrat Coalition Government (2010-2015). This revealed dominant governmental discourses of passive welfare dependents, the so-called 'scrounger', mobilised to unite the government *with* working, respectable people, *against* enemies of the state, those with alternate views, 'them and us'; paraded as truth, or creatively constructed, alongside non-evidenced assumptions. As such, this diverted attention from structural factors, including employment opportunities, pay, working, and out of work conditions. An additional key finding was that of that work, as in labour market participation was valorised, and being in receipt of welfare appeared to deny the individual from reaching their potential.

Chapter Four presented the methodological approaches and a reflexive account of the challenges encountered during the empirical research. This chapter introduced the sample of young people, and front-line workers that participated. Their narratives informed the subsequent chapters.

Chapters Five and Six provided insights into experiences and shared discourses of work and welfare. This revealed front-line workers promoted unpaid work schemes as beneficial because they gave young people experience, to make them more employable, actively recruiting employers who could offer placements. Young people interviewed appeared to govern themselves and others, according to norms of valorised work and stigmatised welfare, whilst at the same time, they consistently presented their effort, either as a hard worker or as effortful job seeker. Some young people spoke of 'going for a job', referring to unpaid work schemes, and whilst they blamed their school for not doing well and not achieving academically, they individualised blame for perceived labour market failure. Both young people and front-line workers referred to the work that was involved in claiming benefits, alluding to competition within, and out of work, but at the same time, drew on those who were not deserving of benefits.

These narratives reflected findings from wider research, and offered important insights into the lived experiences of in and out of work precarity, and the pervasiveness of discourses, also held by the Coalition Government. As such, this thesis provides a useful reflection of governmentality, discourse, common sense norms, and neoliberal rationalities of work and welfare, as discussed in Chapter Seven. Neoliberal societies govern through 'value laden norms' that become evident within the individuals' discourses, norms disseminated throughout society (Foucault, 1982) and are secured through surveillance and monitoring, where individuals are 'measured, judged, and disciplined' (Lemke 2001, 202).

I argue that the work ethic and the stigmatised scrounger label have strengthened the culture of competition and gratitude within work; for more hours in precarious jobs, such as zero hours work; and within welfare, to avoid sanctions and to compete for unpaid work schemes. Through practice, policy and discourse, these norms have contributed to the conduct of conduct, as young people, experiencing increasing pressure to survive financially need to maintain themselves as employable, in effect selling themselves, whilst being told that they should be happy and committed having any job (Standing, 2014a, 116). The narratives of young people and front-line workers mirrored this, with no reference to collective efforts against unfair work

practices, they were required to accommodate to the needs of business and employers, and the employer was 'King'. Front-line workers, part of the complex relations of power, were encouraging young people to take any job, or unpaid scheme regardless of the pay, security or challenges in negotiating benefits, thereby disseminated norms of work and welfare through their practices and discourses.

The young people worked on themselves, presenting their willingness and conviction to work, as the desirable worker, demonstrating the performative requirements of the job (Frayne 2015, 57). Appearing grateful, they competed for more hours. Importantly, the front-line workers were complicit in maintaining their client's buoyancy and closeness to the labour market, which served to keep them in a constant state of enthusiasm for work. In 'moulding them' to be work ready, grateful, and compliant, they were encouraged to maintain a cheery disposition, attend the Jobcentre with a smile, and do the 'CV drop'. Frayne notes (2015, 73), the lynchpin of 20th century philosophy has been the pressure to remain employable, and this is at the heart of practice, and discourse. Not getting a job following efforts made was internalised by young people, their subsequent self-blame being an individualised response. In addition to practices of sanctions (punishment) and surveillance, power is effective when tied to the promise of a reward – such as achieving a job, and governance through self-blame and anxiety can make the self, more governable (Foucault, 1982, 787; Cruickshank, 1999, 94). The young job seeker must keep trying to secure a job; they are voluntarily self-regulating, according to the knowledge of sustained effort and hard work. In essence, this indicates that neoliberal governmentality, congruent to the government's discourses of valorising work and stigmatising welfare, has extended from government to the conduct of conduct and through front-line practices.

The aforementioned competition in and out of work, in addition to practices of disciplinary control, surveillance, interventions and welfare conditionality, have been targeted towards jobseekers and (low paid precarious) workers; those who lack economic and political capital (Crisp and Powell, 2016, 3). As discussed in Chapter One, the jobs available to young people are often low paid, and insecure, presenting few opportunities for career development. Welfare has become more difficult to access, and there has been a reduction of entitlements to welfare for young people, as well as increased conditionality and use of sanctions. Welfare to some extent, de-commodified labour, intervening and loosening labour market discipline and alleviating distress and poverty - conditions, associated with unemployment (Greer, 2016, 164). However, since the 1970s the individual has been increasingly re- commodified,

that is, made more dependent on labour. Indeed, a core finding of this thesis is that young people, particularly those with few financial resources, may be entering a growing 'reserve army of labour'. They are entirely shouldering financial costs to insert themselves into the labour market, or education, internalising blame for their labour maker 'failures'.

These young people were maintained to be buoyant, and close to the labour market by the practices and discourses of frontline workers, as well as welfare policy that maintained they must be in work, whilst out of work. With competition and insecurity in welfare and precarious work, individuals are available for exploitation, notably within low paid, unskilled and insecure jobs. Struggling to secure a work placement, and being in competition with others to do so is 'fighting for the right to self-exploitation', and form of 'capitalist self-disciplining' (Bloom, 2013, 787). Young people competing in and out of work, is associated with neoliberal governance that is ideologically accepted, affecting discourse and practice (Roper *et al*, 2010). This thesis highlights what Brown asserts to be evidence of neoliberalism transforming all spheres of life (Brown, 2015). It 'interpellates' individuals (Althusser, 1971) to see themselves as enterprising, entrepreneurial, and innovative, whilst they are encouraged, through welfare practices, to enhance their values and attract investors and potential employers. Practices also measure targeted outcomes and an individual's ability to participate in work, and front-line workers keep individuals on the right path, to manage and transform them into 'co-operative subjects' for the market. Young people must be subject to policy, nudges, surveillance, but receive punishments if they do not co-operate (Standing 2014a, 265).

Limitations of research

This thesis offers a unique perspective on the understanding of work and welfare, by drawing on a critical analysis of government discourse, a historical analysis, and an analysis of the narratives from a sample of young people and front-line workers. Each of these areas could have been a doctoral thesis. One of the concerns in researching and writing a PhD, is knowing which branches to trim back, and which to develop. That is, the necessity to maintain a focus. This has been a major consideration here, and it is recognised that many more 'branches' could be extended, as a focus for future research, as later discussed.

This research investigated the historical UK government aims in relation to work and welfare with a focus on young people. This recognised that policy, practices and discourses are not politically neutral, but tied to power, and that those in power (the Coalition Government at the time of research) promoted their view as the most common sense one. This thesis has considered the role of discourse as productive and contributing to individuals' perceptions of work and welfare. As Foucault understood, it is discourse, that is, the ways that knowledge is structured is that for which, and by which, there is a struggle. Discourses produce effects and therefore, discourse is the power to be seized (Foucault, 1982). However, it is important to note that although language is a resource that structures a reality and influences ways of thinking, the framings identified in the Coalitions Government's speeches are not linear; they do not emerge straight from the political elites, transformed into individuals' perceptions. Rather, they take hold because these beliefs are pre-existing, for example, where there have always been categories of deserving and undeserving types, fuelling resentment and anti-welfare common sense (Hoggett *et al,* 2013).

Narrative interviews may not yield the full experiences of participants (Silverman 1993, 100) the participant can appeal to the interviewer, telling them what they think they want to hear, with socially desirable responses. This may have been especially true when all young people stressed how hard working they were. However, if this was the case, participants telling me what they thought I wanted to hear was in fact a valuable finding of expected norms. Furthermore, from a theoretical perspective I have explored the research questions and findings focussing on issues of power, ideology and 'truth' and drawn on a range of contributions including from Foucault and Marx; despite there being ontological and epistemological tensions between political economy and post structuralism (for example, Poster, 1984; Olssen, 2004).

The access to potential participants, young people, and front-line workers was problematic, as discussed in Chapter Four. To obtain more participants would entail gatekeeper access and building trust with participants. This may not be a simple process, as reflected in the best efforts as described here, and elsewhere. For example, Wright (2003) had adopted an ethnographic approach, to research the implementation of welfare policy within the Jobcentre, involving interviews with Jobcentre staff, and clients. This was initially successful, before objections by a new member of Jobcentre staff, a replacement gatekeeper, prevented her continuing research with the same level of access. She claimed that this was due to an increasingly managerial service within the Jobcentre (*ibid*, 82).

This thesis based on a small purposive sample of individuals willingly interviewed, cannot and does not claim to be representative of all young people unemployed or in precarious work, nor those that work in employment and support practices. I had wished to access many more participants, young people and front-line workers, and the sample size is perhaps one weakness of the study although many of the findings from this thesis were reflected in research completed by others, suggesting that they were not unique. I have been transparent about this and alluded to the probable explanation, difficulties in recruiting and securing participants. I fully recognise that the findings from this research do not allow me to extrapolate to a wider population. For example, the research drew on a white, Welsh population. As well as age and class; gender for example, caring and in-work conditionality (Rafferty and Wiggan, 2016) race, ethnicity (Brynin and Güveli, 2012), sickness, and disabilities (Garthwaite, 2014; Beatty and Fothergill, 2015) affect the lived experiences of welfare and work. Although this has not been the primary focus here, an intersectional analysis can be useful to understand the different forms of power, oppression and inequality affecting labour market and welfare experiences, which is an important consideration for future research (Tepe-Belfrage, 2015).

Going forward: policy implications

This section addresses some of the key findings and discussion, and relates them to recommendations and policy developments.

For young people that do not wish to follow higher education and are less 'academic', (which is itself narrowly defined), more creative and vocational routes may be needed. Elsewhere, for example, in the Netherlands and Germany, vocational education has been promoted as a high-quality route (Petmesidou and Menéndez, 2017), whereas in the UK there has been a lack of vocational education, with subsequent negative effects, as described:

"*Failure to address vocational education needs in mainstream schools either pre-16 or during post-16 career planning demotivates individuals, reduces confidence and self-esteem and therefore makes the transition to work and further education and training difficult.*" (Parliament. House of Lords, 2016, 85).

It has been noted that school performance and accountability measures impact on the uptake and promotion of arts subjects; such as the introduction of the Ebacc in England, whilst

independent (fee paying schools) are not mandated to remove arts and design subjects. There have been a falling number of students taking design, technology and arts GCSEs, and the Creative Industries Federation, an independent body lobbying on behalf of UK creative organisations (Fairs, 2016), has described this as 'economic suicide'.

Education is one area of devolved policy in Wales; there are no free schools or academies, and there is some evidence of divergence in Wales's education policy and discourse. The Welsh Government set up a creative learning action plan advocating arts to be at the core of education, arguing that,

"In a twenty-first century, schooling will increasingly become the basis of a creative society, of a creative economy and a creative culture. Creativity, or being open to the acquisition of new knowledge and innovative skills, will shape our world like no other force imaginable." (Welsh Government, 2015, 5).

However, PISA scores (the Programme for International Student Assessment) are used to measure the academic performance and educational 'success' of 15 year olds. These PISA scores have been found to be lower in Wales than England, which has led to the Welsh Government to focus on the attainment of GCSE grades A-C, and subsequently schools chasing high and methodologically suspect PISA scores, rather providing pupil-centred education (Rees, and Taylor, 2015, 3).

Wales has devolutionary control over skills, as well as education policy, and the Welsh Government has consulted on the quality of work indicators in Autumn 2016, to introduce a plan for a national indicator of good jobs – part of the 46 overall 'national indicators for Wales'. Key commitments set out included:

"To offer the skills and experiences people need to thrive and prosper in our times" and *"reshape employability support for job-ready individuals, and those furthest from the labour market, to acquire the skills and experience to gain and maintain sustainable employment."* (Gov.Wales, 2016, 5).

This also included specifications for,

"Improving workforce health (including mental health); up-skilling; and improving its procurement policy to bring economic, social and community benefits to Wales".

Nonetheless, if discussion remains underpinned by notions of individual competitiveness, employability and experience, with a firm focus on the individual, this may further justify unpaid and work first policies.

The findings from this research indicated that financial support, for example, from the family, could affect a young person's decisions and strategies in finding work, and manage transitions through unemployment or precarious work. They can play a protective role especially considering that young people, as new entrants to the labour market, are likely to be at risk of precarious labour experiences. Career strategies can involve risk and losses, such as the self-employment start-ups described by four participants in this research, and financial help and support can protect against a mismatch between education, skills and aspiration (under-employment). A young person subject to sanctions and welfare conditionality is less likely to have the finances and opportunity to invest in upskilling and as financial inequalities widen, it is the parent's ability to invest that becomes more 'salient' (Filandri *et al*, 2017). In this regard, financial security can be a 'search subsidy', to help find employment and appropriate training provisions (Bonoli 2012; Marimon and Zilibotti, 1999; 267-8). This would go some way to diminish the 'work for labour' that was evidenced in this research, and underemployment. This is especially important considering that other research has indicated that a generous welfare state is associated with a higher commitment to employment from all individuals out of work, including those perceived to be demotivated and otherwise furthest away, and with weaker bonds to the labour market (van der Wel and Halvorsen, 2015).

The Universal Basic Income (UBI) (e.g. Standing, 2014a, 2014b) is a proposal for a basic income paid to all individuals, regardless of their existing wealth and income. The arguments for, as well as against this proposal are many. Proponents suggest that UBI would free income from the 'behavioural' terms and conditions that are associated with welfare, and take away the 'work' as described in the findings in this thesis, needed to maintain the low-level income from benefits, therefore reducing stress and chronic insecurity (*ibid*). However, Srnicek and Williams (2015, 131) argue that there needs to be a 'counter-hegemonic strategy' that overturns the neoliberal common sense, to unbind the commodification of labour, so that people can enjoy flexible labour and be able to afford to work fewer hours. In addition, this must recognise the unpaid work such as childcare and domestic labour, commonly undertaken by women (*ibid, 122*). Frayne (2015, 226-227), too notes that before UBI, there need to be campaigns for better working conditions and a living wage, whilst at the same time, scrutinising of the present 'work dogma'

Neoliberal 'truths' have been identified throughout this thesis, that focus not on the state and government, but on the individual: it is their failure to be employable, their lack of entrepreneurship and their lack of discipline that is the problem. Solutions of work schemes,

sanctions and conditionality appear to make sense accordingly. Those with the least resources must be quietly accepting of paternalistic advice and work on themselves. In light of this, the young people in this research appeared to be regulating and governing themselves according to discourses of effort and employability, in effect self-conditioning. Dwyer and Ellison summed up this policy trajectory in the quote below:

'…there is a sense not just of conditionality, but of self-conditioning as perceptions about the necessity of work – and the individual's responsibility not only to find work but to have a life shaped by work – become embedded and ultimately 'assumed'. Overtime, assumptions are institutionalized and so become an integral part of a new consensus about work and welfare.' (Dwyer and Ellison, 2009, 65).

