

Positive Welfare and Social Exclusion

Social security constitutes the greatest success of the twentieth century welfare state. Defined to include both social insurance and social assistance, social security has welded society together and facilitated the dramatic economic changes that have marked the progress from the late steam age to the era of information technology. It is the major mechanism that allows the economy to adapt to radical changes in the world economic order without tearing society apart. It helps even out cyclical economic fluctuations and is the major motor of regional economic regeneration.

The very success of social security means that it features less positively than either education or health in the focus groups of public opinion. Whereas the fear of ill health and illiteracy remain, shoeless urchins no longer abound and destitute elderly people are a rarity. Unless its successes are celebrated, there is a danger that the achievements of social security will be understated, and that false economies will be made to find funding for ostensibly vote-winning public services.

The essence of positive welfare is the recognition that social security is a means of social inclusion not a cause of exclusion. Indeed, social security can promote the goal of inclusion by tackling each of the different dimensions of social exclusion: status; lifestyle; employment; economic and political. When social security is unsuccessful in this regard, it is generally because of limitations in the design, promotion and implementation of benefits rather than a necessary consequence of the provision itself.

Space precludes full discussion of the practical implications of adopting a positive approach to welfare. Suffice to focus on enhancing status and accommodating lifestyles.

Including Claimants

Stigma remains an inescapable fact of life for many social security recipients. In an achievement orientated society, claiming income-related benefit is almost inevitably a public admission of failure. Hence some stigma is perhaps unavoidable.

Indeed, it is sometimes argued that stigma is a desirable component in a package of measures to help people move off benefit and reach self-sufficiency: a kind of stick to accompany the carrot of employment. However, stigma also engenders a sense of separation from the wider society, promotes an 'us and them' mentality that exacerbates social division and can sap morale. It is important that

the shorthand of public debate does not lose the important distinction between claiming benefits long-term and 'benefit dependency'.

Dignity should be accorded to all people legitimately receiving benefits. Much that is positive can be achieved by a simple shift in the language of political discourse. Rather than presenting social security as a symbol of economic failure, it needs to be recognised for what it is: evidence of a civilised and civilising society; a return on savings; a reward for past contributions; an investment in people and society's future prosperity; a solution rather than a problem. Since the vast majority of benefit recipients are neither malingerers nor guilty of fraud or abuse (McKay et al., 1997), benefits should be designed, promoted and delivered primarily to foster the well-being of the many, rather than to frustrate the despicable activities of the few. If social security is seen to be positive, recipients are more likely themselves to feel positive, to be proactive and to view themselves as part of one society.

Embracing Lifestyles, Enhancing Autonomy

Claimants are also excluded by the erosion of autonomy imposed by the benefit system and by restrictions on lifestyle. In times of financial hardship people lay great weight on trying to be 'normal' and on not being labelled as 'different'. Even in matters as personal as diet, low income families try to approximate their normal eating habits. Parents do all that they can to make sure that their children are not socially excluded by being unable to participate fully at school or wearing clothes that single them out. Voters recognise the need for a basic minimum but prefer access to additional benefits that will help them maintain the lifestyle to which they are accustomed.

Positive support

Among the many functions of the Benefits Agency two are key: assessing claimants' circumstances and providing financial services such as a regular cash income, access to passport benefits and, in tightly defined circumstances, loans.

Assessment is often a negative experience. Even when the claim has been legitimated by the payment of National Insurance contributions, claimants still often see themselves as having to prove their eligibility, a process akin to being assumed guilty until proven otherwise. Staff make assessments and instruct the payments section to issue a Giro or payment book. They are rarely in a position to do anything else. In effect, social security staff are doing little more than counting the poor. Jobseeker's Allowance and New Deal offer new models. Implemented positively, the claimant is asked 'What else can you do and what additional help do you require?' Staff are motivated to assist people rather than simply to manage files. The claimant is encouraged to think about opportunities and should receive support to transform realistic expectations into reality.

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To date the new model has emphasised work. But different forms of support will be required as the proactive approach is applied to other areas of social security in which work may not always be a viable option. Support services for those on incapacity benefits, for example, might entail advice to help maximise income, limit outgoings and ensure the appropriate provisions to help them fulfil their potential beyond simply the activities of daily living.

New forms of administrative organisation based around claimant types might best support proactive social security. There could be an agency for pensioner affairs. Another might promote work and career development - merging Employment Services and relevant parts of the Benefits Agency and bringing together selected in and out of work benefits. Yet another would provide benefits and services to people unable to work for reasons of disability and physical or mental ill health. There might even be a case for a cross-cutting family or children's agency embracing support for lone parents, childcare strategy, child benefit and possibly, even, the functions of the Child Support Agency.

