

Institution: University of York
Unit of Assessment: 22, Social Work and Social Policy
Title of case study: Development of the 'single working age benefit' and impact on welfare reform
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>A major element of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 is the introduction of <i>Universal Credit</i>, which is widely recognised as the most radical reform of the UK social security system since the 1942 Beveridge Report. Universal Credit will be rolled out nationally from October 2013 and affect the lives of millions of working age people. Universal Credit recipients who are working will be the main beneficiaries receiving more than under the previous Tax Credit arrangements (which are being abolished). Increased payments to claimants will amount to over £2bn with 3.1 million households benefiting (according to the government formal Impact Assessment). The work of the Social Policy Research Unit (SPRU) at the University of York (particularly the contribution of Sainsbury and Weston) has had a demonstrable impact on the development of the ideas and policies of both previous Labour administrations and the current Coalition government. Sainsbury's seminal ideas on the <i>single working age benefit</i> can be seen as having laid the foundations for Universal Credit.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>In 1997, the new Labour government came to office committed to a programme of welfare reform under the guiding principle of "work for those who can, welfare for those who cannot". Up to around 2005, the aim of welfare reform had been pursued principally through significant innovations in employment policy. In comparison, benefit reform was much more limited, and had mainly focused on incremental changes to long-term sickness benefits. However, prompted partly by a report from the National Audit Office in 2005, and a subsequent report by the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee in 2006, the government began to think seriously about wider social security reform.</p> <p>At this point, Sainsbury's contribution- in a series of articles and research papers and through personal engagement with policy makers- was to recast the challenge of welfare reform as one of designing a social security system that would complement employment policy changes, rather than tackling social security in isolation as in the past. This insight emerged from reflecting on a series of related research projects since 1997 on social security and welfare to work programmes, including the New Deal for Disabled People (2001-2006), and Incapacity Benefit Reforms Pilots (Pathways to Work (2003-2007). These projects showed that labour market initiatives consistently fell short of both expectations and aspirations, and that a contributory reason was the structure and complexity of the social security system (see for example Lewis et al, 2005; Corden et al, 2005).</p> <p>The original contribution by Sainsbury about social security reform was to argue that the current system's inherent weaknesses, flaws and dysfunctions could not be solved or removed by the sort of incremental change that had characterised UK social security policy since 1948. What was needed was radical change on a scale that had not been attempted since the post-war Beveridge reforms. Sainsbury thus introduced the concept of (and coined the term) the 'single working age benefit' – a radical restructuring of social security for working age people that would actively support the transition of unemployed people into work (Sainsbury 2006).</p> <p>The impact claimed here is that government policy on welfare reform, specifically the reform of the social security system, was influenced by the work and writing of Roy Sainsbury, and by research and dissemination from SPRU (i.e. rather than from a specific piece or large programme of research). As argued in section 4 below, the impact can be detected in policy debates and documents from 2006 onwards up to the passage of the Welfare Reform Bill through parliament in 2011 (which became the Welfare Reform Act in 2012).</p>
<p>3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)</p> <p>1. Lewis, J., Corden, A., Dillon, L., Hill, K., Kellard, K., Sainsbury, R. and Thornton, P. (2005) <i>New Deal for Disabled People: An In-Depth Study of Job Broker Service Delivery</i>, DWP Research</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

Report 246, Leeds: Corporate Document Services.

<http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20130128102031/http://statistics.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd5/rports2005-2006/rrep246.pdf>

2. Corden, A., Nice, K. and Sainsbury, R. (2005) *Incapacity Benefit Reforms Pilot: Findings from a longitudinal panel of clients*, DWP Research Report No 259, Leeds: Corporate Document Services. <http://eprints.whiterose.ac.uk/73209/1/Document.pdf>

3. Sainsbury, R. (2006) 'Long-term benefits reform – should a single working age benefit be the aim?' in *Disability Rights Bulletin*, pp.3-5, Spring. (This article introduces for the first time the notion of the *single working age benefit* that informed subsequent debates on social security reform.)