Therefore, there needs to be a critique of a culture of gratitude, rather than a critique of assumed cultures of welfare entitlement (Frayne, 2015, 234). This notion of employability, which is central to work and welfare, has also insidiously colonised universities where work experiences are common as part of many degree courses, alongside unpaid graduate internships (Purcell 2013). There is some evidence to suggest that work based learning and work experience does contribute to positive labour market outcomes, although is largely influenced by subject degree type and the higher education institution (BIS, 2013).

One implication of this research is that where attitudes and conduct are perceived as problematic, this legitimises responses that focus on solely on the individual. If the individual is the problem and work is the cure, then worryingly, this belief allows for medicalised discourses assessing attitudes and behavioural norms. Already, as seen in this research and elsewhere, the supposed positive effects of working for wellbeing, (albeit unpaid or in precarious work) has seeped into policy (Friedl and Stern, 2014), including traineeships which are promoted but offer no wage. Online profiling and psychometric testing have been given to benefit recipients and unemployed people in Australia to assess the '*attitudes, behavioural norms and levels of self-belief, in order to access the individual's work values, their background, and their spouse.*' (Cromby and Willis, 2013). In the UK, the Work and Health programme is set to replace the Work Programme (in 2017), the House of Commons briefing paper stating that this policy is to start '*a wide ranging debate about recognising the value of work as a health outcome, to change perceptions and culture around health, work and disability*' (Mirza-Davies and McGuinness 2016, 8). This indicates employment as a 'clinical outcome' and work a cure for this psychological disorder, as Friedli and Stearn (2016) reflect.

Obscures! Unshackles!

"It is only if we grasp these techniques of power and demonstrate the economic advantage or political utility that derives from them in given context for specific reasons, that we can understand how these mechanisms come to be effectively incorporated into the social whole" (Foucault, 1980b, 101).

"*Naturalisation, then, is the most formidable weapon in the armoury of power, and therefore a significant focus of struggle.*" (Fairclough, 2001a, 87).

Hoggett *et al* (2013, 582) remind us that language, particularly political language creates what it purports to describe - it has a performative element. Politically elite discourses have shaped the understandings of work and welfare, sustained and disseminated by the privileged as the norm at a specific time and place. Tellingly, Conservative Work and Pensions Secretary, Iain Duncan Smith suggested that the term 'zero hours' was toxic and should be 'rebranded' as a 'flexible hours contract' (Mason, 2015). Yet, precarious work associated with an uncertainty of hours and fewer statutory protections such as sick pay and maternity leave means that risks are redistributed from the employer, to the workers and the state (Grimshaw *et al*, 2016). It is the positive value of work that is disproportionally emphasised upon those who are reliant on out of work benefits; policy interventions and discourses target the 'non-working' (disregarding voluntary and care work) and in receipt of welfare. Wealthy, non-workers have not faced the same emphasis that work is inherently good for you (Patrick, 2016, 69). This moralisation of work is as Frayne indicates, 'as powerful as a cultural device' (2015, 103). The virtues of work are extolled to those in receipt of benefits, as if it is they that are lacking and need to be reminded of the dignity found through labour, and of the work ethic. Such 'virtues' of work, psychological, shared experience and a collective purpose, are absent for, but paternalistically preached by the wealthy (Frayne 2015, 107).

If we consider that the neoliberal state works for the upper classes and corporations, it also exercises authority and coercion for those at the lower end, experiencing or likely to experience poverty. This regulation of the poor, those in receipt of benefits with the least resources, is indicative of 'neoliberal state crafting' (Crisp and Powell, 2016, 2-3). The workfare state replaces the welfare state (Wacquant, 2010; Soss *et al*, 2011) through competition, discourses of work and welfare (valorised and stigmatised) as well as sanctions that both coerce and compel individuals to take up the low paid, and insecure, precarious work (Adler, 2016). Using the language associated with criminal activity, such as breaches and offences (Fletcher and Wright, 2017), welfare conditionality and sanctions are given with no trial and

disproportionately to the vulnerable. Unlike other 'offences', they are given to those on low incomes where their main income is lost.

Government chooses the discourses of work and welfare that are effectively reliant on simplified symbolic constructions that focus on the individual. They initiate, and sustain agency (Butler, 1997, 2), and with the onus on the individual as deficient and/or passive, this potentially corrodes collectively against seemingly unfair work and welfare practices. It promotes divisive policies and therefore helps to prevent any measures of solidarity and resistance, as vertical divisions of power and authority are ignored (Hoggett *et al*, 2013). It follows then that there needs to be some criticism of prevailing common sense discourses that valorise work, and denigrate welfare. This is not to dispute that work paid or unpaid does provide positive functions, but that the knowledge that work is always worthwhile within discourse, policy, and practice obscures the discussion of structural considerations. Discourses of the work ethic, fairness, and welfare as undeserving, obscure and deflect attention from the issues of working conditions, pay and actual experiences of being out of work and experiencing poverty. They deflect attention from policy, and those who create these representations. The gaze is centred on the individual, which ensures that the wider factors are not discussed (Crossley, 2017, 92). However, the naturalisation of discourses is important for policy implications. Discourses need to be sustained - evidenced where different social groups speak similarly about phenomena, even if they do not necessarily share similar values, which are then 'reflected' back into policies (Hajer, 2006, 70; Deeming, 2014). As Stevens recognised in his research on UK drugs policy, this can result in methodologically suspect 'knowledge' being translated into policy (2007), particularly when explained simply to resonate with others.

Mentoring and advising front-line workers form part of a discursive strategy. As a new constellation of 'street level bureaucrats' they confer and enact these political discourses. However, the pervasive neoliberal, individualising discourses reproduced by front-line workers and young people, have repercussions - because in shifting the focus away from structural inequalities, such issues of availability, pay and conditions, and economic inequalities are subsequently unshackled from the state responsibility (Tyler 2013). Discourses can become dominant and constitute a form of common sense, so that the individual does not question or challenge them. They are a form of 'simulated egalitarianism' (Fairclough 2001a, 30), which makes alternative policies more difficult to envisage and become established. As Weeks (2012, 60-61) notes: '*The further a discourse travels, the more its precepts are abstracted from the real conditions of work, and the more often it is*

reduced to a crudely ideological phenomenon reflecting the experiences of one class but mystifying those of another'.

Voice and opposition may be difficult to mobilise in low wage and insecure precarious employment, where a worker is in competition with others for more hours. As above, the focus on labour power, and the individual adopting the appropriate behaviours, attitudes, and skills as a commodity for 'purchase by capital' (Wiggan, 2015, 372) deflects from any scrutinising and critique of social relations. However, more recently, at the time of writing, McDonalds (fast food global chain) workers mounted their first ever strike, in protest over zero hours contracts and low pay. This was led by one of the oldest unions, The Bakers, Food and Allied Workers Union, and supported by the leader of the opposition Labour party, Jeremy Corbyn, who offered '*support and solidarity*' (Kollewe and Slawson, 2017).

The findings of a welfare regime 'being in work out of work' described by both the young people and front-line workers indicates more broadly, evidence of an ineffectual welfare safety net. Voluntary and charitable sectors were required to fill the gaps including foodbanks and services that were provided by the Job Club. These supported individuals with mental health issues and/or the administrative work needed to access welfare benefits that they were entitled to. This support remains delinked from policy, as organisations are unable to challenge hegemonic discourse or offer a 'political' challenge. This is especially pertinent considering that the Lobbying Act (2014) has prevented charities from speaking out; they must declare any work deemed political, or risk being penalised (Singh, 2017; Taylor and Laville, 2017).

Further research

This final section presents some ideas arising from this research that warrant further investigation.

First would be to explore how common these findings are, and conduct research in areas beyond the Mid and North Wales, and/or draw on a larger sample. This would help further understand how unemployed and precariously employed young people experience and perceive work and welfare. Furthermore, it would be useful to assess any effects of schooling and perceived poor academic performance, particularly as an effect of streaming into different sets. The young people in this research did not blame themselves for a perceived lack of success within school, but they did for not 'achieving' in the labour market. As discussed earlier, segregation of

students into lower, intermediate, and higher level sets has already been associated with confidence, self-belief, and motivation (Parliament. House of Lords, 2016, 134). Further research could draw on a comparative approach, to explore experiences and perceptions amongst secondary education of students in Wales and England. As described previously, with education policy devolved to Wales, there has not been the same structural changes of 'academisation' that has been associated with England's neoliberal and marketised educational system.

There is also scope to look at class in terms of available capital, following the work of Savage (2015) influenced by Bourdieu (1984) and academic sets. Further research may reveal whether there is a middle class 'habitus' reproduced with the same 'symbolic hegemony' as suggested for English education, with dominant learning outcomes defined by limited academic criteria (Francis *et al* 2015). Within Wales, measures of class may be defined differently to England because of differences in cultural capital, for example, the Welsh language, as well as there being political and historical differences (for example, see Mann 2017). For instance, Welsh medium schools have a lower percentage of pupils on free school meals, compared to English medium schools from the same area (South East) Wales (WISERD, 2017).

Second, this research has exposed areas such as resistances to precarious work and welfare regimes; those described by front-line workers as turning down jobs, but also refusing to be 'empowered' through work schemes. There is little evidence to suggest that individuals actively resist work, or are free from the stigma of being out of work and in receipt of benefits. Frayne (2015) found that amongst the individuals he interviewed who openly refused to work, none felt free from stigma surrounding unemployment. Similarly Patrick (2015, 2016b) in her research investigating the lived experiences of welfare reform, found that participants receiving out of work benefits (Income Support, Employment and Support Allowance and Job Seekers Allowance) experienced stigma, which they 'managed' through *othering* those who were deemed less deserving than themselves. Therefore, there needs to be a better understanding of the dissonance between policy, discourse and experiences of young people, so that their experiences can be represented and reflected in policy, including social protections, work conditions and pay. Additionally, further research is called for, to explore individuals' strategies in navigating and negotiating benefit processes where there is insecure, especially seasonal work. As one front-line worker stated: '*they (young people) go off sick over the summer, so there's some security there'*. Furthermore, the question remains to whether 'flexible' working, experienced by some of the young people (resulting in competition for

hours, but no apparent resistance) is a deliberate control by management to exploit their workers. As Woods states (2017, 14- 15), worker practices 'obscure and secure control' but also, the employer may see themselves as a benefactor of hours, that is, '*the dominator deceives themselves as much as the dominated*'.

A third point relates to Universal Credit, which was not in place at the time of this research. It is a means tested benefit replacing six existing payments, given to those out of work or already in work but on a low wage. [14] Universal Credit is a policy underpinned by the concept of fairness and making work pay and as such, the conditions to receive welfare must reflect those of the world of work. There are sanctions and fines for non-compliance to the Claimant Commitment that replaces the Jobseeker's Agreement. Those already in low paid, insecure work will be subject to conditionality and penalties if they do not meet a minimum pay threshold where earnings must be the equivalent of 35 hours a week at minimum wage, they must increase their work or pay rate to take them to this threshold, or be subject to sanctions. This raises important concerns and, following the findings of valorised work and denigration of welfare, suggests avenues for future research. This would focus on empirical data to explore the perceptions and effects of Universal Credit, from the perspective of claimants and frontline service providers. The issues that would be interesting to focus on would be as follows: Firstly, Universal Credit appears to blur any boundary between the so-called 'shirker' and worker, the deserving and undeserving. This policy may lead to uniting common experiences of benefit stigma and precarious work. On the other hand, it may serve to strengthen governance as more individuals, in and out of work, experience benefits stigma, sanctions, as well as competition for work. Secondly, it increases the precariat reserve army of labour as Dean observes, 'Pimping the precariat', because the worker is a '*disposable commodity available at a discount*' in being required to work in many jobs to sustain a minimal income (Dean, 2012, 358). This stands in opposition to the post World War Two de-casualization agenda, as discussed in Chapter Two, as it entrenches worker insecurity rather than alleviating it, and legitimises precarious work. Thirdly, Universal Credit further individualises and obscures structural issues such as pay, working conditions, and availability as the individual is held to account, and penalised for not finding more work, or increasing their wage (Dwyer and Wright, 2014). The fourth point is that issues of being in work, whilst out of work, pose potential financial and administrative challenges. Universal Credit is 'digital by default' and may be difficult to

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[14] Income Support, Income based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income –Related Employment Support Allowance, Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit.

navigate for those who do not have internet access, or have trouble in its usage. Furthermore, there are issues in delays waiting for payments and sanctioning for missing appointments, as has already been reported (Wright and Stewart, 2016). With the number of claims online under Universal Credit rather than the Jobcentre, some of which are to be merged with others or closed (Monaghan and Inman, 2017), this may make negotiating benefit decisions even more challenging.

A fourth point would consider how young people elsewhere experience labour market transitions, particularly where they do not go to university. In order to address these concerns, longitudinal research could be undertaken, returning to interview young participants over a period of years (interview waves) recognising changes in welfare, as well as educational policy. This was method was used by Patrick (2015, 2016b) who interviewed individuals in receipt of benefits (people with disabilities, single parents and young job seekers) three times between 2011 and 2013, to explore their experiences in comparison to their portrayal in policy and media. Further research then could explore changing norms, discourses and experiences, as young people move onto new phases of their lives with potentially new challenges. With precarious labour market transitions for young people, a longitudinal study would seek to capture their trajectories over time and focus on the relevance of young people's social, cultural, and economic capital, and ask for example, to what extent does the family mitigate risk, if at all, and to what effect?

I have already noted that neoliberalism can be conceptualised as governmentality, that is, that government extends beyond the state, and into everyday life. Understanding neoliberalism through the concept governmentality can help to pinpoint applications for subsequent research, with the aim to disestablish neoliberal rationalities, strategies, and techniques (Springer, 2012, 143-144). In particular, ethnographic research that focusses on specific people within a place over time, and where the researcher is 'thrust into the multiplicity and dynamics of everyday social life' (Brady, 2014, 13) would be useful. This could address further issues exploring governing from a distance, technologies of government and their enactment at close range. With welfare reforms ongoing, such as the implementation of Universal Credit as discussed, an exploration of the effects of governmentality is required, including the discursive strategies, mundane governing practices, as well as the resistances and contestations (for example, see Carter, 2016).