Financial services for all

More radical change is possible and consistent with policies to promote self-sufficiency and empower individuals. One approach, that fosters social integration, is to recognise that social security provides collective financial services for virtually everyone. While its services are generally available only to those with limited resources, most people claim benefits at some points in their lives. Social security can therefore be presented as a people's bank used by citizens to 'save' for predictable and less predictable contingencies.

As well as facilitating the development of personalised advice and support services, separating assessment from payment allows for a revolution in the financial services offered to low income families. The support agencies would occupy an analogous position to employers paying the equivalent of wages to those without work or with limited income. They could, like many employers, subcontract this activity to payroll firms and the banking sector (which might have to embrace Post Office Counters given the important role of social security in underwriting the multi-purpose stores in rural communities).

A people's bank could evolve from the merger of the various payment sectors currently scattered across the Benefits Agency. However, the attraction of private sector expertise, additional investment, and the option of competition might make the development of a banking sector the preferred option to service the financial needs of claimants.

Rather than be left to languish on low incomes, claimants would then have access to more of the financial tools used by other citizens to manage the ebbs and flows of family finances. Most claimants steadfastly manage on limited social security payments. The fact that they are currently denied the hole-in-the-wall access to cash and credit that other people find so helpful is a form of social exclusion.

Post Script

Positive welfare is not a defence of the status quo but a radical agenda that builds on success and recognises that social security needs to be made even better, with policy substance and delivery inter-linked.

Positive social security is society's principal weapon against social exclusion. To claim benefit is not a failure. In some cases it is a reward for service; in others, it is a compassionate response to unavoidable need; and in yet others it is a step to further self-sufficiency. The art of positive welfare is to ensure that all stakeholders recognise the differences. That is the challenge inherent in the recent social security Green Paper, *A New Contract for Welfare*.

Related CRSP Publications

CRSP2081P

Leeming, A., Unell, J. and Walker, R., (1994) *Lone Mothers: Coping with the Consequences of Separation*, DSS Research Report No. 30, HMSO, London.

CRSP2125P

Walker, R. and Brittain, K., (1995) *Benefits Agency Customers and the 1994 Review of the Benefits System*, DSS In-house Report No. 7, HMSO, London.

CRSP2227P

Vincent, J., Leeming, A., Peaker, A. and Walker, R., (1995) *Choosing Advice on Benefits*, DSS Research Report No. 35, HMSO, London.

CRSP2139P

Stafford, B., Walker, R., Hull, L. and Horsley, E., (1996) *Customer Contact & Communication with the Benefits Agency: A Literature Review*, DSS In-house Report No. 17, HMSO, London.

CRSP2203P

Kellard, K. and Stafford, B., (1997) *Delivering Benefits to Unemployed People*, DSS Research Report No. 69, HMSO, London.

CRSP2208SP

Stafford, B., Dobson, B. and Vincent, J., (1998) *Delivering Benefits to Unemployed 16 and 17 Year Olds*, Annex 1: Stand Alone Summary, DSS Research Report No. 70, HMSO, London.

CRSP2219P

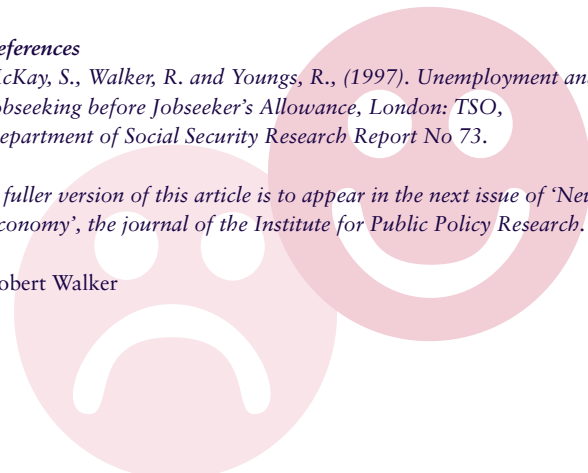
Leisering, L. and Walker, R., (1998) 'Making the future: from dynamics to policy agendas', Chapter 15 in *The Dynamics of Modern Society*, Bristol: Policy Press, pp.265-285.

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McKay, S., Walker, R. and Youngs, R., (1997). *Unemployment and Jobseeking before Jobseeker's Allowance*, London: TSO, Department of Social Security Research Report No 73.

A fuller version of this article is to appear in the next issue of 'New Economy', the journal of the Institute for Public Policy Research.

Robert Walker



Helping Unemployed People into Self-Employment

The Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) commissioned CRSP to conduct research focusing on the value of self-employment for unemployed people.

