

RSA

Action and Research Centre

Realising basic income experiments in the UK

A typology and toolkit of
basic income design and
delivery

by Charlie Young

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About the RSA

Since 1754 the RSA has sought to unleash the human potential for enterprise and creativity. We have a strong history of finding new solutions to social challenges by acting on the very best ideas and rigorous research, drawing on the expertise of our networks and partners.

The current mission of the RSA is ‘21st century enlightenment; enriching society through ideas and action’. We believe that all human beings have creative capacities that, when understood and supported, can be mobilised to make the world a better place for all its citizens.

Central to the RSA’s current work are the concepts of convening and change making. The RSA has also developed a distinctive approach to change: ‘Think like a system, act like an entrepreneur’ which now runs through most of our projects. Our work is based on rigorous research, innovative ideas and practical projects, empowering citizens and partners, individually and collectively, alongside our 29,000 strong Fellowship.

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Preface

It is now almost three years since the RSA entered the discussion about the potential offered by a Universal Basic Income (UBI). This report is our third and has a different purpose to the previous two reports. Whereas previously the RSA has sought to provide an analysis of the underlying case for a UBI, including the likely wider impacts on the tax and benefits system, this report is designed to think about how we can test a UBI in the UK and other contexts.

Our hope is that we can provide some support for those who would like to see a series of UBI experiments or pilots in the UK and beyond. Realising Basic Income is published as four localities in Scotland are considering the feasibilities of UBI pilots (with other Basic Income related experiments underway in Finland, Kenya and elsewhere). Support for these feasibility studies from the Scottish Government is indicative of just how far this discussion has moved from fringe to mainstream.

The RSA entered this discussion out of concern for the negative impacts of the current system of income supports, latterly in the guise of the expanding system of Universal Credit. There are two important functions for a modern welfare state – to provide a decent level of economic security and support individuals and families as they seek to navigate the modern economy and society. A recent large-scale academic study into welfare conditionality, The Welfare Conditionality Report, found the current system to be ineffective in enhancing motivations to work, leading to increased destitution, harmful to mental and physical health, with insufficient support for individuals. Meanwhile, the National Audit Office found evidence of financial hardship caused by the rollout of Universal Credit.

So it is right to be concerned about the current system of supports. And UBI is one possible alternative that has captured some imagination. In an opinion survey published alongside this report, we found that 41 percent of respondents supported a UBI in principle with 17 percent against. UBI is seen as superior to the current system in providing economic security by 45 percent to 13 percent. There are concerns about its affordability and mixed feelings about UBI's potential to incentivise work. All these positions are hypothetical of course. And this turns us toward the need for experiments.

Charlie Young has put together a detailed report that explores how such experiments could work. He maps a version of UBI that links into local public, private and civic supports rather than UBI as a single golf club. This stands in opposition to a naive 'magic bullet' approach. The models and toolkits contained within this report should help those considering establishing live experiments and that is this report's prime intention.

Our survey found that people favour local experiments by a margin of 40 percent to 15 percent. Many are undecided and this points to the need for strong, local citizen engagement as this report advocates in the context of UBI experiments.

We continue to be concerned at the capacity for the current system to provide for economic security with significant concern that the system may even undermine it. In a decade where the UK is expected to leave the EU, where the impacts of automation and AI are as yet unknown, and where levels of economic security are already high, there is a strong case for considering alternatives. UBI experiments will enable a richer public dialogue – locally, nationally and beyond - about a very different approach and they may help allay some natural concerns. This report should help the quality of experimental design so that the public can consider, armed with the right information, whether a decisive change should be made to the way in which we seek to provide a degree of economic security for all. We look forward to working with a range of partners to help turn greater experimentation into UBI into a reality.

Anthony Painter
Director, Action and Research Centre

Executive summary

Basic income is rapidly breaking through into mainstream political discourse. There have been a great number of experiments and pilots around the world in recent years, with many more in the pipeline. Finland, Canada, Kenya, The Netherlands, Uganda and others are currently running trial schemes, with governments and local authorities eyeing up potential projects in the UK, Barcelona, India and the United States. Similar discussions are underway in countries such as France, Portugal, Italy, Serbia and South Korea. Things are moving quickly with more by the day. The RSA has been a key player in the basic income discussion for many years now. Given the gathering momentum and wide variety of applications of the idea, we believe it is time to draw together the manifold lessons learnt thus far and formalise a series of structures through which to understand, compare and deliver these experiments with an eye to facilitating the collaborative formation of basic income policy internationally.

This report is intended as a toolkit, to be used by any and all interested in making basic income experiments a reality. Though primarily focused on implementing experiments in the UK, much of the information herein could also be of use to those working in very different settings; particularly the analytical approaches, formalisation of principles and typology work. This is an effort to amalgamate experiences from across the globe over recent decades in basic income related academia, advocacy, on the ground experimentation, policy formation, and associated research and analysis. The lessons from each of these are applied to contemporary efforts in the UK and, importantly, form the backbone of a new typology of experiment design for use in implementation. This is situated within a wider narrative of how to test basic income's efficacy and potential pathways for moving the policy toward maturity.

Basic income is a contentious idea and it is also far more complicated than most assume. The findings in this report are built upon a comprehensive and concisely conveyed set of widely accepted basic income principles – like unconditionality, regularity and non-withdrawability – that are relevant to what we refer to as the ideal type. We find that very few basic income experiments, historical or contemporary, fulfil all of these principal criteria – certainly none in the western world. This is largely due to logistical, financial and time constraints peppered throughout the implementation process, but also due to differing policy goals and, significantly, myriad interpretations of basic income as a concept. This has led to a collection of different experiment architectures: from saturation sites, where every member of the community has the option to receive basic income payments, to experiments with randomly distributed and chosen participants; from simplified flat payments that aren't withdrawn as earnings rise, to staggered payments for different subgroups, each of

which have distinct effective marginal tax rates (which have historically been up to 80 percent); from universal programs to those focused solely on those of certain income or employment status; and from payments made to individuals to those made on a household basis. Some of these experiments run for two years, others for over a decade. This wide diversity of expressions of the concept offers a great wealth of information.

By categorising and systematising the core characteristics of these experiments, the basic income experiment typology incorporates major and minor variables: like whether to have one or multiple concurrent interventions, for the former; or whether to give out part of the basic income in a local or Cryptocurrency, for the latter. Such decisions, and the associated options that cascade from each, should simplify and catalyse the process of both considering the feasibility of and eventually designing and carrying out experiments.

The report also dedicates space to assessment and evaluation, a critical feature even at the design stage. We saw a gap in basic income impact assessments – especially for historical experiments in the western world – which we believe should be filled with a more dynamic and systemic model. The interrelations of key dynamics in the behavioural changes of basic income recipients should not go unnoticed. Understanding the impacts of basic income requires not just knowledge of changes in headline indicators, but also research into secondary and tertiary impacts. For example, investigating the effect of payments on economic security, knock-on effects on wellbeing and how this affects time spent with family or in the community? With the aid of new technologies and historical insight, this report outlines the primary features of a methodological approach that might be able to rise to such a challenge.

Significant space is also given to the logistical, legal and key policy concerns around implementing basic income experiments in the UK. This includes an investigation of the likely interactions with the UK tax benefit system, the impact of different hypothetical levels of cooperation from the DWP and HMRC, and some of the policy mechanisms through which experiments could be implemented. Towards the end of the report there is also a detailed outline of four different scenarios for particular basic income experiments in the UK. These are costed and explained in logistical and policy terms, along with suggestions for how to measure choice indicators. They provide demonstrations of both feasibility and the variety of creative and imaginative ways to enact basic income policy.

Chapter 1 outlines basic income's relevance to and position within the socio-economic context of the UK, paying particular attention to the welfare state. Chapter 2 enumerates the principles of basic income experiments and explains the key facets of each with reference to real-world examples. Chapter 3 explores the various challenges faced by UK local authorities and other interested bodies in relation to national government, as well as the practicalities of how basic income payments are likely to interact with taxes and different kinds of benefits (especially Universal Credit). Chapter 4 builds on these to produce, first, a series of guidelines for best practice in running basic income experiments and, second, a typology of basic income experiments in the form of an elaborated decision tree. Four scenarios for possible UK basic income experiment are laid out in Chapter 5, each of which are intended to flag the various options

and related challenges and opportunities presented by an array of very different but fundamentally related applications. Chapter 6 introduces the foundations of a model for holistic and systemic assessment of basic income experiments, looking to integrate and build on the insights of research thus far, while also pointing to the possibility of incorporating deliberative processes and additional policy programs.

We hope this report can elucidate a number of confusions and queries in the basic income space. Now that basic income is advancing toward real-world application we believe in the imperative utility of thorough understanding. Producing this will be crucial to communicating and collaborating across borders, ideologies and disciplines for a richer and more coordinated approach to realising basic income worldwide.

Responding to systemic challenges

The RSA's investigations into basic income are built upon certain premises. First, we share the widely held belief that the modern economy and the current structure of the welfare state are failing to deliver for unacceptably large sections of the population. They are similarly ill-equipped to deal with the multiple and converging challenges on the near horizon. The inevitable difficulties of fast approaching systemic changes are manifold. In the global north, automation, stagnating wages, and inequality threaten to compound a sense of economic insecurity that is already complicated by low labour productivity, spiralling personal debt and ageing populations. On a worldwide scale, the unpredictable transformations of our political landscapes, climate change, and mass migration each threaten their own individual and interrelated forms of disruption. These challenges necessitate a systemic rethink of the state, its responsibilities towards its citizens, and its role in relation to the economy. Imaginative, realistic and effective policy responses are in short supply. As such, we have a collective responsibility to investigate proposals already on the table, as well as coming up with fresh ideas. Basic income (BI) is an intriguing contender.

Welfare in the UK is riddled with inefficiency and inequity. This is typified by the Government's recent attempt to rectify the previous system's inadequacies, resulting in the contemporary disaster of Universal Credit (UC). The Government's U-turn on extortionately costly phone-in helplines in 2017 was welcome, but the system remains punitively conditional. Wait times of five weeks for first payments are fundamentally unjust, especially given the fact that so many citizens regularly cycle in and out of poverty and regularly have to reapply. There have been a multitude of reports on the state's recent failures to provide for those in situations of economic precarity, demonstrating (among other things) that in-work poverty^{1, 2}, underemployment³, overemployment⁴, use of food banks⁵ and homelessness⁶ have all remained stubbornly high or, more often, risen in recent years. According to the DWP's own statistics⁷, child poverty numbers, for instance, have stopped falling and virtually flat-lined since 2010. One in four children live in poverty in the UK, two thirds of whom live in working families⁸. This is an important detail that pulls apart traditional notions of working one's way out of poverty. Such ideological proverbs have been important in the creation of today's system as much as they rigidly maintain it, despite external conditions undermining and disproving their utility.

There is deep enmity felt towards those on benefits in the UK. Recipients are, individually and collectively, stigmatised and the target

of scorn – especially in the decades since the 1980s. UK Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, ascribed poverty to a “personality defect”⁹ while consequent workfare schemes instituted by New Labour exacerbated the notion, and the modern day Conservative party, in the form of a meticulously applied austerity program, further divided the nation into “skivers” and “strivers”¹⁰. A system born of universality – Beveridge’s welfare state – once took pride in supporting those most in need. It has been re-worked into a punitive vehicle of condemnation, quite apart from being woefully inadequate for the nation’s most vulnerable. Tinkering at the edges, many argue, is incommensurate with fixing such systemic flaws.

The emancipatory promise of basic income

A basic income, in its purest form, is simply a regular, unconditional payment made to every adult and child. It is not dependent on other earned or unearned income, is not means-tested and is not withdrawn as earnings rise¹¹. There is no consensus on the appropriate level of payment, but it is generally considered that ‘basic’ implies enough to make a difference in people’s lives or to provide for some, if not all, basic means of survival. Proponents frame it as a foundational platform on which people can build the kind of lives they want to lead; whether they want to earn, learn, care or set up a business.

Far from a panacea, basic income is at the very least an attempt to respond in a holistic manner to the kinds of important issues listed above. A basic income can be thought of as many things.

It could constitute a move away from stigmatisation and conditionality towards universalism, from a social safety net to a solid and stable floor. This universality would also likely reduce subjective experiences of stigma – if not eliminate them altogether. One participant in a seminal basic income experiment in the town of Dauphin, Manitoba in Canada described the scheme as “more normal than welfare”. The rest of the test group similarly reported a significant decrease in the sense of embarrassment and shame attached to the receipt of welfare¹².

Basic income advocates also promise it could move large sections of the population from precarity to economic security. Millions of Britons rely on infrequent and unpredictable work. Many are also dependent on what is similarly unpredictable and ultimately insufficient support from the government. For this section of society, and those of any dependents, life is precarious and so the stabilising possibility of basic income is particularly important. The provision of basic needs through unconditional cash payments could lead to a dramatic reduction in the use of food banks, for example, and could also, importantly, increase individual freedoms, self-determination and possibly increase wages.

Another claim is that basic income is an invitation to innovate as it provides the security for entrepreneurial risk-taking. It might even incentivise more conventional forms of work. Reducing the marginal deductions (also known as tax-back rates) built in to many UK benefits could provide an important incentive to work because those working would keep a larger share of earnings.

Proponents similarly argue that basic income could provide the freedom to use time for other productive non-compensatory activities. The floor provided by a basic income could enable increased community

service, engagement in creative pursuits and secure the livelihoods of those providing unpaid but nonetheless crucial activities, such as care-work.

Macroeconomic effects, the most prominent of which include projected reductions in poverty and inequality, are similarly important. Other potential macroeconomic effects might include savings to the government in the form of reduced demand for health services and policing, along with, potentially, increases in aggregate demand. If complemented by an imaginative roster of appropriate policies, some claim that basic income could even play a role in the transition to a new kind of economic system and reimagined social contract. The list goes on.

The promises of the idea are vast - that said, they are promises (albeit with some evidential support from previous pilots). As we will explore later, some of these promises and associated claims are more speculative than others. The carrying out of rigorous basic income-type experiments is, we believe, a crucial way of testing these hypotheses in a real-world context – a fundamental process in the repositioning of universalism as a core component of the welfare state.

Current models for understanding basic income are, while of incredible utility, limited in a few key respects. They are primarily designed to test the basic workings of the payments and assess the idea's financial feasibility. These are important things to test, but in general, the propositions and conclusions of these experiments and analyses are primarily drawn from only two dimensions. We hope that future experiments can give offer a somewhat more holistic view. We aim to demonstrate how this could be done, by assessing behavioural change and different impacts over time, accounting for community, collective efficacy and subjective experience, as well as investigating the underlying dynamics influencing issues like inequality and poverty that are conventionally assessed using macro-level indices. This type of holistic interrogation of the terrain is fundamental if we are to build effective, realistic and systemic responses to adequately meet the challenges we face.

The role of experiments

There have been a number of experiments and pilots around the world in recent years, with more in the pipeline. Finland¹³, Canada¹⁴, Kenya and Uganda¹⁵ are currently running trial schemes, and there are upcoming experiments in Barcelona¹⁶, Uganda (a separate one to the existing project in the country)¹⁷, the Netherlands¹⁸, and several in the United States - including in Oakland¹⁹ and Stockton²⁰, California, along with a possible large-scale state-sponsored trial in Hawaii²¹. All of these are building on the prior experience of programs in the US and Canada in the 1960s and 1970s²², as well as more contemporary examples in India²³ and Namibia²⁴.

In each of these nations, experiments and pilots have been or are in the process of being implemented to sense-check the idea and to test whether or not basic income can provide an escape hatch from a system of transactional relationships, bureaucracy and conditionality. It might sound obvious, but perhaps the fundamental question they seek to answer is “can basic income make things better?” Simple as it sounds, it's worth finding out. Individually, the experiments offer insights into local conditions – comparing the geographically specific mainstream to the

promises of the new. Together, they constitute a meta-analysis of basic income's transformative potential. This is of heightened importance given the political and economic climate in which the concept has re-emerged. As Anna Dent writes in her comparative analysis of four current and proposed basic income-type experiments: "The explicit framing of the pilots as experiments, and the status of [basic income] as different and innovative, combined with the kudos lent by the international attention on the pilots, lend [basic income] an important legitimacy"²⁵.

Basic income-type experiments in the UK

We are embarking on this initiative in favourable conditions. An Ipsos Mori poll in September 2017 found that 49 percent of UK adults support the idea of basic income, in principle²⁶. An investigation conducted by the European Social Survey revealed similar findings – that 52 percent of Britons over the age of 15 support the policy²⁷. This might sound relatively minor, but, presumably, a considerable section of the UK population is unaware of basic income. A recent study by Dalia Research found that the basic income support in Europe is a staggering two thirds²⁸.

Moving from general support to possible implementation is a long road. A crucial part of this, we would argue, is basic income-type experiments. Testing the idea's feasibility on a number of grounds – whether they be work incentives, the impact on poverty, or children's health – will contribute significantly to public awareness, unpacking what a basic income could mean, and its refinement as a realistic policy intervention. Producing a wide array of data documenting the impacts of a basic income as exhaustively as possible is important. Should the experiments point to basic income being ineffective or counterproductive, important lessons can still be learnt.

Similarly, if delivered and communicated intelligently, experiments would generate a degree of public discussion and engagement with the proposition, and in-so-doing serve an important democratic function. If we accept the inadequacies of the system, we would argue such experiments are a must.

Prior to and during the production of this report, the RSA has been in consultation with a coalition of local and city authorities. Each has expressed interest in or committed to implementing a basic income-type experiment of some kind. There's been considerable international interest in the prospect of basic income experiments in the UK, particularly in Scotland following the Scottish Parliament's 2017 Programme for Government, in which funding was promised for research into the feasibility of Scottish basic income experiments²⁹.

It may be useful here to make a broad distinction between basic income pilots and basic income experiments, while recognising that initiatives may not fall neatly into either:

Pilot: A full basic income pilot adopts all of its principles (outlined in Chapter 2). Pilots will, however, be temporally limited and may be applied to only a subset of the wider population eg a town, city or region.

Experiment: Experiments are not full pilots as they may not be universal (eg they will target a particular cohort), have elements of conditionality, or do not meet the criteria of other principles laid out in the following sections. This is often due to financial, political and legal constraints.

