

## Written evidence from Organise, Basic Income Conversation and the UBI Lab Network [PCW0025]

This report summarises the findings of independent public polling and research conducted by Organise, Basic Income Conversation, and the UBI Lab Network in response to the Work and Pensions Committee's call for evidence on the DWP's preparations for changes in the world of work.

- **Organise** is the UK's worker-driven network, providing members with the tools, support and confidence needed to raise a collective voice and improve their working lives.
- **Basic Income Conversation** works with people, communities & sectors to understand what a basic income could do for the UK.
- **The UBI Lab Network** is a network of organisations and individuals seeking to explore the potential of a universal basic income and run pilots in cities across the U.K., as well as internationally.

The report summarises findings from two independent surveys conducted by Organise and Basic Income Conversation, totalling more than 20,000 responses overall. The surveys were designed with the Government's consultation questions in mind and combine quantitative data and qualitative information around people's experience of changes in the world of work, as well as suggestions for how the DWP can best prepare for supporting people across the U.K. into the future of work.

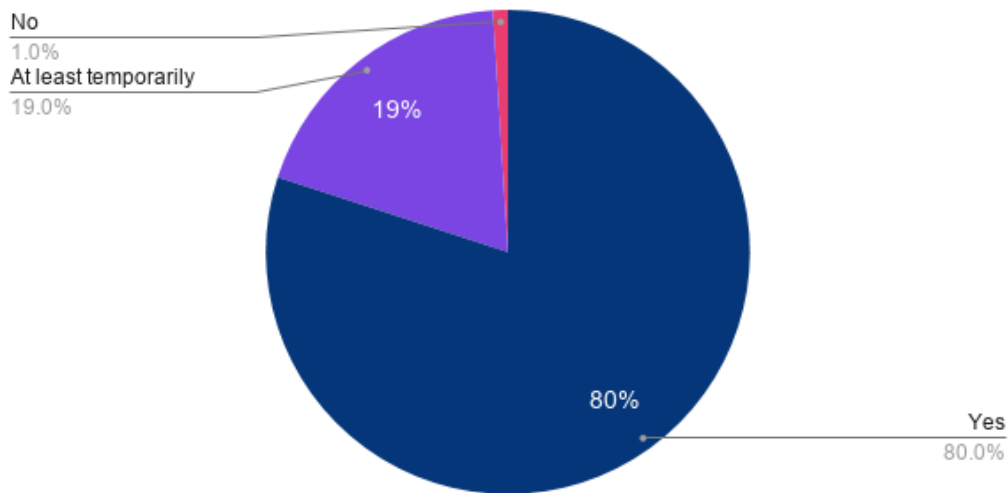
### PART I: UNIVERSAL BASIC INCOME

Part I of this report analyses public polling in response to Question 3 of the Work and Pensions Committee's call for evidence on the DWP's preparations for changes in the world of work:

***"Is there a need to consider new, long-term approaches to addressing change in the labour market: for example, introducing a Universal Basic Income (UBI)?"***:

Survey respondents were asked the following list of questions:

## Do you think the government should introduce a universal basic income in the UK?



Out of a total of 18806 respondents to this question on the survey conducted by Organise, 18599 respondents said they supported the government introducing a universal basic income (UBI). Of those, 3613 respondents stated that a UBI should be introduced at least temporarily, while 14986 respondents indicated that they would support the introduction of a UBI as a more permanent measure.