One fifth and final concluding point would be to focus the gaze of research 'upwards'. Whilst effort has been on the lived experiences of young people, and to some extent, front-line workers – it would be necessary to investigate experiences and perceptions of those that create and sustain the discourses, the decision makers in power. There is a great deal of scrutiny directed at those in receipt of benefits, but not 'above', who construct policies and discourses. As Crossley (2017, 12) observes in his examination of spaces of poverty: '*we should not underestimate the amount of work that goes into 'creating' them and making them appear this way'*. These powers produce and arrange policy and discourse whilst at the same time, they disavow the effects of their responsibility. Edmiston (2017) presents research and offers some explanation to differences in affluent and deprived individuals' perceptions of welfare and inequality. The affluent participants in his study problematized individuals' hardships and gave individualistic explanations of poverty, disadvantage and *presumed* moralised behaviours, whilst adhering to beliefs of meritocracy rather than challenging structural constraints. They lacked a 'sociological imagination' (Mills, {1959} 2000), because they had not experienced disadvantage themselves, and could not identify with policies of redistribution. Participants, who were 'deprived' could identify with the experiences of precarity. However, the author recognised the role of 'othering', that those in lower socioeconomic status draw on individualising discourses of 'others' to protect themselves from the pervasive and negative connotations of welfare. What is of concern, is with the economic elite governing, then dominant 'elite' views may continue to be reflected in policy, moralising presumed poor choices, and upholding meritocracy, hard work and a perceived lack of aspiration; further obfuscating the causes of, and solutions to, perceived problems of work and welfare. However, if there are an increasing number of individuals experiencing in-work poverty and punitive welfare regimes (for example, Universal Credit), such lived experiences may go some way to challenge prevailing discourses and contribute to new truths underpinning political rationalities.

Appendices.

Appendix 1a. Letter of Invitation (English)

Coleg Busnes, y Gyfraith, Addysg a Gwyddorau Cymdeithas, Prifysgol Bangor
College of Business, Law, Education and Social Sciences, Bangor University

Gwynedd LL57 2DG
Elusen Gofrestrig Rhif/Registered charity 1141565

February 2014

'Work and welfare: an exploration of policy, practice and discourse'

I am writing to invite you to take part in a project exploring beliefs about and experiences of unemployment, work and welfare. The project is part of my PhD research at Bangor University.

An Information Sheet about the project is enclosed with this letter.

This would involve talking to me about your work role, and experiences in an interview. Any information you share would be treated as **strictly confidential – you would not** be identified in my PhD or outputs arising from this work.

It is up to you to decide whether you would like to take part.

If you have any questions or would like to know more about this work please contact me Louise Prendergast (sop00c@bangor.ac.uk).

Thank you for taking the time to read this letter.

Yours faithfully

Louise Prendergast

Appendix 1a Letter of Invitation (Cymraeg)

Coleg Busnes, y Gyfraith, Addysg a Gwyddorau Cymdeithas,
Prifysgol Bangor
College of Business, Law, Education and Social Sciences, Bangor
University

Gwynedd LL57 2DG
Elusen Gofrestrig Rhif/Registered charity 1141565

Medi 2014

'Gwaith a lles: archwilio polisi, ymarfer a disgwrs'

Ysgrifennaf atoch i'ch gwahodd i gymryd rhan mewn project sy'n archwilio canfyddiadau a phrofiadau am ddiweithdra a chyflogaeth. Mae'r project yn rhan o fy ymchwil PhD ym Mhrifysgol Bangor.

Amgaeaf daflen wybodaeth am y project gyda'r llythyr hwn.

Bydd hyn yn golygu siarad gyda mi mewn cyfweliad am eich profiadau o ddiweithdra/cyflogaeth. Bydd unrhyw wybodaeth a roddwch yn cael ei thrin yn gwbl gyfrinachol - ac ni ddatgelir pwy ydych yn fy PhD neu ddeunydd arall yn deillio o'r gwaith hwn.

Chi sydd i benderfynu a ydych am gymryd rhan ai peidio.

Os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiynau, neu os hoffech wybod mwy am y gwaith hwn, cysylltwch â mi Louise Prendergast (sop00c@bangor.ac.uk).

Diolch yn fawr am roi o'ch amser i ddarllen y llythyr hwn.

Yn gywir,

Louise Prendergast

Coleg Busnes, y Gyfraith, Addysg a Gwyddorau Cymdeithas, Prifysgol Bangor
College of Business, Law, Education and Social Sciences, Bangor University

Gwynedd LL57 2DG
Elusen Gofrestrig Rhif/Registered charity 1141565

INFORMATION SHEET

'Work and welfare: an exploration of policy, practice and discourse'

Introduction:
You are being invited to take part in a PhD project exploring perceptions of work and welfare. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the project is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information and discuss it with relatives and/or friends if you wish.

What is the purpose of the study?
This study explores young people's experiences and perceptions of work and welfare, and those of front-line workers.

This study explores individuals:
Experiences within employment and/or unemployment
Previous experiences within employment and/or unemployment
Perceptions of work and welfare

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Your decision will not affect any services or support that you receive, or any present employment.   If you decide to take part please complete the consent form and return it using the freepost envelope provided.

What will happen if I decide to take part?

You are invited to take part in a confidential interview to talk about your experiences at a time and venue convenient for you. The interviews may take up to 90 minutes.
There are no right or wrong answers. The interview may be recorded, with your written consent, or alternatively, the interviewer will take some detailed notes.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
Yes. Your contact details will be stored on a confidential database. The information you share will be treated in confidence. You will not be identified in my PhD thesis or in reports or publications. Full anonymity will be maintained throughout, your details will not be shared and

interview data will only be accessible to the researcher and her supervisor. Information given by you will be stored securely and destroyed securely. However, if you share information, which suggests a serious risk of harm to yourself or others, information will be disclosed to the appropriate authorities.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?
You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to the results of the study?
The findings from this study will be included within a PhD research project.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The project is being organized by Louise Prendergast as part of a PhD research project, at Bangor University.

What happens if I have any concerns about this project?
If you are concerned about any aspect of this project and would like to speak to someone please contact my supervisor Diane Seddon by telephone (01248 388 220) or by email (d.seddon@bangor.ac.uk).

Thank you for kindly taking the time to read this information.

Coleg Busnes, y Gyfraith, Addysg a Gwyddorau Cymdeithas,
Prifysgol Bangor

College of Business, Law, Education and Social Sciences,
Bangor University

Gwynedd LL57 2DG

Elusen Gofrestrig Rhif/Registered charity 1141565

TAFLEN WYBODAETH

'Gwaith a lles: archwilio polisi, ymarfer a disgwrs'

Rhagarweiniad: Fe'ch gwahoddir i gymryd rhan mewn project PhD yn archwilio profiadau a chanfyddiadau oedolion ifanc (18-24oed) am gyflogaeth a diweithdra. Cyn i chi benderfynu a ydych am gymryd rhan ai peidio, mae'n bwysig eich bod yn deall pam mae'r project yn cael ei wneud a'r hyn fydd yn digwydd. Cymerwch amser i ddarllen y wybodaeth ganlynol yn ofalus a'i thrafod â pherthnasau a/neu ffrindiau, os dymunwch.

Beth yw diben yr astudiaeth? Mae'r astudiaeth hon yn edrych ar brofiadau a chanfyddiadau pobl ifanc o ddiweithdra a chyflogaeth.

Oes rhaid i mi gymryd rhan?Mater i chi yw penderfynu a ydych am gymryd rhan neu beidio. Ni fydd eich penderfyniad yn effeithio ar unrhyw wasanaethau neu gefnogaeth yr ydych yn eu derbyn. Os ydych chi'n dewis cymryd rhan, cwblhewch y ffurflen cydsyniad os gwelwch yn dda a'i dychwelyd yn yr amlen di-dal wedi'i darparu.

Beth fydd yn digwydd os byddaf yn penderfynu cymryd rhan?Gofynnir i chi gymryd rhan mewn un cyfweliad cyfrinachol i drafod eich profiadau ar adeg ac mewn lle sy'n gyfleus i chi. Gall y cyfweliad gymryd hyd at 90 munud.

Nid oes atebion cywir nac anghywir. Efallai y caiff y cyfweliad ei recordio, gyda'ch cydsyniad ysgrifenedig, neu fel arall, bydd y sawl sy'n cyfweld yn cymryd rhai nodiadau ysgrifenedig.

Fydd y ffaith fy mod yn cymryd rhan yn yr astudiaeth hon yn cael ei chadw'n gyfrinachol?

Bydd. Cedwir eich manylion cyswllt mewn cronfa ddata **gyfrinachol**. Byddwn yn trin y wybodaeth a roddwch **yn gyfrinachol**. **Ni fyddaf** yn eich enwi na dangos pwy ydych yn fy nhraethawd hir PhD nac mewn unrhyw adroddiad neu gyhoeddiad. Ni ddatgelir pwy yw neb trwy gydol yr astudiaeth, ni chaiff eich manylion eu rhannu a dim ond yr ymchwilydd a'i goruchwyliwr fydd yn gallu gweld data y cyfweliad. Caiff unrhyw wybodaeth a roddir gennych ei chadw'n ddiogel a'i dinistrio'n ddiogel. Fodd bynnag, os rhoddwch wybodaeth sy'n awgrymu bod camymddwyn wedi digwydd, trosglwyddir y wybodaeth honno i'r awdurdodau priodol.

Bydd fydd yn digwydd os na fyddaf yn dymuno parhau â'r astudiaeth? Mae gennych yr hawl i dynnu'n ôl o'r astudiaeth ar unrhyw adeg heb roi rheswm.

Beth fydd yn digwydd i ganlyniadau'r astudiaeth? Bydd y canfyddiadau o'r astudiaeth hon yn cael eu cynnwys mewn project ymchwil PhD.

Pwy sy'n trefnu a chyllido'r ymchwil? Mae'r project yn cael ei drefnu gan Louise Prendergast fel rhan o broject ymchwil PhD ym Mhrifysgol Bangor.

Beth fydd yn digwydd os bydd gennyf unrhyw bryderon am y project? Os ydych yn bryderus ynghylch unrhyw agwedd ar y project hwn ac yr hoffech siarad â rhywun, cysylltwch â fy ngoruchwyliwr Diane Seddon dros y ffôn (01248 388 220) neu drwy e-bost (d.seddon@bangor.ac.uk)

Diolch am roi o'ch amser i ddarllen y daflen wybodaeth hon.

Louise Prendergast

Appendix 1b. Information sheet Frontline workers (English)

Coleg Busnes, y Gyfraith, Addysg a Gwyddorau Cymdeithas, Prifysgol Bangor

College of Business, Law, Education and Social Sciences, Bangor University

Gwynedd LL57 2DG

Elusen Gofrestrig Rhif/Registered charity 1141565

INFORMATION SHEET

'Work and welfare: an exploration of policy, practice and discourse'

Introduction:

You are being invited to take part in a PhD project exploring the perceptions of work and welfare. Before you decide whether or not to participate, it is important for you to understand why the project is being done and what it will involve. Please take the time to read the following information and discuss it with relatives and/or friends if you wish.

What is the purpose of the study?
This study explores young people's experiences and perceptions of work and welfare, and those of frontline workers.

This study explores individuals:
Experiences within employment and/or unemployment
Previous experiences within employment and/or unemployment
Perceptions of work and welfare

Do I have to take part?
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Your decision **will not** affect your present employment. If you decide to take part please complete the consent form and return it using the freepost envelope provided.

What will happen if I decide to take part?
You are invited to take part in a confidential interview to talk about your experiences at a time and venue convenient for you. The interviews may take up to 90 minutes.
There are no right or wrong answers. The interview may be recorded, with your consent, or alternatively, the interviewer will take some detailed written notes.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?
Yes. Your contact details will be stored on a **confidential** database. The information you share will be treated **in confidence**.   You **will not** be identified in my PhD thesis or in reports or publications. Full anonymity will be maintained throughout, your details will not be shared and

interview data will only be accessible to the researcher and her supervisor. Information given by you will be stored securely and destroyed securely. However, if you share information that is suggestive of malpractice, this will be passed on to the appropriate authorities.

What will happen if I don't want to carry on with the study?
You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

What will happen to the results of the study?
The findings from this study will be included within a PhD research project.

Who is organising and funding the research?
The project is being organized by Louise Prendergast as part of a PhD research project, at the University of Wales, Bangor.

What happens if I have any concerns about this project?
If you are concerned about any aspect of this project and would like to speak to someone please contact my supervisor Diane Seddon by telephone (01248 388 220) or by email (d.seddon@bangor.ac.uk).

Thank you for kindly taking the time to read this information.

Appendix 1b. Information Sheet Frontline Workers (Cymraeg)

Coleg Busnes, y Gyfraith, Addysg a Gwyddorau Cymdeithas,
Prifysgol Bangor
College of Business, Law, Education and Social Sciences, Bangor
University

Gwynedd LL57 2DG
Elusen Gofrestrig Rhif/Registered charity 1141565

TAFLEN WYBODAETH

'Gwaith a lles: archwilio polisi, ymarfer a disgwrs'

Rhagarweiniad:

Fe'ch gwahoddir i gymryd rhan mewn project PhD yn archwilio profiadau a chanfyddiadau oedolion ifanc (18-24oed) am gyflogaeth a diweithdra. Cyn i chi benderfynu a ydych am gymryd rhan ai peidio, mae'n bwysig eich bod yn deall pam mae'r project yn cael ei wneud a'r hyn fydd yn digwydd. Cymerwch amser i ddarllen y wybodaeth ganlynol yn ofalus a'i thrafod â pherthnasau a/neu ffrindiau, os dymunwch.

Beth yw diben yr astudiaeth?

Mae'r astudiaeth hon yn edrych ar brofiadau a chanfyddiadau pobl ifanc o ddiweithdra a chyflogaeth.

Oes rhaid i mi gymryd rhan?

Mater i chi yw penderfynu a ydych am gymryd rhan neu beidio. Ni fydd eich penderfyniad yn effeithio ar *eich cyflogaeth presennol.* Os ydych chi'n dewis cymryd rhan, cwblhewch y ffurflen cydsyniad os gwelwch yn dda a'i dychwelyd yn yr amlen di-dal wedi'i darparu.

Beth fydd yn digwydd os byddaf yn penderfynu cymryd rhan?

