

Dorling, D. (2013) For young jobseekers, £8 a day is a lifeline, The Guardian, October 15th, <http://www.theguardian.com/society/2013/oct/15/jobseekers-allowance-lifeline-young>

## For young jobseekers, £8 a day is a lifeline

Jobseeker's allowance gives under-25s a chance to start their lives. Take it away, as the Conservatives want, and they will be cast adrift



**Danny Dorling**

The Guardian, Tuesday 15 October 2013 15.00 BST

[Jump to comments \(69\)](#)



Only 37.6% of the UK's 1.09 million unemployed young people claim benefits that average £2,927 a year each. Photograph: Rex Features

Jobseeker's allowance (JSA) for someone aged under 25 is £56.80 a week. According to the prime minister, this is too much and it will be set to zero if a Conservative majority is returned at the next election. Only 37.6% of the 1.09 million young people who are unemployed in the UK claim benefits, and they each receive, on average, £2,927 a year to live on. Although very few young adults are unlucky enough to have to claim JSA for a whole year, the constant churn from one low- or no-hours contract to another, on to one training scheme and then to none, means that almost as many young people join the dole queue every week as leave it. Dole is the lifeline between the bad options. The Tories want to cut that lifeline.

The number of young adults claiming their £8 a day is so low because it has been made so hard to claim JSA, and because – for any young person in a family with the money – the incentive for their parents to bail them out instead is so high.

In the 1980s, you claimed [unemployment](#) benefit by going to your local dole office and signing on every two weeks. However, you did not have to take any job you were offered or sign on for any cack-handed advice or sham education scheme. Signing on gave you a little room for manoeuvre; it gave you a tiny amount of choice.

When I left school, I signed on and then took a job working on a children's play scheme during the summer before I went to university. I did this for three summers in the late 1980s. The dole gave me the choice to do a good job, being paid £3 an hour, rather than take a worse job, any job, and undercut whoever else might have done that work. The dole stopped me fuelling the race to the bottom, and I also learned a little about how to try to keep several hundred children safe and happy in a public park, while many of their parents worked. It was probably the most difficult job I have ever done, and by the third summer I think I was good at it.

Later, when I was 21, I signed on again. I had finished my degree and had no job to go to. All my applications for postgraduate study had been turned down, but, again, the dole gave me a little breathing space, just enough to look and think. Someone dropped out of a course and I got their place. I found paid work during my studies too, as the grant was not enough to live on, but the dole was part of the mix that made choice possible.

However, if you've never been turned down, if you've never found it hard to get a job, if you've never needed some space and time, how could you understand that asking for £8 a day to live on, when you have no other money coming in, is not asking for much?

A functioning labour market is one in which people have a choice to say no to work that it is too demeaning, too poorly paid, too dangerous or too dirty. Then employers need to offer us enough money if they want that work done. Otherwise you have slavery and servitude.

People may think that these benefit cuts will not hurt them and their family and friends. But, if at first they cut the rights of those aged under 25, how long before they cut rights for older people, and rights to other things we once took for granted, such as the provision of free education at ages 16 and 17?

69

comments. Showing  conversations, threads  
, sorted

• 2 PEOPLE, 3 COMMENTS



### KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 3:38pm

Recommend

## 40

Try selling that to the middle class lot here who couldn't give two shites whether the "chavs" have nothing instead of 8 a day.

Observe how a single isolated and ill-advised remark by an inexperienced Labour politician -- "we will be tougher than the Tories on benefits" -- was blown utterly out of proportion and used by the middle class commenters on this website to equate Labour with the Tories.

Even though the Tories have "forced work" coming out in six months that will pay roughly a *third* of what Labour have proposed.

Once again, they accomplish little more than to muddy the water, divide the left-wing vote, and increase the chances of a Tory victory.

But who cares about actual living conditions for the lower classes when nothing in the world matters to you beyond acting trendy to your Facebook friends?

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### SheepEuro KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 4:46pm

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## 18

if those sh1t bags in the labour party had any brain they wouldn't use such terminology as 'tough on benefits'

All this language is used by both sides to obscure the debate.

