

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

Most Britons Support Government on Work Placement Strategy

Two-in-four respondents believe the programme will help people in finding new paid work.

[LONDON – 24 November 2010] – A Government proposal to require people who are claiming unemployment benefits to do compulsory four-week work placements is supported by a large proportion of Britons, a new Angus Reid Public Opinion poll has found.

The online survey of a representative national sample of 2,001 British adults also shows that only three-in-ten respondents agree with Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams, who expressed negative views on the proposal.

Across Great Britain, 73 per cent of respondents support the plans to require those claiming unemployment benefits to do compulsory four-week work placements after a certain period in order to be able to continue claiming these benefits. Placements might include manual labouring activities such as gardening or litter clearing for local councils. Only 22 per cent of respondents are opposed to this idea.

Two-in-five Britons (44%) believe the placements will ultimately help people in finding new paid work, while one third (36%) think they will be ineffectual, and 13 per cent say they will hinder people who are looking for paid work.

While 12 per cent of respondents think individuals who are claiming benefits should be never be required to undertake work placements, 38 per cent believe they should do so within the first five months of starting to claim benefits.

KEY FINDINGS

- **73% support plans to require people claiming unemployment benefits to do compulsory four-week work placements**
- **44% these placements will help people in finding new paid work**

Full topline results are at the end of this release.

From November 9 to November 10, 2010, Angus Reid Public Opinion conducted an online survey among 2,001 randomly selected British adults who are Springboard UK panelists. The margin of error—which measures sampling variability—is +/- 2.2%. The results have been statistically weighted according to the most current education, age, gender and region data to ensure samples representative of the entire adult population of Great Britain. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding.

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When asked about the feelings they would have if they were required to do a compulsory manual work placement, 28 per cent of respondents said they would be willing, 26 per cent claim they would be embarrassed, and 22 per cent say they would be understanding.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has warned that the proposal could drive people into a “downward spiral of uncertainty, even despair”. Danny Alexander, a Liberal Democrat and the Chief Secretary to the Treasury, stated that these plans were not designed to “punish” or “humiliate” but to “support and encourage” people getting back into the habit of getting up and going to work.

Half of respondents (52%) agree with Alexander’s point of view on this issue, while 29 per cent side with the Archbishop of Canterbury.

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Unemployment Benefits

As you may be aware, the Government announced plans to require those claiming unemployment benefits to do compulsory four-week work placements after a certain period in order to be able to continue claiming benefits. Placements might include manual labouring activities such as gardening or litter clearing for local councils. Generally speaking, do you support or oppose these plans?

	Great Britain	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+
Support	73%	76%	68%	76%
Oppose	22%	18%	27%	21%
Don't know	5%	6%	4%	3%

Unemployment Benefits

In general, do you think that undertaking these placements will..

	Great Britain	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+
Hinder people in finding new paid work	13%	11%	15%	12%
Help people in finding new paid work	44%	56%	39%	41%
Make no difference	36%	23%	40%	41%
Don't know	7%	9%	6%	6%

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Unemployment Benefits

Under this scheme, how long after starting to claim benefits do you think individuals should be required to undertake such a work placement?

	Great Britain	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+
Straight away	13%	15%	10%	14%
After 1 month	10%	10%	8%	12%
After 2 to 3 months	12%	12%	11%	14%
After 4 to 5 months	3%	4%	4%	2%
6 months	23%	23%	23%	24%
After 7 to 11 months	3%	3%	4%	1%
After one year	11%	9%	12%	11%
After 13 to 18 months	2%	2%	2%	2%
After 18 to 23 months	2%	3%	2%	2%
After two years	2%	1%	4%	1%
Longer than that	1%	1%	1%	0%
Should never be required to do this	12%	7%	15%	12%
Don't know	6%	9%	6%	5%

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Unemployment Benefits

If you lost your job, and were unemployed for a period of time, which of these words would describe your feelings if required to do a compulsory manual work placement, such as gardening or litter clearing for local councils?

	Great Britain	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+
Upset	16%	20%	18%	9%
Willing	28%	31%	30%	24%
Embarrassed	26%	34%	29%	15%
Angry	16%	16%	21%	11%
Pleased	7%	9%	7%	6%
Enthusiastic	9%	13%	8%	6%
Understanding	22%	28%	22%	19%
Confused	5%	7%	5%	3%
Despairing	15%	13%	19%	11%
Encouraged	9%	12%	9%	7%
I would not feel any of these things	4%	3%	5%	3%
Not applicable to me	15%	8%	9%	30%

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Unemployment Benefits

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams, has warned that the pressure from this could drive people into a “downward spiral of uncertainty, even despair”, whereas Danny Alexander the Lib Dem Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said that these plans were not designed to “punish” or “humiliate” but to “support and encourage” people getting back into the habit of getting up and going to work. When it comes to this plan, do you tend to agree more with...

	Great Britain	Age 18-34	Age 35-54	Age 55+
Archbishop of Canterbury, Rowan Williams’s perspective	29%	21%	35%	27%
Lib Dem Chief Secretary to the Treasury, Danny Alexander’s perspective	52%	51%	46%	59%
Don’t know	20%	27%	19%	14%

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Angus Reid Public Opinion is a practice of Vision Critical—a global research and technology company specialising in custom online panels, private communities, and innovative online methods. Vision Critical is a leader in the use of the Internet and rich media technology to collect high-quality, in-depth insights for a wide array of clients. Dr. Angus Reid and the Angus Reid Public Opinion team are pioneers in online research methodologies, and have been conducting online surveys since 1995.

Vision Critical is now one of the largest market research enterprises in the world. In addition to its five offices in Canada—located in Vancouver, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, and Montreal—the firm also has offices in San Francisco, Chicago, New York, London, Paris and Sydney. Its team of specialists provides solutions across every type and sector of research, and currently serves over 200 international clients.

Angus Reid Public Opinion polls are conducted using the Angus Reid Forum (www.angusreidforum.com), Springboard America (www.springboardamerica.com) and Springboard UK (www.springboarduk.com) online panels, which are carefully recruited to ensure representation across all demographic and psychographic segments of these populations. Panel members pass through rigorous screening and a double opt-in process ensuring highly motivated and responsive members. These premier online survey platforms present respondents with highly visual, interactive, and engaging surveys, ensuring that panel members provide thoughtful and reliable responses. Each survey is actively sampled and weighted to model that characteristics of the universe required and employs the latest in quality control techniques to ensure data validity.

Since 2006, Angus Reid has covered eight provincial elections in Canada—more than any other pollster in the country—and the results have accurately predicted the outcome of each of these democratic processes.

Angus Reid, the only public opinion firm to exclusively use online methods to follow the views of the electorate during the 2008 federal campaign, offered the most accurate prediction of the results of Canada's 40th election. More information on our electoral record in Canada and the United States can be found at:

<http://www.angus-reid.com/services/record-of-accuracy/>

More information on the way Angus Reid conducts public opinion research can be found at <http://www.visioncritical.com/what-we-do/practices/angus-reid-public-opinion/>

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**For more information, please contact
our spokesperson listed in the footnote.**

**Copies of this poll are available on our website:
<http://www.visioncritical.com/>**

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