**When asked why they felt the government should introduce a UBI, people cited a range of social and economic benefits, including:**

- guaranteeing a safe floor of income for the poorest
- easing the recession by boosting individual spending power
- enabling people to retrain and upskill into the jobs of the future
- allowing people to care for children, the elderly and the vulnerable
- reducing the administrative burden of our complex welfare system
- making our society more equal
- improving our health and wellbeing
- enabling creativity and entrepreneurship
- preparing for the future of work in which some jobs will be automated
- allowing people to spend more time volunteering and improving their communities

**Here is what some respondents had to say about why they think the government should introduce a UBI:**

*"I think the security of having a UBI would allow people to retrain, improve skills, care for children and elderly relatives. These things would increase wellbeing, productivity and employees would bring these benefits to their roles. Children would see more of parents which is good for family stability and people would have some income to spend locally. Some people would volunteer."*

*“Many jobs are disappearing and people need to be able to live. Also it will actually help the economy start to grow as people's spending power will increase.”*

*“Everyone deserves to have a basic amount to live on and not risk destitution or ill health if they cannot afford to pay. There is plenty of wealth available to redistribute, there's no justification for some people to have so much while others are left to starve or die of poverty. Universal Basic Income is an elegant and just solution that allows no one to fall through the net.”*

*“Just imagine the sense of security we would feel to know that our basics are covered. It wouldn't stop me from working because it would be just a basic amount and I desire more but it would really be a backstop.”*

*“I think it's a fair solution to the poverty issues many people face today and would cost the Government much less to administer even than UC. It gives people control over how they spend their money and removes the stigma of "being on benefits". Evidence suggests that it also motivates people to work harder at job seeking as it provides a route out of poverty. It would also have a beneficial effect on crime figures as well as physical and mental health issues.”*

*“A universal basic income would completely transform the benefits system, getting rid of the shame and stigma that comes from signing on, and making sure that no one falls through the cracks. It would provide a safety net to those looking to switch careers and retrain, or start their own business, or start working on a freelance basis. Those who don't need it can either donate it to charity or have it reclaimed via taxation.”*

- **If you had the financial security of basic income, would you feel more comfortable re-entering education or training in a new skill to transition to the jobs of the future?**

Out of a total of 3459 respondents to this question on the survey conducted by Basic Income Conversation, 3304 respondents said they would feel more comfortable re-entering education or training if they had a basic income.

- **If you had basic income, would you be more likely to start your own business or project?**

Out of a total of 3459 respondents to this question on the survey conducted by Basic Income Conversation, 3249 respondents said they would be more likely to start their own business or project if they had a basic income.

- **How do you think your life at work would be different if you received a universal basic income every month?**

*"It would take a little bit of pressure off me knowing that at least I'd be able to afford the basics if work dried up. It would also make for a better world generally knowing that those with nothing can at least afford a decent meal or to maybe buy clothes for their kids. It would reduce the massive pressure that poverty brings. Nobody would have to worry about where the next meal is coming from. I've experienced this at various times in my life and the pressure is impossible to describe."*

*"I'd be empowered to work on less well-paid or voluntary projects that I care passionately about, such as my local community mutual aid group, my local community garden project, keeping the local environment cleaner with litter picks, supporting new arrivals with orientation and language help etc. There's so much more time and mental energy to get involved in local projects when you aren't constantly working 8-6 5 days a week just to afford your rent and bills."*

