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Purnell seeks innovative welfare solutions

Bystaff writer

From epolitix.com, this has more detail on the ways in which Purnell's plans to completely privatise service delivery in welfare aim to further constrict, if not eradicate, the slim margin of self-determination for workers identified in Madame Tlank's article on this website.

Again 'responsibility' is the issue and it is not that of the private service providers but of those 'served' by them. (The service provider's duty is to innovate and be creative - presumably, like the homicidal 'Working Links', when they goof they get off scot free). While there are no limits to the service providers' entrepreneurial imagination, again the 'choice' that is offered to those serviced is rigged - "Claimants should have the choice over how to get back to work, not whether they should go back to work," he explained.'

Interesting that Purnell came from the DCMS to work and pensions, a signal indication of the way 'creativity' segues into the imposition of work. Creativity as the lab for devolution of responsibility and forced choices â a kind of OuLiPian [OuLymPian?] welfarism where constraint is productive? Certainly a workshop for potential labour, since in a global downturn Value - and its human producers - is more likely to be destroyed than reproduced. Working Links was in the vanguard of this kind of private-public 'murdering the dead' but clearly coerced labour in a fully outsourced form has a future. How long before some creative service provider proposes a Welfare to War or Warfare as Work scheme? Could outsourced conscription be the final solution to the incapacity benefits 'problem'?

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Purnell seeks innovative welfare solutions

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The work and pensions secretary has said that the welfare system is to be significantly opened up to private and voluntary sector providers.

James Purnell said in a speech on Wednesday that firms will be encouraged to come up with and propose innovative solutions, rather than wait to be asked.

He argued that this is a "complete reversal" of current rules which stipulate that his department decides which services to put out to tender.

"This is us saying very clearly the only limit is the quality of service and imagination of the provider," Purnell told the Financial Times ahead of the speech.

Under the plan, businesses could bid to run programmes including welfare-to-work schemes and projects to rehabilitate former offenders.

And Purnell said that a work culture can only be achieved in the UK by reforming the welfare system to give people more responsibility.

"Claimants should have the choice over how to get back to work, not whether they should go back to work," he explained.

"We want a work culture, not a welfare culture and we can only achieve this by reforming the system so that it demands personal responsibility.

"Where providers identify a part of our business, or a customer group that they think they could do more for in a particular region, I want to hear their proposals. I want to be able to harness this creativity, and test the ideas we receive so that we can develop the innovative ideas for future programmes or enhance the effectiveness of current ones to do yet more to help people back into work.

"This is not an ideological issue - it's not one at the expense of the other. We are no more in favour of private providers than the public sector. It's a pragmatic question about the best way to help people.

"Rather than identify a need and then invite suppliers to fill it, we'd like to have an open door, where good ideas get serious consideration.

"One of the strengths of providers is the potential to develop new solutions to existing problems and we should put ourselves into the position to tap into this expertise and innovation more creatively."