In the RSA's view, given the current powers and resources of local, city and regional governments, trials could be more feasible as basic income experiments instead of full pilots. Due to disagreement about the necessary conditions to qualify as basic income policy we will use the term 'basic income-type experiments'. This is not a criticism of past or existing projects, nor of future ones, but instead a recognition of the diverse range of applications the idea has. Regardless of their specific certifications, these experimental trials are likely to generate invaluable findings - both in their own right and together as a coordinated research project.

The purpose of this report

The primary aim of this document is to provide a technical and practical policy foundation to move discussion forward toward pragmatic action; to investigate possible ways of designing and implementing different typologies of basic income-type experiments in a UK context. The main goals:

First principles and contextualisation

1. Clarifying the underlying principles of what can be considered 'ideal' types of basic income policy and experiments;
2. Investigating policy goals and narratives associated with the realisation of basic income experiments;
3. Exploring the economic and legal particularities of implementing basic income experiments in a UK context;

Developing a typology of basic income-type experiments

4. Defining and categorise crucial variables of and possible adaptations to basic income-type experiments;
5. Highlighting general rules for and factors to consider when designing basic income-type experiments;

Putting experiments to good use: widening the scope of research

6. Outlining possible basic income-type experiments for application in a UK context, in the form of costed scenarios;
7. Introducing an in-depth dynamic assessment methodology to understand basic income as a systemic intervention. This will involve looking at the underlying dynamics of basic income's impacts and investigating how different effects relate to one another.

Together, these could form a platform from which to launch a series of interventions across the country, which would contribute to a more holistic understanding of basic income in a real-world context. Such initiatives would be both policy experiments and scientific research projects, acting as vital and unique test beds for the analysis of basic income's purported impacts.

Thus far, the basic income discussion has progressed in a somewhat haphazard fashion. Countries, charities and companies have relatively autonomously launched projects around the globe, each of which has promulgated a unique interpretation and expression of basic income's key characteristics. While there has been some collaboration and knowledge

transfer, each project appears rather isolated. The methodology of this report rests on an amalgamation of the lessons from a wide variety of basic income-type experiments, with the intention of developing a fleshed-out categorisation – a typology.

A UK intervention into the basic income space should be most effective if based on a solid foundation of international research and policy experience, as well as the associated implications of each variant of basic income. That foundation is what this paper sets out to build.

Making basic income a reality

The narrow view of basic income is that it is simply a reform of the tax and social security system but the RSA's interest in basic income draws on a much wider lens. Basic income is an opportunity to reconsider the interaction between the economy, the state, civil society and the individual. Any system of basic income will need not just a *laissez-faire* disposition, but a set of institutions and interventions that reinforce norms of contribution (taking advantage of the so-called 'fly-paper' effect³⁰) – without falling back on the blunt and destructive instrument of hard conditionality.

Therefore, in forthcoming UK pilots we advocate proactive but voluntary support for the individuals involved, developed through deliberative processes, as outlined in recent RSA papers on the basic income and the Universal Basic Opportunity Fund³¹, the Citizen's Economic Council³² and Addressing Economic Security³³. The development of social norms must be part of any basic income-type experiment. This is not to skew the result; it is to imagine and test out a system with a very different core logic of encouragement and support.

As changes to current, struggling systems of support become necessary in the face a changing labour market, there will already be extremely valuable implementation lessons available. By moving forward with basic income experiments, the UK would demonstrate itself to be at the vanguard of modern social policy and 21st century social justice.

A principled approach: Basic income in context

What constitutes an ‘ideal-type’ basic income experiment?

There is notable disagreement on the extent to which different policy options actually constitute a basic income. These differences largely come from how a basic income might be funded - by replacing the welfare state, through progressive taxation or the redesign of the tax system to include wealth taxes or taxes on the commons, for example. At the experimental design stage, however, much of this controversy can be avoided because the focus is on the direct and indirect effects that basic income payments have on individuals and communities, rather than funding implications.

On the delivery side, there appears to be a relative consensus on what basic income is in ideal philosophical and academic terms, at least among its advocates. But when it comes to what constitutes a basic income in praxis, namely in pilots or experiments, there is divergence. This is primarily the case in terms of design architecture, including appropriate levels of conditionality and universality. While the international proliferation of projects labelled as ‘basic income experiments’ has aided in the increased legitimisation and awareness of the idea, some have criticised a handful of initiatives for being a basic income in name only. The targets of such criticism include, perhaps surprisingly, Finland’s program - which has been delivering payments to 2,000 unemployed people.

These principles together represent an ideal type. It would be very difficult, if not impossible, for authorities to perfectly map experiments over every single one of the principles outlined below. That said, basic income-type experiments are the subject of our analysis, rather than fully fleshed out pilots or policy proposals. An absolute overlap with an ideal or pure basic income is therefore not necessary. Indeed, some proponents of basic income insist that perfect pilots and experiments are impossible, almost by definition. One reason for this is the necessary absence of associated changes in income tax and benefits. Another is that an important beneficial dynamic of basic income comes from the behavioural impacts of the scheme’s permanence. Any study with a foreseeable end date cannot mimic this, but can nonetheless act as proxies.

There is a vast body of academic and policy literature on basic income and a considerable proportion of this focuses on the principles underlying the concept. Understanding these principles and building experimental designs around them is a methodological process in keeping with the advancement of knowledge, ensuring relevance to on-going debates

and moving the conversation toward potential implementation of basic income in a meaningful way.

Below is a roster of these principles, which have been collated following an extensive review of the relevant literature. They are made up of commonalities and crossovers of opinion and highlight prerequisites for the legitimate and effective implementation of basic income experiments. Each is contextualised and elaborated upon for ease of application. Finer-grain details and permutations of these principles are explored later in this document.

The eight principles of basic income-type experiments

The principles below are intended as guidelines - important guidelines but guidelines nonetheless - for the design and implementation of basic income-type experiments:

- Basic payments
- Regular payments, at least once a month
- Unconditional payments
- Universal payments
- Non-withdrawable payments
- Equal and individual payments (excluding children)
- Payments don't leave anyone worse off
- Ceteris paribus

1. Basic payments: not too low, not too high

Basic income payments should be sufficient to make a significant difference in people's lives and help people cover basic needs. This might or might not mean payments are enough to survive on alone. There is general agreement that if payments are above a certain threshold then the nature of the policy changes drastically. In 2015, in line with 2012/13 benefit rates, the RSA modelled illustrative payments set at around £71 per working age adult per week, with marginally less for youth and more for those of retirement age³⁴. In the table below these have been updated in line with contemporary rates.

Age	BI Payments per person (£)	
	weekly	monthly
0-4, first child	£84.50	£367.17
0-4, add. children	£67.00	£291.22
5-15	£57.90	£251.59
16-24	£57.90	£251.59
25-64	£73.10	£317.64
64+	£155.60	£676.12

Table 1: Basic income payment levels (RSA, 2015)³⁵ [modified and updated]

Pegging payments to existing benefits rates is common in experiments. The Finnish payment level is based on unemployment benefit, for example. Others have relied on alternate baselines and metrics. One such approach is to set payments at a certain percentage of the area's median income or national GNI. There are some complications with this approach, however. If median incomes were to fall, in times of recession for instance, then those who need the most support will experience disproportionately high levels of precarity as their payments will drop. A more common method is to peg payments to a poverty or quality of life indicator. The Canadian experiment in Ontario, for example, is giving out payments equivalent to 75 percent of the low income measure (LIM), one of the government's benchmarks for poverty³⁶. Payment levels for previous and contemporary experiments are outlined at the end of this section.

2. Regular payments: at least once a month

Regularity and predictability of income are important. As outlined in the recent RSA report *Addressing Economic Insecurity*, a combination of interconnected factors including oscillating incomes and uncertainty mean that there is an exceptionally high level of economic insecurity in the UK³⁷. This group, sometimes referred to as 'the precariat'³⁸, can have irregular or unpredictable work hours, a dearth of savings and assets, and often an absence of sick pay, holiday pay and pensions. They stand to benefit considerably from the stability provided by regular instalments.

Regular payments are preferable to larger lump sums. In more economically developed countries (MEDCs) large grants can be more likely to encourage excessive spending in the short term (the 'weakness of will' effect) and make it more difficult to reliably plan for the longer term^{39, 40}. Advocates argue that in this way, smaller, regular basic income payments are more conducive to general economic security than capital grants⁴¹. An efficient way to tailor payment regularity to recipient need is to match the timescale of payments to the timescales of major household expenditures like food, rent and electricity and water bills.

3. Unconditional payments: No strings attached

A move to unconditional payments is a core part of streamlining the bureaucratic process conventionally associated with conditional welfare provision. Conditions such as having to attend regular meetings or provide proof of actively looking for work make a large portion of benefit provision convoluted and expensive to deliver.

Existing conditionality is not only costly to the exchequer but also heavily contributes to the social stigma attached to receiving benefits; a factor of major significance in basic income advocacy. Historically this has often been overlooked in basic income-type experiments, like that in Livorno, Italy⁴².

Unconditionality also refers to whether there are limits on what the money can be spent on. There is a considerable amount of research supporting the idea that unconditional cash transfers can more effectively deliver for the recipients themselves than in-kind vouchers or payments tied to beneficiary expectations, such as school attendance^{43, 44}. Payments in experiments should have as few conditions attached as possible. The RSA has previously proposed a 'contribution contract'⁴⁵, in which

recipients lay out the intended uses of the new money and explore the possibilities it presents them with. In line with unconditionality, this should not be binding nor exclusionary in any sense.

4. Universal payments: All for one and one for all

Basic income advocates suggest that basic income payments be universal: paid to, or at least available, to everyone. This is contentious in the context of basic income experiments. Even national governments would struggle to define a set of parameters for eligible recipients that did not exclude at least some portion of the population. A criterion as broad as ‘citizen’ still excludes recent immigrants, for example. Whether or not prisoners and ex-convicts receive payments is another example consideration.

It is important here to highlight one possible area of confusion: the distinction between the concepts ‘universal’ and ‘unconditional’. In discourse within and between the social sciences and policy worlds the terms are often used interchangeably. In Professor Malcolm Torry’s paper ‘Unconditional’ and ‘Universal’: definitions and applications, he writes of the importance of clarifying the terms in the context of the basic income debate:

“‘Universal’ here generally means universal provision, in the sense that an income would actually be paid to everyone within a particular national or regional jurisdiction: although restriction to those legal resident, or to citizens (somehow defined), might be necessary and might compromise the proposed universality. In the context of the basic income debate, ‘unconditional’ generally means unconditional in relation to past, present or future events that we can affect, but not in relation to age, which is a condition that we cannot affect”⁴⁶.

Examples of the ‘unconditional’, as covered above and to be explored in more depth further below, include labour market participation, engagement in community service, and/or turning up to appointments.

As Torry outlines, it will be difficult to cast a net wide enough to avoid excluding potential recipients, especially for local authorities. Financial constraints for experiments also mean that it is often tempting to target a particular cohort, like focusing on a particular geographical neighbourhood, income level or age group.

That said, part of the effectiveness of basic income as a policy intervention comes from neighbourhood and community effects, also known as the ‘social multiplier’. Historical experiments suggest that saturation sites – those experiments in which all residents of an area receive or have the option of receiving a basic income – foster emergent phenomena such as community support groups, increased collective efficacy, more consistent continuation to higher education and improved mental health^{47, 48, 49, 50}. These phenomena have not been seen as widely in experiments with targeted cohorts or participants scattered across large geographic areas. Universality is therefore considered of great importance as it opens up the mutually reinforcing, communal and collective elements of basic income that are fundamental to its civic nature. As a general rule, the economic

and social value of each payment for recipients increases as the number and density of recipients increases.

5. Non-withdrawable payments: Not pulling up the drawbridge
 Used here, non-withdrawable refers to the act of not reducing payments as earnings rise. One of the primary concerns with contemporary state welfare provision, and a specific element looking to be ameliorated by basic income, is the phenomenon of marginal deduction. This is a process through which, as recipients' incomes rise, their benefits and tax credits are correspondingly decreased and eventually removed.

As a result, those on benefits can face a financial cliff-edge so that increasing one's earnings means losing benefits. In the UK this can be equivalent to >70 pence for every pound earned. Marginal deduction rates (MDRs) are an important component of poverty traps, particularly given that they actively dis-incentivise work⁵¹. Despite this, many historical and contemporary pilots - like those in Canada and the US from the 1970s to the present day - experimented with a range of 'tax-back' (marginal deduction) rates, making them somewhat similar in architecture to Universal Credit. Some of these pilots had marginal deduction rates of up to 80 percent⁵².

Basic income experiments should avoid this if possible, especially if the effects of the payments on work incentives, labour-market response and poverty traps are of research interest. The RSA's illustrative diagram of marginal deduction rate or tax rate under the national basic income scheme outlined in *Creative Citizen*, *Creative State* can be seen below. The 2012-13 tax system line includes Personal Income Tax Allowance (PITA), National Insurance (NI) contributions and Income Tax, while only the latter applies to the basic income model. This is a particular illustrative example for a single-earner family with three children.

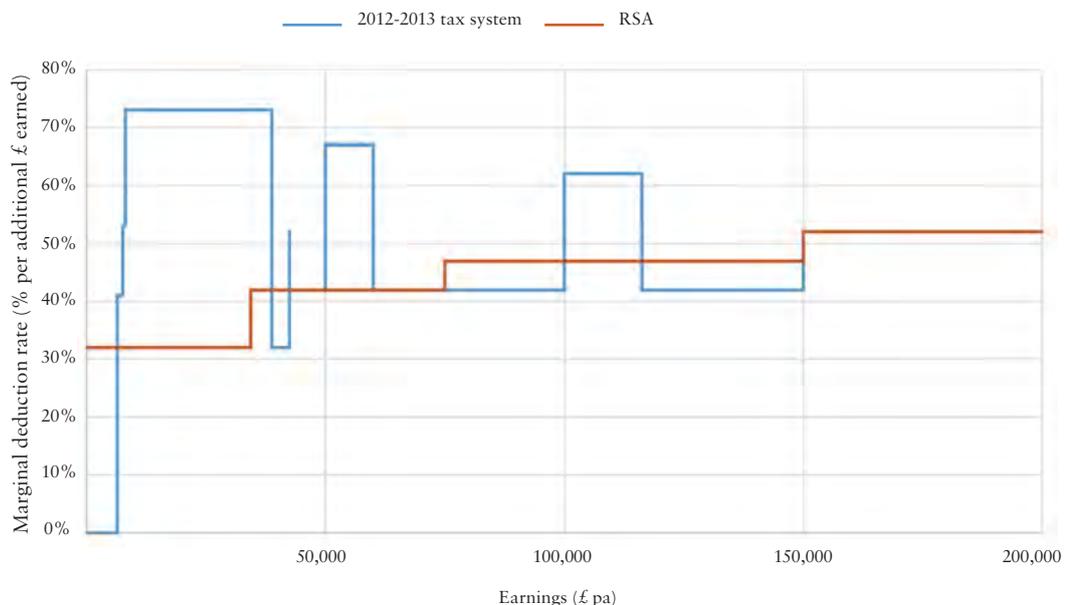


Figure 1: Marginal deduction rates under the 2012-2013 Tax Credit system versus the RSA basic income scheme⁵³

6. Equal and individual payments (excluding children): Financial freedom

Making payments on a household basis (which contemporary benefits regularly do) misses an opportunity to expand individual agency. If there is an adult dependent in the household, for example, a basic income offers the opportunity for a newfound degree of independence and financial freedom. There are also important contributions outlining the importance of this feature in feminist terms of liberation, including on the potential for individualised basic income payments to offer avenues out of domestic violence^{54, 55} and sexual exploitation⁵⁶.

An important exception to the ‘individual’ principle is to do with children for whom surrogates are necessary. As such, some basic income experiments, and indeed many cash transfer programs across the world, give children’s payments to a parent. Historically this has most often been the mother but a more appropriate version may be to give payments to whoever is classified as the child’s primary carer. This is particularly effective when parents are not in formal employment but engaged in childcare and other forms of valuable but non-compensatory work^{57, 58}.

Some also argue that paying a basic income by household - especially when payments for couples come to less than two individual’s payments combined - creates an unethical and unfair tension in family dynamics, including an incentive for couples to split⁵⁹. Basic income payments are generally regarded as independent of household composition and delivered as individual payments.

The ‘equal’ part of this principle is, simply put, that everyone receives the same amount of money, in the name of fairness. The exception here is that different age brackets receive different amounts, due to their different life circumstances and relative expenditures. All those in the same age bracket must receive the same amount.

7. Payments don’t leave anyone worse off than under conventional benefits

In addition to being a core policy aim and part of the appeal of proposed basic income schemes, this is an important ethical consideration for experiments. The UK’s tax benefit system is a highly complex web of interrelated Tax Credits, benefits and National Insurance contributions, made up of a set of interactions compounded by conditionality, sanctions and the impact of household composition and paid work on each.

Despite some devolution of powers, Westminster retains control of the administration of most benefits, including Tax Credits/Universal Credit, Income Support and the functions and operations of Job Centre Plus. As will be elaborated on in Chapter 3, the level of cooperation from the DWP and HMRC somewhat predetermines the extent to which local and city authorities can isolate the effects of basic income payments in relation to other benefits. This problem can be mitigated in two key ways.

First, it may be necessary to look into possible kinds of amelioration for different groups. For example, the RSA’s model found that some low-income single-parent families with children below school age were at risk of losing out from a rigidly flat-payment national basic income. Solutions were also proposed in the report to rectify this, namely that

these groups receive additional assistance⁶⁰. A recent report from Kela, the Finnish body responsible for designing and running the countries' current experiment, came to similar conclusions, though under slightly different parameters⁶¹.

Another example of this relates to housing. If the basic income payments are likely to lead to reductions in housing benefit or if landlords respond to the cash influx by raising rent correspondingly, then additional forms of support should be available. This could come in the form of support for settling rent disputes, granting additional payments for those with acute housing needs, or - as is the case for Barcelona's proposed basic income experiment - the refurbishment of housing⁶². This would in itself be an important finding of experiments.