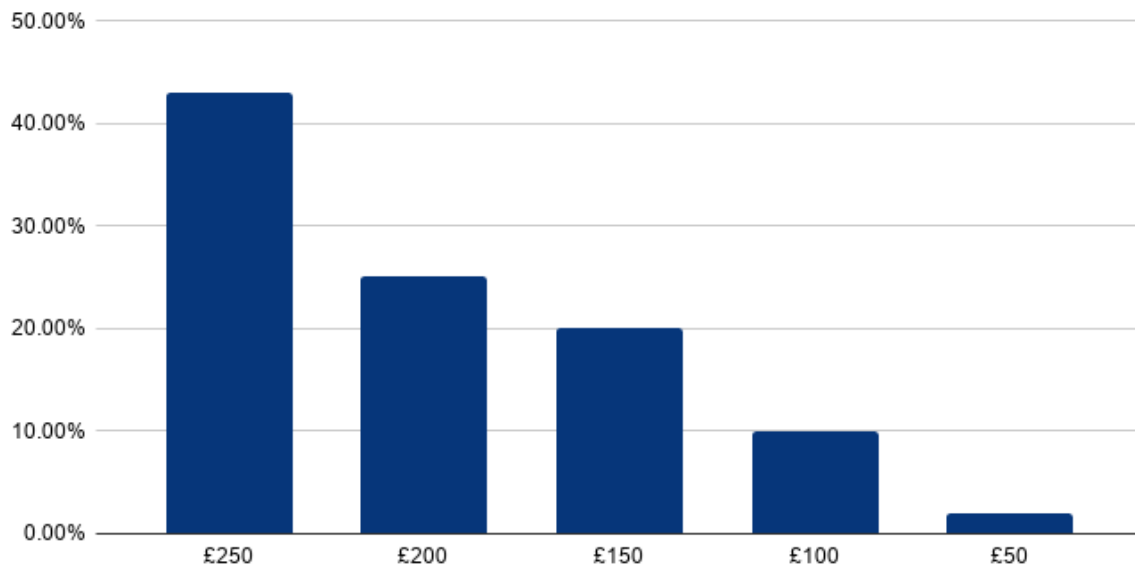
*"I would feel valued as a citizen of this country, having paid my taxes without interruption for my whole career. I would be able to feed my family. Pay my mortgage. Mitigate some of the loss of losing my whole year's income in one fell swoop, as is the case for many in the seasonal wedding industry. It would also affect my mental health in a positive way, because currently I do not feel valued, and there is little to live for."*

*"It would decrease my stress, which has the worst impact on my health. I'd probably go into lines of work that I'd typically thought economically unviable - not only creative pursuits but also social and community work."*

*"If a universal basic income were introduced it would alleviate considerable pressure on an already extremely difficult situation - I have worked hard all my life and contributed with payment of National Insurance and Taxes over the last four decades, as have my family. Alleviating the stress and worry of not being able to afford the basics should be a massive priority as everyone is affected in this crisis, the subsequent relief would reduce physical and mental health negative effects greatly and give everyone a safety net and a sense of security that is desperately needed right now. It would give me the time, confidence and ability to focus fully on building back up my business and becoming profitable again."*

*"My mental health (and by extension my physical health) would be exponentially improved. I would be able to work towards getting a job I am good at and would enjoy, rather than being forced to fling myself into a job that I am terribly-suited for just to stay alive. I would have freedom to live, rather than survive, and would be able to contribute a huge amount to my community because of improved health and more time to do things."*

How much money, per week, do you think the government should give to people if it decided to introduce a universal basic income?



## PART II: THE DWP AND THE FUTURE OF WORK

Part II of this report analyses public polling in response to Questions 1, 4.1 and 8 of the Work and Pensions Committee's call for evidence on the DWP's preparations for changes in the world of work:

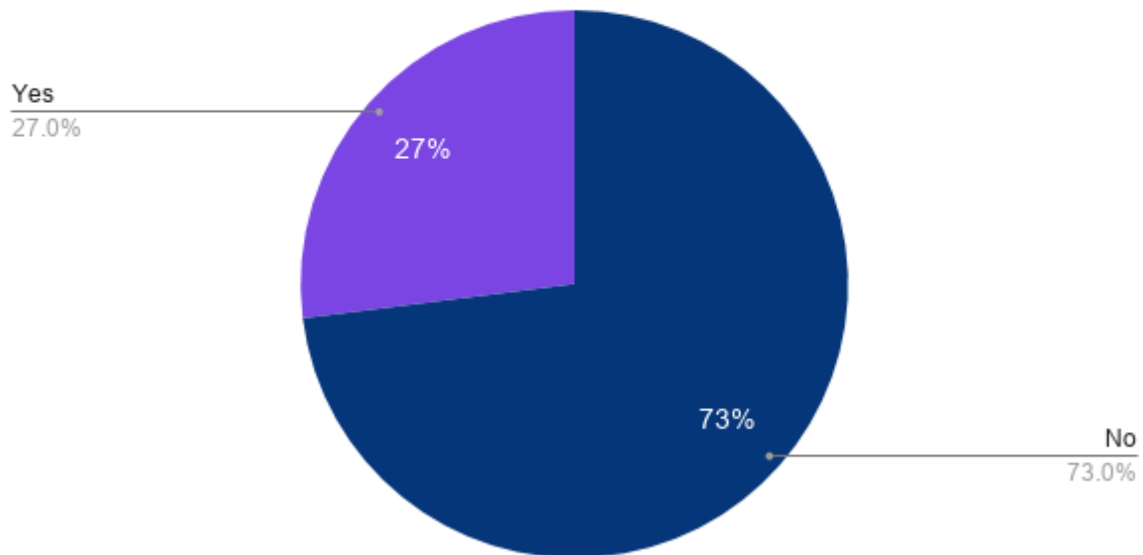
***“What are the main challenges that DWP faces as a result of the “Fourth Industrial Revolution”?”***