Gofynnir i chi gymryd rhan mewn un cyfweliad cyfrinachol i drafod eich profiadau ar adeg ac mewn lle sy'n gyfleus i chi. Gall y cyfweliad gymryd hyd at 90 munud.
Nid oes atebion cywir nac anghywir. Efallai y caiff y cyfweliad ei recordio, gyda'ch cydsyniad ysgrifenedig, neu fel arall, bydd y sawl sy'n cyfweld yn cymryd rhai nodiadau ysgrifenedig.

Fydd y ffaith fy mod yn cymryd rhan yn yr astudiaeth hon yn cael ei chadw'n gyfrinachol?

Bydd. Cedwir eich manylion cyswllt mewn cronfa ddata **gyfrinachol**. Byddwn yn trin y wybodaeth a roddwch **yn gyfrinachol**. **Ni fyddaf** yn eich enwi na dangos pwy ydych yn fy nhraethawd hir PhD nac mewn unrhyw adroddiad neu gyhoeddiad. Ni ddatgelir pwy yw neb trwy gydol yr astudiaeth, ni chaiff eich manylion eu rhannu a dim ond yr ymchwilydd a'i

goruchwyliwr fydd yn gallu gweld data y cyfweliad. Caiff unrhyw wybodaeth a roddir gennych ei chadw'n ddiogel a'i dinistrio'n ddiogel. Fodd bynnag, os rhoddwch wybodaeth sy'n awgrymu bod camymddwyn wedi digwydd, trosglwyddir y wybodaeth honno i'r awdurdodau priodol.

Bydd fydd yn digwydd os na fyddaf yn dymuno parhau â'r astudiaeth?
Mae gennych yr hawl i dynnu'n ôl o'r astudiaeth ar unrhyw adeg heb roi rheswm.

Beth fydd yn digwydd i ganlyniadau'r astudiaeth?
Bydd y canfyddiadau o'r astudiaeth hon yn cael eu cynnwys mewn project ymchwil PhD.

Pwy sy'n trefnu a chyllido'r ymchwil?
Mae'r project yn cael ei drefnu gan Louise Prendergast fel rhan o broject ymchwil PhD ym Mhrifysgol Bangor.

Beth fydd yn digwydd os bydd gennyf unrhyw bryderon am y project?
Os ydych yn bryderus ynghylch unrhyw agwedd ar y project hwn ac yr hoffech siarad â rhywun, cysylltwch â fy ngoruchwyliwr Diane Seddon dros y ffôn (01248 388 220) neu drwy e-bost (d.seddon@bangor.ac.uk)

Diolch am roi o'ch amser i ddarllen y daflen wybodaeth hon.

Appendix 2. Ethical Approval

COLEG BUSNES, Y GYFRAITH, ADDYSG A GWYDDORAU
CYMDEITHAS COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, LAW, EDUCATION AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

PRIFYSGOL
BANGOR
UNIVERSITY

3 March 2014

Dear Louise Prendergast

Re: **Work and welfare: an exploration of policy, practice and discourse.**

Thank you for your recent application to the CBLESS Research Ethics Committee.

The committee has considered your application and I am now able to give permission, on behalf of the CBLESS Research Ethics Committee, for the commencement of your research project with the following conditions.

1. In your information sheet sections on confidentiality, the phrase "a designated individual in your local authority" should be replaced with "the appropriate authorities".
2. Your information sheet should indicate who will have access to the interview raw data – presumably you and your supervisor.
3. You are reminded of the need to follow good research practice to ensure your safety when carrying out the interviews.

Please send amended copies of your information sheets to the Ethics Committee secretary.

I wish you well with your research.

Yours sincerely

John Bailey

Vice-Chair, CBLESS Research Ethics Committee
Is-Gadair, Pwyllgor Ymchwil Moeseg CBLESS

Cc: Diane Seddon

Appendix 3. Interview Schedule (Young people)

Introduction

This research is part of my PhD work. The findings from my interviews will inform my PhD thesis. All the information given is confidential and anonymous. Information will not be passed onto staff or any other individual. Your participation in this research will not affect your benefits or any support that you may receive.

Consent

- "Before we start, I need your consent to record this interview."
- Sign consent to interview form.
- Press record on MP3 player. "The interview is now being recorded…"

Interview Guide.

Framing:

I am interested in the experiences of young people in employment and unemployment I would like to know your thoughts

Generative question:

(Biographical account) so, can you please tell me your story: your background from leaving school and experiences leading up to now.

Start wherever you like. I will not interrupt you.

Additional prompts once interviewee has finished

Is there anything you would like to add?

Would you like a break?

Following from the account given, key areas that could be of relevance.
Experiences within education and un/employment and services received, employment aspirations and opportunities and/or challenges or barriers to, family, support network, opinions of employment: what it is what it should be?

(I noted that you mentioned, could you tell me a bit more about that?)

Break Needed?

Semi structured questions/prompts (if needed)

To be adapted according to that already given, avoiding going over ground already detailed.

Thanks for telling me about your experiences.

There are some additional questions that I would like to ask you about (if not already covered). These have no right or wrong answers. Take as you like to answer them.

- **Experiences of education**
  - What were your experiences of school/college/university
  - What did you enjoy/dislike

- **Experiences of Employment (if not covered)**
  - Can you tell me your experiences leading up to this? How did you get this job? What do you think about this job?
  - Support offered within work if needed.
  - Job security.

    - **Experiences of unemployment**
      - Have you been you been unemployed previously
    - Support and resources available
    - Interactions with staff?
    - Experiences of job seeking, interviews, schemes?
    - The processes involved in claiming benefits?
    - Benefit Sanctions: Your experiences- Do you know of anyone who has been sanctioned…? Their experiences.

  - What do you know about unemployment benefits and what must be done to receive them (e.g. amount received, contractual agreements)
  - What do you know of/ think of welfare to work schemes
  - What could be done better if anything? Do you have any suggestions?

Is there anything that you would like to tell me or ask me? Anything that you think should be important to discuss further or that has not been covered.

Debriefing

Many thanks for your help. Turn off recording device. Making sure that participant is left on a positive note.

Appendix 4. Interview Schedule (Frontline workers)

Introduction

This research is part of my PhD work. The findings from my interviews will inform my PhD thesis. All the information given is confidential and anonymous. Information will not be passed onto staff or any other individual.

I am interested in the experiences and day-to-day lives of people that provide services to the unemployed, as well as those unemployed and in work. I would like to know your thoughts on the people that you see and of people unemployed. I would also like to know your thoughts on the unemployment benefits system, what works well and what could be improved from your perspective.

I will ask you some questions; there are no wrong or right answers.

Consent

- "Before we start, will you consent for this interview to be recorded?"
- Sign consent to interview form.
- Press record on MP3 player. "The interview is now being recorded…"

Interview Guide.

Phase 1.

Framing:

I am interested in the experiences of young people in employment and unemployment I would like to know your thoughts

Generative question:

Before we start, it would be helpful for me to get some basic information. Could you tell me about your role within your work?

Start wherever you like. I will not interrupt you.

Additional prompts

Could you tell me about:

- Your work (prompts)
  - Challenges and/or pressures.
  - Targets. If they exist, are they efficient, effective, and appropriate? Personal views and experiences of targets.

- Work
  - Previous personal experience of unemployment?

- Support for unemployed, and benefits system (prompts: financial, skills, training).

- The (unemployed) people that you see (picking up on the term the interviewee uses).
  - A typical interaction scenario.
  - Examples of case studies and why these were deemed successful.
  - Perception of any gaps in services provided (prompts: training, barriers, personal circumstances, education, skills)?

- Thoughts on policy
  - Employability training – e.g. Welfare to work schemes, what they are/should be?
  - Conditionality (demonstrating job seeking, 'claimant commitment') and requirements (e.g. form filling, etc.).
  - Experiences in delivering welfare services, general feeling towards.

Is there anything you would like to add?

Do you have any key messages that you would use to inform unemployment policy development?

Thank you very much for your time.

Appendix 5. A. 'Welfare Speech'

A: Prime Minister David Cameron's Welfare Speech at Bluewater, Kent Monday 25th June, 2012 (Gov.uk 2012b).

On my first night as Prime Minister, I said we would build a more responsible society.

Where we back those who work hard and do the right thing.

Where we look after the elderly and frail.

Where - as I put it - those who can, should; and those who can't, we will always help.

Building that society is simply not possible without radically reforming welfare.

Today, almost one pound in every three spent by the Government goes on welfare.

In a world of fierce competitiveness - a world where no-one is owed a living - we need to have a welfare system that the country can properly afford.

The system we inherited was not only unaffordable.

It also trapped people in poverty and encouraged irresponsibility.

So we set to work.

In two years, Iain Duncan Smith has driven forward welfare reform on a scale and with a determination not seen since World War Two.

He is a great, reforming Minister, with a passion and commitment that shine through.

And he is delivering remarkable results:

Over 400,000 more people in work than in 2010.

Tens of thousands of claimants of incapacity benefits re-assessed, and found ready for work.

We've established the biggest-ever Work Programme - and we're well on our way to getting 100,000 people into jobs.

We've helped tens of thousands of young people find real work experience.

Reformed and reduced the extent of tax credits. Tightened up housing allowances.

Capped benefits so that in general, no one can claim more than the average family earns.

And we've laid the foundation for Universal Credit.

This has the potential to be one of the most significant reforms for a generation.

Ending the nonsense of paying people more to stay at home than to get a job - and finally making sure that work really pays.

What Iain Duncan Smith has achieved over the past two years.

Refusing to accept the status quo, turning around huge numbers of lives is truly remarkable.

But the job we have set ourselves, of building a welfare system that truly works - that supports the responsible society - that job is not yet complete.

So today I want to talk not just about what we've done, but where we go from here.

Benefits for the elderly and disabled

There are three component parts of the welfare system.

First there are benefits for the elderly.

These account for around £110 billion of the total welfare bill - the lion's share of which is spent on pensions.

One very important value should sit at the heart of our pension system.

If you have worked hard all your life, then you deserve real dignity and security in your old age.

That's why we restored the link between pensions and earnings - and ensured through the triple-lock that pensions would rise according to whichever was highest: earnings; inflation; or 2.5 per cent.

It's why back in April we delivered the biggest-ever cash rise in the full basic state pension - an extra £5.30 a week.

And it's why we're bringing in the single-tier pension.

This means that instead of a complicated pension with endless top-ups, there will be a straightforward, flat rate of around £140 a week.

This act of simplification is incredibly important.

It's going to pull hundreds of thousands out of means-testing.

It's going to help make saving pay.

And it's going to give pensioners more peace of mind, because they will have more clarity about what they're going to get - and they can save for the future with greater confidence.

This is quite simply about doing the right thing by those who have done the right thing all their lives and I'm proud that we are the government taking this forward.

There is also a debate about some of the extra benefits that pensioners can receive - and whether they should be means-tested.

On this I want to be very clear: two years ago I made a promise to the elderly of this country and I am keeping it.

I was elected on a mandate to protect those benefits - so that is what we have done.

Next, we've got disability benefits for those who aren't receiving a pension, which account for almost £10 billion of the total welfare bill.

Again, this was an area in need of reform.

Over the past decade, the number claiming Disability Living Allowance as a whole shot up from 2.5 million to 3.2 million.

Two thirds of the DLA caseload have an award for life.

And incredibly, half of new claimants never had to provide medical evidence.

When you know, as I do, how much help genuinely disabled people need, then you can't just ignore it when the system isn't working properly.

On the one hand, it's not right that someone can get more than £130-a-week DLA simply by filling out a bit of paper.

But on the other, it's not right that those with serious disabilities have nightmare 38-page forms to fill in.

So we're bringing in a system that's fairer and simpler.

And crucially, we're introducing proper, objective assessments, so that money goes to people who truly need it, with more for the severely disabled.

At the end of all this there will continue to be generous disability benefits - and rightly so.

Working age welfare

But it's in the third component of welfare - working-age benefits - that the really big arguments for the future lie.

Partly because this accounts for a huge amount of money - around £84 billion a year.

But mainly because it's here that things have gone truly awry.

We inherited, quite simply, a mess of perverse incentives, mind-numbing complexity and real unfairness.

Here are just a few examples of what's possible in that system.

Take a couple living outside London.

He's a hospital porter, she's a care-worker.

They're both working full-time and together they take home £24,000 after tax.

They'd love to start having children - and they know they'd get some help from the state if they did so.

But with the mortgage and the bills to pay, they feel they should keep saving up for a few more years.

But the couple down the road, who have four children, haven't worked for a number of years.

Each week they get £112 in income support, £61 in child benefit, £217 in tax credits and £141 in housing benefit - more than £27,000 a year.

Even after the £26,000 benefit cap is introduced, they'll still take home more than their neighbours who go out to work every day.

Can we really say that's fair?

Next there's the situation with young people who want to leave home.

Take two young women living on the same street in London.

One studied hard at college for three years and found herself a full-time job - say as a receptionist - on £18,000 a year, or about £1200 take-home pay a month.

She'd love to get her own place with a friend - but with high rents in her area, the petrol to get to work and all the bills, she just can't afford it.

So she's living at home with her mum and dad and is saving up desperately to move out.

Then there's another woman living down the street.

She's only 19 years-old and doesn't have a job but is already living in a house with her friends.

How?

Because when she left college and went down to the Job Centre to sign on for Job Seeker's Allowance, she found out that if she moved out of her parents' place, she was automatically entitled to Housing Benefit.

So that's exactly what she did.

Again, is this really fair?

And then there are the hundreds of thousands of commuters who travel long hours each day because they work in places like central London.

Places where they couldn't possibly afford to rent or buy on the money they're earning.

But at the same time, in those places where they're working but can't afford to live, there are people on salaries of £40, £60, £80,000 paying sub-market rents and living in council houses.

What these examples show is that we have, in some ways, created a welfare gap in this country between those living long-term in the welfare system and those outside it.

Those within it grow up with a series of expectations: you can have a home of your own, the state will support you whatever decisions you make, you will always be able to take out no matter what you put in.

This has sent out some incredibly damaging signals.

That it pays not to work.

That you are owed something for nothing.

It gave us millions of working-age people sitting at home on benefits even before the recession hit.

It created a culture of entitlement.

And it has led to huge resentment amongst those who pay into the system, because they feel that what they're having to work hard for, others are getting without having to put in the effort.

The system is saying to these people:

Can't afford to have another child? Tough, save up.

Can't afford a home of your own? Tough, live with your parents.

Don't like the hours you're working? Tough, that's just life.

So there is a real welfare gap that exists in our country.