Second, and more simply, it may be preferable to make the initiative voluntary, opt-in and easy for participants to leave if they so desire. This would mean, however, that any participants leaving the experiment would create a self-selection bias in the remaining test group. Should participants leave the experiment, however, they must be helped to transition back into the tax benefit system so they wouldn't go for long periods without adequate support. This transitional help also applies to the experiment's end. One way to catalyse this process is through agreement with the DWP and HMRC around suspending and immediately reinstating relevant benefits and tax credits; thus avoiding unnecessarily long lead-in times for recipients.

Kela came up with a third solution to this problem. Basic income payments are deducted from other social service payments, including earnings-related allowances and the parental daily allowance. In light of this, any participants in the scheme found to be worse off under the basic income experiment can petition Kela for an increase to make up the difference⁶³.

It should be noted, however, that this feedback loop is possible largely because the basic income payments relate to the Finnish benefit system in a relatively simple fashion – pegged to specific benefits and mediated by national government. Inclusion in the experiment was also mandatory for a random group selected from those on unemployment benefits. This meant it was priority to ensure no-one was worse off.

A similar dynamic could be achieved in the UK, were participants to entirely remove themselves from the current benefit system while forgoing Personal Income Tax Allowance and Tax Credits. This would have to be done by HMRC setting up a special tax code, with employers and the self-employed being aware of this special tax treatment. Such a system could possibly be complemented by a smartphone app, website and/or call line dedicated to quickly calculating and comparing individuals' entitlements under each scheme.

8. Ceteris paribus: Maintaining a stable research environment
Experimental conditions should, as much as possible, be held constant. For the sake of accuracy in studying basic income's effects there would preferably be no other major socio-economic policy changes during the experiment. If policy changes do occur (and they almost definitely will do) they must be sufficiently accounted for when assessing the results⁶⁴.

As will be explored in later sections, some of the experiments proposed include parallel policy interventions such as financial literacy workshops, housing support, work and education programs and community service. In this context, for the sake of scientific rigour, it is important to retain a test group for comparison: recipients receiving a basic income without these parallel programs. This does not impact upon the necessity of a control group, one receiving no basic income nor access to the additional programs. Together this will allow for meaningful cross-comparison in a real-world context.

It may be overly impractical to fulfil all these criteria, but as many as possible should be aimed for if experiments are to be applications of basic income in a meaningful sense. Again, we are by no means aiming for the improbable ideal. It should be made clear that the process of listing which principles are fulfilled and contravened by different experiments is not an attempt to disqualify or criticise particular projects. Quite the opposite, this analytical lens offers a pathway out of the dualistic debates around whether something 'is' or 'isn't' basic income, dissolving this false dichotomy so we can better understand the multiple manifestations of the idea.

Elements of testing basic income might negate the possibility of meeting some of the criteria. For example, running an experiment with additional programs, constituting combined interventions, could marginally contravene the *ceteris paribus* principle. Similarly, targeting a particular cohort would go against the principle that payments should be universal, but may have research benefits in terms of more focused real-world interventions.

Another somewhat elastic principle is that of unconditionality; conditionality is a spectrum⁶⁵. Some basic income advocates insist on the total absence of conditionality - with the exception of age as a differentiator between payment levels - but there is a wide space between that and the conditionality of the contemporary welfare system that could be explored.

In an experimental context it may also be useful to test various principles of a basic income against each other, possibly by trialling the efficacy of a partial scheme against a fuller scheme. To some extent this has already been done (in the US and Canada, for example) but it might be worth filling in some of the gaps. This could lend crucial material to a large and growing body of research in this field. Table 2 demonstrates how several of these previous, current and proposed experiments 'fit' within the principles laid out above, as well as outlining some of their key characteristics and context:

Current	Basic	Regular	Unconditional	Equal and individual	Non-withdrawable	Universal	Better-off	Test group size
Ontario, Canada	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	-	4,000
Finland	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	✓	2,000
Kenya - GiveDirectly	✓	✓/X	✓	✓	✓	X	N/A	21,000
Historical								
Seattle-Denver, United States	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	4,800
Dauphin, Manitoba (Canada)	✓	✓	✓	X	X	✓	-	3,000
Gary, Indiana (United States)	✓	✓	✓	X	X	X	X	1,800
Madhya Pradesh (India)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	6,000
Otjivero, Namibia	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	N/A	930

Current	Duration	Yearly payments	Marginal deduction	Budget
Ontario, Canada	3 years	C\$16,989 (s); C\$24,027 (c); +C\$6,000 (d)	0.5	C\$50m/y
Finland	2 years	€ 6,270	None	€20m
Kenya - GiveDirectly	2-12 years	\$273.75	None	\$25m
Historical				
Seattle-Denver, United States	3, 5 years, 20 years (Denver only)	0.95, 1.26 and 1.46 of poverty rate	0.5, 0.7, 0.8	\$77.5m (1975)
Dauphin, Manitoba (Canada)	3 years	C\$3,800-C\$5,800	0.5	-
Gary, Indiana (United States)	3 years	0.7 and 1.0 of poverty rate	0.4, 0.6	\$20.3m (1973)
Madhya Pradesh (India)	18 months	INR1200-3600	None	-
Otjivero, Namibia	2 years	N\$1200	None	-

* s = singles; c = couples; d = additional disability payment

Table 2: Historical and contemporary basic income-type pilots and experiments against core basic income principles

Sources: Ontario^{66, 67, 68, 69}; Finland^{70, 71, 72, 73}; Kenya^{74, 75}; Seattle-Denver^{76, 77}; Dauphin, Manitoba^{78, 79}; Gary, Indiana^{80, 81}; Madhya Pradesh, India^{82, 83}; Otjivero, Namibia^{84, 85}.

As can be seen from Table 2, no single basic income experiment in the Western world has delivered a program consistent with all of the principles listed above. The only experiments to date that fulfilled all criteria were those conducted in Madhya Pradesh, India and Otjivero, Namibia. An interesting category worth paying attention to is the principle that all participants be left ‘better off’, or at least have the option of not being made worse off by the experiment. The ‘N/A’ response in the above table, which is only applicable to countries in the global South, is a reference to the fact that each experiment was conducted in a context where existing state welfare provision is or was marginal or absent. This means basic income isn’t or wasn’t necessarily ‘replacing’ anything.

Another trend of note in the above is the consistency with which Western experiments incorporate marginal deductions. Several - namely the historical Canadian and US experiments - tested multiple marginal deductions, or ‘tax-back’ rates as they are referred to in North America,

against multiple payment levels. This was largely down to a focus on testing labour response and the majority of associated economic analysis primarily focused on basic income's effects on work. This was in large part down to the contemporaneous policy debate and as US economist Stanley Masters outlined at the time: "The labour supply analysis is relevant for the stereotype of the poor as lazy bums"⁸⁶. Thankfully, basic income is now being discussed in much broader terms.

Work response is, however, the focus of the contemporary Finnish experiment. Despite this Kela has managed to fulfil the highest proportion of the principles of basic income laid out above for a Western country. This is probably contentious given that the program is the object of much criticism, largely due to its targeted focus on unemployment (the Finnish government had previously suggested rolling out a broader basic income program in coming years, although following a U-turn in April 2018, the experiment will be ending in 2019⁸⁷).

The adherence of various basic income-type experiments to the principles outlined above is multifaceted. Navigating the extent to which an experiment 'counts' as basic income is a thorny issue and better considered as a scale than a binary. We argue that these discussions should be based on the foundation of widely accepted features⁸⁸, such as those set out above. This is important for both the design of new experiments and the questions that associated research might answer.

Policy objectives, narrative and the drivers of change

Before moving on to the fundamentals and processes of experiment design and implementation, it is worth taking stock of the processes leading up to current and historical basic income-type experiments. This includes a preliminary assessment of their expressed policy objectives. It is also important to realise the 'moment' we are experiencing, where interest in basic income appears to have created a positive feedback loop, both coming from and feeding back into basic income-type experiments on an international scale.

Experiments in the UK would undoubtedly add into this, both in terms of political momentum and increasing knowledge about the policy's relative efficacy. In this context it is important to consider what we think basic income might be for, on a fundamental level, and what we expect it could achieve. Once clarified, policy aims will deeply affect experimental design and define the parameters of success.

Explicit 'outcomes' and their analysis will be explored in later sections, but some of the broad-stroke policy objectives that may be considered are included in the list below:

- Poverty reduction;
- Reducing levels of inequality;
- Increasing entrepreneurship;
- Decreasing unemployment, underemployment and overemployment;
- Increasing economic security;
- Creating more connected communities;
- Reducing the burden on the NHS;
- Improving educational attainment;

- Lowering crime rates - especially theft, robbery and domestic violence;
- Reducing homelessness;
- Eradicating stigma associated with receipt of benefits; and/or
- Minimising dependence on food banks.

The experiment currently underway in Finland set out with clear objectives, elaborated on in a recent report written by the Kela staff responsible for its design. At the outset, Prime Minister Juha Sipilä, presented basic income as a policy measure that could, if implemented correctly:

“Reform the Finnish social security system in order to [i] better adjust to changes in working life, [ii] make social security more participatory, [iii] diminish disincentives to working, [iv] reduce bureaucracy and [v] simplify the overly complex tax benefit system”⁸⁹.

While specific change-aims of this kind are crucial, there are other drivers that are key in the realisation of basic income-type experiments. These drivers also influence the impact experiments go on to have in both national and international contexts. Public policy expert Anna Dent’s recent paper *From Utopia to Implementation* highlights that factors including international activity, explicitly framing experiments as experiments, setting out with a clear sense of purpose, and involving a diversity of actors have all been key in laying the ground for, legitimising and ensuring the continuation of contemporary basic income experiments⁹⁰.

Of the four experimental contexts Dent assessed using this rubric, the prospective Scottish experiments appeared to be of greatest promise: “Scotland was found to be the country with the furthest-reaching ambitions relating to BI, which is seen as having the potential to unlock wider debate. Although the current priority is to test the effects of BI, it is framed as the basis for fundamental, perhaps paradigmatic, social change.”⁹¹ Keeping an eye on the state of the kinds of drivers highlighted above will be fundamental to realising this potential.

The idiosyncrasies of the UK context

Interactions with the tax benefit system

In both the UK and worldwide, much attention has been paid to the proposed changes to tax and benefit systems necessary to fund a basic income and ensure proposals result in an equitable and just distributional macroeconomic impact. By design, testing basic income-type policies as experiments does not allow for the kind of all-out redesign necessary to create a closed system of funding and payment.

Historical and contemporary experiments have typically had the luxury of buy-in from their national governments. This has historically resulted in a certain amount of leeway when it comes to funding, as well as clarifying relationships and interactions between basic income payments and the existing tax and benefits systems.

As things currently stand, the UK situation is of a different character. In any UK basic income experiment there will inevitably be multifarious interactions with the existing tax and benefit systems, whether this is with Universal Credit or the ecosystem of welfare it is gradually replacing. In preparing for this we must also account for different possible levels of cooperation offered by the DWP and HMRC.

The first aspect of running experiments in the context of the tax benefit system is to do with whether or not benefits will be paid as per usual. One option, as proposed by organisations including the Citizen's Income Trust⁹², is to retain the existing benefits architecture and pay a basic income on top.

The second, which is notably more common, is that some benefits and tax credits are removed. These might include Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) and other unemployment benefits, Income Support and other in-work benefits, Personal Income Tax Allowance, Tax Credits and removing the lower band of National Insurance contributions. If certain benefits are removed then, in the context of basic income experiments, it is essential that participants sign themselves off benefits voluntarily.

This second option can be thought of as a sliding scale. At one end, all benefits are removed, while at the other only very few. Most agree that it is important to retain benefits related to disability, incapacity, housing benefit of some sort, childcare and potentially others for those in special circumstances like low-income single parents.

Levels of cooperation with the DWP and HMRC will have a significant effect on both scenarios. The diagram below breaks these possible scenarios down into distinct categories.

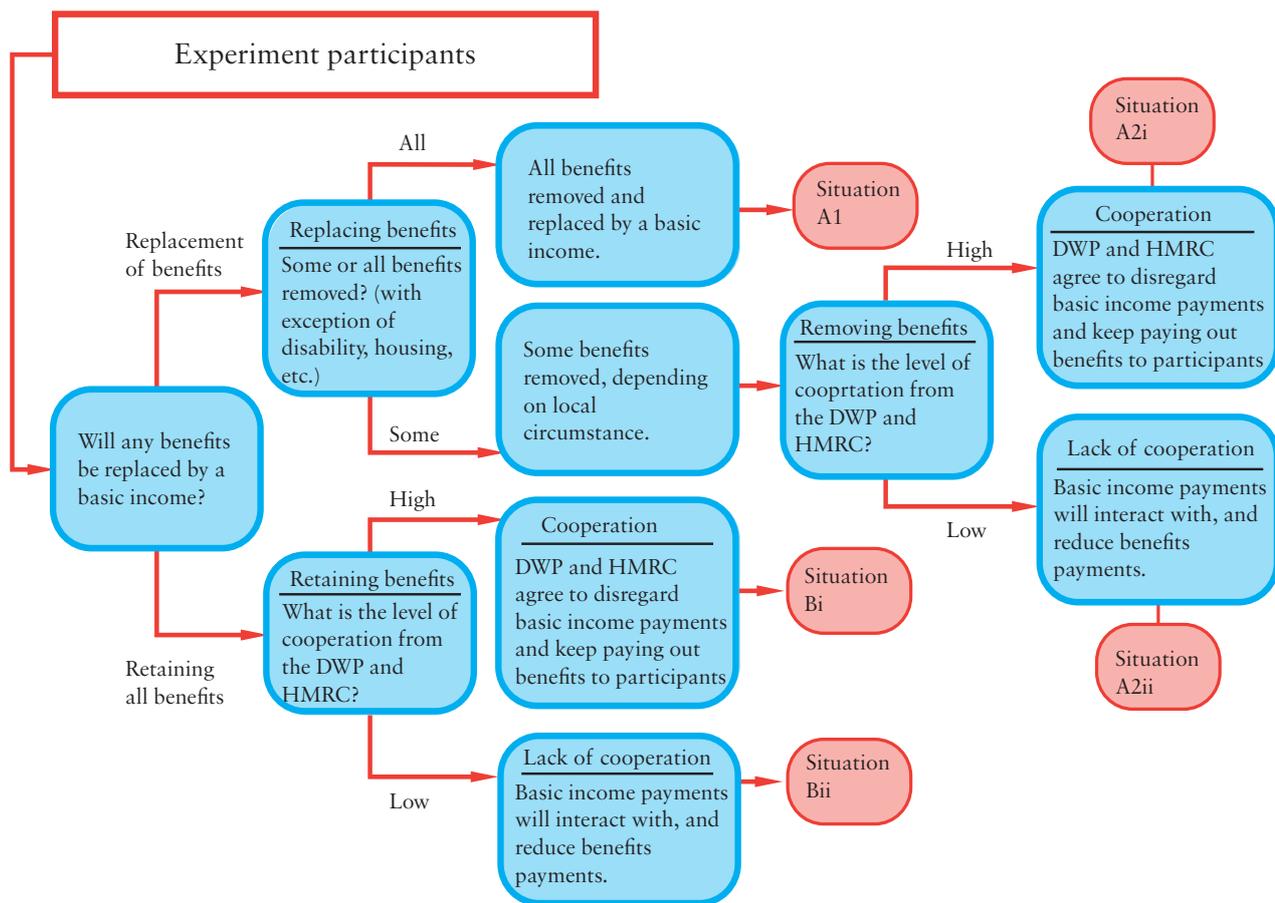


Figure 2: Breakdown of possible interactions with the tax and benefit system

The chart above lays out five different ‘situations’ to be considered: A1; A2i; A2ii; Bi; and Bii. The level of cooperation of the DWP and HMRC is not binary, of course, but the extent to which they are willing to cooperate fundamentally changes the nature of any basic income experiment. There are two key components of cooperation to be considered.

The first component centres on whether or not the DWP are willing to regard basic income payments as non-taxable income. If payments are disregarded, then they might not affect means-tested benefits and the full value of the basic income will be transferred to participants. If not, the tax-back rates of existing benefits would undermine the value of the payments. Under Universal Credit, 63 pence is removed in benefits for every £1 earned. The worst-case scenario here would be if participants stayed on UC and basic income payments were counted as income, in which case a maximum of 37 percent of experimental payments would actually reach participants.

The second component is what happens to savings from reduced means-tested benefits payments, assuming participants sign-off. A good case could be made for the DWP and HMRC to pay local authorities back for any savings resulting from the experiment. This is money that could be recycled back into the experiment’s allocated funding.

The table presented in Appendix I - Implications for BI experiments according to DWP and HMRC collaboration scenarios outlines some of the characteristics of each 'situation' and likely repercussions for basic income experiments in the UK, each of which can be applied to UC or the old tax benefit system.

The level of payment must be decided considering these factors. They also need to account for place as local features must guide and inform choices made around which benefits might be replaced, and the requisite level of payment needed to make up for any resulting shortfall.

It would be preferable to run micro-simulations of the likely effects of introducing a basic income in the chosen community, with permutations in payment level and benefit structure to demonstrate which project eliminates participants losing out in cash terms.

Contemporary tax benefit system (as distinct from Universal Credit)

Local authorities must try to ensure, through agreements with the DWP and HMRC, that the payments be treated as disregarded non-taxable income. Depending on the level of cooperation from the DWP and HMRC, payments are going to exceed some eligibility thresholds for certain benefits and impact on tapers for means-tested and income-conditional benefits, National Insurance contributions and Personal Income Tax Allowance. As discussed above (situations A1, A2i and A2ii) experiments may require that participants voluntarily forgo JSA, ESA, Income Support and PITA, among others. The specifics of which benefits should be voluntarily forgone will depend on the group involved in the experiment.

As alluded to above, one option is to open a dialogue with the DWP and HMRC around the possibility of treating basic income payments as disregarded non-taxable income so as to avoid the payments pushing participants into higher tax brackets or interacting the marginal deductions of existing benefits. If participants were to remain on benefits then the basic income payments would essentially be withdrawable and the conditionality tied up in benefit receipt would be retained.

There is a simpler option that is also more in line with any potential (funded) national basic income policy. This would require participants signing off income-conditional benefits, along with Tax Credits and paying NI contributions and the basic rate of tax from first pound earned (forgoing PITA). As proposed in the RSA's *Creative Citizen, Creative State*⁹³, removing PITA would help fund any financially sustainable nation-wide policy. This forgoing of income-related benefits would mean that none of the old system's marginal deductions would apply.