***How could DWP improve the training and advice it offers to jobseekers?***

***As the workplace changes, will it be necessary to change the legal definition of employment to ensure that people continue to have the appropriate legal status and protections? Might any other legal changes be needed?***

Survey respondents were asked the following list of questions:

Do you expect that work in your sector will go back to 'normal' after the coronavirus crisis?



Out of a total of 18283 respondents to this question on the survey conducted by Organise, 13356 respondents stated they did not expect work in their sector would go back to 'normal' after the coronavirus crisis, while 4927 respondents stated that they expected work would go back to 'normal'.

*"My company has made it clear they expect redundancies, massively reduced staffing in what was already a skeletal situation before this crisis."*

*"I work in a charity shop and we won't be back to normal for a long time. We will have to limit the number of customers in at any one time and we will certainly make much less money which could lead to more redundancies. The position of some of our senior staff is already in jeopardy. We will be unable to open new donations for 72 hours so we will have to quarantine them separately which will be a nightmare. I suspect we will have less volunteers which will make running the shop very difficult. We will have shorter opening hours therefore less trading opportunity. If one member of staff receives a test and trace text or tests positive, it is possible that we would all have to self-isolate and therefore the shop would have to close down again."*

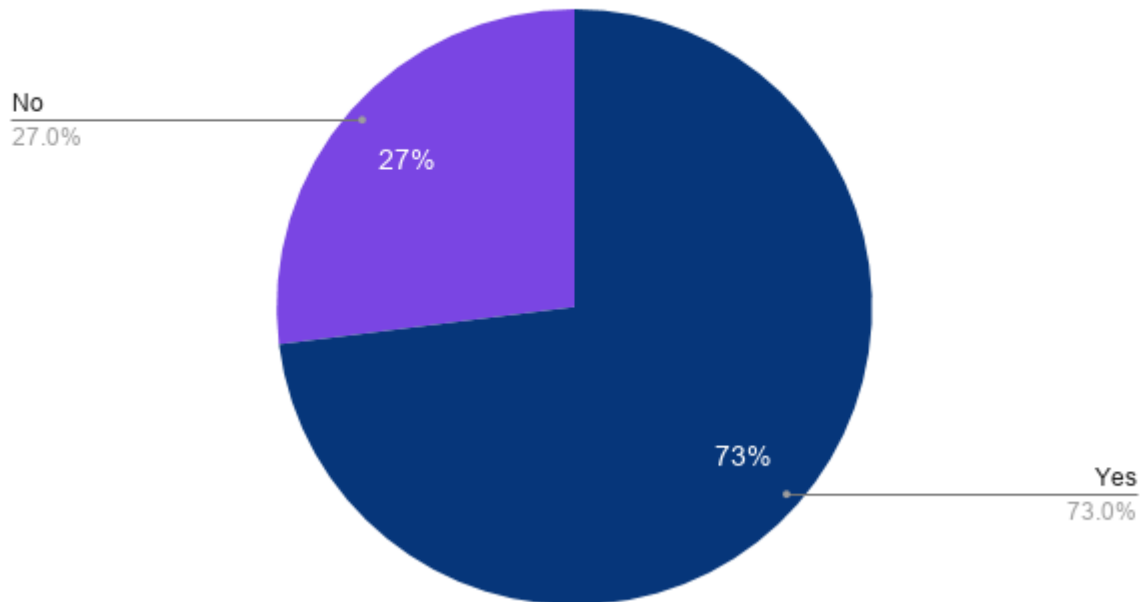
*"I work with lots of office-based clients, they are being told that things aren't going to go back to normal for a long time. I've currently lost 80% of my regular work and I can't see it ever getting back to how it used to be."*