4. Sainsbury, R. and Stanley, K. (2007) 'One for all: active welfare and the single working age benefit' in Bennett, J. and Cooke, G. *It's all about you – Citizen-centred welfare*, pp.43-56, London, ippr. http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2011/05/one_for_all_1588.pdf

5. Sainsbury, R. and Weston, K. (2010) *Exploratory Qualitative Research on the 'Single Working Age Benefit'*, DWP Research Report No. 659, London: HMSO. https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/214430/rrep659.pdf

6. Sainsbury, R. (2010) '21st Century Welfare - getting closer to radical benefit reform?' in *Public Policy Research*, Vol.17, issue 2, pp.102-107. DOI: 10.1111/j.1744-540X.2010.00612.x

Supporting grant:

Sainsbury and Weston, 2009-2010, 'Exploratory research on the *single working age benefit*', Department for Work and Pensions, £95,000.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

4.1 Overview

Sainsbury and colleagues have influenced the development of welfare reform policy in the UK since 2005 up to the enactment of the Welfare Reform Act in 2012. The main immediate beneficiaries have been policy makers within government and organisations interested in welfare reform. Indirect beneficiaries will be the recipients of Universal Credit as it is implemented from October 2013.

The route to this impact can be traced through the following (taken from the REF document "Panel criteria and working methods", REF 01.2012):

- Citation in (a) public consultation and (b) policy documents
- Reference in Parliamentary debates
- Use by Parliamentary Select Committees

Other evidence includes:

- A letter of endorsement from Lord David Freud, currently Minister for Welfare Reform in the Coalition government since 2010), confirming the influence claimed
- Invitations to speak at relevant events
- Meetings with key politicians and advisers.
- Appointment as Specialist Adviser to the House of Commons Work and Pensions Select Committee for its Inquiry into Benefits Simplification
- The widespread adoption of the phrase 'single working age benefit' in policy debate, before the current alternative title *Universal Credit* replaced it.

This case study is put forward as an example of the following (again taken REF 01.2012):

- Influence or shaping of legislation
- Shaping or influence on policy made by government
- Change in policy direction

Impact case study (REF3b)

- Stimulation of policy debate

The introduction of the notion of the 'single working age benefit' is also an example of two of the criteria for four star quality rating. It is "outstandingly novel in developing concepts..." and has been a "major influence on the intellectual agenda of a ...field".

4.2 Narrative

In July 2005, Margaret Hodge, Minister at the Department for Work and Pensions, invited Sainsbury to discuss ideas on benefit reform. He left a paper "*The reform of incapacity benefits - thoughts towards a new 'working age benefit'*". Hodge wrote in September to thank him for contributing to her ideas about future policy proposals (letter available for scrutiny). Some of the ideas in the paper were reflected in the Green Paper, *A New Deal for Welfare* (DWP 2006), in the chapter, 'Long term benefits reform'.

The paper was the basis of an article (Sainsbury 2006) that introduced the phrase '**single working age benefit**'. During 2006, this idea of a single working age benefit fed into policy making through:

- Speech by Sainsbury at Labour Party Conference
- Meeting with John Williams, Special Political Adviser to Secretary of State, John Hutton
- Meeting with Government adviser David Freud to discuss radical benefit reform and the single working age benefit. The Freud Report published in March 2006 contained a chapter "Benefit reform – towards a single system" reflecting many of the ideas discussed with him.

In March 2007, Sainsbury was appointed Specialist Adviser to the Work and Pensions Select Committee for its *Inquiry into Benefits Simplification*. The Committee's report contains a chapter on fundamental changes to the benefit system discussing the single working age benefit in detail. In July 2007, a key paper by Sainsbury and Stanley set out a revised version of the single working age benefit as a blueprint for radical benefit reform.

In 2008, the Labour Government published two important Green Papers. *No One Written Off* (DWP 2008a) contains a chapter on "Simplifying and streamlining the benefit system" and ***Raising Expectations and Increasing Support***" (DWP 2008b) reaffirms "we remain attracted to the idea of a single working age benefit ..." (p.35). Both Green Papers cited Sainsbury and Stanley (2007). In July 2009, DWP commissioned SPRU to conduct research on public attitudes to the single working age benefit (published as Sainsbury and Weston 2010).