Depending on the overall level of payment, as discussed above, this might mean some people be given additional money, or levels set so there are no cash loses for individuals or households due to irregularities in outcome (if people rely heavily on tax credits, for example). However, due to the fact that people are opting out of (most aspects of) the benefit system in order to participate in the experiment, there will be considerable savings to the exchequer. Recycling this money back into the experiment would likely ensure payment levels were high enough to avoid anybody losing out. It may be practically difficult to get participants off PITA and

paying NI contributions from the first pound earned. Nevertheless, this scenario would be more informative than retaining all benefits in informing any future incarnations of basic income.

Access to free public services

It is important to consider the relationship between benefits and resulting eligibility for some free public services, including free school meals and bus passes. It would be unethical to ask that participants forgo some benefits if it meant the removal of these kinds of services. Those receiving Tax Credits are be offered (depending on circumstances) support such as maternity costs, court fees, home repairs and heating and energy costs. Income Support is similarly linked.

The idiosyncrasies of areas' local public services, like transport networks that differ considerably between rural and urban areas, require that this process begin at the local level. A local mapping of the relationships of particular benefits to government provided services - including deliberation with residents about which they feel are important, and in what ways - is the first step to negotiating alternative arrangements and ensuring that basic income payments do not deprive participants of essential support.

This issue was recently identified in Rochdale, where the RSA is working in concert with Rochdale Boroughwide Housing to develop a plan and funding for a new scheme to boost employment and skills: the New Pioneers Programme. The scheme is set to involve a series of payments to programme participants akin to a basic income. Those working on it have outlined the potentially significant difficulties of participants' losing free and subsidised services as a result of the programme's payments ('passport benefits', for example in relation to prescriptions, school meals and journeys on public transport). The RSA has been working with the council and the local DWP to overcome this.

Universal Credit

Universal Credit, an amalgamated form of benefit provision, makes it somewhat less complicated to predict the impacts of basic income payments on the wider benefit system. Under UC, payments are reduced at a marginal deduction rate of 63 pence for every £1 earned. Once you include council tax credit this can increase for some households^{94, 95}. Those with children and/or receiving housing benefit are given a work allowance, an earnings threshold up until which no deductions apply. Payments are awarded at different levels depending on age and whether or not recipients are single or in a couple. For couples, the payment is combined, and at a level lower than the equivalent of two single people. Those with disabilities are given additional payments, these are unconditional and so would not be affected to basic income payments. Table 3 details the work allowance rates and payment levels for key categories.

Basic payments				
Status	Age	Monthly payment	Marginal deduction	Work allowance (p/w)
Single	<25 years	£251.77	Child	63% / £192
	25 years or older	£317.82	Housing	63% / £397
Couple	<25 years	£395.20	Neither	63% / £0
	25 years or older	£498.89		

Table 3: Universal Credit payments, marginal deductions and work allowances (DWP, 2017)

As mentioned, an important principle is that no one ends up ‘worse off’ under basic income-type experiments. Unless the experiment’s cohort is very small (so as to be assessed on a case-by-case basis), this requires that involvement be voluntary and opt-in, with an opportunity for participants to leave the experiment and fluidly transfer back into their previous arrangement with the DWP and HMRC if they so choose.

Household modelling: Universal Credit and basic income

The chart below demonstrates one specific scenario comparing the impact of basic income payments in comparison to UC, according to different earnings levels. The situation of each individual and household on UC will be different in terms of: i) earnings; ii) receipt of other benefits not aggregated in UC (like disability benefit); iii) work allowances, if applicable; and iv) age and relationship status, which together affect the basic payment level of UC.

The household composition treated in the chart below is a low-income family of four in receipt of Child Benefit (CB), meaning the UC scenario includes Child Benefit (for both children). The parents are aged 27 and 30, one of whom works, and their two children are aged 3 and 5. They receive no other benefits.

The basic income scenario is based on the understanding that those receiving payments sign-off of UC entirely. This is preferable in a controlled experiment to determine whether or not basic income itself is more effective than conventional benefits. Giving participants access to both UC and basic income payments would present complex difficulties for research and analysis as well as potentially undermining some (financially sustainable) national models. There is precedent for this ‘switching’ to a different benefits regime, some of which are far more extreme than this proposal. In the Finnish experiment, the test group has the BI payments deducted from a myriad of benefits: labour market subsidy and basic unemployment allowance; earnings-related unemployment allowance; sickness allowance and partial sickness allowance; maternity, paternity and parental allowances; and special care allowance⁹⁶. There is precedent for this in the UK, namely with the Universal Credit pilots.

In this scenario, those receiving basic income payments have signed off Child Benefit and Personal Income Tax Allowance, while also paying National Insurance contributions from the first pound earned. Tax Credits are not applicable here as UC recipients are not eligible for them.

The graph does not take into account associated free government services. Basic income payments are set at the level outlined in Figure 3.

Monthly net income from Universal Credit and child benefit vs. Basic Income (plus earnings), against earnings alone
Household composition: Family of four, parent over 25 years, one of whom is working. Children aged 3 and 5. No housing benefit.

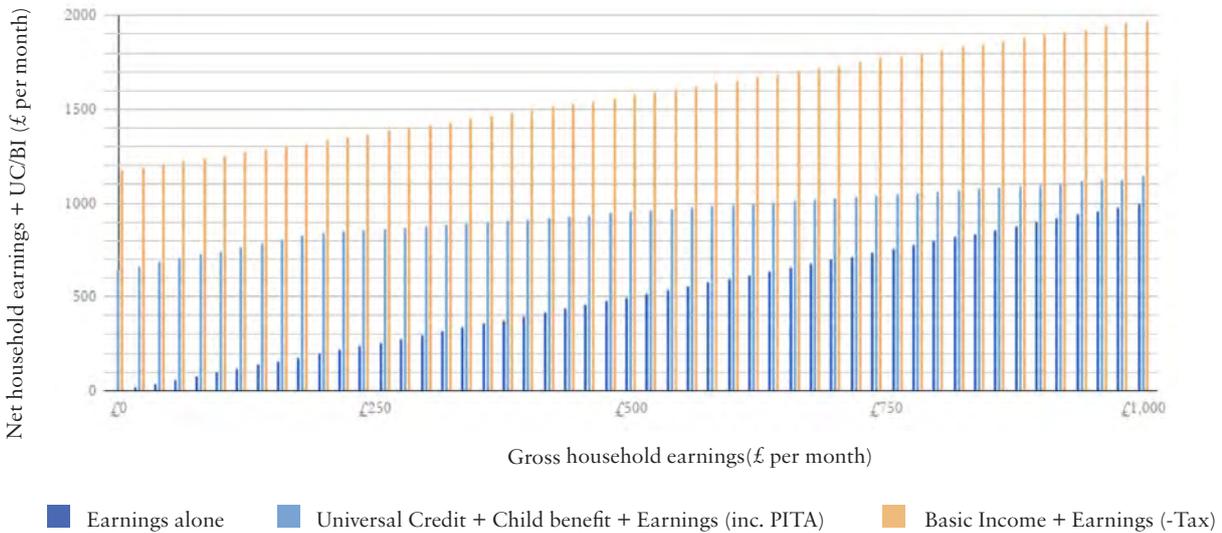


Figure 3: Monthly net household income across a range of earnings, with a comparison of the Universal Credit system and basic income

The x axis represents earnings while the y axis represents total net household income plus i) Basic income payments; and ii) UC + Child Benefit. For comparison, these are presented against gross earnings alone.

Of principle interest here are: the interaction between Universal Credit/basic income payment levels, the effect of rising incomes, and associated marginal deduction rates. For UC, the basic monthly payment for the household is £498.89. Child Benefit is paid at £89.95 per month for the first child and £59.53 for the second⁹⁷. Children being in the household means a work allowance of £192 a month – before which UC payments do not drop. After this payments are reduced at a MDR of 63 percent. The CB portion is non-withdrawable so remains constant at all earning levels.

The equivalent monthly basic income payments are: i) £291.13 for the 3 year old child; ii) £251.59 for the 5 year old child; and iii) £317.63 per adult (£635.27 together). In total, for the entire household, this amounts to £1177.99 per month for four people. These payments are commensurate with the proposals in the RSA's 2015 report *Creative Citizen Creative State*⁹⁸, as previously outlined in Table 1 and reproduced here:

Age	BI Payments per person (£)	
	weekly	monthly
0-4, first child	£84.50	£367.17
0-4, add. children	£67.00	£291.22
5-15	£57.90	£251.59
16-24	£57.90	£251.59
25-64	£73.10	£317.64
64+	£155.60	£676.12

Reproduction of Table 1: Basic income payment levels (in this model), modified from Creative Citizen, Creative State (RSA, 2015)⁹⁹

While there is no withdrawability built into the BI payments, the removal of Personal Income Tax Allowance means the basic rate of tax (20 percent) is paid on all earnings, with an additional 12 percent taken off earnings in the form of National Insurance contributions (32 percent combined).

First and foremost, the chart above (Figure 3) demonstrates that the BI scenario gives the household more money and greater financial security than the UC equivalent at all earnings levels for this family type. As earnings rise, the level of financial support provided by the combination of UC and CB payments declines more quickly overall.

Initially, due to the work allowance for UC and the basic tax rate applied to all earnings under BI, the total income for the household rises at a faster rate under UC. This is because up until UC's work allowance threshold of £192 per month there is effectively a MDR of 0 percent, while the equivalent under BI is 32 percent. Despite this, the total amount received remains higher under this BI payment option at every earning level. After the UC work allowance threshold is crossed, a steep MDR of 63 percent kicks in, at which point the benefits of the basic income scenario are pronounced - as can be observed by the growing gap after the downward kink in the UC trend-line and consistent upward trajectory of the BI equivalent.

For the period in which Universal Credit's marginal deductions are applied - between gross monthly earnings of around £200 and £980 - net earnings only increase by £250, or 30 percent of the gross. Over one month this is equivalent to someone putting in more than two and a half weeks additional work - full time at the national living wage - and getting paid considerably less than a week's salary. The comparative take-home figure for the basic income scenario is more than double UC's, at £530.40. Among other things this constitutes a significant reduction in the disincentive to work.

Some might say that this level of payment is too high and would therefore be unaffordable on a larger scale. The RSA has argued to the contrary

at length in several previous publications^{100, 101}. Regardless, the chart below outlines several different lower levels of basic income payment, set at 50 percent and 75 percent of the BI scenario above in order to explore the efficacy of alternate basic income proposals. The original scenario is retained for comparison.

Monthly net income under Universal Credit + Child Benefit vs. Basic Income(s) by earnings)

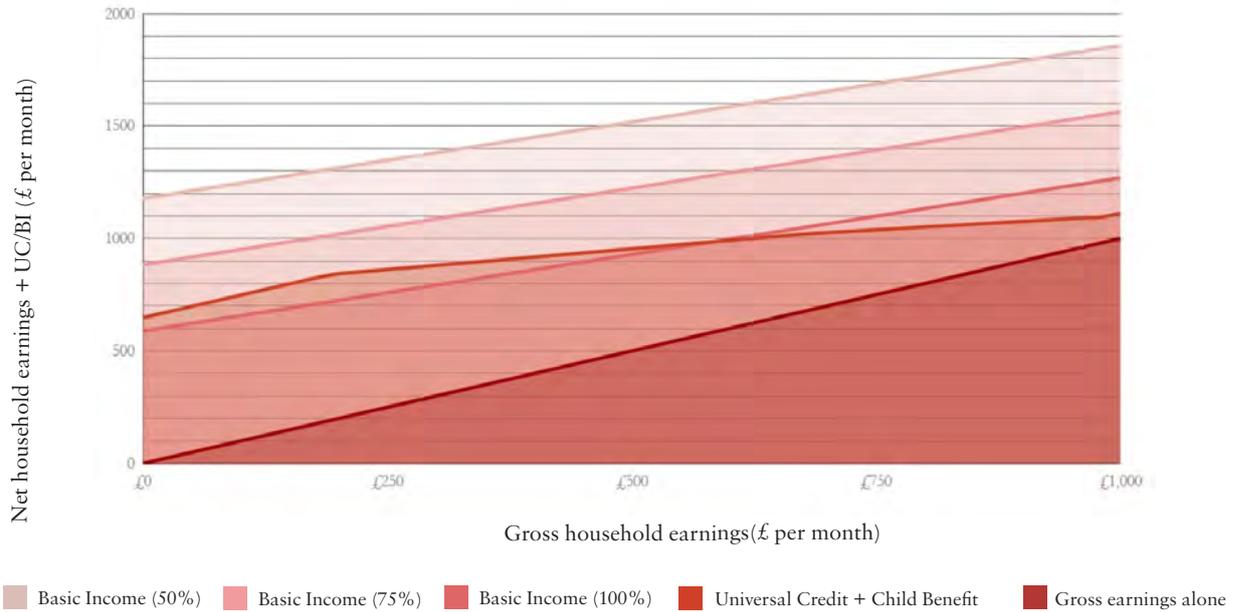


Figure 4: Monthly net household income, with a comparison of the Universal Credit system and three different levels of basic income.

The dotted line in this chart represents the monthly gross earnings level of an individual paid the national living wage for 20 hours a week (~£650) and is presented for orientation purposes. The BI payment levels demonstrated here are laid out in Table 4.

Age	Monthly BI payments per person (£)		
	50%	75%	100%
0-4 first child	£183.59	£275.38	£397.17
0-4 additional children	£145.61	£218.41	£291.22
5-15	£125.79	£188.69	£251.59
16-24	£125.79	£188.69	£251.59
25-64	£158.82	£238.23	£317.64
65+	£338.06	£507.09	£676.12

Table 4: Basic income payment levels for Figure 4

The most modest of these scenarios has evident complications. Families of this household composition on the lowest incomes lose out with a 50 percent basic income, in comparison to those receiving conventional Universal Credit and Child Benefit. The difference in net household earnings – at its peak – is $\sim\pounds 120$ per month, while the mean gap is $\sim\pounds 70$ per month. This is primarily because the BI payment level is low, but is exacerbated by the work allowance embedded in this household’s particular version of UC. The fact that there are dependents means there is no MDR until earnings rise to $\pounds 192$ per month.

After this point however, the net income of the household grows faster under the BI scenario, overtaking the UC scenario just before the part-time work threshold (dotted line), meaning that those working 20 hours or more a week at the national living wage do better under BI, even at a payment level of 50 percent.

The 75 percent basic income payment model, as with the 100 percent model, outperforms UC across the board. The same dynamics as those discussed in the context of the 100 percent model apply here, when it comes to total net earnings. It is worth noting that even a relatively low payment level has more of an impact than UC. This is especially encouraging given that it is three quarters the level of payment previously proposed by the RSA, which was presented as affordable in a national context (albeit this analysis was carried out in a 2015 context).

It is important to reiterate that these models are cursory and do not take all factors into account. Further and finer grained research will need to be carried out to effectively predict the likely impacts of basic income in comparison to the contemporary welfare state, even on an experimental scale.

These scenarios are also static. The medium and long-term implications of each of the above on government expenditure is complex and largely dependent on labour-market response, behaviour change and individual and household earnings over time.

Keeping these limitations in mind, the graph below illustrates a simplified version of the hypothetical costs of Universal Credit, Child Benefit and basic income, as laid out in Figure 5. The solid “net cost” lines subtract any NIC and Tax paid to the exchequer from household earnings.

Gross and net costs of Universal Credit System and Basic Income(s) as earnings increase

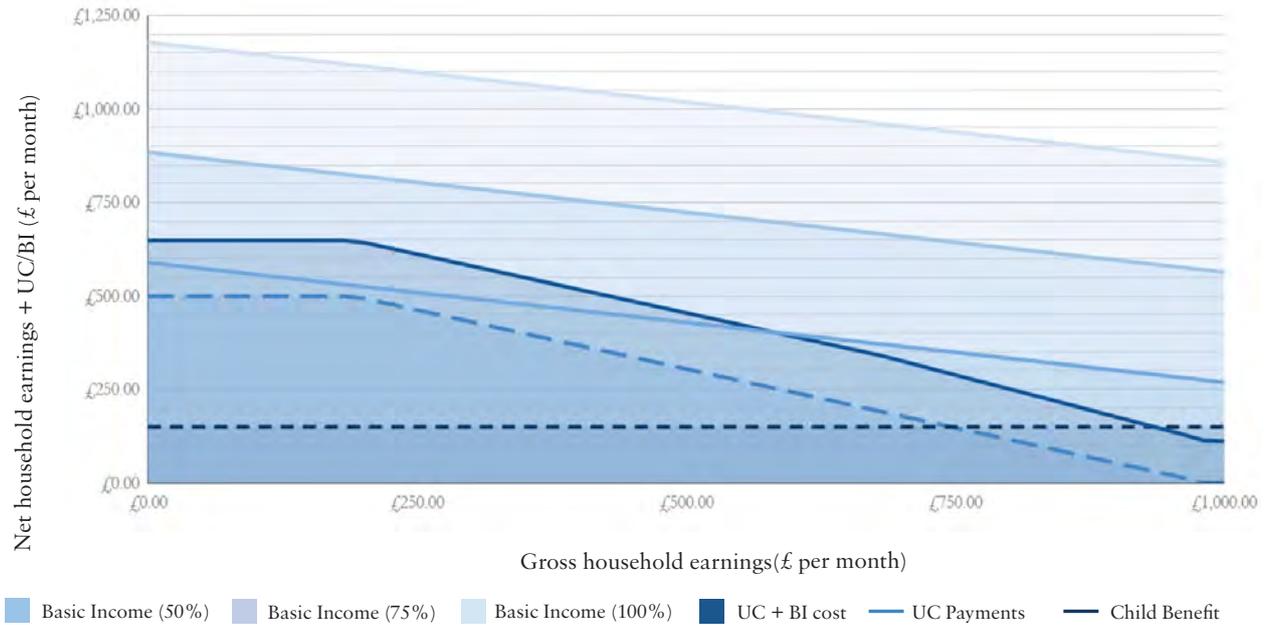


Figure 5: Relative costs of payments per month against earnings with UC and BI

It may seem odd to calculate the costs of UC and BI immediately after looking at the effects of the payments on income, as some might assume them to be mirror images of one another. However, there are a number of mechanisms like tax rates and MDRs that unevenly distribute gross and net household earnings over time. The UC scenario is made up of four primary components.