How we got here

Now when we look at how we got into this mess, we can go back in time and see a lot of good intentions.

Why does the single mother get the council house straightaway when the hard-working couple have been waiting for years?

Because governments and local councils wanted to make sure children got a decent start in life, so mothers were given priority for council housing.

Why do we have people on big salaries living in council houses?

Because governments wanted social housing to support hard-working people, so the eligibility criteria were set wide and the tenures long.

Why has it become acceptable for many people to choose a life on benefits?

Because governments wanted to give people dignity while they are unemployed - and while this is clearly important, it led us to the wrong places.

To job seekers being called 'customers' instead of claimants and to conditionality on benefits being set at the bare minimum.

As well as the good intentions of governments, there was that assumption of trust at the heart of the system.

That people would naturally do the right thing.

That they would use the system when they fell on hard times but then work their way out of it.

This may have worked when the welfare state was born, when there was a stronger culture of collective responsibility in this country.

But as I've argued for years, the welfare system has helped to erode that culture.

From the couple told they'll get more benefits if they live apart, to those who knew they could earn more by signing on than by going out to work.

Time and again people were not just allowed to do the wrong thing, but were actively encouraged to do so.

How we get out

That's how we got here.

How do we get out?

Some say the answer is more money.

The argument goes that if you give more welfare money to those who are higher up the income scale as well as those at the bottom then you iron out the perverse incentives that encouraged people not to work, not to save, not to do the right thing.

Indeed, that's part of the thinking behind Universal Credit - it's about helping more people to escape the poverty trap and get on in life.

But anyone thinking we can just keep endlessly pumping money in is wrong.

Frankly, to quote the last government, there is no money left.

We're already spending one pound in eight on working-age welfare - twice as much as we spend on defence.

The truth is we can't just throw money at the problem and paper over the cracks.

The time has come to go back to first principles; to have a real national debate and ask some fundamental, searching questions about working-age welfare.

What it is actually for.

Who should receive it.

What the limits of state provision should be and what kind of contribution we should expect from those receiving benefits.

Let me take each in turn.

As I do so I want to stress now that these are not policy prescriptions; they are questions that **we as a country need to ask in a sensible national debate.**

What working-age welfare is for

First, let's be clear what working-age welfare is for.

More than anything else, it is about providing a safety net.

You fall into it if times are hard, and it helps you back out again.

[political content excised]

It's what the Deputy Prime Minister has rightly called the poverty plus a pound approach: push people one pound over the poverty line and consider the job done.

As Iain Duncan Smith has argued so powerfully, that might look good on the government spreadsheet but it means next to nothing on the ground.

Crucially, it doesn't address the causes of poverty.

You can give a drug addict more money in benefits, but that's unlikely to help them out of poverty; indeed it could perpetuate their addiction.

You can pump more cash into chaotic homes, but if the parents are still neglectful and the kids are still playing truant, they're going to stay poor in the most important senses of the word.

So this government is challenging the old narrow view that the key to beating poverty is simply income re-distribution.

Of course money is vital.

That's why we've increased child tax credits for the poorest families.

But our argument - and our approach - has two important parts.

First, we must treat the causes of poverty at their source…

…whether that's debt, family break-down, educational failure or addiction…

Second, we've got to recognise that in the end, the only thing that really beats poverty, long-term, is work.

We cannot emphasise this enough.

Compassion isn't measured out in benefit cheques - it's in the chances you give people…

…the chance to get a job, to get on, to get that sense of achievement that only comes from doing a hard day's work for a proper day's pay.

That's what our reforms are all about.

Transforming lives. Helping people walk taller.

Attacking the complacent, patronising view that said all millions of working-age people were good for was receiving from the state.

And saying: no - self-reliance is in everyone. Industry is in everyone. Aspiration is in everyone. No-one is a write-off.

That's why getting people into jobs is central to our vision for making this country stronger and we need to keep building a system that delivers this vision.

Yes, a genuine safety net for those who need it but also a strong minimum wage to draw people into work and prevent exploitation.

And crucially, a tax system and tax credits so that people are incentivised to work.

Who should receive

This is the vision for working-age welfare and it follows from this that we need to think harder about who receives it.

If it is a real safety net, then clearly it's principally for people who have no other means of support, or who have fallen on hard times.

But there are many receiving today who do not necessarily fall into these camps.

For example, the state spends almost £2billion a year on housing benefit for under-25s.

There are currently 210,000 people aged 16-24 who are social housing tenants.

Some of these young people will genuinely have nowhere else to live - but many will.

And this is happening when there is a growing phenomenon of young people living with their parents into their 30s because they can't afford their own place - almost 3 million between the ages of 20 and 34.

So for literally millions, the passage to independence is several years living in their childhood bedroom as they save up to move out.

While for many others, it's a trip to the council where they can get housing benefit at 18 or 19 - even if they're not actively seeking work.

Again, I want to stress that a lot of these young people will genuinely need a roof over their head.

Like those leaving foster care, or those with a terrible, destructive home life and we must always be there for them.

But there are many who will have a parental home and somewhere to stay - they just want more independence.

The point is this: the system we inherited encourages them to grab that independence, rather than earn it.

Perversely, the benefits system encourages this process from one generation to the next.

If a family living on benefits wants their adult child to stay living at home they are actually penalised - as soon as that child does the right thing and goes out to work.

You get what's called a non-dependent deduction, removing up to £74 off your housing benefit each week.

I had a heartrending letter from a lady in my constituency a few weeks ago who said that when her son leaves college next month, her housing benefit will drop significantly, meaning her family may have to split up.

This doesn't seem right.

In effect, the state doesn't just open a door to dependency for young people, it drags them in.

And this marks us out from many other countries in Europe, where the emphasis on family responsibility is much stronger.

In Holland, for instance, the welfare system doesn't provide for under-21s as a default - and where it does, it expects their family to contribute if they can.

So if they're on means-tested benefit and are getting about 230 Euros a month, it's usually for their parents to top that up.

And compared to here, the qualifying criteria for young people to get financial help with housing are much tighter.

So we have to ask: up to what age should we expect people to be living at home?

Another question has to be asked about those on high salaries in social housing.

Today there are between 12,000 and 34,000 households with incomes of over £60,000 living in council houses.

Between 1,000 and 6,000 council house occupants earn over £100,000.

This is a difficult area.

We don't want to stop people striving and climbing up the ladder in case they lose their home.

But when you have people on £70,000 a year living for £90 or so a week in London's most expensive postcodes you have to ask whether this is the best use of public resources.

Every pound that is used to subsidise those rents effectively comes from someone else's wages.

So this is another area for debate: who should be entitled to have their own home, funded by the state?

The limits of state provision

Next, we need a debate about the limits of state provision.

There are national questions we have to ask.

This year we increased benefits by 5.2 per cent.

That was in line with the inflation rate last September.

But it was almost twice as much as the average wage increase.

Given that so many working people are struggling to make ends meet we have to ask whether this is the right approach.

It might be better to link benefits to prices unless wages have slowed - in which case they could be linked to wages.

There are a number of options we could look at.

There's also a whole debate about how long the state should provide at a particular rate.

Back in the 90s the Clinton administration in the US started time-limiting benefits, and they saw federal case-loads fall by over 50 per cent.

Instead of US-style time-limits - which remove entitlements altogether - we could perhaps revise the levels of benefits people receive if they are out of work for literally years on end.

It is extraordinary that there are 1.4 million people in this country who have been out of work for at least nine of the past 10 years.

So softer time-limits - that increase the incentive to work, that stop people getting stuck in that welfare trap - could be something we consider.

I don't deny that these are big, tough questions.

But when you have got 300,000 children living in households where no one has ever worked, then you cannot shy away from them any longer.

As well as these general questions about the limits of state provision, we need to look at specific benefits.

Housing benefit is one of them.

The benefit cap is going to put a stop to the most outrageous cases.

The families getting £80, £90, £100,000 a year to live in homes that most people who pay the taxes towards those benefits could not possibly afford.

But still, there are questions about whether some people in some places are receiving too much, particularly given the hard times we're in.

People can still seek support for housing up to a rate of £20,000 a year - that's actually over 25 per cent higher than the average rent paid in London.

Just think what that figure means.

What would someone in work have to be earning to afford rent of £20,000 a year?

If rent is typically about a third of post-tax income, they'd have to be on a salary of at least £80,000.

That is in the top five per cent of the population.

Surely we should ask if it's fair that the maximum amount that you can get on housing benefit is set at a level that only the top five per cent of earners would otherwise be able to afford.

Meanwhile those who work in expensive postcodes who aren't on benefits typically have to move further out and commute in to work.

So this is a question that needs to be asked: should those on benefits be financially helped to live exactly where they want to?

And when talking about state provision and its limits, there is another area we need to look at and that is the interaction of the benefit system with the choices people make about having a family.

I've already talked about how many people have to think very carefully about whether they can afford to have children and how many they could have.

But let's look at the signals that the welfare system sends out.

If you are a single parent living outside London - if you have four children and you're renting a house on housing benefit - then you can claim almost £25,000 a year.

That is more than the average take-home pay of a farm worker and nursery nurse put together.

Or let me put this another way.

For most in work when they have a child their income will change very little but for many on out-of work benefits, their income will change substantially.

That is a fundamental difference.

And it's not a marginal point.

There are more than 150,000 people who have been claiming Income Support for over a year who have 3 or more children and 57,000 who have 4 or more children.

The bigger picture is that today, one in six children in Britain is living in a workless household - one of the highest rates in Europe.

Quite simply, we have been encouraging working-age people to have children and not work, when we should be enabling working-age people to work and have children.

So it's time we asked some serious questions about the signals we send out through the benefits system.

Yes, this is difficult territory.

But at a time when so many people are struggling, isn't it right that we ask whether those in the welfare system are faced with the same kinds of decisions that working people have to wrestle with when they have a child?

The contribution we should expect

The last area for debate is about what we should expect from those receiving benefits.

For example, it is still possible to stay on benefits for years without gaining basic literacy and numeracy skills.

But isn't this something we should expect of people, considering these skills are almost essential to getting work?

Bizarrely there is also no requirement to have a CV.

But shouldn't this be the very thing that's asked of people before they even walk into the job-centre?

And we have yet to introduce a system whereby after a certain period on benefits, everyone who was physically able to would be expected to do some form of full-time work helping the community, like tidying up the local park.

But wouldn't this be a perfectly reasonable thing to expect?

In Australia robust, rigorous activity such as 'work for the dole' is standard after just six months.

For those on sickness benefits too, it might be reasonable for them to take more steps to improve their health.

Today if someone is signed off work with a bad back there's no requirement to take steps to get well to keep on receiving that benefit - even if they could be getting free physiotherapy to get back to health and start working again.

And we also need to ask if single parents living on benefits can do more to prepare for work.

Today, we have 580,000 lone parents on out-of-work Income Support.

Before this Government came to office, single parents weren't required to look for work until their youngest child was seven years old - up to three years after they've started primary school.

We thought that needed changing - so we're bringing it down to five years-old, about the age they start school.

But now there is free childcare for all children from age three, that does prompt a question about how some of that time - 15 hours a week, more than a thousand hours over a couple of years - should be used by parents on Income Support.

Of course this is hard.

If you've got a small child in nursery for three hours in the morning then I'm not suggesting you'd be able to get them there, get home, get to work, do a shift then pick them up again.

Childcare can be incredibly awkward.

Sometimes the hours just don't fit.

But even if there's no scope for actually working, there should at least be for preparing to work: getting down to the job centre; writing a CV; learning new skills.

The current commitment - which is just to visit the Job Centre once every three months or every six months - does not seem to me to be enough, especially in the light of the free childcare that's now there.

And in this debate about contribution, there is an argument to be made for recognising and rewarding those who have paid into the system for years.

Today we treat the man who's never worked in the same way as the guy who's worked twenty years in the local car plant, lost his job and now needs the safety net.

So here we could ask whether your reward for paying in is that you won't have to face all the tough conditions that we're imposing on those who haven't paid anything into the system at all.

This is very simply about backing those who work hard and do the right thing.

Timing

So these are just some of the questions I think we need to have in this debate.

Some provocative; some obvious; some long overdue.

There's a number of questions I haven't addressed.

Like if it's right that people continue to have the option of leaving school and going straight onto benefits, without ever having contributed to the system in any way.

Or if it's right that we are paying non-contributory benefits to those people who don't even live in this country.

Or if it's right that we continue to pay the vast majority of welfare benefits in cash, rather than in benefits in kind, like free school meals.

But for all, there are broader questions about timing.

About whether, if they were to happen, these changes would be made in one go and affect existing recipients - what is called 'the stock'.

Or whether it is right that these changes would just affect future recipients - or what is called the 'flow' - so people coming in to the system would know more clearly what is expected of them.

For now, both stock and flow options should be there on the table.

And there is also, more immediately, a question of timing about when these questions will be asked - in this Parliament or the next.

On some of them I hope to work with our coalition partners over the next few years.

[political content excised]

Conclusion

I said something else on the steps of Downing Street on my first night as Prime Minister.

That we would confront the problems that are holding Britain down and face up to the big challenges.

Those words are put to the test on welfare.

There are few more entrenched problems than our out-of-control welfare system and few more daunting challenges than reforming it.

Raising big questions on welfare, as I have today - it might not win the government support.

Frankly a lot of it might rub people up the wrong way.

But as I've argued, the reform of welfare isn't some technocratic issue.

It's not about high-level accounting to get the books in order.

It's about the kind of country we want to be - who we back, who we reward, what we expect of people, the kind of signals we send to the next generation.

So no matter how tough it is, we are going to ask the big questions.

Because governing is not a popularity contest.

It's about doing what is right for our country not just for today but for the long-term - and that is what we are determined to do.

Appendix 6. B. 'Chancellor's speech on changes to the tax and benefits system'

Speech delivered by then Chancellor of the Exchequer, George Osborne given on 2 April 2013 to Morrisons supermarket in Kent. (Gov.uk 2013b).

Good afternoon, thank you for inviting me to be here at Morrisons today.

One of your company slogans - "every penny matters" - is a very fitting catchphrase for what I want to talk about.

I want to talk about the major changes we're making to our tax and welfare system this month.

Changes that are all about making sure that we use every penny we can to back hard working people who want to get on in life.

Changes that are all about backing people like you.

For too long, we've had a system where people who did the right thing – who get up in the morning and work hard – felt penalised for it, while people who did the wrong thing got rewarded for it.

That's wrong.

So this month we're going to put things right.

This month, 9 out of 10 working households will be better off as a result of the changes we are making.