The debate is about RIGHTS.

In the UK people are voting away their rights to be fed and clothed.

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**KrugmanFan** SheepEuro

15 October 2013 5:13pm

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7

It was an ISOLATED and substance-free comment by an inexperienced politician. Miliband and Balls have not used that terminology.

Maybe the difference between having your benefits pulled under the Tories, and NOT having your benefits pulled under Labour, is like splitting hairs to you. But it makes all the difference in the world to lots of young people.

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• 2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



**blu1982**

15 October 2013 3:58pm

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9

Quite right. Another nail in the coffin of meritocracy

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**VictorKibalchich** blu1982

15 October 2013 5:15pm

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4

When did we ever have a meritocracy?

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**movedtorant**

15 October 2013 3:59pm

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45

Why should hard working families trying to do the right thing have to pay to give a leg up to young people who are skivers as they are not working?

Answer: the greedy and selfish rich who evade or avoid paying taxes could contribute their fair share and the government could use the money to ensure that our young people get a decent start in life.

Is that too complicated for you to understand Mr Cameron?

I'm with you 100% Danny, I also signed on when I was young and it gave me some space to grow up, find my way and eventually become a useful member of society.

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**salamandertome** movedtorant

15 October 2013 6:10pm

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12

I can relate 100% too. I signed on when I left school, before getting a temporary office job in the early 1980s. And again when I finished higher education in 1991. Its a pittance, but enough to give a young person breathing space.

Do you remember the Enterprise Allowance initiative? Where, if you could borrow £1K from somewhere, you could get a little over the standard rate every week, without the hassle of signing on? It might be a policy of the Thatcher government, but it gave some people a real chance to do something positive with their lives - what do they get now from Cameron? Bullied into taking the first shit job that comes along, branded a skiver for having a bit of bad luck.

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**pukkap**

15 October 2013 4:00pm

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32

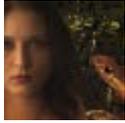
Why cant we just send them all down the mines or to the mills? Oh yeah we dont have any. Joking aside this blame game villifying the most vulnerable has to stop

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• 4 PEOPLE, 12 COMMENTS



## Henuttawy

15 October 2013 4:10pm

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49

Yet the idea of driving untold young people into utter destitution is a vote-winner! They wouldn't do it otherwise. What kind of utterly vile country has Britain become?

It's the thin end of the wedge, of course. They'll see if they can get away with this and then sooner or later all forms of social security will be cut, for everyone.

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## KrugmanFan Henuttawy

15 October 2013 4:41pm

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11

A country in which most people have bullshit jobs and fake educations.

It gives them a unique psychological pathology, which I name the "charlatan complex".

To deflect attention away from their disreputable living (telling lies to sell cars, or whatever), they choose to attack the poorest members of society.

The anti-Labour bandwagon created by the unholy union of the corporate-crony Right and the anti-war Left, and the associated misconceptions about the national debt, certainly aren't helping anything.

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**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

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labour are exactly the same, only less balls (exception Ed Balls)

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**KrugmanFan** SheepEuro

15 October 2013 4:59pm

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There's clearly a **huge** difference between pulling the benefits of under 25s, and NOT pulling the benefits of under 25s.

Maybe you don't like to alienate people and there's some social percentage in not picking a side and equating all political parties. I would place you on the same pedestal as a political saboteur who attempted to disrupt the war effort against the Nazis.

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**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

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Very judgmental today or is it a personality fault that you have?

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**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

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Who launched the illegal war on iraqi women and children? Labour did the killers of millions of innocents Hypocrites.

I give you the Labour party

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**VictorKibalchich** KrugmanFan

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Labour are to blame for the anti Labour bandwagon.

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**KrugmanFan** SheepEuro

15 October 2013 5:19pm

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3

Ah, so that's what we have: the lowest common denominator.

We see now the element that this anti-Labour crusade all boils down to.

The middle class obsession with the Iraq War, even 10 years after the invasion. Regardless of whether it was opposed by 139 Labour rebels compared with just 15 Tory rebels.