Recent years have witnessed a growth in self-employment in the UK, currently estimated at between 12 and 13 per cent and predicted to continue to rise to over 15 per cent by 2006 (DfEE, 1997). However, the nature of self-employment is changing. Whilst 'traditional' types of self-employment remain, new, less autonomous and more insecure types of self-employment are emerging, such as homeworking and labour only sub-contracting.

Obtaining recent data about self-employment can be problematic. Surveys may not necessarily adopt a consistent definition of self-employment and reliance on self-descriptions may be insufficient. Income and earnings data collected for survey purposes is thought to be often

inaccurate or misleading, because of the difficulty in defining income and profits. Furthermore, self-employed people are known to have particularly low response rates to surveys.

In addition, there is also only limited information available about self-employment experiences over time. For example, little is known about

flows into and out of self-employment. Information about the origins of those moving into self-employment and the destinations of those leaving self-employment could provide valuable information about factors that influence such movements, as well as those influencing the duration or sustainability of self-employment.

The research used three main sources of information:

1. Secondary analysis of data drawn from the first two waves of the first cohort of the Jobseeker's Allowance baseline survey (conducted at CRSP), providing information on respondents' movements over a six month period.
2. Secondary analysis of longitudinal data drawn from the Family and Working Lives Survey (FWLS), which collected information about the work histories of over 9000 people aged between 16 and 69.
3. A review of relevant literature.

Key Findings

Research shows that there are a number of factors that may determine success in self-employment, including age, previous employment history, skills and access to resources.

For example, young people have a higher failure rate in self-employment than others and so may require more intensive resources than other groups to enable them to sustain self-employment. This is particularly important if the recently introduced self-employment option in the New Deal for young people is to be successful in its aim of providing a viable, secure and sustainable alternative to unemployment.

Although self-employment remains a predominantly male occupation, females are increasingly likely to take-up self-employment, partly as a result of their increased participation in the labour market as a whole, and partly because of a rise in predominantly female self-employment opportunities, including homeworking and part-time self-employment. However, much of this 'new' self-employment is insecure and poorly paid. The

analysis showed that women are more likely to leave self-employment if the opportunity arises, suggesting that for many women, self-employment is not taken out of choice, but rather to fit in with family responsibilities and caring commitments, or as a way of re-entering the labour market.

Analysis of the FWLS data showed that even if a period of self-employment ends, the experience may enhance labour market prospects, with those who had

entered self-employment from unemployment more likely to move on to employment than return to unemployment once self-employment had ended (Figure 1).

The research highlighted the need for more longitudinal data on self-employment over time, providing information on transitions between self-employment and unemployment, using a consistent definition of self-employment which recognises the emergence of 'new' types of self-employment.

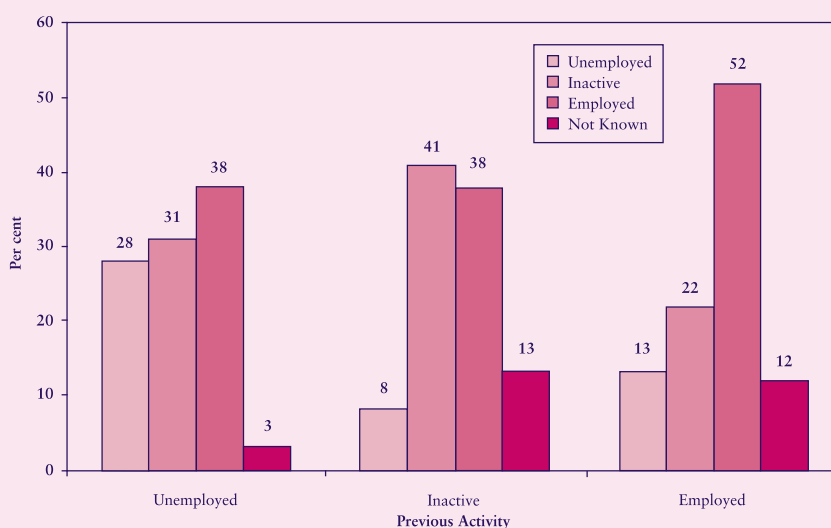
The research commenced in July 1997. The report of findings was published in 1998 as DfEE Research Report No.46 (Kellard, K. and Middleton, S., *Helping Unemployed People into Self-employment*).

References

DfEE (1997). *Labour Market and Skills Trends 1997-98*. London.

Karen Kellard

Figure 1 Destinations After Self-employment According to Previous Activity



Customer Contact with the Benefits Agency

The Benefits Agency (BA) has a large customer base, indeed most people are customers of the Agency at some point in their lives. Customers contact the organisation for a variety of reasons, use different methods - visit, 'phone or write, and may make more than one contact. Not all of these contacts will be deemed necessary by the Agency and/or the customer. It is in both parties' interests to minimise the number of unnecessary contacts.

