

Labour, universal basic income and a job guarantee

Published: January 12, 2026, 8:49 pm

John McDonnell, the Shadow Chancellor, [has apparently decided](#) that the next Labour manifesto should include a commitment to Universal Basic Income (UBI) even though, as yet, no figures are available to support the proposal in the UK, and no data from previous trials has proven whether the system will work, or not.

I find the announcement a challenge. I have in my time argued for UBI. If I was now given a choice between Labour adopting modern monetary theory, with a job guarantee attached, or a universal basic income I believe that modern monetary theory with a job guarantee would be more important, more realistic, more likely to deliver, and more acceptable to voters.

I can see value in a UBI. I do not dismiss the idea. But I think the public are a long way from accepting it as yet, whereas a job guarantee makes a lot of sense to many people, especially given Labour's priorities, and the current state of the economy.