This month we will make work pay.

Now, those who defend the current benefit system are going to complain loudly.

These vested interests always complain, with depressingly predictable outrage, about every change to a system which is failing.

I want to take the argument to them.

Because defending every line item of welfare spending isn't credible in the current economic environment.

Because defending benefits that trap people in poverty and penalise work is defending the indefensible.

The benefit system is broken; it penalises those who try to do the right thing; and the British people badly want it fixed.

We agree - and those who don't are on the wrong side of the British public.

But this isn't just an argument about whether these changes are fair or not.

It's really about the future of our country.

When I think about the future, I think about the kind of country my kids and your kids are going to grow up in.

The world is going to be quite a different place.

We're facing more and more competition from vast new economies like China and India.

There are quite literally billions of people who are joining the world economy.

That's human progress.

If we're not careful, Britain risks being out-worked, out-competed and out-smarted by those hungry for a better life.

Fortunately, this country has a lot of strengths. British people are some of the hardest workers in Europe.

Our companies produce some of the best inventions in the world.

But we aren't going be able to compete if politicians waste your money or we rack up debts we can't afford to pay off.

When I became Chancellor, we were forecast to have the biggest deficit of any major economy in the world.

The deficit is the gap between what the government spends and what it raises - and in Britain that gap got bigger than almost anywhere else.

By taking hard decisions in the last few years to save money, this government has cut that deficit by a third.

But it's still too high.

Because of that deficit, seven pence in every pound of tax you pay is going to be wasted.

It will have to be spent not even on paying off the national debt - but just servicing the interest on that debt.

You spend hours here working hard.

You pay your taxes out of your earnings.

I want every penny of that money to be spent on the things that matter to you and your family: a better NHS, good schools and policing, strong defence, and decent pensions.

Not on paying the interest bills on the national debt.

Some politicians seem to think we can just wish away Britain's debt problem.

They want to take the cowardly way out, let the debt rise and rise and just dump the costs onto our children to pay off.

I don't think that would be fair.

And I don't think we'd get away with it.

The interest charges would soar.

Interest rates would rocket.

People with mortgages would struggle.

Businesses with loans would go bust.

Jobs would be lost.

So we are making changes to our tax and benefit system so this country can live within its means and compete in the global race the Prime Minister has spoken of.

That's what this speech is about – that's what the changes we are making this month are about.

It's about making the country fairer – and protecting our future.

And there are 3 things we are doing.

First, reforming the welfare system so it's fair on people like you who pay for it, and fair on people who need help to look for work.

Second, creating jobs in our economy.

And third, making sure when people are in work, they can keep more of what they earn.

Let me take each in turn.

Welfare system

Let's start with the welfare system.

I think people in this country understand that the welfare system needs to change.

In 2010 alone, payments to working age families cost £90 billion.

That means about one in every six pounds of tax that working people like you pay was going on working age benefits.

To put that into perspective – that's more than we spend on our schools.

That's one reason why we've got such a big deficit.

But the system was not just unaffordable.

It was fundamentally broken.

The system became so complicated, and benefits so generous, that people found they were better off on the dole than they were in work.

And the figures show what happened as a result.

Even at the end of the economic boom in 2008 there were more than four million working age people on out of work benefits.

And here's the saddest fact of all.

We had nearly 2 million of our children living in families where no-one worked – the highest proportion of any country in the European Union, including countries much poorer than us.

That's a worry for the future.

Once it becomes the norm in an area not to work, welfare dependency can become deeply entrenched, handed on from one generation to the next.

And governments of all colours let too many unemployed people get parked on disability benefits, and told they'd never work again.

Why?

Because people on disability benefits don't get counted in unemployment figures that could embarrass politicians.

It was quick fix politics of the worst kind – and the people who lost out were you, hard working taxpayers who had to pay for all this…

…and those on disability benefits who could have worked but were denied the opportunity to do so.

What this government is trying to do is to put things right.

We're trying to make the system fair on people like you, who get up, go to work, and expect your taxes to be spent wisely.

And we're trying to restore hope in those communities who have been let down by generations of politicians by getting them back into work.

So our reforms have one simple principle at their heart – making sure people are better off in work than on benefits.

Take Housing Benefit.

When I took this job, I discovered there were some people who got £100,000 a year in Housing Benefit.

£100,000 a year in benefit.

No family on an ordinary income could ever dream of affording a rent like that.

And you can imagine what that does for someone's incentives to get a better paid job – because almost everything extra they earn will just be taken away from them in lower housing benefit.

We can't have a system that penalises you for going out to work and wanting to get on.

So we've put a stop to those staggering payments and put a cap on housing benefit.

We've made sure that you can't get more than £400 of Housing Benefit a week in this country.

That's still a pretty generous amount.

And yet when we did the pressure groups and welfare lobby attacked it as not enough.

They still say that people should get more than £400 a week housing benefit.

They don't seem to realise that the money to pay these benefits comes from people who work hard, who pay their taxes, and many of whom can't afford £400 a week in rent.

This week, we're bringing in further common sense changes to benefits.

We're making savings to council tax benefit – that's a benefit that went up by 50% previously.

And we're also changing the housing benefit rules.

We're saying that if you continue to live in a council house that's bigger than you need, you'll need to make a contribution towards the extra bedroom.

We've got 1.8 million families waiting for social housing, and yet there are a million spare rooms across the sector.

If you live in private rented accommodation and receive Housing Benefit - these rules already apply – and have done for nearly 20 years.

You don't get money for a spare room.

Treating both groups of people the same, regardless of which landlord owns their house is only fair.

Another change is taking place too.

Next week, on April 8th, we're also making sure that benefits, in the economic jargon, are only uprated by one percent.

What this means in reality is that benefits won't increase more than many people's wages.

In these difficult economic times, many people in jobs haven't seen their incomes rise by much, if at all.

Some have even seen it cut.

And we're also having to impose a one percent salary increase on people in the public services like nurses and teachers.

So it's only fair and right that the same rules apply to people on benefits.

Fair to you, people in work.

There's another, even more significant change we're making this month.

Families out of work can claim various different benefits – and they can end up with an income far higher than an average working family.

Why on earth would someone go out to work if that's the case?

So this April we're introducing the new Benefit Cap.

The Benefit Cap has a very simple principle at its heart: no family that's out of work should receive more in total benefits than the average family gets in work.

The cap will be set at £500 for a couple, or someone with children, and £350 a week for a single adult.

That's £26,000 a year for a family, or £18,000 for a single adult.

Most working people think frankly that's pretty high - yet still the pressure groups complain it's not high enough.

Who here, who pays their taxes, and pays for the benefit bills of others thinks £500 a week in benefits is too little?

Who here, who goes to work and sends money to the Government, thinks families that aren't working should get more than £26,000 a year?

Exactly.

Those who campaign against a cap on benefits for families who aren't working are completely out of touch with how the millions of working families, who pay the taxes to fund these benefits, feel about this.

We are on your side.

The new Benefit Cap will be introduced in parts of London from 15th April – before we roll it out across the country this summer.

With all our welfare changes, we're simply asking people on benefits to make some of the same choices working families have to make every day.

To live in a less expensive house.

To live in a house without a spare bedroom unless they can afford it.

To get by on the average family income.

These are the realities of life for working people.

They should be the reality for everyone else too.

And we're going to go further – replacing all those complicated benefits and tax credits with a single, simple Universal Credit which ensures you're always better off working.

We're trialling it in the north-west of England this month – to make sure it's ready for national roll out later this year.

Be in no doubt: reforming the welfare system is a big job, and it's hard.

But I'm proud of what we're doing to restore some common sense and control on costs.

In recent days we have heard a lot of, frankly, ill-informed rubbish about these welfare reforms.

Some have said it's the end of the welfare state.

That is shrill, headline-seeking nonsense.

I will tell you what is true.

Taxpayers don't think the welfare state works properly anymore.

When did this start to happen?

When we created a system that encouraged people to stay out of work rather than find a job.

Our reforms are returning welfare to its most fundamental principles – always helping the most vulnerable, but giving people ladders out of poverty.

And the politicians who should have to explain themselves are those who have given up on trying to get people working again.

In reality there's nothing "kind" about parking people who could work on benefits. There's nothing fair about a something for nothing culture.

The pundits and politicians who are spending this week firing off letters to newspapers, or touring the television studios, are missing what people actually want.

People don't want a welfare system that keeps them in poverty.

Most people on benefits want to work.

They want a welfare system that helps them into work, that lifts them up, that gives them pride, self-worth and dignity.

That's why we're building a benefits system that means you're always better off in work.

And that's why we're building an economy that creates real, lasting jobs.

Creating jobs

For it wasn't just our benefits system that was broken.

Our economy broke too.

Fixing that economy has been a hard, difficult process.

And yes, it's taken longer than anyone hoped.

But we're getting there.

We're fundamentally rebalancing our economy, away from debt, away from the public sector, away from relying on a select few industries like the banks, away from being dependent on the City of London…

…to an economy where prosperity and businesses are shared across the country; an economy that invests in the industries of the future; an economy which makes things again and where there are good, well paid jobs not just for this generation – but for our children too, in that competitive world I told you about.

And we're delivering results.

Over 1 million private sector jobs have been created in our economy over the last three years.

The rate of employment has risen faster here than in the US and three times as fast as in Germany.

Last year, more businesses started in this country than in any other year before.

And in industries like car manufacturing, Britain is now back to being a world leader.

So as well as all the benefit changes this April we're also doing even more this month to make sure Britain competes and thrives and jobs are created here instead overseas.

Yesterday, corporation tax was cut to 23% - that means it's lower here than in the other largest economies in the world.

And we will get it lower still, to 20%.

This week we are also introducing new research and development tax breaks so companies can invest in the high technology and intellectual property that are the future of the British economy.

And we'll be abolishing the jobs taxes altogether on many hundreds of thousands of our small businesses in the coming year.

To help people who work in construction, and support families who want to own their own home, but can't afford the deposits these days, we're launching our new Help to Buy scheme this week.

And here's another change we're making.

On Saturday, the top rate of tax will be reduced from 50p to 45p.

I know this is controversial – but if we're serious about Britain succeeding in the world, it's an economic essential.

In a modern global economy, where people can move anywhere in the world, we cannot have a top rate of tax that discourages people from living here, setting up businesses here, investing here, creating jobs here.

If you don't believe me, ask France.

They're planning to whack up their top rate of tax – and you know what's happening?

Job creation is down as people are leaving the country.

The opposite is happening here because we are welcoming entrepreneurs and wealth creators – and the jobs they bring with them

Let's be clear.

The 50p tax was a big tax con.

When the 50p rate was introduced, the amount collected in income tax fell by billions of pounds as the wealthy paid less.

So we got the worst of both worlds: a tax rate that discouraged enterprise and didn't raise more money from the rich.

You can't pay down the deficit with that.

You can't fund the health service with money that never arrives.

Instead, at every Budget, I've made sure that the richest are paying more with taxes that actually work, for example, higher stamp duty for expensive houses and clamping down on loopholes. The independent IFS confirm that the richest are paying the most towards dealing with the deficit.

Giving Britain a sensible top rate of tax may not be a popular decision - but my job is not to take decisions that please everyone.

My job is to take the hard decisions that are right for the economy and the country – decisions that help create jobs and help Britain get ahead in this world and help give all our kids a brighter future.

Keeping more of what you earn

So we're reforming welfare to encourage work.

We're boosting the private sector to create jobs so that those who want to work, can work.

The third part of our plan is to make sure when people are in work, they get to keep more of what they earn.

In other words to make sure you get to keep more of what you earn.

I'm a low tax Conservative.

I believe what you earn is your money, not the government's money.

So I want to take away less of it in tax, and leave you to spend it how you wish.

Give me the choice between people choosing how to spend their own money, or a politician choosing how to spend it, and I know who I would pick.

That's good for the economy.

That's good for society – the more people get to keep from what they earn, the more likely they are to work, the more independent and responsible they will be.

And it also simplifies the system.

Today, we have the bizarre situation where hundreds of thousands of people on low incomes pay tax, only to have to apply to get their money back again in benefits.

But it has to be a real tax cut - paid for by doing the hard working of cutting back government spending.

Not a tax cut paid for with borrowed money - borrowed money that is paid for with higher taxes in the future.

This week - because we've done the hard work on spending - we're bringing in the largest tax cut in a generation.

And it's paid for.

From this Saturday, the personal allowance – the amount of money you can earn before you start to pay tax – will rise from £8,105 to £9,440.

Nine out of ten working households will be better off as a result of the reforms we're making this month.

And the average working household will be better off by over £300 a year.

That's roughly equivalent to an average monthly shop here at Morrison's.

And next year, we're going further.

We're going to increase the personal allowance to £10,000.

Let me repeat that– from next April, you won't pay any income tax at all on the first £10,000 you earn.

This will mean nearly three million more people will pay no income tax at all.

That's £700 pounds less in tax for working families than when we came into office.

And let me make clear: we're not doing it by borrowing more money – meaning you'll pay for it down the road.

No, we can afford this because as a country we have taken some difficult decisions together on public spending– and it's only right that the British taxpayer gets rewarded for that.

Conclusion

Let me end by saying this.

You sitting here know that there's no easy way out of the problems that had built up in this country.

We're going through some tough times.

And we will hear plenty from the people who want to say there's no debt problem.

People who say that there's no benefits problem either.

That the changes we are making are unnecessary and unfair.

What we're doing this coming week is making welfare fairer, helping to create jobs, and making sure all of you can keep more of what you earn.

We're supporting hard working people.

That's the way to protect our future, and make the country fairer too.

Thank you.

Appendix 7. C. 'Setting out a vision for Britain's welfare state'

A speech delivered by then Secretary of State for work and pensions, Iain Duncan Smith on 23 January 2014 at the Centre for Social Justice. (Gov.uk 2014b).

Introduction

It is a pleasure to be hosted today by the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ) – setting out a vision for Britain's welfare state alongside the organisation where, in a sense, it all started.

Within their critique, the CSJ set out a plan for reform for government, and today I want to look at that.

But in 2010, we inherited an economy which had entered the worst recession in living memory, with the deficit rising, costs spiralling, and GDP shrinking. People were losing their jobs and feared for the future.

It was vital that we immediately set out a long-term economic plan to put this right and secure Britain's future – at the heart of which was the need to cut the deficit.

Some would frame this as a rigid dichotomy:

On one side, those opposing cuts, decrying all savings as an assault on the poor and vulnerable.

On the other, those urging that the whip be cracked harder, clamping down on spending and making deeper cuts.

Yet the reality is rather more complex.