CRSP was commissioned by the Department of Social Security (on behalf of the BA) to investigate the number and types of contacts made by customers and so assist with the development of policy on service delivery.

The research task was to determine the number of contacts customers needed to make in order to complete or transact a piece of business. A piece of business is a customer's *raison d'être* for one or more related contacts with the BA. Examples are making a new claim, reporting a change of circumstances, chasing a payment and seeking information. The pieces of business were defined by the customers, and do not necessarily match the administrative categories used by the Agency.

Whether a given contact is seen as necessary or unnecessary can depend upon whether it is seen from the perspective of the customer or the BA.

The research showed that, from the BA's viewpoint, about a third of all contacts were unnecessary. The average customer made 1.1 unnecessary contacts and 1.8 necessary contacts with the Agency.

However, from the customers' point of view most contacts were considered to be necessary with an average of 0.4 unnecessary contacts and 2.4 necessary contacts.

Despite these differences, there was a measure of agreement from both perspectives that a 'high' number of unnecessary contacts were associated with particular pieces of business - making an

appeal, reporting a lost payment and chasing a payment - and certain 'benefits' - Income Support and the Social Fund (Table 1 and Figure 1).

A report of the research has been published. Stafford, B., Kellard, K. and Horsley, E., (1997) Customer Contact with the Benefits Agency, London: TSO, Department of Social Security Research Report No. 65.

The fieldwork for the main survey was conducted for CRSP by Public Attitudes Surveys Limited.

Karen Kellard and Bruce Stafford

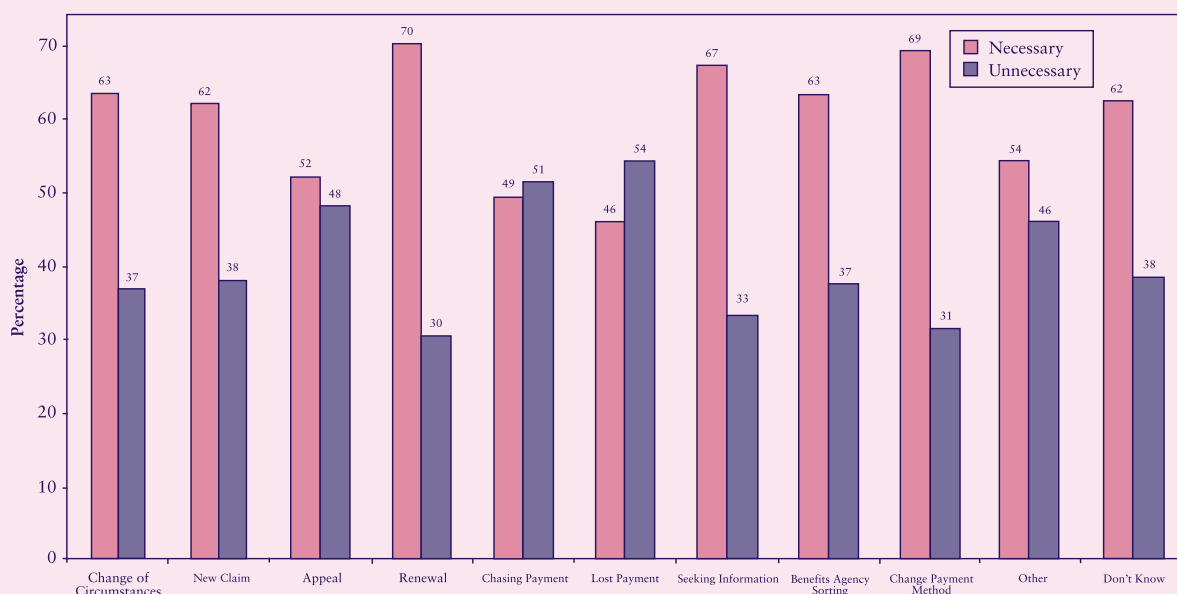
Table 1 Necessary and Unnecessary Contacts according to Benefit Type

Benefit Type	Benefits Agency Perspective		Customer Perspective	
	Necessary	Unnecessary	Necessary	Unnecessary
Income Support	1.6	1.6	2.6	0.6
Social Fund	2.6	1.8	3.7	0.7
Retirement Pension	1.5	0.4	1.7	0.2
Family Credit	1.6	0.6	1.9	0.3
Disability Living Allowance	1.6	0.6	1.9	0.3
Child Benefit	1.6	0.5	1.8	0.3

The research covered customers of: the Social Fund; Child Benefit; Disability Living Allowance; Income Support; Family Credit and Retirement Pension. These were selected because they provide a representative mix of schemes and customer types, as well as covering contacts with the Benefits Agency's local offices and Central Directorates.