The first, Child Benefit, is a flat rate payment that is not withdrawn as earnings rise. The second is the UC payment mechanism's embedded MDR once the work allowance threshold is crossed. This means that while the costs to the exchequer are falling, those on low incomes keep a very small portion of their earnings. The third component is that of National Insurance contributions. These are initially paid at a rate of 12 percent of earnings once pay rises above £157 a week (a mean of £680 a month). According to this (admittedly cursory) model, the combined marginal deduction rates of NI contributions, tax and UC payments would be around 75 percent at some earnings^{102, 103}. For example, an increase in monthly earnings from £680 to £940 would result in an increased income of only £65.24 per month despite a corresponding gross increase in earnings of £260. The fourth element, the basic rate of tax (20 percent), is applied on earnings over the equivalent of ~£950 per month (£11,500 a year).

The BI scenarios have two main (much simpler) components. The first is the basic income payment mechanism, which is a flat non-withdrawable payment that does not change over time. The second is a combination of the immediate application of NI contributions on earnings and the removal of the PITA. The former means that a charge of 12 percent is put

on all earnings (starting from zero), while the latter translates into a 20 percent tax, the basic rate (again from zero); together they come to 32 percent. Tax receipts are deducted from the cost of payments, hence the basic income scenarios' downward sloping trajectories for cost.

At the point of delivery the cheapest of these is clearly the status quo - Universal Credit plus Child Benefit. This point is not really up for debate. While national policy is not the focus of this publication, it is worth remembering that the flip-side of basic income policy is changes to the ways in which government raises revenue – whether that be progressive income tax, wealth taxes or exploring the promise of sovereign wealth funds¹⁰⁴. Instead, the focus here is potential savings from reduced pressure on other government services like healthcare and policing, streamlining bureaucracy, and what could be significant economic multiplier effects resulting from community collaboration and changes to work incentives and economic security.

Basic income-type experiments will only be able to make initial interventions and, significantly, lack the feedback loops from changes to tax structure on a macro-economic level. The financial costs of delivering basic income payments in experimental situations, while comparatively high, must be considered in this wider context.

Obviously the situation is far more complex than the graphs above. The categories into which benefit recipients fall are numerous and delineated by factors including housing situation, age, dependents, and living arrangements/relationship status. UC payments for each of these differ considerably from the above – a single 30 year old in need of housing support gets £317.82 per month, with a work allowance of £397, for example. On the other end of the spectrum, many get no work allowance at all.

It should be noted here that household structure is very important and that the above is merely one example of the possible effects on one household composition. A variety of micro-simulations for different types of household will be invaluable prior to experimentation, particularly for those who may lose out (eg households of one or two people, in work at lower incomes). The primary focus of this paper is not to demonstrate the efficacy of basic income but to discuss the considerations of and pathways to running basic income experiments.

On top of each of these variables is a host of other dynamics, as previously alluded to, including NI, PITA, associated free government services, levels of and eligibility for other benefits, wait times and conditionality. For a more joined-up analysis of the likely interactions between BI payments and existing tax benefit systems we would recommend carrying out micro-simulations during experimental design processes.

Housing benefit

A major additional challenge is housing benefit, specifically under the old tax/benefit system, as the amount recipients receive decreases in relation to the combination of income and other benefits. This is hard to model, as different tenants receive different levels based on where they live, and, with the old system, a host of other payments.

There are several responses to this. First, local authorities could top-up participants' basic income payments in order to counteract the decrease in housing benefit. There would be a cost to this. One option would be

to set a maximum marginal deduction rate, calculated from both taxes and benefit withdrawal. Second, councils could do essentially the same thing for those living in council property, by reducing rent for those hit by decreases in housing benefit. This would be similarly expensive. Third, councils could pilot a universal housing allowance, as has been proposed and outlined in various guises by policy makers and political-economic academics over the last few decades^{105, 106}. This would, however, be of considerable difficulty given the medium and long term cycles of planning and finance within local housing budgets.

Savings to the DWP and HMRC

Reducing claims for a number of benefits or paying out less for each will save money. Those receiving BI payments may, as above, have their benefits reduced or sign off of benefits altogether. This has been an important point in calculating the relative legitimacy of basic income as national policy, and many cost-neutral models rely on the recycling of elements of PITA, Tax Credits and other benefit expenditure like UC, JSA, ESA and Income Support.

In the case of basic income-type experiments managed by local authorities, however, these savings will likely go back to Westminster rather than the authorities managing the experiment. As a result, finding imaginative and alternative routes of funding is imperative. As explored above, one possibility is holding discussions with the DWP and HMRC to find alternatives, perhaps in the form of a flat or annual payment to local authorities based on the estimated savings, benefit related or otherwise, resulting from the experiment.

Legal considerations

Implementation will require a consideration of legal issues including, among other issues, tax law, constitutional law, administrative law, relevant international legislation and – for now – the EU. UK law requires ‘equal treatment’ of citizens. Initially, an experiment will fundamentally contravene this, as test groups must necessarily be treated differently to control groups or, if the experiment is stratified, other test groups.

Part 3 of the Equality Act (2010), namely schedules 2 and 3, “makes it unlawful to discriminate against, harass or victimise a person when providing a service (which includes the provision of goods or facilities) or when exercising a public function.”¹⁰⁷

Similar constraints are present in international law, including the Human Rights Convention’s stipulation that all have an equal right to adequate social security and social care.

These constraints are not insurmountable so long as there are justified grounds for deviation. In the run up to the Finnish experiment, the argument for experimentation was made on the basis of their being “reforms required for societal improvements” and justified moving away from the principle of non-discrimination on the basis of “ensuring other basic rights”¹⁰⁸. The extent to which these are stumbling blocks also depends on whatever eligibility criteria might be applied to experiment participants. A geographical test-group across various demographics may be easier to justify than, say, a test group based on age.

The piloting and roll out of Universal Credit had to deal with these same hurdles. The DWP, however, had a much larger remit and sphere of influence than local authorities. A comprehensive study of legal avenues through which to implement basic income experiments is a necessary step toward their realisation.

Policy mechanisms for implementation

The majority of previous, present and prospective experiments have had the explicit backing of national governments. This made it easy to manage not only interactions with their existing domestic tax and benefits systems, but also to wield and enact the powers necessary to make the smooth application of basic income-type experiments a reality. The UK situation is fundamentally different in this regard. Regional and local arguments made to central government will influence the design and implementation of the experiments.

Scotland is in a unique position in the UK. For this reason the below is an examination of the Scottish situation, though a great deal of this directly or indirectly informs and affects the other countries of the UK.

As of the Scotland Act of 2016 the Scottish Parliament has the following powers with regards to tax, benefits and welfare¹⁰⁹:

- Scottish Parliament has the power to create employment schemes for those at risk of long-term unemployment and to help disabled people back into work. This means the replacement of the Work Programme and Work Choice schemes run by the UK DWP with Scottish services, to provide support to help unemployed and disabled Scottish people¹¹⁰.
- Despite this, local authorities are constrained by policy and financial decisions announced at the UK Government spending review in November 2015. Funding was substantially reduced for contracted employment support from April 2017.
- Scottish Parliament has the power to set income tax rates and thresholds for non-savings and non-dividend income (but not Personal Income Tax Allowance).
- Scottish Parliament has the ability to top-up reserved benefits with discretionary payments¹¹¹. This is of particular relevance to basic income-type experiments.
- Scottish Parliament has the power to create new benefits in devolved areas.

The following benefits remain reserved in Westminster: Pensions/ Pensions Credit, Child Benefit, Income Support, PITA, Tax Credits/Universal Credit. The functions and programmes of the Jobcentre Plus also remain reserved.

Having briefly covered the case for change, interactions between basic income payments and other benefits, along with some of the legal and policy constraints involved in implementation, what follows is an elaboration and categorisation of best practice for implanting basic income-type experiments.

The below is informed by the experience of policy-makers, academics and practitioners the world over, and constitute a guide for feasibility studies and eventual delivery. We have covered basic income's core principles, and will now explore the subtler variables of experiment architecture, design characteristics and assessment and evaluation processes. This is a document tailored to the needs of our time in an effort to craft a collective vision and explore the efficacy of basic income in a UK context.

Developing a typology of basic income-type experiments

Section 1:

Fundamentals of experiment design for testing the impacts of a basic income

Basic income's ideal principles, its associated theories of change, and its UK-specific considerations are only the initial stages of realising basic income experiments.

Designing basic income experiments is a much more technical affair. This includes: ensuring scientific rigour; delivering political objectives; staying true to relevant principles; identifying variables and corresponding experimental architecture; securing funding; administration; and outlining processes of delivery, assessment, and evaluation. The list below outlines the relevant foundational elements of such procedures. Together they underpin what might be considered close to 'ideal' basic income-type experiments.

1) Sample size

For statistical significance the sample should include at least one thousand participants, preferably more. The Finnish basic income experiment has a sample size of around 2,000¹¹², while the Canadian experiment in Ontario is set to include up to 4,000 people¹¹³. A historical pilot in Madhya Pradesh, India, delivered payments to 6,000 people¹¹⁴ and the GiveDirectly's current Kenyan pilot includes over 20,000 individuals¹¹⁵.

Experiments that include multiple test-groups require much larger sample sizes if any specific findings about the payments are to be gleaned. Each new group must be tested as separate in many cases and so statistical significance is reduced when divided. Historical trials in the US and Canada had sample sizes of up to nearly 5,000, but results could have been more accurate had they not divided and subdivided test-groups by staggering payment levels and MDRs¹¹⁶.

The sample group – both test- and control-groups - should be as constant as possible. Experimentally it would be preferable to exclude newcomers (although there would be exceptions for new-born babies) and it is important to consider whether residents leaving the neighbourhood should continue to receive payments. These choices will largely depend on the outcomes being assessed. Economic mobility itself could be an interesting factor to test.

2) Duration of experiment

Pilots should run for two years or more in order to assess the medium term effects of basic income payments. Various experimental variables are unlikely to emerge over a short period of time – including many behavioural impacts, poverty and inequality indices, and changes in community culture.

Having a longer experiment also lends credibility to any findings, and points to whether initial effects are likely to persist. Most of the Canadian and US experiments of the 1960s and 1970s ran for between three and four years, with the exception of the Seattle-Denver experiment, which ran from 1971 to 1982¹¹⁷. The Namibian Basic Income Grant ran for two years, the same length of time as the contemporary Finnish experiment. There was a time when it looked as if the government would extend the program and to include working people¹¹⁸, but in April 2018 Kela announced the experiment would end in 2019¹¹⁹. Finnish welfare reform will likely incorporate more conditionality¹²⁰, despite 70 percent of Finns supporting the idea of basic income in principle¹²¹. The Ontario experiment will make payments for three years¹²² while the Kenyan one intends to run for 12 years¹²³.

3) Selecting participants

The process for selecting participants will vary depending on whether the experiment is conducted as a randomised control trial (RCT) or using a ‘saturation site’ (each of which are covered in more detail below). Eligibility criteria will need to be drawn up, which could end up being no criteria at all (other than location and/or legal status). Some basic income-type experiments have handpicked participants to representatively match the general population or demographic of research interest. Others have selected by random allocation.

The Ontario experiment specifically targets those on low incomes, with eligible participants invited to submit to a process of random selection¹²⁴. In Finland, the government chose experiment participants randomly from a pool of unemployment benefits recipients. Involvement was mandatory for those chosen¹²⁵. The Dauphin, Manitoba pilot was markedly different, being a saturation site. Payments were offered to everyone in the locality. This necessitated a large communications effort, including going door to door to promote the scheme¹²⁶.

Some basic income advocates insist that to truly trial a basic income, the demographics of the participant pool must match that of the general population rather than any particular demographic (relevant for both the universalism and unconditionality principles). If this is the desired approach, it should be noted that self-selection has the potential to create bias. Whatever selection method is chosen, the participating cohort will need to be sorted into control and test groups of similar demographic make-up.

4) Consistency of survey and assessment

At the outset, important variables for the testing of each experiment’s hypotheses must be built into the structure of the study. A baseline survey should be conducted prior to the experiment’s launch, gathering as rich a pool of data as possible. This should preferably be done one month prior

to the first payment. Regular interim evaluation surveys should follow, preferably every six months, with a final evaluation survey a month after the last payment. In order to assess and analyse attitudinal and behavioural impacts, respondents should answer qualitative questions, some of which should use the Likert scale (strongly disagree -> strongly agree).

Surveys should be a means of collecting both qualitative and quantitative data. It is also highly beneficial to do more fine-grained ethnographic case studies as well as conducting in-depth interviews with key spokespeople (local authority, social workers, teachers, medical professionals). New technologies, including smartphone apps and encrypted data sharing platforms, offer exciting new (and ethical) ways of gathering rich and complex information. These will all be elaborated on in the final two chapters.

The research architecture should be built in relation to the variables deemed most important for the locality. These are similarly reliant on the hypotheses being tested. Much information cannot be added retroactively and so a broad and inclusive baseline survey is of the utmost importance. It is better to gather too much initial data than to be found lacking at a later date. A public education campaign should also run prior to the experiment's launch so as to ensure high levels of engagement.

5) Long-term thinking

Experiments take a long time and project fatigue, budgetary constraints and changes in the political cycle can create instability at any stage. Money must also be set-aside in the budget for post-pilot evaluation. For the same reason, it is useful to include independent non-governmental organisations to ensure consistency and keep the project to its original specifications.

The 1970s experiment in Dauphin, Manitoba points to the dangers of short-term thinking and planning. The experiment produced reams of data but suffered from a lack of stamina, meaning the records were left in cardboard boxes and only analysed decades later¹²⁷.

6) Locking in the reporting process

Too many basic income experiments have ended without a final summary of results or associated analysis. To pre-empt this, regardless of initial confidence, it is important to agree at the outset when each of the evaluations (community surveys etc.) will occur, as well as the timescale on which the final report should be delivered, and to whom eg to the DWP, HMRC, HoC and/or HoL within one year of pilot completion.

7) Involving the community

Community education prior to and during the experiment and interviewing key stakeholders on a regular basis are initial steps toward collective participation. Setting up an advisory committee of local community leaders, participants, non-governmental organisations and civil servants could help solidify this, as could the support structures outlined in the RSA's work on the Citizen's Economic Council¹²⁸.

A newsletter could help keep the community informed (see Kela's for example¹²⁹), as would the creation and maintenance of a website with anonymised public-facing data on the experiment. Opportunities to

comment and discuss on the project's website would add to the value of the surveys, while also allowing for more deliberative conversations.

8) User-friendly payment systems

The delivery mechanisms for paying recipients must protect their identity and be responsive to their concerns and issues, preferably with a telephone hotline for participants to call if necessary. This could be aided through the use of an app, which would allow for more fluid communication and opens up the possibility of incorporating complementary cryptocurrencies.

If payment levels need to change then recipients must be informed in good time and changes introduced gradually, if possible. Basic income-type experiments should ideally be non-withdrawable but if income-conditional tapering does apply then payments need to be based on the previous month's income, or something similar, so that recipients can know what to expect. It is also important to incorporate quick response-times to any job-losses or other important changes in recipients' financial situations.

9) Streamlining data collection

The state already gathers much of the data required to study the effects of a basic income. Making this data available for experimental analysis would save doing the same work twice. Unfortunately, many surveys, like the ONS' Personal Wellbeing in the UK, are only released annually and interview a national sample. These alone can't provide localised results on individual basic income experiments, let alone in the desired timeframe. However, requesting questionnaires and evaluation methodologies from the government could easily result in ready-made sections of community evaluation surveys. This would also allow for nationwide comparisons.

10) Measuring innovation

In addition to tracking entrepreneurial activity it would be useful to do a more in-depth study. This might include interviewing individuals who claim to have engaged in entrepreneurial activities to see whether and how basic income payments impacted on their behaviour. This could be complemented by a regression analysis of national benchmarks might also be beneficial.

11) Comparing several test-groups

While some experiments may involve a single test-variable (namely a consistent payment to all participants under the same conditions) several variables can be tested on a single site by dividing participants into distinct test-groups. As previously mentioned, historical experiments in the US and Canada gave sub-groups different amounts of money and/or staggered tax-back rates. Assessing the difference in attitude and behaviour between such groups can shed light on the impact of contrasting implementations of basic income.

Other variables for comparison might include the treatment of assets when calculating participants' eligibility for payments (if eligibility criteria are part of the experiment's architecture). It is favourable to have as few permutations as possible so that each test group is as large as possible.

This is for the sake of statistical significance and the extrapolation and re-application of findings (see “sample size” above).

If experiments are carried out at multiple sites across the UK each site will likely focus on a different model. If each is similar enough, distinct variables, like conditionality, targeting, or payment amount, can be compared. Rather than atomised standalone projects, an intersection of this kind would say a lot more than each could individually.

12) Avoiding misinterpretation of the results

Pilots have often had their findings skewed by political miscommunication, especially in Canada and the US. In the latter, the press widely reported that test sites were experiencing rapid increases in divorce rates. This became an issue of much controversy, thereby making the experiment politically untenable. Once the experiments had been wrapped up and the data sufficiently scrutinised, it was found that the results were statistical aberrations rather than a notable trend. In light of this, and other such instances, experts suggest the inclusion of independent groups in the design, delivery, and communication of experiments¹³⁰.

Kela¹³¹ has been cautious about communicating with the press to avoid political and media miscommunication. It is not an entirely airtight approach, however, as many participants in the Finnish trial – who speak for themselves rather than the entire cohort – have been in contact with The Economist, CNBC, and others. In addition to their soft approach to the media, Kela do not intend to release any findings until the experiment’s conclusion. Similarly, Y Combinator’s project in Oakland¹³², California, will reportedly not be releasing data from their micro-pilot until after the last payment is made.

13) Considering basic income’s multifaceted impacts on communities

The potential effects of basic income are numerous and diverse and the data collected must reflect that. Previous experiments have pointed to basic income payments having a positive impact on mental health¹³³, hospitalisation rates¹³⁴, birth weight¹³⁵, graduation rates¹³⁶, school test scores and attendance¹³⁷, community cohesion¹³⁸, environmental degradation¹³⁹, poverty¹⁴⁰, inequality¹⁴¹, bureaucracy¹⁴², economic growth¹⁴³, innovation and gender equality¹⁴⁴, and other important areas.

