

Funding the Future

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As The [Guardian notes](#) this morning:

Unemployed workers will be forced to take up a job in any sector or face swift financial sanctions under a crackdown designed to fill hundreds of thousands of vacancies in sectors from social care to construction, ministers have announced.

Claimants will be given just four weeks – down from three months – to find a job within their preferred sector. After that point, if they fail to make “reasonable efforts” to secure a job or turn down any offer, they will have part of their universal credit payment withdrawn under a tightening of existing Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) policy.

I am appalled. The last remnants of the social security safety net for those without work in the UK is to be withdrawn to keep Boris Johnson in a job. This is, very obviously, what Theresa May called the Nasty Party at work.

I am as appalled by the sheer absurdity of this proposal. What it means is that a person might now be sectioned under the Universal Credit regime before they have even received the first payment from it. How on earth could anyone have thought this up?

But what most annoys me about this proposal is the sheer lack of respect it shows for a person who has lost their job who is now required to react by getting another within four weeks when the decision-making processes involved in that situation are profoundly important to most people, and quite difficult to take because of their wide reaching consequences, none of which facts are respected by this proposal.

No one, from Beveridge onwards, thought that we should have an unemployment support system to maintain those who never want to work, whilst saying which I am aware of the arguments for universal basic income, which I think to be somewhat different. What, however, was proposed as part of the past-war settlement was an end to the curse of poverty, fear and long-term loss associated with involuntary unemployment. The aim was always to provide those in this situation with the support that they needed whilst they re-orientated their lives to new work. The process respected the people in question and was critical to the creation of a society in which all

had a chance to prosper.

There is quite literally nothing left of that respect in this proposal. The unemployed person is treated as an object to be redeployed for the benefit of an employer, without any concern for the person's own situation, aspirations, fears or hopes. Humanity is simply stripped from the system: the unemployed person becomes a cog in a machine.

When a political party has reached this state of depravity it is no longer fit to govern.