There were two main phases to the research. First, a qualitative study involving six discussion groups; and secondly, a survey of 2,000 customers. Sampling for the main survey was carried out across a selection of the BA's local offices and Central Directorates. The data gained from the survey provide a unique longitudinal perspective on customers' interactions with the BA.

Figure 1 Necessary and Unnecessary Contacts According to Reasons for Contact



A New Agenda for Politics

In a time when unprecedented change spans global forces and individual lives, study of the dynamics of society helps to identify and define the challenges which society confronts and offers a new policy agenda.

Until recently social science has sought to describe society in terms of structures and states that have more than a modicum of permanence. With dynamic approaches to the study of society, states and structures are conceived to be either the more or less long-lasting products of ongoing social processes or even, on occasion, illusions that owe their existence to researchers being forced by data limitations to study 'stills' from the 'movie of real life'.

The new agenda points towards a differentiated policy targeted on specific events, transitions and episodes in people's lives rather than a policy designed with regard to static and aggregate problem groups such as 'the' unemployed, lone parents or 'the' elderly. It is a policy strategy that builds on the agency of those in need, a proactive policy aiming to identify critical points of intervention early in problem careers.

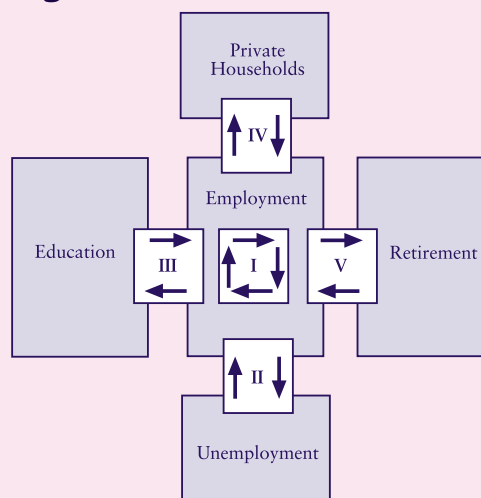
The figure provides a map of transitions to and from the labour market that provide points of intervention for policy. Whereas in the past a person might have expected to pass through each transition only once, milestones on a life time journey from education to retirement, such transitions today serve as gates to new opportunities that need to be opened several times. The figure tells only half of the story. Men and women have to coordinate interdependent trajectories that unfold simultaneously, such as their employment and family careers. The aim of dynamic policy making is to speed the passages through these gates and to equip people with the skills and resources needed to exploit opportunities that are available and to cope with set-backs if necessary.

Pro-active policy may initially be more expensive since it generally requires investment in people to provide them with professional and technical support. In the middle and longer term it should pay dividends, reducing the time that people spend unproductively or even destructively, and enabling them to cope better with the uncertainty and change that is so much a feature of modernity.

Dynamic analyses may also point to new policies in response to newly identified realities. For example, the notions of post-industrial poverty call for new and newly differentiated responses. Transient spells of poverty might best be tackled by schemes that facilitate a person to spread their income across a longer period through saving or borrowing. Chronic or permanent poverty necessitates measures that redistribute resources between different people and sections of society, either in the form of cash transfers or through the provision of services to enhance the quality of life. Equally, though, it should not be assumed that the circumstances of all the long-term unemployed are homogeneous: the different narratives of their life trajectories will reveal much about their ability to respond to policy initiatives. Policy has to be increasingly flexible and differentiated to adapt to the variegated and rapidly changing realities created by the new economic order.

Dynamic policies also lead back to old ideas of preventive social protection. Many claimants of social assistance would be best helped by improved social security benefits which prevent them from falling on to the last safety net. The potential here for unemployment benefits is obvious but changes need to be made to allow these benefits to operate better in a flexible labour market. Likewise, insurance-based pension provisions have almost extinguished poverty in old age in many countries but the restructuring of old age pensions currently debated has the potential to reintroduce destitution among the elderly in the middle years of the 21st century. The de-indexing of state pensions in Britain has already increased poverty in old age, putting into

Figure 1 Labour Market Transitions



- I Transitions between short-time working and full-time employment or between dependent work and self-employment
- II Transitions between unemployment and employment
- III Transitions between education and employment
- IV Transitions between private domestic activities and employment
- V Transitions between employment and retirement

Source: Adapted from Günther Schmid, cited in Reissert (1996)

reverse the progress of half a century. However, preventive policies are not easily designed or implemented. This applies, in particular, to labour market policies designed to reduce unemployment.

Policy makers are already moving in the direction of dynamic policies, driven by pressures on public expenditure and with the aim of making state welfare cheaper and, perhaps, more cost effective.