After all, if we didn't reduce the deficit, the biggest losers in the end would be those who depend most on public services and the welfare safety net.

So today, I want to show that we would have wanted to reform the welfare state, even if we had no deficit.

[Political content removed], we should hate the idea of people with unfulfilled potential languishing on welfare.

Welfare reform is fundamentally about opportunity and life change…

… cutting the cost of social failure by transforming the life chances and outcomes of those on benefits…

… restoring fiscal stability, and restoring lives at the same time.

Hidden reality

10 years ago at the CSJ, our aim was to gain a better understanding of why people found themselves trapped in disadvantage, and to develop solutions for helping them break free and secure their futures.

In visit after visit to some of Britain's most deprived areas, I came to see how urgently that life change was needed.

In neighbourhoods blighted by worklessness… where gangs were prevalent, debt and drugs the norm… families broken down… those living there had one thing in common; they were for the most part dependent on the state for their daily needs.

[Political content removed] Whilst the middle class majority were aware of the problems in poor communities, they remained largely unaware of the true nature of life on some of our estates.

For too long we let these problems be ghettoised as though they were a different country.

Even now, for the most part they remain out of sight – meaning people are shocked when they are confronted with a TV programme such as Benefits Street.

Failed system

The reality is that our welfare system has become distorted, no longer the safety net it was intended to be.

Too often it is an entrapment – as it has been for a million people left on incapacity benefits for a decade or more, or the more than 4 million abandoned on out-of-work benefits even before the recession.

At its very worst, the present system makes criminals out of those trapped in its clutches. Faced with losing up to 94 pence of every pound they earn because of how benefits are withdrawn, too many end up in the shadow economy or working cash in hand.

Such behaviour can never be condoned, but it is a tragic state of affairs – and a mark of how far the current system has failed – that people should feel pushed into crime by having their aspirations to make a living penalised. Surely the system should deliver for people who want to work hard and play by the rules.

Positive choice

Met with the problem of social breakdown, our critics would have it that a sympathetic approach is to sustain these people on slightly better incomes – [political content removed] that poverty is about money, and more state money should solve it.

As a result, the previous government ratcheted up welfare bills by an enormous 60%.

Yet rarely did they stop to ask what impact that money was having… no matter if it kept individuals from the labour market… if it labelled them 'incapable'… if it placed them in housing that they could never have afforded if they took a job.

Where for most people, their life's direction of travel is dictated by the informed decisions they make: can they afford a large family… should they move in order to take up a better-paid job… can they risk a mortgage to get a bigger home?

Yet, too often for those locked in the benefits system, that process of making responsible and positive choices has been skewed – money paid out to pacify them regardless, with no incentive to aspire for a better life.

From dependence to independence

I have long believed there is no kindness in a benefits system that traps people, leaving them in a twilight world where life is dependent on what is given to you, rather than what you are able to create.

Yet casual disapproval of those on benefits is also too easy – it does us as politicians well to remember that it was generations of politicians that created this welfare system that now traps them.

Our single-minded aim has been, and must continue to be, to change a system that has left too many only with short-term, narrow options within parameters set by the state.

Of course in the most severe cases of sickness and disability, it is right that welfare should support individuals, but even then, it must be about more than sustainment alone. It should be about helping people to take greater control over their lives.

For all those who are able, work should be seen as the route to doing so – for work is about more than just money. It is about what shapes us, lifts our families, delivers security, and helps rebuild our communities. Work has to be at the heart of our welfare reform plan, or all we will do is increase dependency not lessen it.

'Reform', often overused, is in reality about transformation and life change. Improving people's lives through the choices they make. A journey from dependence to independence.

Our mission is to put hope back where it has gone, to give people from chaotic lives security through hard work… helping families to improve the quality of their own lives.

In government, the challenge has been to act on this ambition and make changes to restore a creaking and chaotic welfare state into one which delivers on that vision for life change.

Welfare as a journey that people are on, rather than a destination where they stay.

Universal Credit

Let me explain:

This guiding principle underpins the welfare reforms we are driving through now: families should face similar choices, regardless of whether they are on benefits or in work… and the welfare system should both reward the right choices and remove the stumbling blocks in people's way.

I am not going to list them all but I want to illustrate what I mean by way of some examples.

First and foremost in achieving change is Universal Credit… simplifying a mess of benefits and tax credits… but what's more, resetting it so that time on benefits resembles life in work.

Take the fact that today, over three-quarters of people in work are paid monthly – a big change from 20 years ago. Yet the benefit system remains unchanged. An archaic arrangement of fortnightly payments reflects a work environment very different to the experience of most, a big upheaval for those used to being in a job.

With the majority of those who fall unemployed back in work in months, why make life so difficult for them? Surely the journey between benefit and work should be simple.

That is why Universal Credit is paid monthly – it comes as no surprise that in the Pathfinder areas, over three-quarters are now confident about managing their money each month.

In turn, this frees up our resources to target help at the vulnerable few who do need supporting.

For those out of work for longer, imagine how hard it is to move into employment and budget monthly, when all you have known is fortnightly money. Surely we should help this minority to develop their budgeting skills, easing that transition into work… instead of simply waiting for them to crash out of a job because they couldn't cope managing their money over a longer period.

It is the same with getting people online and paying their own rent. With 92% of jobs requiring basic IT skills, there is a real opportunity to prepare people for the world of work.

Most of all, we achieve that by making work pay… allowing the person who has never had a job that moment of incredible realisation – that their first step into work is the first step in the rest of their lives.

Claimant commitment

This, then, is the fundamental cultural change that Universal Credit delivers: welfare should be seen as no different from work itself. For those who are not employed but capable of doing so, whilst you may not have a job, the state supports you – you are 'in work to find work'.

Through the 'claimant commitment', which deliberately mirrors a contract of employment, we are making this deal unequivocal. Those in work have obligations to their employer; so too claimants a responsibility to the taxpayer: in return for support, and where they are able, they must do their bit to find work.

As we roll out Universal Credit, the behavioural effect we are seeing has been remarkable.

Universal Credit claimants are now spending twice as long looking for work, understand their requirements better, and are more assiduous in meeting them.

This is welfare reform in action: changing the dynamics in the system, making things simpler, preparing people for work, ensuring work pays, and rewarding positive behaviour.

Ensuring security through work, just as our pensions reforms help ensure security in retirement.

Changing a culture and changing lives.

Benefit cap

But as well as smoothing people's journey into work, it is vital that we also remove the obstacles blocking their path.

That is what the benefit cap is all about – another example of striking cultural change… ending the something for nothing entitlement and returning fairness to the system.

Before we implemented the cap, it was possible for people to receive, in some cases, almost twice as much in benefits as the average weekly wage.

This system wasn't fair on hardworking taxpayers, paying out ever-increasing amounts to sustain others in lifestyles they could barely dream of affording themselves.

But importantly it has not been fair on benefit recipients themselves. How many of us here would want to live trapped in a system where it was more worthwhile sitting benefits than going to work.

Now, having capped the amount paid to some 30,000 households, these families face the same choices about where they live and what they can afford as everyone else.

What's more, by exempting those on tax credits, we have ended the perverse incentive to remain on welfare as a way of life and left the door open for a return to work.

Since being notified that they potentially stood to be capped, more than 19,000 people have made that positive step into work.

Spare room subsidy

So it is with the removal of spare room subsidy.

For too long, we have been content to subsidise people on Housing Benefit living in homes in the UK which had a million spare bedrooms… taking money from taxpayers, many themselves making difficult decisions about where they can afford to live.

We became accustomed to paying out for this – even when, at the same time, 2 million families were being squeezed into miserably overcrowded accommodation and having to sit on housing waiting lists in the hope of obtaining a home.

Too many lives unnecessarily blighted and insecure.

Whilst we always knew that it would be difficult, we simply could not let it go on like that.

Ending the subsidy has meant that everyone – be they in the social or private sector – faces choices about what they can afford, and others in overcrowded homes can be helped.

What's more, it has also prompted councils and housing associations to understand their tenants' needs and make better decisions about managing their resources, instead of building the wrong houses to meet demand – a situation which did too little to help those in need.

Pathways to poverty

It is not enough to manage the symptoms of disadvantage. To make a meaningful and lasting difference requires that we treat the cause.

Whether it be worklessness and welfare dependency… family breakdown… educational failure … debt … or addiction… these are the multiple and overlapping problems that cause

people to find themselves in difficulty in the first place – as we defined it at the CSJ, the 5 pathways that lead people into poverty.

In office, I believe we have made real inroads to addressing these pathways, always with the aim of life change… establishing social justice as a priority for government, and paving the way to go even further in future.

We have put families first – looking at the family as a whole and addressing their problems in the round. Now as we look to extend the Troubled Families Programme from 120,000 to another 400,000 families, those once at the hands of piecemeal and inefficient social services will receive the intensive, tailored support that can bring lasting change.

After the family, next comes children's education. Here, where previously those from poorer backgrounds were allowed to trail behind their peers, now my colleague Michael Gove is ensuring that once again education is seen by struggling families as the route to a better life for their children. A good education policy is one that leaves no child left behind.

Through our welfare reforms, as I have explained, we are getting people into employment – and we have fought so hard for investment in childcare, in order that work pays when they get there.

Through ongoing investment in credit unions and finally clamping down on the predatory practices of payday lenders, we are helping individuals escape the spiral of problem debt.

And through pioneering new approaches across the prison, employment and rehabilitation services, we are pushing ahead with an approach to tackling addiction that delivers lasting life change – meaning individuals getting clean and back on track, free from drugs and alcohol.

It is interventions such as this, and many more, that will make a real difference…

… helping people who might once have been left on the sidelines to turn their own lives around.

Poverty plus a pound

The importance of this historic break from the old ways of approaching social problems cannot be underestimated.

We must learn the lessons of the previous decade, where despite best intentions and despite an unprecedented level of spending, the government failed to meet the poverty target they had set themselves.

I have long maintained that the first problem was the target itself – a fixation on relative income and a moving poverty line ever harder to reach.

But equally problematic was the mechanistic approach, as the government chased that target by hiking income transfers to families and children… spending more on benefits overall, and creating a whole new system of credits which cost four and a half times more than those it replaced.

Between 2003 and 2010, over £170 billion was spent on tax credit. 70% of that spending – some £120 billion – was paid in child tax credits alone.

Yet I believe that spending failed to meet its objective, because it put process ahead of people… failing to ask what impact it was having on changing lives.

To put it another way, what more could have been achieved had that money been invested in a more focused way to create lasting improvements to people's chances… be it higher attainment in schools, better budgeting skills, recovery from addiction, and so on.

That is why the government's child poverty strategy recognises that money matters – but, also, that other factors are fundamental to children's current wellbeing and their future life chances.

In the past, whilst some families may have moved over an arbitrary poverty line as a result of more welfare spending, sadly, too often their lives remained unproductive and insecure.

Life change

This terrible waste of human potential showed itself not only in the child poverty figures, but also in the labour market.

Common sense should tell us that Britain cannot run a modern flexible economy, if at the same time, so many of the people who service that economy are trapped in dependency on the state, unwilling or unable to play a productive part.

But millions were left on out of work benefits unchallenged.

This in turn, helped to create a demand for foreign workers, as business looked to fill the jobs that British people didn't want or couldn't get.

In just 5 years between 2005 and 2010, the number of British people in jobs fell by some 400,000, while the number of foreigners in British jobs soared by more than 700,000.

In other words, for every British person who fell out of work, almost 2 foreign nationals gained employment.

Short-term policy making created damaging long-term consequences…

… destroying the ethos of a whole section of our society, left behind in workless households and those deprived estates that I described at the start.

The simple truth is that we should never have been prepared to see a growing number of our fellow citizens fall into dependency, hopelessness and despair. For without their active contribution we will be unable to create that modern economy.

It is not only migration that rises as a result. Crime and health costs are high in such difficult communities.

[Political content removed]

Imagine the damage done to some 2 million children living in households where no one worked.

Employment

No – leaving people behind is not a long-term economic model.

Instead we have stuck to our economic plan, and now, the economy is growing.

This growth has produced a rise of more than one and a half million people in private sector jobs, and, this quarter, the largest increase in employment for 40 years.

Importantly, we are also seeing promising signs that the trend of bringing in migrant workers at the expense of British workers is being reversed.

As we reach record levels of people in work, the latest data that shows that of the rise in employment over the past year, over 90% went to UK nationals.

What's more, the number of people unavailable for work – having dropped out of the labour market altogether – is at its lowest level for 2 decades, driven by falling numbers claiming the main out-of-work benefits – down by over half a million since 2010.

Britain now has a lower proportion of workless households than at any time under the last government…

… and 274,000 fewer children are living in workless households – meaning children who now have a role model to look up to, offering hope and self-worth, with aspirations for their own future transformed.

As the economy recovers, this is where the real effect of our reforms is felt: British people having a fair chance to access the jobs being created… taking up work that pays… ensuring everyone can begin to see the benefits of Britain's growth.

This is not just about those who are on welfare it is also vital reform for those who are not.

They will benefit not just from reduced costs but perhaps more importantly, from a long-term social settlement… which, in turn, will lead to a settled society in which all are acknowledged to play a full part.

Economic plan

Nothing illustrates the government's commitment to this process of life change more than the Chancellor's confidence that, because our economic plan is working, Britain can afford a rise in the National Minimum Wage.

He is absolutely right – for restoring the value of the Minimum Wage would send a powerful positive message.

His recommendation shows that we care that people on low incomes should see a better level of pay to give them greater security.

A stable economic settlement requires a strong social settlement.

You cannot reform one without the other, and thus welfare reform is one very important part of a larger, long-term economic plan.

[Political content removed]

Working closely with the Chancellor, as part of cutting the deficit – by a third already, by half next year – we have set the welfare state on a sustainable footing for the future.

That is achieved by helping people move towards self-sufficiency – in order that the demand on welfare itself lessens.

As a result, welfare spending is now falling as a percentage of GDP…

… and our reforms are forecast to save a total of around £50 billion by the end of this Parliament.

Yet, our real success, I believe, has been to reframe the argument – challenging a narrative beloved by some of our critics… which focuses so exclusively on how much is being spent on welfare that it risks overlooking the real question… that it is not about how much goes into the benefit system, but what difference it makes to people at the other end.

Further reform

We all accept the need to continue the process of welfare reform – and the next government will have to make further changes.

But more than that, we are committed to making a lasting difference, preventing spending from simply popping back up further down the line – which is why we will remain focussed on life change.

A reformed welfare system that will catch you when you fall, but lift you, when you can rise.