*"I'm a childminder, children pass every germ and virus around constantly . We'll have to keep closing for 14 days every time someone gets a temperature. Half my children have already left as their parents' jobs have gone or they've decided it's too risky."*

*“I work in theatre, unfortunately it doesn’t look like I will be able to work until at least 2021. It’s possible I may not have a job to go back to if theatres don’t survive.”*

*“My sector has been devastated and will be one of the last to return. In a way, I don’t want it to go back to ‘normal’ but use the opportunity to reframe and change as it was based on exploitation and poor, unsustainable business models.”*

### Do you feel worried about your future at work?



Out of a total of 18372 respondents to this question on the survey conducted by Organise, 13469 respondents stated they felt worried about their future at work, while 4903 respondents stated that they did not feel worried.

- **What are your biggest concerns?**

*“I fear being made redundant and entering a hugely oversaturated job market. In my job I have managed to avoid the first wave of redundancies, but 40% of our workforce has been put out of work.”*

*“Because of the unemployment figures rocketing, there will be less spending money which will slow the economy down dramatically. Less spending means less jobs as a result, causing even less spending, etc”*

*"I work for Amazon and I'm a key worker there. Frankly speaking we struggle so hard and even during this pandemic we're risking ours and our families lives and going to work. Even at this time, they're expecting us to reach the targets which are surely impossible and feeling painful to reach. If we don't reach them, they're terminating the people saying they don't require us. I'm worried about my job and if there is no income how do I live and support my family? Even if I wanted to leave the hardest job and go for another, the market is very low for jobs now and what if I can't get any other job?"*

*"That I won't be able to get any paid work this year, that I will struggle to afford a house (living away from my parents) for another 10-15 years due to the recession that will probably happen soon."*

*"Being directly in the line of fire of coronavirus, higher job responsibility worsening my mental health issues - I have started to have panic attacks and have been recommended to seek medication."*

*"I am worried for my children and grandchildren."*

- **What do you think the government could do to help with the things you're worrying about at work?**

Aside from the need for a universal basic income, the main issues that cropped up over and over again in survey responses were:

- **banning zero-hours contracts;**
- **the disparity of employment rights and provisions between self-employed, freelance and gig economy workers and employees;**
- **the minimum wage being too low to afford a decent standard of living;**
- **lack of retraining opportunities for adults who want to change career paths.**

*"Zero hour contracts should be abolished, not knowing from one week to the next if you have work is inhuman. The universal credit system does not work, is inconsistent and punitive."*

*"Improve the social safety net by introducing a basic income for everyone or increase existing benefits; provide better, more accessible retraining opportunities for adults looking to change careers, totally ban zero hours contracts, these are an affront on anyone's dignity."*

*"If the government decides to raise NI contributions from self-employed workers then they can also offer those workers the same benefits received by PAYE workers, i.e. holiday and sick pay."*

*"First thing, ban zero hour contracts. Second, bring the minimum wage up to a living wage for full time hours. Third, raise the minimum hourly rate for part time workers particularly for those who have more than one job."*

*"I think tightening the law to ensure that all employees receive basics like sick and holiday pay would be a good start. Currently many people are classed as freelance or self-employed to enable employers to avoid having to provide these things."*



*“Most training positions are for young people. There should be a recognised older persons’ apprenticeship that pays a real living wage so older people can retrain. Perhaps we could be tied to the company for a set period to help the company with the education costs they incur.”*

**June 2020**