The unholy marriage between race-obsessed moral exhibitionism on the Left and corporate-crony capitalism on the Right that enables the Tories to divide and conquer and gain the ascendant in British politics.

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**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 5:44pm

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what's middle class about criticising an illegal war?

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**KrugmanFan** SheepEuro

15 October 2013 5:55pm

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2

Because you've had ten years of criticizing the illegal war, and all the British troops are out of Iraq.

You don't have to worry about whether YOUR benefits are cut. That is why you push a ten-year-old fixation related to foreign policy ahead of bread and butter domestic issues.

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**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 6:08pm

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Ten years in the past so it doesnt matter .? I am not going to waste any more time here , you vote for labour and you will be complaining for ten more years, about working class people having their benefits 'stolen' by immigrants , what idiocy! there is no consistency in anything you have written!

Capital 'L' for you!

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**KrugmanFan** SheepEuro

15 October 2013 6:12pm

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Ten years in the past means it's hardly a reason to interrupt a discussion about bread and butter domestic issues and advocate handing the election to the Tories.

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• 5 PEOPLE, 15 COMMENTS



## LabourSameAsTories

15 October 2013 4:11pm

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8

We are weeks or (at most) months away from the so-called Labour Party coming out with the same policy, if not extending the "no dole" age even further.

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## KrugmanFan LabourSameAsTories

15 October 2013 4:31pm

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9

No, you're telling lies. Labour have proposed lowering the voting age and clearly endeavour to style themselves as the party of youth. There hasn't even been a HINT so far that they will come out with the same policy.

People like you are no different from Tories, really. In both cases, living conditions take a back seat to principle. You don't care about what the policies of the next government will be..all that matters is the "anti-establishment" chic.

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**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 4:43pm

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3

workfare en masse will be introduced under a labour government

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**KrugmanFan** SheepEuro

15 October 2013 4:53pm

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8

As it is soon about to be introduced by the Tories, even before the next election.

Due to overwhelming democratic pressure (instigated by the tabloids, but still counting as democratic pressure), you're presented with a choice between:

(1) Workfare under a Tory government paying a third of minimum wage. In addition, under 25s will have all their benefits pulled.

(2) Workfare under a Labour government paying minimum wage. In addition, the bedroom tax will be repealed.

And yet the response of people like you is to divide the left-wing vote, thus increasing the chances of a Tory victory.

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**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 4:56pm

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1

Who are you to tell people who they must vote for What is your name Joseph Stalin?

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**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 4:58pm

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0

You are dividing the Green vote , shame on you.

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**KrugmanFan** SheepEuro

15 October 2013 5:00pm

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5

The difference is the Greens have no chance of winning. 0% chance. I'm living in the real world where the one party that can stop the Tories is Labour.

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**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 5:03pm

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1

Oh right, labour has according to you the best chance of winning. That's democracy is it? The Tories have the best chance of winning so therefore I should vote for them.

You should sign out of CIF and come back in a few years when your brain has finished developing

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**VictorKibalchich** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 5:17pm

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This place is over run with Labour party hacks.

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**KrugmanFan** SheepEuro

15 October 2013 5:22pm

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3

Nice try.

Labour has a chance of beating the Tories and is by far the lesser evil compared with the Tories.

The Greens have 0% chance of stopping a Tory victory, 0% chance of influencing anything.

You are a moral exhibitionist who doesn't care a jot about conditions for the poor and unemployed.

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**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 5:42pm

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ok you are not joe stalin but judy - judge judy

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**SheepEuro** VictorKibalchich

15 October 2013 5:43pm

**Recommend**

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ten year old labour fanatics

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**grun glaublich** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 7:08pm

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1

The Greens would have a lot more chance of winning if people vote for them. Choosing not to is perpetuating the ridiculous two horse race.

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**KrugmanFan** grun glaublich

15 October 2013 10:15pm

Recommend

0

You know as well as I do that the chance is ZERO that you will sell that idea to enough people to turn the next election.

You clearly don't care whether the Tories win the next election. That's one of the telling traits of a middle class poseur who cares more about showing an anti-establishment chic to his Facebook friends than he cares about bread and butter economics.

