



Unemployed told: do four weeks of unpaid work or lose your benefits

- Crackdown on £190bn-a-year welfare bill
- Payments could be suspended for three months

The unemployed will be ordered to do periods of compulsory full-time work in the community or be stripped of their benefits under controversial American-style plans to slash the number of people without jobs.

The proposals, in a white paper on [welfare](#) reform to be unveiled this week, are part of a radical government agenda aimed at cutting the £190bn-a-year welfare bill and breaking what the coalition now calls the "habit of worklessness".

The measures will be announced to parliament by the work and pensions secretary, [Iain Duncan Smith](#), as part of what he will describe as a new "contract" with the 1.4 million people on jobseekers' allowance. The government's side of the bargain will be the promise of a new "universal credit", to replace all existing benefits, that will ensure it always pays to work rather than stay on welfare.

In return, where advisers believe a jobseeker would benefit from experiencing the "habits and routines" of working life, an unemployed person will be told to take up "mandatory work activity" of at least 30 hours a week for a four-week period. If they refuse or fail to complete the programme their jobseeker's allowance payments, currently £50.95 a week for those under 25 and £64.30 for those over 25, could be stopped for at least three months.

Sanctions – including removal of benefit – currently exist if people refuse to go on training courses or fail to turn up to job interviews, but they are rarely used.

The plans stop short of systems used in the US since the 1990s under which benefits can be "time limited", meaning all payments end after a defined period. But they draw heavily on American attempts to change public attitudes to welfare and to change the perception that welfare is an option for life.

The proposals come as the government prepares to unveil policy plans across a number of departments. Tomorrow, the Ministry of Justice will reveal that thousands of criminals with serious mental illnesses or drug addictions will no longer be sent to prison but will instead be offered "voluntary" treatment in hospital. Documents will show that offenders will be free to walk away from NHS units because officials believe it would be pointless to create duplicate prisons in the community. "While treatment is voluntary, offenders in these



programmes will be expected to engage, be motivated to change and to comply with the tough requirements of their community order," they will say.

Kenneth Clarke, the justice secretary, said: "Serious criminals who pose a threat to the public will always be kept locked up, but in every prison there are also people who ought to be receiving treatment for mental illness rather than housed with other criminals. The public would be better protected if they could receive that treatment in a more suitable setting."

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Summary Writing

Write a short summary of the above article, including only the main points. Try to use your own words as far as possible. Write between 50 and 100 words.

Complete the sentences below with one word from the text. Sometimes you may need to change the form (eg put a verb into the past tense).

1. The _____ for his disease lasted six months.
2. The electrical wires _____ a danger to the baby crawling on the floor.
3. She _____ from the medicine.
4. The dog growled as a _____ to the stranger.
5. It is the school's _____ that all children must wear uniforms.
6. The police ordered her to stop the car and she _____.
7. . Everyone _____ to quit smoking.
8. We _____ the plane to land in one hour.
9. She has _____ political views and wants to overthrow the government.
10. She brought extra money to _____ she could pay her own way.
11. It's a fancy restaurant,; blue jeans are not _____.
12. In August, the car companies _____ their new models.



Answer Key

Example Summary

People without jobs will be forced to do work in the community or lose their unemployment benefit under new government plans. The aim of the government is to change the attitudes of people who live on state support and make sure that it always pays to work. Another proposal is that criminals with serious mental illness and drug addicts will no longer be sent to prison.

Vocabulary

1. treatment
2. posed
3. benefitted
4. threat
5. policy
6. complied
7. ought
8. expect
9. radical
10. ensure
11. suitable
12. unveil