In February 2009, David Freud became welfare reform adviser to the Conservative Opposition. He introduced radical benefit reform to Iain Duncan Smith (currently Secretary of State for Work and Pensions) who had established the Centre for Social Justice (CSJ). In September 2009, CSJ published *Dynamic Benefits*, which developed the single working age benefit idea further, citing Sainsbury and Stanley (2007). After the 2010 Election, radical reform became a priority of the Coalition government. It published a Green Paper, *21st Century Welfare*, in July based on *Dynamic Benefits*, citing Sainsbury and Stanley (2007), and a later White Paper, *Universal Credit – welfare that works*, that cited both Sainsbury and Stanley (2007) and Sainsbury and Weston (2010). [Text removed for publication]

The Welfare Reform Bill reached the Committee stage in March 2011. Sainsbury was invited to give oral evidence referred to in a subsequent Committee hearing: **Kate Green** (Lab): "I was also very struck by the evidence that we received from **Professor Roy Sainsbury** last week, when he said that the public as a whole favour individual assessment and individual arrangements." (Hansard Minutes of the Standing Committee on the Welfare Reform Bill, 29 March 2011: Col 176). It was also cited in the House of Lords debate on the Bill: Baroness Lister: "Indeed, **Professor Roy Sainsbury** told the Public Bill Committee in the other place that in research with claimants, "individual assessment spontaneously arose as a thing that people were very keen on"." (Hansard House of Lords Debates, 13 Sep 2011: Column 727).

Further evidence of impact comes from House of Lords debates. One demonstrates how the Labour government had accepted the single working age benefit: Lord Knight: "When we were in

Government, we were committed to a **single working age benefit.**" (Hansard House of Lords Debates, 13 Sep 2011: Column 721). The other, from a senior Liberal Democrat peer recognised as an authority on social security, Lord Kirkwood, serves as a summary of the impact claimed in this submission: "I counsel the coalition Government about over claiming. ... It is said that this is all a great revolution but people such as **Professor Roy Sainsbury at York** have been talking about it for years." Hansard House of Lords Debates, 13 Sep 2011: Column 685.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Presented below is a list of documents that include citations for Sainsbury and Stanley (2007) (sometimes referred to 'the ippr paper') and Sainsbury and Weston (2010), and documents referencing the 'single working age benefit' without specific citation. They are all in the public domain; the DWP publications are available on the DWP website. The documents provide direct evidence of the impact of the research and writing on the single working age benefit on thinking about welfare reform. The OECD report provides evidence of the extent to which the concept of the single working age benefit has penetrated into wider, international debates.

1. Department for Work and Pensions (2006) *A New Deal for Welfare: Empowering people to work*, Cm 6730, London: The Stationery Office. (at p.51)
2. Freud D (2007) *Reducing Dependency, Increasing Opportunity: options for the future of the welfare state*, London, DWP. (see chapter 6, pp.99-105)
3. Work and Pensions Select Committee (2007) *Benefits Simplification. Seventh Report of Session 2006–07*, HC 463-1, London, The Stationery Office. (p.89) (p.89; chapter 6, pp.84-93; Annex A, pp.108-112)
4. DWP (2008a) *No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility*, Cm 7363, London, The Stationery Office, July 2008. (pp.32, 107)
5. DWP (2008b) *Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming welfare for the future*, Cm 7506, London: The Stationery Office, December 2008. (pp.10, 35, 38, 205, 210)
6. DWP (2009) *Building Britain's Recovery: Achieving Full Employment*, Cm 7751, London, The Stationery Office. (pp.13, 74, 79, 119)
7. Centre for Social Justice (2009) *Dynamic Benefits*, London, Centre for Social Justice. (pp.248, 257, 298, 366)
8. DWP (2010) *21st Century Welfare*, Cm 7913, London, The Stationery Office. (p.24) (pp.14, 24)
9. DWP (2010) *Universal Credit: welfare that works* Cm 7957, London, The Stationery Office. (pp.9, 64, 65)
10. Office of Economic Co-operation and Development (2010) *Sickness Disability and Work. Breaking the Barriers*, OECD, Paris (pp.17, 18, 95, 112, 113)
11. [Text removed for publication].

Hansard references:

12. Hansard Minutes of the Standing Committee on the Welfare Reform Bill, 29 March 2011: Col 176
13. Hansard House of Lords Debates, 13 Sep 2011: Column 685, 721, 727,