8.2 Work and Welfare: Changing Work, Worklessness and Welfare Policy: 30-minute Pack

AQA 7192 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For questions marked AO2 or AO3 use short, linked sentences; for the final question write in full sentences. Allow about 30 minutes for the whole pack.

1 Describe two features of Universal Credit as a UK welfare reform.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 Compare a welfare pluralist view and a residual view of how welfare should be provided in society.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 Explain two reasons why some sociologists argue that Universal Credit may increase insecurity for low-paid workers.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 Using your knowledge of sociological perspectives, evaluate the extent to which welfare-to-work policies, such as conditionality, training and wage subsidies, are the most effective response to long-term worklessness.

(Total for Question 4 is 12 marks)

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Mark scheme · 8.2 Work and Welfare: Changing Work, Worklessness and Welfare Policy: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies a feature, e.g. Universal Credit combines several means-tested benefits into one monthly payment	**B1**
development, e.g. it merges jobseeker's allowance, housing benefit and tax credits among others	**B1**
identifies a second feature, e.g. has stronger conditionality and an emphasis on moving claimants into work	**B1**
development, e.g. claimants must show job search activity and can face sanctions if they do not	**B1**

Answer: Universal Credit combines several means-tested benefits into one monthly payment, merging payments such as jobseeker's allowance and housing benefit, and emphasises stronger conditionality by requiring claimants to show job search activity and potentially face sanctions.

Question 2

identifies pluralism as support for mixed provision from state, market and voluntary sectors	**B1**
explains pluralist idea that diversity allows choice and fills gaps state provision may not cover	**B1**
identifies residualism as favouring minimal state role and support only as a last resort	**B1**
explains residualists argue extensive universal welfare can reduce personal responsibility and be unaffordable	**B1**

Answer: Pluralists support mixed welfare provision from state, market and voluntary sectors, arguing diversity gives choice and fills gaps, while residualists favour a minimal state role providing support only as a last resort, arguing that universal provision can reduce personal responsibility and be unaffordable.

Question 3

identifies reason one, e.g. monthly payment timing can be problematic for people used to weekly wages	**B1**
explains development, e.g. large monthly payments followed by delays or advances can cause budgeting difficulties and risk of rent arrears	**B1**
identifies reason two, e.g. strict conditionality and sanctions can reduce income security when employment is unpredictable	**B1**
explains development, e.g. low-paid or gig work with variable hours can make meeting conditions hard, risking sanctions and loss of income	**B1**

Answer: Monthly payment timing can cause budgeting problems for workers used to weekly pay, risking rent arrears, and strict conditionality with sanctions can reduce income security for those in unstable or variable-hour work who may struggle to meet requirements.

Question 4

Level 1 Simple, limited points about welfare-to-work policies, with little development. May describe a single policy without linking to sociological perspectives or provide unsupported assertion about effectiveness.	**1-3**
Level 2 Some relevant knowledge and application. Describes welfare-to-work policies and gives basic reasons why they might help, with limited use of sociological perspectives or evidence. Some attempt at evaluation, but unbalanced.	**4-6**
Level 3 Clear knowledge and application. Explains how welfare-to-work policies can reduce worklessness using sociological ideas such as human capital and behaviourist approaches, and offers criticisms from structural and feminist perspectives. Some balanced assessment and examples.	**7-9**
Level 4 Comprehensive, well-developed response with effective evaluation. Uses competing sociological perspectives, for example New Right support for conditionality, social democratic or structural critiques that stress job creation and local investment, and feminist concerns about care responsibilities. Reaches a supported conclusion on how far welfare-to-work policies alone are sufficient.	**10-12**

Indicative content:

- Points that support welfare-to-work policies: conditionality can motivate active job search; training increases skills and employability; wage subsidies reduce employer risk and create opportunities; policymakers can target support to local needs.
- New Right perspective: supports conditionality and work incentives, arguing benefits should encourage work and reduce dependency.
- Human capital perspective: emphasises reskilling and training to match employer needs, improving long-term prospects.
- Structural criticisms: decline in local job opportunities, automation and lack of investment mean training alone cannot create jobs; need for demand-side policies and regional investment.
- Feminist critique: welfare-to-work can punish carers if childcare and caring responsibilities are not addressed; conditionality may unfairly sanction those with caring duties.
- Practical and ethical issues: sanctions can increase hardship, digital access and budgeting challenges under Universal Credit may limit policy effectiveness.
- Evidence from Item-like contexts: where vacancies are low or insecure (gig work), wage subsidies and retraining may have limited effect unless job quality and availability improve.
- Conclusion should weigh perspectives, recognising welfare-to-work can be part of a solution but is unlikely to be sufficient on its own without job creation, supportive services and safeguards.

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