It may be overly complex to measure all of the above, but choice areas must be kept in mind for experimental design, implementation, measurement and analysis. This will be elaborated on in the final chapter.

14) Ethical considerations

As previously stated in the ‘principles’ section, it is essential that experiments should not leave anyone worse off (but instead leave many much better off). Participation in the scheme should therefore be voluntary and it must be easy for participants to leave at any point. Potential recipients must be fully informed about the experiment’s structure and conscious of its duration at the outset. It would also be beneficial, as the experiment comes to a close, to provide participants with access to job training schemes and financial advice about how to transition back into life without the payments.

Participants must also be shielded as much as possible from public scrutiny. This includes politicians, civil society and the press. Primarily

this is in order to avoid the potentially negative repercussions of invading the private lives of those involved, including possible demonisation - an effect basic income seeks to remedy. However, as pointed out by Kela, public scrutiny can also lead to inaccurate results because participant behaviour is likely to change. In other words, the effect of basic income and the effect of the experiment are two separate phenomena¹⁴⁵. If the latter is mismanaged the *ceteris paribus* principle could be violated.

Focus: Basic income and work incentives

The vast majority of historical basic income-type experiments in the MEDCs focused heavily on labour-market response i, ii, so much so that the approach to and framing of this thorny issue requires careful consideration from the start. Today, much of the debate still revolves around whether or not unconditional cash will simply remove the will to engage in the labour-market. According to the available data, on the whole payments affect the labour-market only very slightly and can go in both directions.

When approaching this area in an experimental context it is necessary to make the distinction between the technical definitions of work and labour – as the two are often, mistakenly, conflated. ‘Labour’ is the effort contributed to the productive economy (as conventionally understood), while ‘work’ encompasses a much broader range of activities, such as caring for relatives or community work iii. The dynamics between these and basic income are incredibly complex.

Non-withdrawability, for example, removes disincentives (wrapped up in MDRs) to join or increase participation in the labour force, while also providing a level of economic security that could allow people to take up different kinds of important but uncompensated work. Additionally, more economic security could increase the freedom to and benefits of taking-up more casual labour, retraining, and moving jobs, or taking greater risks in career advancement and launching new businesses. On the other hand, a reliable income stream could encourage people to reduce their hours due to a lower dependence on wages. In some cases payments could encourage people to leave the workforce altogether in favour of other activities.

Another factor, a chaotic and unpredictable one, is the potential for a basic income constituting what Erik Olin Wright calls an ‘inexhaustible strike fund’ iv. Badly treated and/or underpaid workers could gain considerable bargaining power due to no longer being entirely dependent on their employers. This could have positive and negative implications for wages, work-hours, and job satisfaction depending on the outcomes of individual negotiations. Measuring labour-market response should take all these factors into consideration.

Experiment designs that seek to assess the effect of basic income on labour must also focus on what this labour is replaced with. Some previous experiments have indicated apparent slight decreases in work-hours, however on closer inspection much of this can be attributed to new mothers spending more time with their children, students staying in school longer (delaying their entry into the workforce) and people spending longer between jobs – often in order to find better work instead of just taking the first position offered to them v. However, the most recent research in Alaska found no significant reductions in labour-supply over several decadesvi.

It is unclear the extent to which employment was substituted with unpaid but nonetheless valuable labour in these trials. What is known is that such activity included caring for children, the elderly and the sick, voluntary work, artistic pursuits and further education and training. If these replacement activities are not measured we can only get one side of the story.

i Hum, D., and Simpson, W. (1993). Economic Response to a Guaranteed Annual Income: Experience from Canada and the United States. *Journal of Labor Economics*. Volume 11, Number 1, Part 2 [Online] Available at: home.cc.umanitoba.ca/~simpson/JOLE1993.pdf

ii Ibid.

iii Standing, G. (2014). *Work after globalisation building occupational citizenship*. United Kingdom, Elgar.

iv Wright, E. O. (2005). Basic income as a socialist project. *Rutgers Journal of Law & Urban Policy*, Volume 2, Number 1

v Forget, E. L. (2011). The Town with No Poverty: The Health Effects of a Canadian Guaranteed Annual Income Field Experiment. *Canadian Public Policy*. Volume 37, Issue 3 pp. 283-305

vi Jones, D., and Marinescu, I. (2018). The Labor Market impacts of universal and permanent cash transfers: evidence from the Alaska Permanent Fund Working Paper Series. IZA Institute of Labor Economics 24312. [Online] Available at: ftp.iza.org/dp11356.pdf

Section 2:

Classifying variants of basic income-type experiments

Each of the basic income principles and fundamentals of experiment design can be either followed or eschewed, and to varying degrees for each. When it comes to the variations of implementation things get even more complicated. There is a wide range of ways in which to implement a basic income, as illustrated by historical and current experiments and pilots, and each set of parameters has its own merits and shortcomings. This section explores possible permutations of the guidelines discussed above, refining them into partially path-dependent categories.

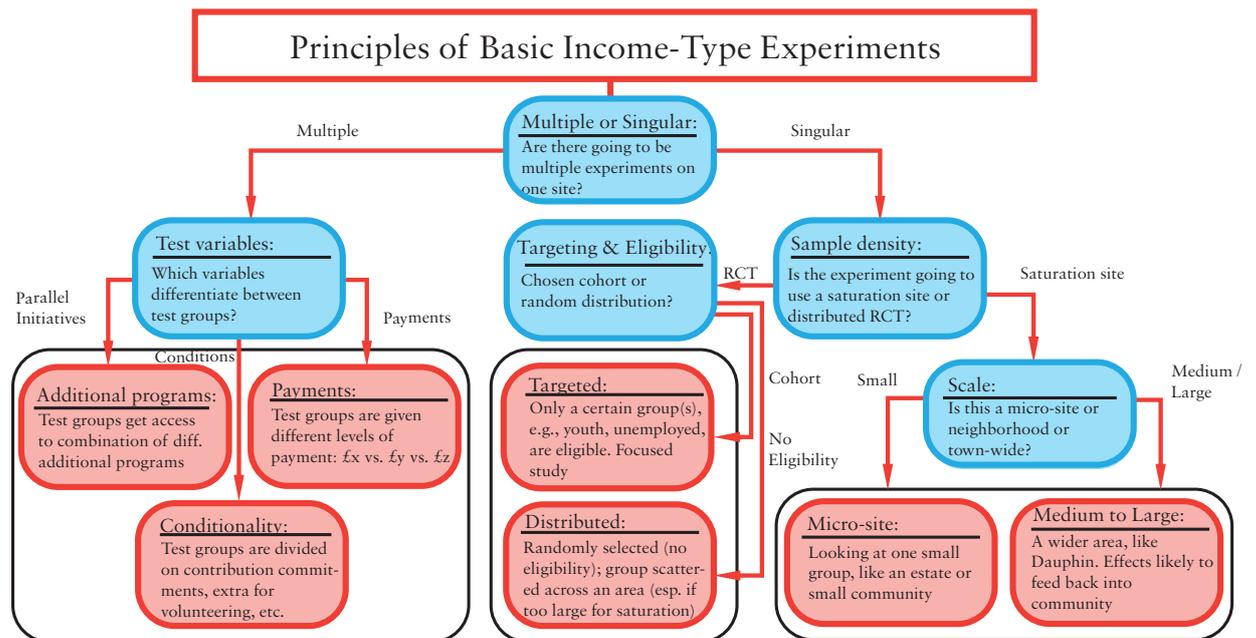


Figure 6: Decision-tree detailing key categories of basic income-type experiments

The decision-tree above (Figure 6) is based on variables such as sample density, multiple or singular experiments, and universality. These are not necessarily means mutually exclusive. In the above flowchart, different typologies have been defined along broad lines according to which variables are most compatible.

It should be noted that this leaves out some options. It would be possible, for instance, to conduct an experiment with a saturation site and test between multiple test groups (by conditionality, payment or additional programs). This may, however, be divisive in the community and so, partly for this reason, we have excluded it from the above demonstration. More realistic and natural combinations might include testing the effects of different payment levels on geographically dispersed but demographically consistent target groups (eg youth), or a randomised control trial that tests the impact of payments paired with different social programs (eg housing support, financial advice).

Figure 6 is recommended as a tool for the preliminary design phase of experiments. Later stages should refine whether or not ancillary variables

and design characteristics should be incorporated, like paying part of the basic income in a local currency or whether to use a negative income tax or standard payments as the method of delivery. These modifications are elaborated in the next chapter (see: Permutations and Additions to Scenarios 1-4).

Core variables

1) Saturation sites versus randomised control trials

A fundamental initial choice is whether payments should be made available to everybody in an area - referred to as a 'saturation site' - or to randomly chosen recipients over a presumably larger area - a 'randomised control trial' (RCT) Both have their relative merits and drawbacks.

1a) Saturation sites

A saturation site allows for the analysis of the community as a whole and more accurately reflects the likely impact of a national basic income policy. As such, including a saturation site as part of the experiment design could help prepare for a form of universal, national, basic income policy. Saturation sites also lead to what is termed a 'social multiplier', wherein individual recipients' interactions with each other build on and extend the impact of the payments alone¹⁴⁶.

A saturation site by no means implies that all residents of the area receive a basic income, but that each has access to it should they choose to sign up. There are some examples in which eligibility criteria are applied, like that of income (eg Dauphin), but in these scenarios everyone matching those criteria are offered access to the scheme (there is disagreement on whether this counts as a saturation site or not).

As with all such experiments, saturation sites require a control group against which to test the effects of interventions. Given that everyone in the locality has access to the scheme, this control group must be sourced from elsewhere. The group must not be made up of those in the test area who are not receiving basic income payments, as the participant demographic (who will have opted in) will likely differ considerably from the non-participant demographic, regardless of whether or not eligibility criteria are in play.

The control group should preferably consist of a nearby locality (eg within the same city or a nearby town) with a population and demographic make-up similar to those enrolled in the experiment. This is laid out visually in Figure 7. The dots are stand-ins for individuals or families in a particular location.

The darker orange dots represent those enrolled in the experiment, while the white represent those in the same area who are not enrolled. The dark blue dots represent the control group.

The only saturation sites in basic income experiments to date were those in Madhya Pradesh (the Madhya Pradesh Unconditional Cash Transfer and the Tribal Village Unconditional Cash Transfer), the Namibian Basic Income Grant, and the branch of the Canadian Mincome experiment in Dauphin, Manitoba in the 1970s. The latter is thus far the only example of a saturation site being implemented in a Western nation.

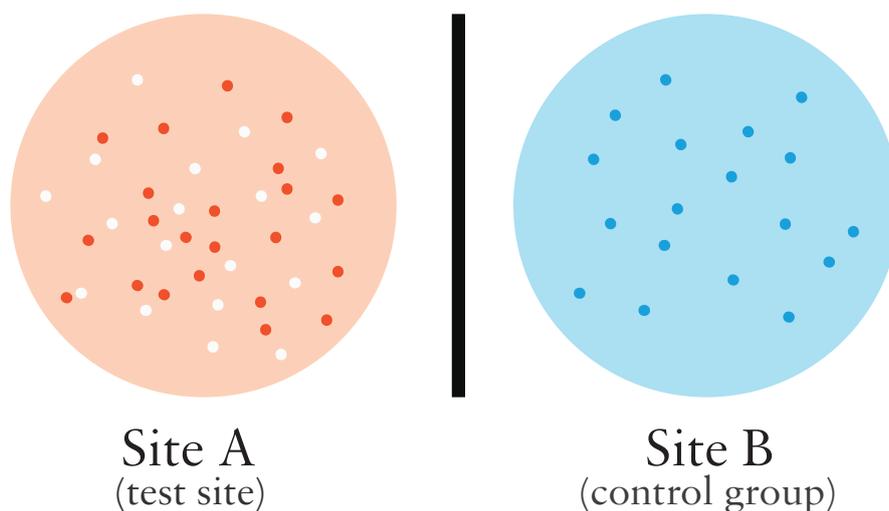


Figure 7: A graphical representation of test and control groups in a saturation site basic income study

Government staff were tasked with knocking on the door of every Dauphin household and around fifth of the population received payments over the course of the experiment¹⁴⁷. It has been found through multiple studies that the universality of Dauphin’s experiment led to significant impacts on health and education. This included decreases in hospitalisation, especially admittances related to accident and injury, and mental health issues. Graduation rates also increased, including amongst students whose families were not receiving the basic income payments. Professor Evelyn Forget, the author of *The Town with No Poverty*, partly ascribes this to the aforementioned ‘social multiplier’, writing that because “Dauphin was a saturation site, the involvement of friends and neighbours in the scheme might have led to changes in social attitudes and behaviours that influenced individual behaviour even among families that did not receive the supplement.¹⁴⁸”

Dr David Calnitsky, author of *More Normal than Welfare*, found that recipients of the Mincome payments reported a reduced tendency to feel embarrassed and uncomfortable about being on welfare. In comparison with those on conventional welfare programs, participants also reported a decrease in the frequency of discrimination and prejudice associated with being welfare recipients¹⁴⁹. For many, this kind of universality and associated considerations of community and feedback effects are necessary for initiatives to qualify as basic income.

The implementation of basic income in a real-world universal context also gives unparalleled insight into the effects on aggregate demand. Giving payments to all, proponents argue, could lead to a rise in income above the level of the payments alone. Relevant mechanisms responsible for this include people collaboratively saving, investing, setting up new businesses and helping each other with debts. Such behaviours, as well as spontaneously founded community groups advising on financial matters, have been seen in Madhya Pradesh¹⁵⁰, Namibia¹⁵¹ and Dauphin, Manitoba¹⁵². US charity GiveDirectly is conducting a study in Kenya, which doesn’t include a saturation site per se but nevertheless the study is producing similar results, implying sharing and collaboration¹⁵³.

National proposals for basic income generally agree that the payments should be more or less universal and there are yet to be any contemporary major city or locality experiments testing of the efficacy of this approach. However, it is worth noting that giving money to richer demographics could require a hypothetical calculation of the projected tax increases these recipients would likely incur in order to help fund a national policy.

Incorporating a saturation site in a UK context would provide experimental results of international value and significance, as well as for policy making at home.

1ai) Scale of saturation sites

Saturation sites in basic income trials have historically been at the scale of a small town. To give an idea, Dauphin had a population of 8,885 with 3,165 in the surrounding (eligible) region at the time of the experiment, while the Madhya Pradesh pilots offered payments to every resident of eight villages, approximately 6,000 people.

For cities in richer nations this would understandably be difficult due to the necessity of higher payment levels in line with existing benefits structures and living costs. Focusing on particular areas of a city, perhaps even a few streets forming as coherent a ‘neighbourhood’ or ‘community’ as possible, could combine the efficacy of a saturation site with fiscal feasibility. This would also allow for a bounded element of ‘targeting’, for instance by focusing on an area of social deprivation, whilst maintaining a level of unconditionality and universality.

A town, rural or semi-rural area offers the opportunity to cover larger areas, due to lower population density and possibly a moderately lower payment level in line with living costs. Smaller trials could also be conducted as micro-sites, for example on a single council estate.

1b) Randomised control trials

Randomised control trials involve the selection of only a portion of candidates for participation. This more easily allows for multiple experiments on the same site, more choice in the selection of recipient demographics and facilitates easier comparison between different locales. Isolated recipient demographics – or cohorts delineated by eligibility criteria - might include youth or, in an even more focused fashion, youth not in education employment or training (NEETs). Experiment designers might also want to focus on targeted interventions such as tackling income poverty in old age, child poverty, or precarity amongst farmers and the rural poor.

As shown in Figure 8, the RCT approach is more conducive to comparing results with a control group under similar conditions. RCTs are often referred to as the ‘gold standard’ of evaluating the impacts of an intervention^{154, 155}. RCTs also offer the opportunity to carry out multiple tests in the same location.

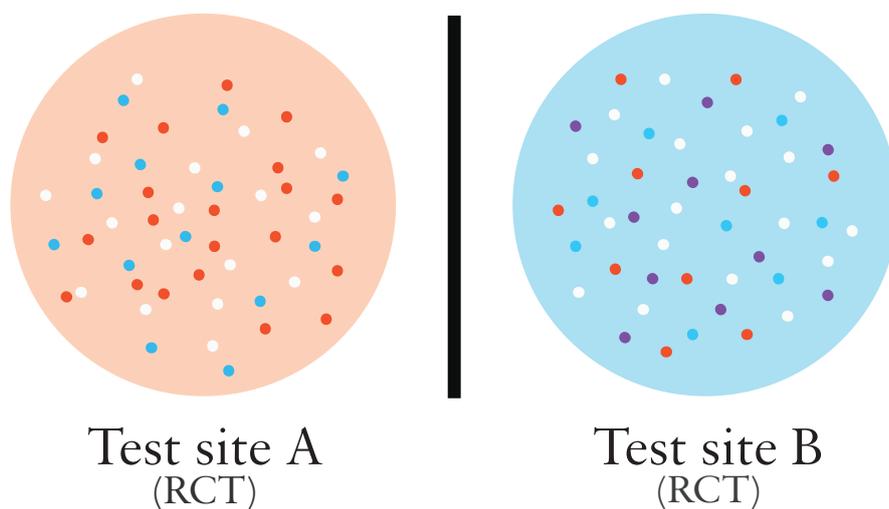


Figure 8: A graphical representation of test and control groups in a randomised control trial basic income study. Test site A and Test site B correspond to separate, isolated experiments

Test site A consists of a single site and three colours of dot: the orange represents the test-group, and the light blue the control group, the white the non-participants.

Test site B portrays a separate experiment with multiple test groups. This might occur if the designers of the experiment want to measure the impact of different levels of payment (test group i gets £x per month; test group ii gets £y per month) or other variables like different rules around conditionality, as in contemporary basic income-type experiments in the Netherlands: “Weten wat werkt”^{156, 157}.

Here, the orange and blue dots represent test groups i and ii, respectively, the purple the control group, and white dots representing non-participants.

In test sites A and B, the test group(s) and control group should be made up of similar cohorts, both in terms of demographic and eligibility criteria (income, age, employment status, etc.). For the Finnish experiment currently underway, participants were chosen at random from the pool of those receiving unemployment benefits. The impact of the basic income payments on the test group (2,000 people) will be assessed against those in the same circumstances who remained on the old system (~175,000 people). The Ontario pilot, by contrast, invited prospective participants to apply for the scheme. Some of these applicants were chosen (at random) to participate in the scheme, while a selection of those not selected form the control group.