In the USA, welfare reforms originally proposed by Clinton began with the aim of making work pay though increases in the Earned Income Tax Credit, childcare and universal coverage of health care. The next goal was to get recipients off welfare into work within two years. But it was recognised that there will always be people who cannot find work after the two years have ended and for these Clinton planned to impose a work requirement, using welfare expenditure to create subsidised jobs. But whereas Clinton sought to establish a link between what society can demand of claimants and what it has to do to enable them to meet these demands, under pressure from the Republicans the link was cut, retaining demands on claimants but dropping the support.

Policies outlined in the Labour Government's first Green Paper on social security reform echo many of Clinton's initial objectives. With an unassailable majority in the House of Commons, the main opposition to reform may come from within government, born of frustration if returns on the initial investment in people take time to materialise.

This article is an edited version of the final chapter of 'The Dynamics of Modern Society' which is edited by Lutz Leisering and Robert Walker and published by the Policy Press, Bristol, 1998 (ISBN 1-86134-059-1).

Reissert, B., 1996, 'How are social protection systems coping with change?' Paper presented at the 1996 Joint ETUC/ETUI Annual Conference, Brussels, 7-8 November.

Robert Walker and Lutz Leisering

The Characteristics of Older Workers

Does age have an effect on economic activity? If so what is the effect and how does it occur?

Older people are certainly less likely to be in paid work but this is not necessarily because they are more prone to unemployment. Rather the key factor appears to be the likelihood of returning to work. At what age is it appropriate to term someone an 'older worker'?

Recent analysis of data from the 1994/5 Family and Working Lives Survey, conducted for the Department for Education and Employment, suggests that the answer to the last question is 'around the age of 50'. Above this age the chances of leaving work increased (Figure 1) and the chances of returning to work decreased (Figure 2).

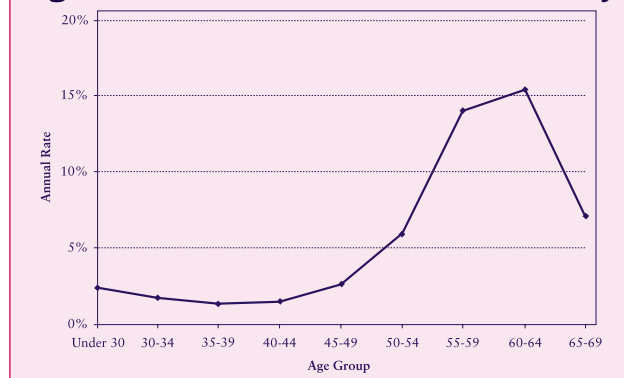
Of course, age is not the only cause of change in economic activity.

There was a sharply increased likelihood of people in white collar occupations becoming inactive beyond the ages of 50 and 55. The sharpness of this trend suggests that positive choices were being made by such groups, and in large numbers. The risk of unemployment remains comparatively low. However, among people in 'other' occupations, those without pensions or training for example, the transition to inactivity was much slower, and took place over a greater number of years. Evidence suggests this is likely to reflect progressively increasing health problems, or other commitments such as caring responsibilities, contributing to a more gradual withdrawal from the labour market. Moreover, those in blue collar jobs faced higher risks of unemployment and those risks became greater as they became older.

There were also gender differences, 64 per cent of men in their 50s were in full-time work, whilst ten per cent said that disability represented their main status, and a similar number were unemployed. Only six per cent said they were retired. For women in their 50s the range of activities was even greater. Fifty six per cent were in paid work, evenly split between full- and part-time workers. Twenty one per cent were 'looking after home or family' and nine per cent described themselves as retired.

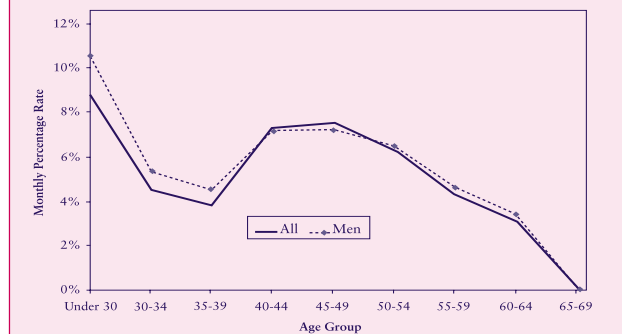
Five per cent of people aged 50 to 69 believed they had been discriminated against on age grounds in making job applications. A higher proportion of men than women perceived themselves to have been discriminated against on the basis of their age.