Our vital reforms are a major undertaking that reaches beyond this Parliament.

Thus as we look towards establishing a manifesto for the next election, it is a case of looking at which parts of the system promote productive choices, and which are actually limiting people's horizons…

… asking how best we can lift people up, urging them forwards on the journey to independence and security.

Conclusion

Britain will only be great again if all in our society are part of our economic recovery and growth.

As we modernise our work practices and create a more flexible and responsive economy, it is important that this is underpinned by social change.

Everyone who can playing a productive role…

… individuals in control of their own lives…

… and the next generation of children aspiring to even more.

In other words, reform that is not just about state institutions, but about social renewal – part of a vision of strong families with hope for their children's future, but who also care about their communities.

The task that we have set out to achieve is hardly a small undertaking.

And it is not easy, as those arrayed against us do all they can to misrepresent what we are doing…

…. angling for a return to the failed and expensive policies of the past, when success was measured by the amount of money you spent, not the lives you improved.

The purpose

So, the purpose for government is not radical but balanced… not grand but simple.

It is that through our economic and welfare changes we will have helped people feel that bit more secure about their lives and their grandparent's lives…

… feel more hopeful about their children's futures…

… and rekindle their pride in their communities, as their neighbours also begin to thrive.

That is the human dimension of all that we do.

Appendix 8. D. 2015 'Welfare reforms'

David Cameron Blatchington Mill school in Hove, a constituency described as being one of the 'key battle grounds for the Conservatives and Labour' before the 2015 general election (cited in le Duc, 2015).

Our long-term economic plan is working. Last year we were the fastest growing major economy in the world.

We've created a thousand jobs a day. There's a record number of businesses in Britain. The pistons in our factories are firing. The orders in our companies are rising. The plan is working.

And our vision for the next Parliament is turning this long-term economic plan into a plan for you.

It's about …

- more people starting their first day of work
- more parents putting their children to bed at night knowing they can provide for them
- more young couples picking up the keys to their first flat
- more teenagers doing apprenticeships that will set them up for life
- more people retiring – not with worry about the future but with real security

This is a plan to be felt in people's pockets and homes and hearts and hopes.

It aims to redraw the rules in this country so that hard work is rewarded, so that those who put in will get out.

Achieving this vision is impossible without a welfare system that truly works and that's what I want to talk about today.

We've already come a long way.

The system we inherited was a national disgrace. After 13 years of a so-called "progressive" welfare system, we had almost two million children living in workless households.

The number of households where no member had ever worked nearly doubled.

I don't call that progress.

I call progress 1.75 million more people in work.

I call progress 900,000 fewer people on the main out-of-work benefits.

I call progress employment rising from Scotland to the South West, from Wales to the North East, from the North West to the West Midlands.

That is the progress we've made – and today is about where we go next.

I want to talk about what the next Conservative Government would do and the principles that underlie our plans.

Before we go into that, there are a few myths I want to take on.

We've heard these myths bubbling away for the past five years, misleading people, sometimes scaring people and now, nearing the end of this parliament, it's time to take stock.

First, the myth that you can't reform welfare without hurting pensioners.

We have proved that totally wrong.

While conducting some of the widest ranging welfare reforms since Beveridge, we have ensured the best deal for pensioners for a generation.

It's a fair deal for those who save, with a new state pension that gets rid of the complexity, the confusion and the old means test so that hardworking people know it's safe for them to save.

It's a fair deal for all pensioners with a triple lock that says pensions rise according to whichever is the highest – earnings, inflation or 2.5 per cent.

And so it's more generous – with the state pension increased by £800 so far.

These reforms mean dignity and security for everyone reaching old age and they show decisively that you can reform welfare and protect pensions at the same time.

Myth two went like this. You can't reform welfare because there aren't enough jobs for these people to go into.

It's the argument that it's not fair to ask people to do more to find work because there isn't much work to go around.

Again that's been blown out of the water.

More people in work than ever before.

More women in work than ever before.

More older workers than ever before.

More private sector workers than ever before.

Go online, open the papers and you will find a record number of vacancies.

There are around 700,000 vacancies at any one time.

And those new jobs are not all part-time or zero hours as some would have it – quite the opposite.

In the last year over 80 per cent of the rise in employment has been people working full-time.

As for zero hours contracts, they account for less than one in 20 of all jobs.

So there is the work – and it's decent work – for people to take.

The third myth is perhaps the most pernicious – that welfare reform just hits the poorest, changing their lives for the worse.

This usually comes from people who say the answer is spending more money, who oppose every change and who defend everything that came before.

I would ask them: is it compassionate to leave people on the dole for years with no incentive to get into work?

Is it big-hearted to leave people on sickness benefit without checking if they can work, if given the right help?

Is it kind to sentence people to never going anywhere, of letting people in their teens and twenties sit at home all day slipping into depression and despair?

No. No one wants that life for their own child or their own friend. Why would anyone want it for millions of people?

The right thing to do – what I want to do – is break this cycle, change lives and actually tackle poverty. And that's what our reforms are about.

And I tell you: when you meet people who have just got into work after a long time unemployed, you see what this is all about.

The pride. The purpose. The self esteem.

It is there in people's faces.

Yes, we need to reform welfare to save money but this is also about changing people's lives.

And that is why whatever the flack we got, we have got to see this through.

So let me turn to next steps.

We are guided by a few simple principles and the first one is this – work must always be rewarded.

This goes right to the heart of our vision for Britain.

As a Conservative I instinctively look up to those who work hard and who put the hours in and I passionately believe in reward for effort.

For years we had the opposite.

You tried to come off welfare, you didn't take more money home.

You tried to earn a wage and after all the benefit withdrawals and tax, you ended up hardly better off than when you started.

Say you were a single mother of two children, working shifts as a carer, trying to claw your way out of welfare.

Say you were earning £150 a week.

Under Labour, in some cases, do you know how much of that you would keep, after benefit withdrawal and taxes?

4p in every pound.

Four pence.

Would you get out of bed on a cold morning for that? No one would.

So this is a key, irreducible principle for us – work must always pay.

Our vision is a Britain that rewards work. And we are doing some important things to realise that.

We have already capped benefits to £26,000 and the next Conservative government would lower that to £23,000 because no household should receive more in benefits than the average family earns.

We have also announced that we would freeze working-age benefits for two years in the next parliament so benefits don't rise higher than wages and it pays to be in work.

Most important of all, we are introducing universal credit.

This is sweeping away all the old overlapping benefits that meant you were better off on welfare.

It is replacing the complexities with a single payment, ensuring that from the very first hour you work you will be better off.

And already this is getting results.

New research comparing universal credit to jobseeker's allowance shows that on universal credit, claimants spend more time looking for work, they move into work more quickly and they earn more money.

As we announced this weekend, universal credit has now started to roll out nationally and it is set to reach two thirds of all job centres by the end of this year.

And rewarding work shouldn't stop with the welfare system itself. Once people are in work, we must keep rewarding them more.

We've delivered the first above-inflation increase in the minimum wage since the financial crisis and we're on a trajectory to reach over £8 an hour by 2020.

We are cutting the taxes of the lowest paid. Today no one earning £10,000 pays income tax. Three million of the lowest paid have been taken out of income tax.

The next Conservative Government would raise that tax-free threshold to £12,500, meaning no one working 30 hours on the minimum wage will pay any income tax at all.

That is what's progressive – not trapping people in a system where you take with one hand and give with the other but letting them earn, allowing them to keep more of their own money.

Put simply: rewarding work.

The second principle is this – there must be a link between what people get and what people give.

When the welfare state began there was a clear set of values that underpinned it.

You would pay in when you can, and if you fell on hard times it was there for you – a safety net that was bound together by common values and mutual contribution.

People didn't tend to take advantage of the system. But over time those values got eroded. Welfare became a series of giveaways.

One of the things people were most frustrated by was the fact that people could migrate to this country and start claiming benefits immediately despite having never paid in.

That was the epitome of something for nothing.

And as we have made clear, the next Conservative government will go into those European negotiations with a clear mandate to change it.

No in-work benefits or social housing unless you have lived here and contributed to our country for a minimum of four years.

And then there were the messages we sent young people in this country.

You could leave school, sign on, start getting your benefit, start getting housing benefit and the contribution you were asked for was minimal.

Turn up every couple of weeks and sign on.

Tick the boxes, no questions asked.

No CV? No problem.

No real effort put in? No problem.

And all this had a corrosive effect.

For those paying for welfare, it infuriated them.

For those dependent on welfare, it infantilised them.

Because people don't just live up to expectations, they live down to them too.

If you give people nothing to work for, no responsibilities to uphold, they're going to lose the ability to stretch themselves and find work.

So we came in with a mission to reset the messages we are sending young people.

Our goal is effectively to abolish long-term youth unemployment.

That well-worn path – from the school gate, down to the job centre and on to a life on benefits has got to be rubbed away.

To achieve that we have set a bold expectation – when you leave college you should either be earning or learning … doing an apprenticeship, studying at university or college or doing a job.

And the right incentives have got to be there to encourage this.

We've already said that with a Conservative Government – save in exceptional circumstances – it will only be possible for a young person to claim housing benefit when they move out if they have a job.

Access to jobseeker's Allowance for 18-21 year olds will be abolished and replaced with a youth allowance time-limited to six months after which you will have to take an apprenticeship or do daily community work for those benefits.

We would use the savings made from all this – and from reducing the benefit cap – to fund three million new apprenticeships. That is three million chances of a better life.

And I can announce today that in the next parliament we would take further steps to make sure young people don't get sucked into a life on welfare.

About 10 per cent of 18 to 21-year-olds who go to the job centre to make a claim are what is known in the jargon as "NEETs".

They have not been in employment or education or training for more than six months before they sign on.

They drift from school to worklessness to benefits and not enough is asked of them.

Now of course, the best thing is for young people not to fall into inactivity in the first place and we are doing a whole range of things to stop that happening, whether it's raising the education age, increasing apprenticeships or creating the new careers company to give them guidance.

But if they have drifted into a life of inactivity, then it's pretty clear what these young people need. They need work experience. They need the order and discipline of turning up for work each day.

So a Conservative government would require them to do daily community work from the very start of their claim, as well as searching for work.

From day one they must play their part and make an effort. That could mean making meals for older people, cleaning up litter and graffiti or working for local charities.

Your first experience of the benefits system should be that, yes, you can get help but it isn't something for nothing and you need to put something back into your community too.

The next principle is this.

No one should be left behind.

Whether you had a bad start in life or suffer from an affliction that you could beat with the right help, no one should be written off.

We used to have a system where if you had a sick note from the state, it was often a sick note for life.

Indeed there are around one and a half million people today who have been on sickness benefits for more than five years.

Now of course, if you have a serious disability – physical or mental – and you really cannot work, then the welfare system must be there for you.

But the truth is there are many people receiving welfare who have treatable conditions.

Today there are 90,000 people in our country claiming sickness benefits for conditions such as drug addiction, alcohol addiction or obesity – treatable conditions – but right now there is no requirement for them to undertake treatment.

So in a way, the system is colluding in the problem. It's possible for people to carry on claiming benefits without making any efforts at recovery and that is effectively condemning them to going round and round in a destructive circle with no spur or incentive to break out of it.

It would be easy to just forget about these people and keep them on the welfare rolls.

The hard thing – and the right thing – is to help them break that cycle.

That is why I have asked Dame Carol Black – a world-renowned expert in these issues – to conduct a rapid review.

We want to know how we can help these people break the cycle, beat their problems, get back into work and start living more fulfilling lives.

We want to work out how the benefit system can be used to incentivise positive changes in their lives, not just keep them stuck in bad old habits.

And yes, that means looking at whether people should face the threat of a reduction in benefits if they refuse to engage with a recommended treatment plan.

But let me be clear. There will not be some magic solution on this. A lot of these situations are incredibly complex and often there is an overlap with mental health issues to be handled carefully.

But I don't want us to tip-toe around these issues any longer while there are people whose lives are ticking away and we can help them.

Like I said – no one should be left behind.

The final principle that guides us goes to the heart of what welfare is all about.

If you are genuinely sick and vulnerable and you need help, you will get that help.

The safety net will always, always be there for you. In fact we have made it stronger.

The system we inherited was fiendishly complicated for a lot of people to access and a significant part of the welfare bill went to those who actually could be working with the right support.

We said: let's make it simpler, let's get proper objective assessments of whether people can work and above all let us direct resources at those who really need it.

As someone who knows how much help those with genuine disabilities need, this was very important to me.

So we introduced Personal Independence Payments and today more of the most disabled people get more money.

I repeat: more people with the most serious disabilities are getting the highest level of support.

And of course when it comes to caring for those with disabilities, the reality is not just payments and benefits.

The reality is the day-in, day-out caring done by an army of devoted people in our country. The people who are up early and up late, giving their loved ones medications, washing them, cooking for them in what can be a lonely and unsung role.

We as a country need to do more to recognise Britain's amazing carers.

That's why as a government we have protected carers' allowance and, as part of universal credit, it will be easier and more worthwhile for them to work part-time too.

We've also boosted the resources to give carers breaks from caring and supported the hospice movement which does so much to help this happen.

All of this is about seeing through that fundamental principle of welfare that in Britain, if you fall on hard times or are dealt a bad hand, we are here for you.

So we're rewarding work, ending something-for-nothing, making sure no one is left behind and looking after those who genuinely need help.

And these welfare reforms as a whole do something else too – restore real fairness to our country.

Our welfare system should be something that unites our country in pride, not that divides it in resentment.

But when people worked hard and paid their taxes, knowing that others were choosing to live on welfare, when they saw their money going on social housing they could never afford to live in or when hardworking young people were stuck living with their parents into their 30s while others got a council house straight out of school, that created a sense of deep unfairness.

We are putting that right with a clear set of rules that apply to all – a British deal on welfare.

If you are in work, you'll be better off.

If you're out of work and want to, we'll back you.

If you're out of work and refuse to, we will not keep supporting you.

If you're genuinely sick or disabled, we will be there for you.

And if you've worked hard all your life, we'll make sure you have dignity and security in retirement.

Basic, fair, common sense rules and they come back to what I said on the steps of Downing Street on my first night as Prime Minister.

I said we would build a more responsible country where we back those who work hard and do the right thing, where we look after the elderly and frail, where – I put it – those who can, should and those who can't, we will always help.

It's a long road to building that country. But with every person who moves off welfare into work, we're getting there.

With every teenager who goes into an apprenticeship and not to the job centre, we're getting there.

And that's why we need another five years – to finish the job. to change more lives, to secure a better future for you, your family and for Britain.

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