2. Staggered approaches: multiple experiments on one site

One of the primary benefits of conducting different experiments across the UK is the ability to compare the results of different varieties of implementation. Inevitably, each basic income-type experiment is slightly different. Provided that UK experiments are coordinated so that the methodological design of each is similar in some crucial aspects, especially in terms of the principles set out above, results can easily be compared. This

would also expand the sample sizes, and by proxy increase the scale of each individual intervention. As such, statistical significance will increase, facilitating the wider extrapolation of findings.

It may be the case, however, that individual localities want to carry out multiple experiments themselves. This requires choosing category boundaries to differentiate test groups and then placing different participants into each. Some examples of these category boundaries are discussed below.

It is important to note that conditionality (ii) and additional programs (iii) could be incorporated into a single experiment that doesn't break up the test group into multiple samples. For instance, an experiment design could provide additional programs like community building institutions or housing assistance to the entire test group. There is precedent for this, for example in Madhya Pradesh¹⁵⁸ and a contemporary pilot in Uganda¹⁵⁹.

2a) Different levels of payment and marginal deduction rates

A randomised control trial in a city could, for example, give one test group a basic income at £60 per week while another test group receives £80 per week (with a status quo control group). This would allow for the comparative analysis of each payment level's impacts over the other and, for both, against no basic income payments at all.

Many historical pilots have taken this further. For instance, the prominent negative income tax experiments in the US and Canada in the 1960s and 1970s tested a large number of variables at the same time, resulting in relatively small sample sizes for each test group despite extensive participation on the whole. Each experiment had between four and 11 test groups and total sample sizes of between 809 and 4,801 families¹⁶⁰. The Seattle-Denver experiment, for example, had 11 different plans. Tax-back rates (as they called marginal deductions) ranged from 50 percent to 80 percent and payments were set at between 95 percent and 140 percent of the poverty line. In several of these experiments, across North America, the division of test groups along these lines and the small sizes of each sub-group made it challenging to make definitive conclusions with predictive power worthy of extrapolation.

While experimenting with different rates of marginal deduction may be considered incommensurate with the basic income, and variable payment levels might contravene legal principles (both of which have been discussed above) combining two or more other variables for cross-tabulation can produce useful and otherwise unattainable data. This will, however, drastically reduce the effective sample size. If desired, different payment and MDR levels could instead be used in separate experiments across the country, necessitating careful coordination between experiments.

2b) Conditionality

Testing conditionality has already been discussed in conjunction with the contemporary Dutch basic income-type experiments. The first Dutch experiment, currently under way in Utrecht (which reportedly stalled due to the stipulations in the country's 'Participation Act') involves three test groups and a control group on conventional conditional benefits. Basic payments are made to some participants unconditionally, while the two

others test groups' benefits remain conditional as under the status quo but have either: a more generous work allowance, at which point MDRs kick in, or; additional work programmes¹⁶¹. Further Dutch experiments (42 municipalities plan to conduct experiments) are looking to integrate additional conditionality, eg additional money for volunteer work, to compare with other test groups¹⁶². While work-conditionality may be incongruous with the nature of a basic income experiment, conditionality of a different kind could be worth exploring.

This could be done by having three groups: a control group; a group receiving an unconditional and non-withdrawable basic income; and another receiving a basic income on the condition that they perform certain work in the community, or civic, training, and/or educational activities. This would allow for testing whether or not an unconditional basic income has a greater positive impact on people's lives than a conditional basic income – specifically when this condition is not 'labour'.

Margaret Thatcher's government instituted a policy of this kind in 1981, the Enterprise Allowance Scheme (EAS), which provided non-withdrawable cash payments to those wanting to set up new businesses. The scheme was conditional and not universal - participants had to follow strict guidelines and attend meetings while also only being eligible if they were unemployed and had little savings¹⁶³. Nonetheless, it was quite successful. According to contemporaneous World Bank data, for every 100 successful EAS participants, 65 additional (non-EAS) jobs were created¹⁶⁴. The average cost for the state of each new job created was £4,650 in 2017 GBP, equivalent to just over 20 percent more than a year on today's Job Seeker's Allowance¹⁶⁵.

Regardless of the level of conditionality applied in basic income-type experiments, it is important to ensure that processes aren't overtly intrusive, punitive or exclusionary. Reversing the stigmatising of benefit recipients is a central appeal of basic income for many of its proponents. In this context it might be worthwhile to measure the rate and impacts of non-compliance and withdrawal from the scheme.

2c) Additional programs

Opponents of basic income often attack the idea on the grounds that it's not a panacea. In many ways this is a straw-man argument. Only a small minority of advocates see it that way. Instead, many proponents on the progressive end of the political spectrum propose concurrent policies such as wealth taxes, rent controls, reforms to minimum wage legislation, better representation for workers, state investment, job creation and the establishment of sovereign wealth funds, among others.

Those on the right often suggest pairing basic income with political projects including the shrinking of the welfare state and what is essentially the privatisation and 'voucherisation' of public services. Whichever brand of additional programs is offered, their mere presence indicates that basic income isn't generally considered a silver bullet or standalone policy.

Introducing additional programs alongside basic income payments could model these multi-angled approaches on a small scale. Little can be done at the tax end but the provision of other support structures is within the remit of local authorities. A basic income experiment still

in the design stage in Barcelona, B-MINCOME, is looking to integrate jobs programs, training programs, housing policy, and volunteering and community activism into the basic income scheme¹⁶⁶. The Barcelona experiment has elements of targeting and conditionality to do with income, savings, and home ownership (in line with Catalan law) and is set to run in a particularly deprived neighbourhood where residents' incomes have dropped by 27 percent on average since the financial crisis¹⁶⁷.

Many of the potential participants are experiencing energy poverty, have trouble finding affordable housing, high education dropout rates, and health crises, while cycling in and out of poverty on the back of low-wage part-time jobs. Each of the interventions under discussion in the experiment, which the project's practitioners refer to as 'active social policies', are tailored to the idiosyncrasies of the district. One such programme is the refurbishment of rented rooms, while another aims to offer temporary public jobs to the unemployed. The B-Mincome team is refining these programs in collaboration with the local community and potential beneficiaries.

Figure 9 looks at some of the ways this might play out in terms of isolated test groups.

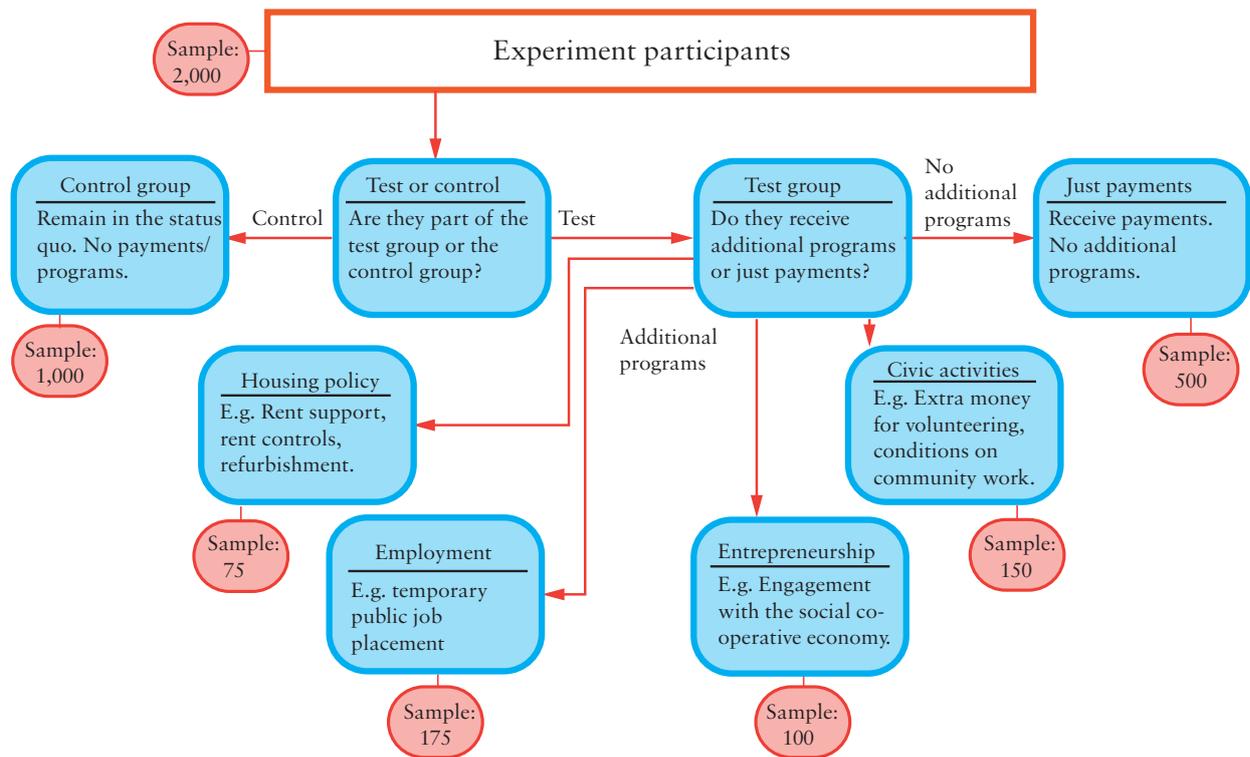


Figure 9: Test groups broken down by participation in different programs within the same experiment

It can be seen here that the sizes of test-groups fall dramatically as additional pathways proliferate, reducing statistical significance greatly. In the example above, it would be difficult if not impossible to draw generalisable lessons from the housing policy group because the sample size is only 75. This has caused difficulty for those behind the B-MINCOME scheme (some test groups are as small as 50) as has finding enough eligible participants for each bracket.

The RSA, in partnership with Rochdale Boroughwide Housing, is putting together a basic income-type scheme, within a broader labour market intervention. After identifying the priorities for intervention, based on discussions with local residents and stakeholders, the New Pioneers Programme outlined two further, interconnected programmes to run alongside 'New Pioneers Income' - their basic income-type payment. These will be focused on individuals who have health limitations and are out of work, and individuals who are in part-time work already but seek to progress to full-time.

These are, primarily, the provision of space to create and run local community businesses, and the running of intense careers coaching with individuals and small groups, including brokering job opportunities with employers and training opportunities with a range of potential providers. Rather than isolated interventions, the elements of the programmes are to be delivered in an interdependent and dynamic fashion.

While these kinds of proposals are probably insufficient scaffolding to match the claimed benefits of prospective national basic income policies, the shortfall is inevitable due to the constrained resources and remits of local authorities. What they might offer, however, are insights into and possible assessments of which support mechanisms best accompany basic income payments.

3) Universality: Targeted cohorts

The vast majority of historical and contemporary basic income pilots and experiments have focused on a targeted cohort. The Negative Income Tax experiments in Canada and the US mostly focused on particular family structures (eg two child families) and particular ages (eg below the age of 58). All these experiments also had an income-related eligibility threshold. The most common defining feature of this threshold was that of having an income below a certain percentage of the poverty line (typically between 150 percent and 240 percent)¹⁶⁸. The contemporary Ontario pilot is similarly structured, in that only those earning less than the full value of the basic income payments are eligible for the scheme, ie \$16,989¹⁶⁹. It should be noted that all of these experiments had marginal deduction rates of between 30 percent and 70 percent.

The current Finnish experiment is also targeted. It focuses solely on the unemployed, specifically those who were in receipt of unemployment benefits prior to the study¹⁷⁰. Primarily due to this design element, the experiment has been the target of much criticism - including controversial suggestions that it is not a basic income policy at all.

Income and employment status are only two ways in which to categorise potential participants. Another option of particular interest is targeting youth, or specifically NEETs aged 18-30. This group frequently rotates in and out of work and is characterised by economic insecurity. When employed, the nature of their work is often precarious. It has been argued that a basic income could support this group not only to actively seek work, but also with skills, training and education. The 2017 French presidential candidate Benoit Hamon proposed a basic income for the nation during his campaign, starting with payments to 18-25 year olds¹⁷¹. He later somewhat backtracked.

Those approaching retirement, as will be discussed in the next chapter, are also particularly vulnerable in today's labour market. This is particularly true for older women, and they stand to gain a lot from the security of basic income in many of the same ways as young people¹⁷². As an older woman it is more difficult to retrain, and you are far more likely to perform a disproportionate amount of unpaid care work, while also experiencing discrimination at work or when finding it^{173,174}.

Another group that could be considered is the homeless population. One study found that giving rough sleepers a small, personalised budget had a massive and durable impact. Participants in the City of London experiment had been sleeping rough for between four and 45 years and were given £3,000 each - with varying levels of voluntary engagement with support workers. By the evaluation period, the majority were living in accommodation, or planning to move in to accommodation soon¹⁷⁵. This worked out to be a considerably cheaper and more effective strategy than those in place at the time.

Other potential groups include those families with children in poverty, or elderly poverty. It may be wise to conduct this as a geographical experiment rather than resorting to what would otherwise be necessary means testing that could be overly intrusive and demeaning.

While targeting has some clear benefits, both in terms of the possible effects on participants and research results, doing so stands in direct opposition to the universality principle.

Ancillary variables

There are several variables that do not appear in Figure 6. These may be requirements externally forced onto those implementing a basic income-type experiment. Others are additional 'tweaks' that could be made to each of the above, such as paying out a proportion of BI payments in the form of a local or Cryptocurrency, or testing out the effects of making payments on different timeframes.

These would run parallel to any of the above experiment designs and would affect the variables above in the slightest ways or, as is the case for the delivery mechanism for payments, on an entirely different plane. These are explored in detail in the following chapter (see: Permutations and additions to scenarios 1-4).

What might basic income-type experiments look like in the UK?

Four scenarios

The material thus covered is all geared toward implementing real world basic income-type experiments. UK experiments could, together with the initiatives across the world, constitute a major step in transitioning basic income from a progressive proposition at the fringes of mainstream political debate to a realistic proposal for governments to consider implementing on a wider scale.

It is therefore critical that experiments are designed in a manner that is methodologically robust and resilient to scrutiny. Implementers must work with partners in civil society, academia and policy (including those running trials abroad) to ensure that UK experiments are conducted in a manner that generates accurate and useful results, building on prior research and are as widely actionable as possible.

This section is an exercise in envisioning what such experiments might look like. Each applies the frameworks developed in the previous sections and should be understood in the context of: basic income principles; local, regional and national legislation and policy goals; the infrastructure of existing tax/benefit systems; variables of experiment design; and rules for carrying out experiments.

There are four illustrative scenarios elaborated upon below, each of which follow a different strand of the variable flowchart laid out in the previous section. They have been chosen so as to cover a broad range of possible policy aims, funding levels, and levels of complexity.

It should be noted that the total costs outlined below are that of the payments alone and does not include the administration, design stage, research, analysis, nor any other element of the process. This is largely because there is a great degree of variance between the costs of these elements, partly due to locally specific conditions. Estimating these costs will require further investigation at a later stage in feasibility and design phases.

The costs are also based on the understanding that participants either do not require additional funds to top payments up to pre-existing benefit levels, or that BI payments are not expected to make up any shortfall. If this is not the case then either the “better off” principle will be contravened or there might be some necessary slight increases in expenditure.

As outlined in Chapter 3, participants would be asked as a condition of their enrolment in the experiment to forgo: Universal Credit and Child Benefit (the BI payments for children are essentially Child Benefit, after all); or JSA, Tax Credits, etc. if not in a UC area. Participants would also be exempt from PITA meaning they pay the basic rate of tax from the first pound earned, along with National Insurance contributions. All of this will undoubtedly benefit the exchequer in the form of decreased benefits payments and increased tax revenue. This could and should be re-routed back into the experiment's budget. There is a strong argument to be taken to the DWP and HMRC to do so.

Should further reading on any of the below be desired, each section has plentiful references in the footnotes, pointing to relevant case study examples of historical and/or current basic income-type experiments. Each scenario is intentionally aligned with elements of contemporary basic income discourse (eg poverty, economic security, community, automation) along with source material and tools for analysing each in an experimental context.

The scenarios are explained in terms of their design architectures, processes for implementation, and the dynamics of assessable outcomes – with associated evaluation methodologies. Chapters 5 and 6 go hand-in-hand, with the former laying out example experiments and the latter investigating systemic means of evaluation as well as the best ways to contribute to basic income knowledge and foster collaboration, inform policy, and promote the ideals and practices underpinning basic income.

These are but a few examples taken from a wide set of possible programs. The four scenarios outlined in this section are, however, important to consider and they individually and collectively constitute a springboard from which to launch an experimental design phase.

Four scenarios

Scenario 1: Mid-scale saturation site

All residents in a given area, like a council ward, receive basic income payments.

- Case study example: Dauphin, Manitoba - Mincome

Scenario 2: Targeted cohort

A cohort with a particular shared characteristic, such as age, employment status, welfare receipt, or income level, receives basic income payments.

- Case study example: Finland - Kela

Scenario 3: Micro-site

A small group of individuals are universally provided with basic income payments to test its impact on particular outcomes, eg employability in a housing estate with high numbers of JSA and ESA recipients.

- Case study example: City of London homelessness pilot

Scenario 4: Combined interventions

A version of one of the above, but supplemented with a range of other interventions such as training and skills opportunities, new models of worker support and help with housing payments.