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**grun glaublich** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 11:31pm

Recommend

0

You are just spouting bile. Your personal judgement of me is utterly worthless.

Back to the point, if more people voted green they could win. That's the point of the election.

I wonder if the old Whigs and Tories were so complacent about the PLP.

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• 3 PEOPLE, 3 COMMENTS



## Monchberter

15 October 2013 4:27pm

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9

Keeping the under 25's at home with mum and dad (where realistic) is being banked on as a huge money saver for Osborne. No housing benefit, no JSA, and it's not like young people are going to vote anyway to stop it.

The politics of cynicism.

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**sophieclarke1987** Monchberter

15 October 2013 4:36pm

### Recommend

15

Keeping the under 25's at home with mum and dad (where realistic) is being banked on as a huge money saver for Osborne.

But that's what doesn't add up; looking at the welfare bill, unemployment is 3%, and as the article mentions, many young people who can claim, don't.

All the changes and extra staff the changes will need will actually end up costing more money (not to mention the fallout).

So it's pure ideology driving the change.

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**Coolhandluke77** sophieclarke1987

15 October 2013 5:52pm

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One persons ideology is another persons morality.

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• 2 PEOPLE, 2 COMMENTS



**Rrrubycon**

15 October 2013 4:32pm

Recommend

8

What are young people meant to do without that money? Hope into the non existent jobs they're busy turning down?!

Clearly the government would rather spend money on hostels and drug workers etc. Because when there is little help in moving up in the world,&nbsp; the only way is down.

The government will have to pay one way or another, so why not take the ACTIVE role?&nbsp; Insane.

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**jessthecrip** Rrrubycon

15 October 2013 6:29pm

Recommend

15

It sounds like a perfect recipe for petty crime, despair, alcoholism, drug addiction and dealing, depression and possibly more rioting I'd say

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• 5 PEOPLE, 5 COMMENTS



**sophieclarke1987**

15 October 2013 4:32pm

Recommend

52

This policy makes me so angry.

I claimed 2 years ago, only for about 5 months (3 months, then I had a job which lasted 6 weeks, then claimed for another 2 months).

I never turned down a job offered to me, I never even turned down an interview for something that I didn't want.

And yet somehow, people turned their nose up at me and there was always a sense that I wasn't trying hard enough (it felt like).

I had plenty of education and work experience; it was quite clearly the job market failing to help me, not my laziness.

Nothing's changed; no one wants to invest in young people. They want us all neatly packaged straight from school/university and even then they want us to 'intern' and 'volunteer' for sweet f\*\*k all because we don't deserve a job.

What happened to investing in people and training? If there's a 'something for nothing culture now', it's not young people who suffer from it.

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**cymraeg147** sophieclarke1987

15 October 2013 5:20pm

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21

Well said. The biggest benefit scroungers in the UK are the corporations who knowingly pay a pittance and use the benefit system to prop up their wages bill and their profits.

They are destroying our country.

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**proj48** sophieclarke1987

15 October 2013 6:05pm

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17

Absolutely. My daughter has had the same problems, willing to do any job but not given the chance. Luckily we've been able to help her financially but god knows how others manage. This really is the most despicable government in modern British history. And at least

a third of people are planning to vote for them again. It beggars belief

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**BleakAcreBite** proj48

15 October 2013 6:10pm

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8

Good luck to her as I remember how hard it was.

My tips would be:

1. I found it easier to get interviews for grad jobs/jobs that were a good fit for my qualifications. I got a job teaching at the local college but Boots wouldn't hire me because they thought I would leave.

2. Join a temp agency and then list it as your current employment on your CV. When I did this instead of saying I was unemployed I suddenly started getting interviews, including the one for my current job. Some places won't interview unemployed people. I know this is maddening and illogical but in my experience it has been the case.

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**davedandconfused** BleakAcreBite

15 October 2013 8:37pm

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1

"2. Join a temp agency and then list it as your current employment on your CV. When I did this instead of saying I was unemployed I suddenly started getting interviews, including the one for my current

job. Some places won't interview unemployed people. I know this is maddening and illogical but in my experience it has been the case."

