



# Making sense of sanctions

Call for evidence questions

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## Making sense of sanctions - project background

The Social Market Foundation (SMF) is undertaking a major review of the operation of the system of conditionality and sanctions in the UK.

As part of this we are issuing a Call for Evidence to ensure that we have as full an understanding as possible of how the system operates in practice. We would be very grateful for any responses to the questions below - as well as if you would be able to circulate this Call for Evidence to other individuals or organisations in your network that might have a valuable perspective.

Please feel free to answer as many or few of the questions as are relevant to you. We would also be grateful in any reports or statistics etc. that provide an insight into these issues. If you would like to provide us things in confidence that are not for publication please make this clear when sending.

Please send any response by Friday September 14th to [sanctionsproject@smf.co.uk](mailto:sanctionsproject@smf.co.uk)

### Section 1: About you

**1.1** Please provide a brief overview of you / your organisation, and your relationship or experience to the benefits system and / or to claimants who are subject to conditionality

### Section 2: Conditionality

**2.1** To what extent do claimants feel able to negotiate the conditions of their claimant commitment, either at the outset of a claim or while the claim is ongoing? Are there ways in which this could be made easier?

**2.2** To what extent are claimants aware that if they do not meet the commitments, their benefit may be sanctioned?

### Section 3: Impact of existence of a sanction regime

**3.1** Do claimants find that the existence of sanctions motivates them to undertake work search or preparation activity?

**3.2** Does the existence of sanctions affect claimant behaviour or have impacts in other ways?

**3.3** To what extent does the existence of sanctions affect the relationship between a claimant and work coach? Are there ways in which any negative impacts could be reduced?

### Section 4: Application of sanctions

**4.1** Are 'easements' within the system, which suspend sanctions for certain vulnerable groups for a period of time, appropriately used and effective? Are there ways in which their use could be improved, or they could be made more effective?

**4.2** Do claimants find that the imposition of a sanction motivates them to comply with their conditions in future?

**4.3** Does the imposition of a sanction have other impacts on claimants, for example on their health, relationships, or future benefit claims?

**4.4** Where claimants do not appeal a sanction, what reasons lie behind this?

**4.5** Where claimants do appeal a sanction, to what extent does the Decision Review / MR / Appeal process arrive at a sound decision?

## Section 5: communication

**5.1** To what extent do claimants understand that their benefit may be sanctioned if they don't take part?

**5.2** To what extent does a failure to meet their conditions arise from claimants not having a sufficient understanding of what is expected of them? Are there ways in which this could be made clearer to them?

**5.3** Do sanctioned claimants understand why they have been sanctioned, and are there ways in which this could be made clearer to them?

**5.4** Do sanctioned claimants feel informed throughout the sanctions process, and how could their awareness be improved?

**5.5** To what extent are sanctioned claimants aware of the help available to them from Jobcentre Plus? For instance are they aware of how to appeal a decision or how to seek help through hardship payments? Are there ways in which this could be made clearer to them?

If you have any questions about this Call for Evidence, or the project more widely, please contact [sanctionsproject@smf.co.uk](mailto:sanctionsproject@smf.co.uk)