Figure 1 Moves from Paid Work to Inactivity



Older workers were less likely than many younger people to have experienced unemployment. Where they had, this was typically as an interruption to full-time work and happened later in working life. Once people had become unemployed, their chances of returning to paid work were much reduced if they were older than

Figure 2 Chances of Leaving Unemployment to Enter Paid Work



50 (Figure 2). For those born before 1945, and now aged 50 or older, only 45 per cent of all spells of unemployment beginning after the age of 50 ended with the person taking up paid work. Instead one-third of those spells were still continuing and more than one in six (17 per cent) ended in economic inactivity, typically retirement. In contrast, for the same birth cohort of people more than three-quarters of spells of unemployment that began before the age of 50 ended by a move into paid employment.

Older workers who were unemployed were prepared to accept just as broad a range of different types of jobs as younger workers, and were slightly more willing to take either permanent or temporary work (22 per cent of those aged 50 or over compared with 16 per cent of those under 50). However, those aged 50 or older were slightly more likely to want work of less than 30 hours and were less likely to be prepared to work more than 48 hours a week. Their wage expectations were higher than for other unemployed people - almost two in five (39 per cent) of those aged 50 or older would only accept wages of at least £200 per week in a job, compared with half as many (20 per cent) of the younger claimant unemployed.

The percentage describing themselves as retired increased rapidly with age, from three per cent of those aged 50 to 54 to 83 per cent of those aged 65 to 69. People in their 50s appeared reluctant to say that retirement represented their main economic activity. Only after prompting did many concede that they had, effectively, now retired. Those who had retired early were more likely than most to have occupational pensions. Successively younger age groups expected to retire at earlier ages: only time will tell if such expectations are realised.

Another important reason for high rates of economic inactivity, and indeed for reduced working hours, was the responsibility for providing care. This was particularly common for women in their 40s and 50s. By their late 60s, almost one woman in three had cared for an adult at some point in their life, as had more than one in every ten men. Older people were also more likely than others to report health problems. Those who did were only half as likely to be in paid work as those without health problems.

Taking all forms of inactivity together, the chances that men would leave inactivity for paid work declined sharply past the age of 50, and were close to zero for those over 60. Women were even less likely than men to leave inactivity for work. Moving out of inactivity into paid work for women was much reduced once they were over 40 and was particularly uncommon for those older than their late 50s.

This article is based on: 'Characteristics of Older Workers' DfEE Research Report 45. ISBN 0-85522-716-8.

Stephen McKay and Sue Middleton

Healthy Living Centres

Researchers rarely see a direct and apparent connection between studies they have undertaken and developments in social policy. However, the link between recent CRSP research on co-operatives in health and social care and on Community Well-being Centres, and the evolution of Healthy Living Centres is surely more than coincidence. Healthy Living Centres were introduced in the Government's White Paper, *The People's Lottery*.

In pursuit of the goals of Healthy Living Centres, the issues to be tackled are those of co-operation and commonality, the locus and sharing of power, and the commitment and engagement of key actors.

The inspiration for the concept of community well-being centres was Peckham Pioneer Health Centre. Its founders believed that, given opportunities and choices, people would opt for health enhancing activities.

The essential features of the Pioneer Health Centre:

- holistic focus on health rather than disease;
- a beautiful environment; a wide range of facilities;
- non-directional self help and self-determination;
- health checks and family consultations;
- local family membership;
- good nutrition advocated and supported by a cafeteria and centre farm.

The research identified some 300 initiatives which shared some of the characteristics of the Pioneer Health Centre. They have adopted social, ecological or holistic models of health which challenge the medical model. Health is understood as far more than the absence of disease. Accompanying this conceptual shift is a focus on the active role of individuals, social and environmental influences on health, and the importance of the community as a resource in health services development.

The majority of schemes were locally generated and run and take a community development approach. However, this varies from limited or, indeed, token involvement of local people to genuine partnerships and community action, which aim to create local ownership and control. This latter type is more often embodied in community and user-generated schemes and those with a co-operative structure.

A wide range of statutory agencies, voluntary bodies and some private organisations are combining in partnership to launch, run or develop projects. The multi-agency approach of schemes reinforces the value of 'health alliances', but funding is almost

Because of the multi-faceted nature of 'health', particular groups addressed issues of community health and well-being through a range of activities:

primary care	health promotion and prevention
complementary therapies	support and therapy
leisure and recreation	exercise and fitness
diet and food	community and personal care
the arts	education
housing	transport
economic regeneration	employment initiatives
community development	community action

always problematic: multi-agency funding for alliances is difficult to manage, and initiatives reported difficulties in achieving funding for work which straddles conventional boundaries. 'Grassroots' projects can find access to funding a particular problem.

The centres did not always tackle monitoring and assessment systematically, although some successful approaches were found. Workers may be daunted by the time, energy and cost entailed, by lack of confidence in their ability to carry it out, and by a misplaced belief that they should conduct epidemiological surveys in the best traditions of medical research.