Excellent advice, great idea.

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**limbo99**

15 October 2013 4:34pm

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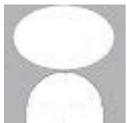
17

I am sure non of the current cabinet have ever been in your position Danny and so will continue to crush and undermine the youth of today. Opportunity for all, my arse.

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**SheepEuro**

15 October 2013 4:40pm

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13

If it wasn't the extreme right wing party advocating it from their bunker in Downing Street, it would make some demographic sense (assuming savings 'have to be made'). If people are living longer (certain people, rich people are living longer) then it is arguable that younger people should stay at home longer.

Of course it's all a robbery by the Tories to save expenditure so that their bankster friends can pay themselves higher dividends, and any small saving made will be 'lost'/stolen.

Have to agree that it takes away the option of choice by stealing young peoples' allowances though. It's not called a safety net for nothing. We are at a stage where the government can import all the skilled labour it wants and when times are hard organise racist 'pogrom' campaigns to stir up racial tensions. Anything so long as the sleeping populace don't blame those really responsible - the Banking elite who tell Cameron what to do.

It is clear the government doesn't want young people growing up to become valuable members of society. This is the worst aspect of Tory welfare theft. People unless from a very wealthy background have no stake in society.

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● 5 PEOPLE, 7 COMMENTS



**Batman1971**

15 October 2013 4:56pm

Recommend

11

It is madness and one-sided generational war. To a sane person, their policies make increasingly little sense.

For example, the bedroom tax. Q: Who are the most likely to be living in massive homes too big for them with plenty of empty rooms? A: Pensioners. Q: Who is exempt from the bedroom tax? A: Pensioners.

Furthermore, the state pension is now in a triple lock, where it goes up with whatever is the highest, CPI, RPI or inflation...

Yet Cameron promises a land of opportunity for all by snatching it away from the young. I, too, have been on JSA for a year or two when I was younger, and I can't believe that they are going to take away the safety net for the young that was there for me when I needed it. What about their national insurance contributions? Do they count for nothing?

We used to laugh at countries like Italy, where adult men often didn't leave home until their 30's - now, it seems, the Conservatives want to infantilise grown men (and women) too...

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**cymraeg147** Batman1971

15 October 2013 5:10pm

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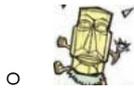
6

Pitting pensioners against the young is never a good idea. The people most likely to have loads of empty rooms are the rich. Some even have more than one house as a second, third or fourth home. Loads of empty rooms for most of the year.

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**wichdoctor** Batman1971

15 October 2013 5:32pm

Recommend

5

*For example, the bedroom tax. Q: Who are the most likely to be living in massive homes too big for them with plenty of empty rooms? A: Pensioners. Q: Who is exempt from the bedroom tax? A: Pensioners.*

More likely politicians with their two or three homes

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**wichdoctor** Batman1971

15 October 2013 5:35pm

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2

*now, it seems, the Conservatives want to infantilise grown men (and women) too.*

Labour started the infantilising. Have you ever tried to buy a pint of beer while looking under 25 and having no ID?

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**BleakAcreBite** Batman1971

15 October 2013 6:07pm

Recommend

4

I had to go on JSA after university. I graduated in 2006 and although the recession hadn't started there were far too many applicants for all the jobs in the county. My parents let me stay at home on the understanding I helped out and gave them about half of the money.

I don't understand what the plan is for young people with no families if they can't claim and can't get a job.

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**grunglaublich** wichdoctor

15 October 2013 7:13pm

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1

More likely politicians with their two or three homes

Paid for from expenses....

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**grunglaublich** wichdoctor

15 October 2013 7:14pm

Recommend

1

More likely politicians with their two or three homes

Paid for from expenses...

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• 3 PEOPLE, 4 COMMENTS



**cymraeg147**

15 October 2013 5:16pm

Recommend

9

It seems that in today's UK plc money has become the new religion while those without it are the new demons.

We have a government signing treaties with Switzerland which rob the UK of income and actively encourage tax dodging by the rich and their corporate friends. At the same time they are actively legislating to condemn many, many people of all ages to a life of hunger, homelessness and death (from hunger or cold).

