

# Being on benefits isn't a culture; for many it's a living hell

Adam Tugwell | 24 March 2025



As you read through the pages of this blog or read the eBooks that are available and recognise the story unfolding and the different parts that we can all see, you may be able to step back and observe the reality that those who 'take from the state' are the easiest for everyone else to blame.

No matter their background or reason for being dependent upon the State, Benefits Claimants have become scapegoats and little more than everyone else's 'guilty bastards'.

Worst of all, they have now become a very easy target for those who are actually responsible for everything that is going wrong with the UK, to project their own guilt and fear upon.

For anyone receiving benefits when they could or would rather be 'paying their own way', being anywhere near the Benefits System, the many organisations that work within and around it, and being within the exploding sub-class of our society currently being gaslit by the financial benchmark of the National Minimum or Living Wage; life is a fearful, emotionally and practically challenging living hell.

In my recent research article and eBook '[Is Poverty Invisible to those who don't Experience it](#)', I discussed the realities that people using Foodbanks and in poverty face across the UK today.

Given the nature of the announcements due to be made as part of the Spring Statement this Wednesday and what we already know is on the way from the October '24 Budget, I will expand here on 5 of the most important points of what being within or touched by the Benefits System means to many of those whose lives are touched by it:

## 1. It costs more to live than the Minimum or Living Wage allows

The elephant in the room that is the cost-of-living crisis, is this:

***What we currently accept as being the National Minimum Wage or Living Wage, isn't anywhere near enough for a single person without any parental, caring or partner responsibilities, to live independently without top-up benefits, help from charities (foodbanks), going into debt or raiding savings.***

## 2. Working on the Minimum Wage means you still need help

People working in Minimum Wage jobs in the UK, cannot earn enough, working a 40-hour week, to pay their own way.

Those on Minimum Wage cannot live independently, without still having to jump through the hoops and requirements that come from being a benefit claimant; from 'qualifying' to get emergency food packages from Foodbanks; by going into debt using credit cards, loans or pay-day-credit type schemes; or by falling back on family or friends for handouts, just to make ends meet.

## 3. Being on benefits is no breeze: Welfare cuts are an act of increasing cruelty when many just want safe-to-climb ladder to escape

Being on benefits means being treated like you are someone else's guilty bastard and like you are the one who is in the wrong.

The staff in jobcentres (understandably) often don't really want to be there. They are regularly exposed to some of the UK's most unhappy people. When they themselves are at the cutting edge of a Benefits System that has ALREADY removed all sense of humanity from its heart and behaves like it already runs with the dehumanisation that we can expect from universal AI that is being introduced for all the wrong reasons.

People who are not working or who have personal issues that have made them dependent upon benefits often feel vulnerable.

They suffer from the lowered levels of confidence that any form of unexpected or inescapable vulnerability brings. Even before they contact Jobcentres, the Benefits Office or

any other organisations that provides the different services and offerings that provide income and support that comes from the public purse.

Some active claimants do use anger and exhibit loud forms of frustration. But this is often a self-protection mechanism and way to try and secure what they need from the System.

Sadly, these few are the stereotype upon which much of the prejudiced behaviour towards those on Benefits that reaches far beyond DWP staff is formed.

The profit-led private contractors who provide 'back to work' or 'welfare to work' services and 'support' are no better.

The tick-box culture that is applied universally towards anyone whose existence touches the welfare purse is one where claimants are considered capable of working *if they tried*, and therefore there *because they choose to be*.

***Once through the turnstile of the benefits door, benefits claimants are considered worthless.***

***Nobody operating or administering the benefits system from within is prepared to look at anyone asking for help as being anything other than the same.***

***The Benefits system is inherently cynical and labels everyone who doesn't work as being in the benefits queue as a lifestyle choice.***

Unless benefits claimants possess a CV or situation which would be strong enough to indicate that they wouldn't even be there in the first place, the experience of being just within the benefits system itself quickly takes its toll. Once inside, it is a downwards spiral for many where there is no genuine escape, even if you find a way to leave.

Politicians may indeed be openly questioning the number of unemployed who there because of mental health issues.

But beyond the torture of what it takes for growing numbers to keep up with a financial and money-centric culture that demands everyone keep up, the constant hits that come from being in 'the system' and treated like you are sub human by those who do and can work, makes for a progressively difficult challenge, that in the situation we all face today, has come down to little more than lucky breaks for the many who do want to escape.

#### **4. Very few want to be on benefits - Living independently on a basic wage is key**

I mentioned the angry and the frustrated above.

These are the people that hide behind a mask and fight the contact that they have with the Benefits System, because it's what they believe they have to do, *to survive*.

Yes, many receiving benefits suggest openly and behave with a sense of entitlement. But this is the situation that decades of poor politicians – and therefore that *we all* have created,

because of the responsibility that *we all have*, for appointing the politicians who have created, developed and maintained the mess that the UK is now in.

The stories of people who cannot step out of the benefits trap, because they cannot afford to do so, are also true.

There is something perverse about a situation where claimants will not take the risk of taking jobs and opportunities because of how they will be treated by the benefits system and what support they will lose immediately if and when they take those steps to get out.

**Unless they cannot work because of other commitments or they find themselves genuinely unable to do so, there are few Benefits Claimants who have entered or remain within the Benefits System by choice.**

## 5. A Minimum Wage that is guaranteed to be a Living Wage would change everything

Another truth that we have turned a blind eye to, is that many people who cannot do so currently, would be very happy to be working in Minimum Wage jobs IF they actually paid what its costs to live independently.

Many people would choose to work in Minimum Wage jobs, in receipt of a wage that they could live independently on. Because their only working responsibility or responsibility to others would then be to do what they are asked for the time that they are at work.

Many of us would be very happy just to work a working week and at the same time earn enough so that all of the bills and the essentials that it takes to live an independent and self-sustaining life today are paid for. Just as long as we don't then have to go looking for and making ourselves vulnerable to anyone or anything else, reaching out for help, just to make ends meet.

*If you would like to explore this further, please read '[The Basic Living Standard](#)'.*

## Further Information

To explore more of Adam Tugwell's writing, including the online edition of this post, please visit:

[www.adamtugwell.blog](http://www.adamtugwell.blog)

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