A clear statement of aims and objectives, and what is to count as success, building the means to monitor and evaluate them into the scheme from the outset, are vital for work which is breaking new ground and seeking funding.

Evaluation may be pitched at the level of the individual, the project or the community. Schemes may monitor details of what they did and of intermediate outcomes. Assessment of wider outcomes, such as changes to people's attitudes, values and beliefs and meeting targets such as the reduction in heart disease, are beyond the resources of most projects. Quantitative measures of take-up, outputs and change are best used in combination with qualitative, subjective accounts of observed and experienced improvements in well-being.

Success appeared to be associated with:

- genuine changes in philosophy and approach, documented as a substantial shift in conceptualising health towards a holistic view and the social model of health;
- the development of health alliances which involve all relevant parties, including community groups, on a more or less equal basis;
- organisational change, indicated in the willingness of agencies to tackle the problems associated with setting up and organising joint work, and to establish appropriate procedures for monitoring and evaluation;
- structures which engage and empower participants so that they can effect change in their lives and which ensure a high degree of user and community involvement;
- secure and long-term financial support.

Problems and obstacles:

- a traditional philosophy and approach associated with the strength and persuasiveness of the medical model and of 'provision' made for people;
- too much dependence on enthusiastic and visionary people;
- bureaucratic boundaries and different ways of working which impede alliances;
- structures which encourage 'top down' methods which lack real community involvement;
- marginalisation of grassroots initiatives;
- failure to monitor and evaluate;
- falling between criteria for funding;
- difficulties in securing a building or space in which to operate.

The full report, Co-operating for Health, by Katharine Gaskin and Jill Vincent is available from CRSP, price £10 with order. A free Research Summary is also available.

Jill Vincent

CRSP News Update

New Projects

Since our last Briefings, CRSP has received funding for the following research projects:

- Leave Christmas Until December: How parents cope with Christmas
- Perceptions of Poverty and Social Exclusion 1998
- Incapacity Benefit and the Contributory Principle
- Returning to Work: Specific Groups and their Experiences

Staff Matters

CRSP welcomes Philip Sadler who joined us on 26th January as part-time IT support technician.

Karl Ashworth, Research Fellow will be leaving CRSP on 29th May after seven years. He will be joining MVA in Woking as a Senior Research Consultant. CRSP wishes Karl good luck in his new job.

Congratulations

CRSP congratulates:

Stephen McKay and Karen Rowlingson on the birth of their daughter Alex Rowlingson McKay born 1 February 1998,

and

Bruce, Maire and the rest of the Stafford family on the arrival of daughter, and sister Beth Stafford born 20th March 1998.

We would also like to congratulate Karen Kellard on being awarded a Masters Degree in Policy, Organisation and Change in Professional Care and Nigel Bilsbrough for achieving a Masters Degree in Business Administration.

Also Sharon Walker for completing her National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) Level 2 in Business Administration.

Visitors

Wim Van Oorschot from Tilburg University, The Netherlands, joined us as a visiting Professor from 5th January to 27th February. While Wim was with us he wrote two reports: Universalism and Selectivism among the Dutch Public and Dutch Public Opinion on Social Security, both available from Sharon Walker at CRSP.

Martha Hill, Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, visited CRSP to share interests in the analysis of panel data.

Bernhard Hilkert, University of Bremen, is spending three months at CRSP engaged in a comparative study of British and German social assistance funded by the Anglo-German Foundation.

Family Food and Fun Day

The Saffron Food and Health Project* marked the end of its first year by holding a Family Food and Fun Day on Saturday, 28th of March. The purpose of this event was to raise the awareness of healthy eating. Staff at the Linwood Centre, local residents and project workers all joined forces to host a community lunch and to try and put some fun into healthy eating. Approximately 400 people attended and the day was both successful and enjoyable.

* This project is funded by the National Lottery Charities Board.

International Seminar: Workfare in Europe*

As part of a cross-national study of welfare-to-work policies in Europe, CRSP is hosting a two day seminar on the 11-12 June for researchers and policy makers. Participants will attend from six northern European countries (Norway, Denmark, Germany, The Netherlands, France and the UK) and from the United States. The seminar will provide an opportunity for policy makers from each of these countries to meet their counterparts and to discuss the pitfalls, successes and practical implications of implementing Welfare-to-Work policies. Presentations and discussion will form the basis for a subsequent comparative analysis of 'workfare' type schemes.

* This work is funded under the European Commission's Framework IV programme.

CRSP is an autonomous research centre based in the Social Sciences Department of Loughborough University. The Centre was founded in 1983 by Professor Adrian Webb. Professor Robert Walker became Director in 1990.

For further information about the research described here, to order **Working Papers**, to receive back issues of **Briefings** or our latest **Annual Report**, or to be added to the CRSP mailing list, please contact:

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