It shames us all. How did we sink so low.?

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**KrugmanFan** cymraeg147

15 October 2013 5:27pm

Recommend

4

Take a look at some of the comments. They're still more interested in moral cleansing related to the Iraq war, than in whether under 25s in this country have their benefits pulled.

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○

**SheepEuro** KrugmanFan

15 October 2013 5:49pm

Recommend

0

if under 25s have your attitude then I think they should be enlisted - why not send them to iraq? to see the good work done by the last PLP?

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**KrugmanFan** SheepEuro

15 October 2013 6:00pm

Recommend

1

Under 25s who think bread-and-butter domestic issues should be discussed without being interrupted by moral cleansing over the Iraq war -- even 10 years after the invasion -- should be enlisted in the army against their will?

Nice.

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• 3 PEOPLE, 3 COMMENTS



**Richieworm**

15 October 2013 5:23pm

Recommend

1

unemployment benefit should be based on a fund that is set up in your earnings, so the more you have worked the more you get.

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○

**tundy** Richieworm

15 October 2013 5:45pm

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7

well, yes, good idea. Still no reason to take away a pathetic £56 a week. You can't even feed yourself and afford transport with that.

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**Schema\_ Richieworm**

15 October 2013 5:46pm

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2

That is what Labour intends to do.

Not sure on the details though...

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**BernardBolt**

15 October 2013 5:44pm

Recommend

16

The Tories blatantly disregard the fact that the unemployed only count for a small percentage of the welfare bill. The young have just become their next easy target. Living in JSA is not fun and certainly not a life of luxury. They are at best deluded but at worst...well there's no polite way of saying it.

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**BleakAcreBite**

15 October 2013 6:04pm

## Recommend

8

Have the government said anything about what happens if you don't have parents or family who will keep you? Particularly for children leaving foster care or care homes? Are you meant to turn to criminality? How is this fair or practicable?

In reality unless they are prepared to risk a serious backlash from unemployed young people and anyone else who cares they will replace it with something else by a different name like a learning benefit or make people do apprenticeships for a comparable amount.

Also I know a few people who worked from 18 and got made redundant a few years later. They had contributed to the system when they were working and so in my book were entitled to their JSA.

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**davedandconfused**

15 October 2013 8:25pm

## Recommend

3

It was being able to sign on at 16 in 1984 that meant I could find a job get a work ethic and not feel the need to claim later in life when moving round the country from job to job.

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**grunglaublich**

15 October 2013 8:52pm

## Recommend

4

But, if at first they cut the rights of those aged under 25, how long before they cut rights for older people,

That's already started. They've changed the rules so you have to be over 35 to claim for a one bed home through the Local Housing Allowance. Younger than that you can only apply for the shared room rate. That's a de facto cut for 25 to 35 year olds.

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● 2 PEOPLE, 3 COMMENTS



**twodotty**

15 October 2013 8:52pm

## Recommend

4

As a 24 year old who is currently unemployed, this issue infuriates me. Having to sign on every week and see all the other young people there makes me so angry. It's a complete waste and a real shame. Having worked for years does anyone here seriously believe I like living with my parents and on £56.80 a week? That I like having to visit a job centre every week and doing nothing of any real value or not having enough money to have any sort of normal life?

The money that I receive though is vital and without it there would probably be no hope of me getting a job as I can't rely on my parents. This is just more proof of how out of touch this government is.

I nearly lost it with my local conservative MP who came to my door, knew I was 24 and hadn't voted before and said to me people died so you could vote. I will definitely be voting this time and I would encourage any young person to do the same.

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**LabourSameAsTories** twodotty

16 October 2013 2:22am

Recommend

0

Who for though? Labour are the same as the Tories, after all.

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**twodotty** LabourSameAsTories

16 October 2013 6:22am

Recommend

0

Sadly you're right but they maybe the lesser of two evils. I'll have to decide closer to the time of the elections who I think is best to vote for.

▪ Report

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**twodotty**

16 October 2013 6:22am

Recommend

0

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