- Case study example: Barcelona - B-MINCOME

Scenario 1: Mid-scale saturation site

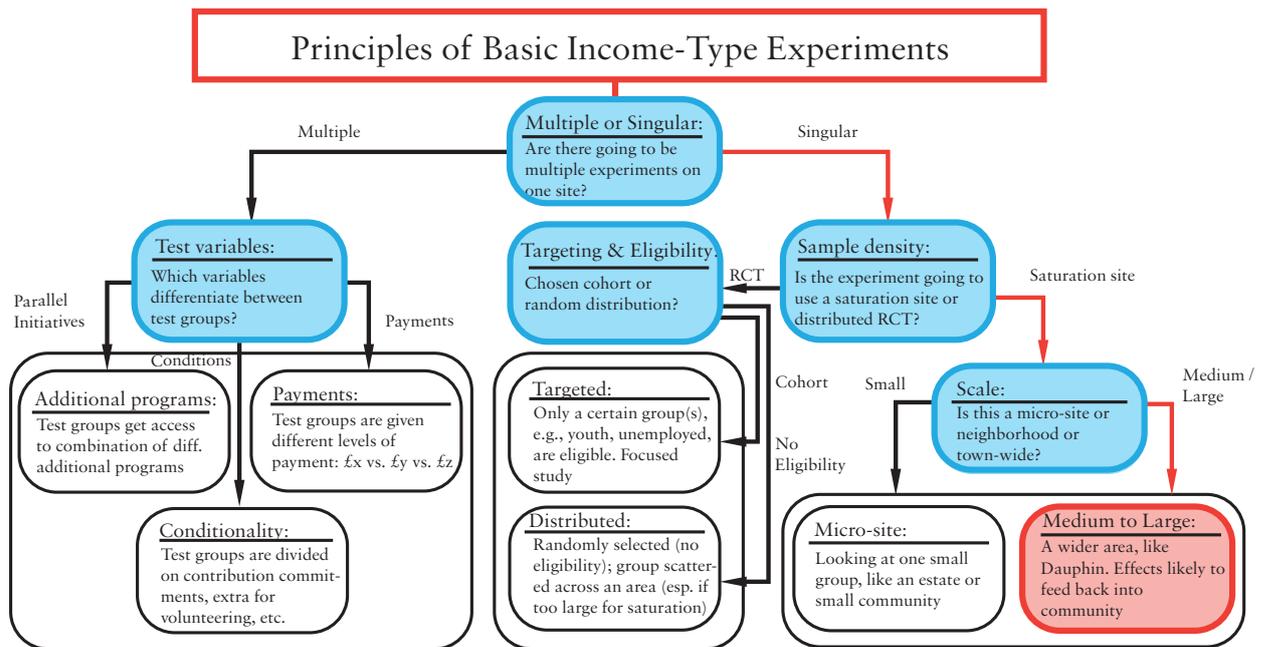


Figure 10: Single test variable -> Saturation site -> Medium-large

This experiment is what some might consider the closest to ‘ideal type’. There is a single intervention (independent variable): introducing basic income payments. All dependent variables (assessed outcomes) are attached to this single independent variable.

Given the saturation site, the availability of BI payments to all in the vicinity, this experiment is close in character to proposed national universal policies. Additionally, the ‘social multiplier’ will be in play, which may impact on behaviour, collective efficacy and community feedback dynamics.

Running an experiment like this at scale will be expensive in comparison with other experiment structures, due to the high number of potential experiment participants. The experiment in Dauphin, Manitoba – the only Western case study of this kind to date – invited 12,000 residents to participate, around 20 percent of whom signed up in some capacity over the duration of the program.¹⁷⁶

Under this scenario, payments are delivered on a monthly time-frame, paid individually and directly into the bank accounts of adults of working age, with different amounts going to children (under the stewardship of parents/carers) and slightly more going to those over 64. Decisions will have to be made about whether to include new arrivals (whether through new births or immigration) and those leaving the community (if measuring aspirational/entrepreneurial activity it may be relevant to see what participants go on to do). We suggest levels of payment similar to those modelled in the RSA paper *Creative Citizen, Creative State*¹⁷⁷, updated for these to 2016/17 benefit rates.

Age	Income per person (£)	
	per week	per year (~52.1 wks)
0-4, first child	£84.50	£4,404
0-4, add. children	£67.00	£3,494
5-15	£57.90	£3,019
16-24	£57.90	£3,019
25-64	£73.10	£3,812
64+	£155.60	£8,113

Age	Cost for payments to 1,000 People (£)	
	per week	per year (~52.1 wks)
0-4, first child	£2,535	£132,120
0-4, add. children	£2,077	£108,314
5-15	£7,411	£386,432
16-24	£6,423	£335,109
25-64	£38,012	£1,982,240
64+	£28,008	£1,460,340

Total cost (£)	per week	per year
	£84,470	£4,404,555

Table 5: Basic income payment levels and costs for Scenario 1⁷⁸

For a geographic test site (portion of rural area/town/city) of 2,000 people with 50 percent take up, or 5,000 with a 20 percent take up rate, with the assumed average age demographics of the UK⁷⁹, and an average of two children per household, total payments would amount to approximately £4,405,000 per year. This is £85,000 per week or £8,810,000 for a two-year experiment. The payments for children aged 0-4 are to be made to all children, not just the first two (as Child Benefit has since April 2017).

As the experiment progresses some individuals will move up age categories and thus their entitlements will change. This means that total costs will be somewhat modified over time. The extent to which they change depends on whether or not babies born after the start-date are entered into the scheme and also on the specific ages of the test group. Migration (into and out of the test-site) will also be a factor.

Experiment structure: The experimental control group would need to be made up of a separate community or neighbourhood with similar network structures and baseline demographic characteristics. In order to test the short and medium-term effects of the BI payments, this experiment should run for at least two years. The hypotheses below are intended as suggestions to be built upon, as outlined in the Chapter 6 on dynamic assessment.

Possible initial hypotheses and variables to be tested:

*Basic income payments will lead to proportionally better **health** outcomes and decreased **hospital admissions** relative to the control group.*

- This is to be measured in terms of hospital admission statistics (possibly incorporating GP visits, with participants' consent). Particular attention is to be paid to A&E and mental health hospitals. Cortisol levels may also be recorded.
- Additional evidence may come from self-reported subjective surveys of experiment participants and members of the control group: "Would you say you are in good health?"; "Have you noticed any changes in the quality of your health in the last few months/since the experiment started?" Local GPs and hospital staff from the test and control sites should also be asked to provide comment, as well as accessing government health data if possible and ethical.

*Basic income payments will lead to a greater proportional decrease in **inequality** relative to the control group.*

- This is to be measured using economic data, applied to income ratios within and between companies and groups, and the Gini coefficient, in absolute rather than percentage change terms.
- Additional supporting material will come from ethnographic study, as well as baseline, interim and post-experiment surveys. Relevant questions might include: "(To what extent) do you feel your community is equal?" or "Do you feel your community is more or less equal that it was a year ago?" These could be reformulated into questions applicable to the Likert scale, as well as incorporated into discussions around income, wealth, power and related structural dynamics.

*Basic income payments will lead to a greater proportional decrease in levels of **poverty** relative to the control group.*

- This is to be measured in terms of household income, consumption patterns and incidence of material deprivation. Additional supporting material will be provided via ethnographic study and qualitative interviews with experiment participants and the control group. Baseline, interim and post-experiment surveys will form the basis of much of the comparative analysis.

Case study example: Dauphin, Manitoba (Canada), 1970s.

Further reading: Forget (2011)¹⁸⁰; Calnitsky (2016)¹⁸¹; Hum and Simpson (1993)¹⁸²

	Basic	Regular	Unconditional	Equal and individual	Non-withdrawable	Universal	Better-off	Sample size
Scenario 1: Mid-scale saturation site	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	?	1,000

Table 6: Scenario 1 mapped onto table of basic income principles

The principles check box above implies that this experiment would be extremely close to the ‘ideal’ type.

Represented by a ‘?’ above, the better off principle will not be satisfied unless it is ensured that participants don’t lose out as a result of payments. Without close attention during the design phase and a reliable responsiveness to participants’ needs during the course of the experiment it is near impossible to say whether or not this condition has been satisfied.

While there are ticks in both boxes, it is worth noting that it could be a challenge to ensure unconditionality and non-withdrawability, depending on the extent to which the DWP and HMRC are willing to collaborate and the willingness of participants to remove themselves from existing benefits.

Scenario 2: Targeted cohort

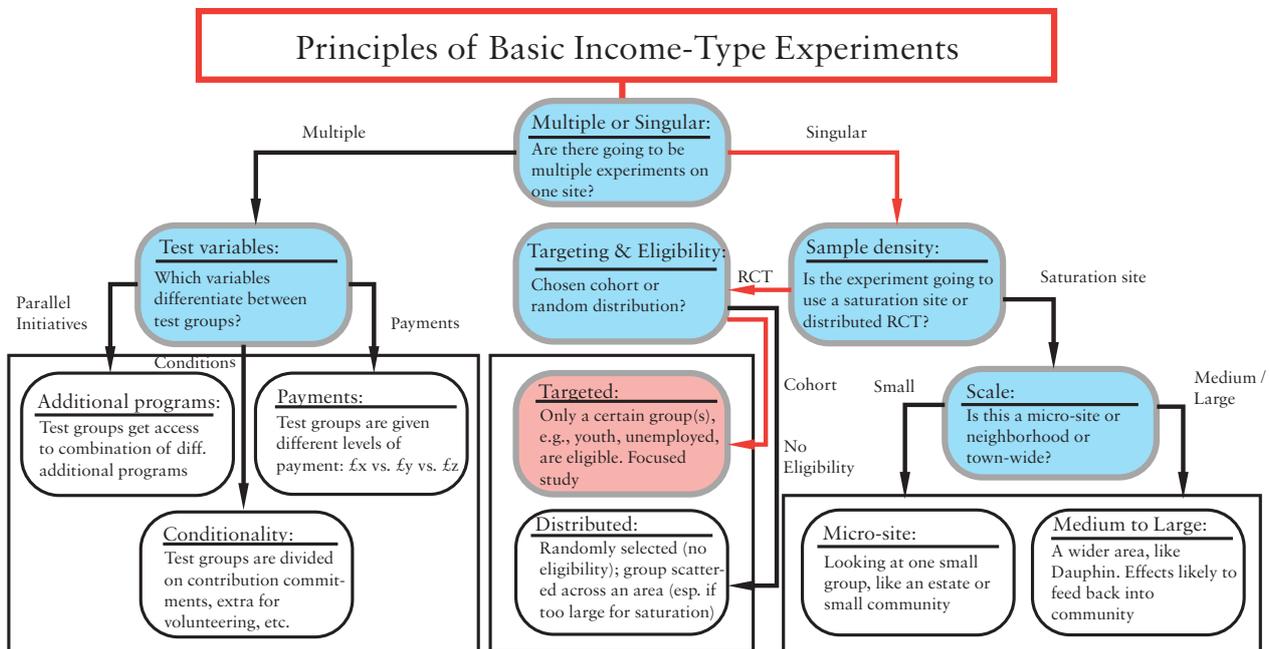


Figure 11: Single test variable (within cohort) -> Distributed RCT -> Targeted

This experiment type is relatively common when it comes to historical pilots. It involves the provision of an unconditional income to a cohort with a particular shared characteristic. Contemporary and historical trials

in the US, Canada (with the exception of Dauphin, above), Finland and elsewhere in the western world have run programs available solely to those (separately or together) in low income brackets, un- or underemployment, and/or in receipt of state welfare.

Research suggests that youth (18-30) are amongst those with the highest barriers for entry into employment and similarly most likely to change their work participation in response to basic income payments¹⁸³.

For the young, this is due to the fact that they are largely entering into the workforce for the first time, have a disproportionate experience of precarity and are faced with shrinking returns on educational investment¹⁸⁴. It may be worth focusing in particular on those young people not in education, employment or training. Similar difficulties face those aged 30-40.

There are certain biases affecting different groups, whether they be based on age, employment status or any other criteria. In contrast to the younger groups outlined above, some claim that those approaching retirement (55-64) face the idiosyncratic risk of short-term unemployment turning into long-term unemployment¹⁸⁵. The effect of a basic income on this could possibly increase the likelihood of older groups withdrawing their labour altogether. This might be worth testing. Other factors to consider include the effect on older women. Under the status quo this group faces significant challenges with regard to not only gaining employment but also contract type and pay. On average, women aged between 50 and 59 earn 18.4 percent less per hour than their male peers¹⁸⁶.

This scenario focuses on the effects of a basic income on two example test groups: i) youth of 18-30, and; ii) older people aged 55-64 (inclusive). The same framework can be applied to other desired test groups, such as employment status, income level, gender, or race.

Under this scenario, payments would be delivered on a monthly time frame, paid individually and directly into the bank accounts of i) young people aged between 18 and 30 and ii) those aged between 55 and 64. Decisions will have to be made about whether to include people entering or exiting each of the two age brackets – 17 year olds turning 18 or 30 year olds turning 31; and 54 year olds turning 55 or 64 year olds turning 65, respectively.

It might make sense to remove those at the upper bounds, especially those turning 65 as they will enter retirement. Adding newly turned 18 and 55 year olds, while possibly desirable, may be administratively difficult to do. It is worth bearing in mind that new arrivals could also skew the results because their time under the scheme will differ from other participants. The totals for 1,000 people in the sample are laid out below, assuming here that half (500) participants are in the younger test group and half (500) participants are in the older test group.

Age	Income per person (£)	
	per week	per year (~52.1 wks)
Youth (18-30)		
16-24 (from 18 y/o)	£57.90	£3,019
25-64 (until 31 y/o)	£73.10	£3,812
Older working age (55-64)		
25-64 (from 55 y/o)	£73.10	£3,812

Age	Cost for payments to 1,000 people (£)	
	per week	per year (~52.1 wks)
Youth (18-30)		
16-24 (from 18 y/o)	£14,475	£754,750
25-64 (until 31 y/o)	£18,275	£953,000
Older working age (55-64)		
25-64 (from 55 y/o)	£36,550	£1,906,000

Total cost (£)	per week	per year (~52.1 wks)
		£69,300

Table 7: Basic income payment levels and costs for Scenario 2

These payments, again, are updated versions of payments laid out in the RSA's Creative Citizen, Creative State¹⁸⁷. These are pegged to payments levels for, in this case, Jobseeker's Allowance. The population of the youth group has been split between age payment brackets (in line with age distribution of the UK population as a whole¹⁸⁸), 25 being the age threshold. Participants will move upwards through age groups as the experiment progresses.

The costs presented are equally relevant for if the experiment wanted to give BI payments to: i) youth and pre-retirees in general, and; ii) young people not in education, employment or training and women aged 55-64, more specifically.

Selecting participants for this scenario is more complicated than in Scenario 1. Participants would be screened on the basis of age or – if

choosing the more precise eligibility criteria above – employment status, gender and other associated classifications. Generally, the more precise the eligibility criteria the more elaborate the selection process. Participants could apply to be part of the program but doing so would lead to selection bias. Local authorities might want to pick people (as is common in randomised control trials) but making the experiment mandatory might lead to ethical difficulties. Getting the correct test-group demographic is of particular importance for basic income-type experiments with targeted cohorts.

While particular groups are being targeted, this scenario places no conditions on payment recipients. Even if NEEs were the target group, participants would be under no pressure to attend obligatory meetings or receive punishments for failing to engage in employment, education and/or training. This, along with non-withdrawability, means payment costs will be effectively constant.

Experiment structure: the above will need to be applied to a control group. In the case of a targeted cohort this would need to be a group meeting the same eligibility criteria (same age bracket) and with similar baseline characteristics (a similar incidence of benefit receipt, employment status and similar income, for example). In order to test the medium-term effects of the BI payments, this experiment should run for at least two years. The total cost of payments over this period would amount to around £7.2m.

Possible hypotheses and variables to be tested:

*Basic income payments will lead to a greater proportional increase in levels of participants' **employment** relative to the control group.*

- This is to be measured in terms of incidence of labour force participation and average hours in work. Data could be collected by the council and, where relevant, local job centres. Additional supporting material will be provided via ethnographic study, qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys with experiment participants and the control group. Baseline, interim and post-experiment surveys will form the basis of much of the comparative analysis.

*Basic income payments will lead to a greater proportional decrease in levels of the **experience of stigma** amongst participants relative to the control group.*

- This is to be measured in terms of self-reported feelings of self-worth, frequency of feeling uncomfortable around those not on benefits, and difficulties experienced with banks, landlords and others as a result of receiving BI payments compared to other benefits¹⁸⁹. Data are to be collected via interviews and surveys with participants, especially those in the test and control groups who are in receipt of benefits (including participants who were, prior to the experiment).
- Some questions must be comparative, eg “Do you feel more or less embarrassed being on BI payments compared to mainstream

benefits?” Baseline, interim and post-experiment surveys will form the basis of much of the comparative analysis to track the development of these opinions/feelings.

Basic income payments will lead to a greater proportional increase in job satisfaction and hourly earnings for those participants in work, relative to the control group.

- This is to be measured in terms of self-reported job satisfaction and average (mean and median) hourly pay. Qualitative and quantitative data will be gathered in the form of baseline, interim and post-experiment surveys of participants who have been in work for at least some of the duration of the experiment. Local and possibly national government data would prove useful, as would the cooperation of participants’ employers (should this be deemed ethically and practically sound).

Possible permutations of the Target Group type of BI experiment, predicated on the existence of eligibility criteria, include the targeting of not just age group and employment status but instead (or additionally) income level, disability or incapacity - as implemented in the 1960s and ’70s experiments in the US and Canada, and in the recently proposed Québécois experiment, respectively.

Proponents of this structure of experiment argue that targeting more readily lends itself to helping those in need, while others stress that the absence of a ‘social multiplier’ reduces the transformative civic potential of the basic income-type intervention.

Case study examples: Finland (Kela), current - employment; Ontario, current – income level; Canada and the US, historical (1970s) – income level; Quebec, proposed – disability.

Further reading: Finland: Kela (2016)¹⁹⁰; Kangas, O., et al. (2017)¹⁹¹; Canada (current): Segal, H. (2016)¹⁹²; Canada and US (historical): Hum, D. and Simpson, W. (1993)¹⁹³; Quebec: (proposed): Québécois government (2017)^{194, 195}.

	Basic	Regular	Unconditional	Equal and individual	Non-withdrawable	Universal	Better-off	Sample size
Scenario 2: Targeted cohort	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	X	?	1,000

Table 8: Scenario 2 mapped onto table of basic income principles

The principles checkbox above implies that this experiment would be close to the ‘ideal’ type (but not quite as close as Scenario 1). Whether or not Scenario 2 fulfils the unconditionality and non-withdrawability criteria depends on the same dynamics as those laid out in Scenario 1.

Scenario 2’s cross in the box for the universal principle comes from its key experimental design feature, namely that BI payments are only given

to people who meet certain eligibility criteria (age, work status, income, disability etc). It is worth noting that this is distinct from the unconditional principle, which is denoted as conditions placed on participants to fulfil certain tasks or meet certain expectations during the experiment.

Scenario 3: Micro-site

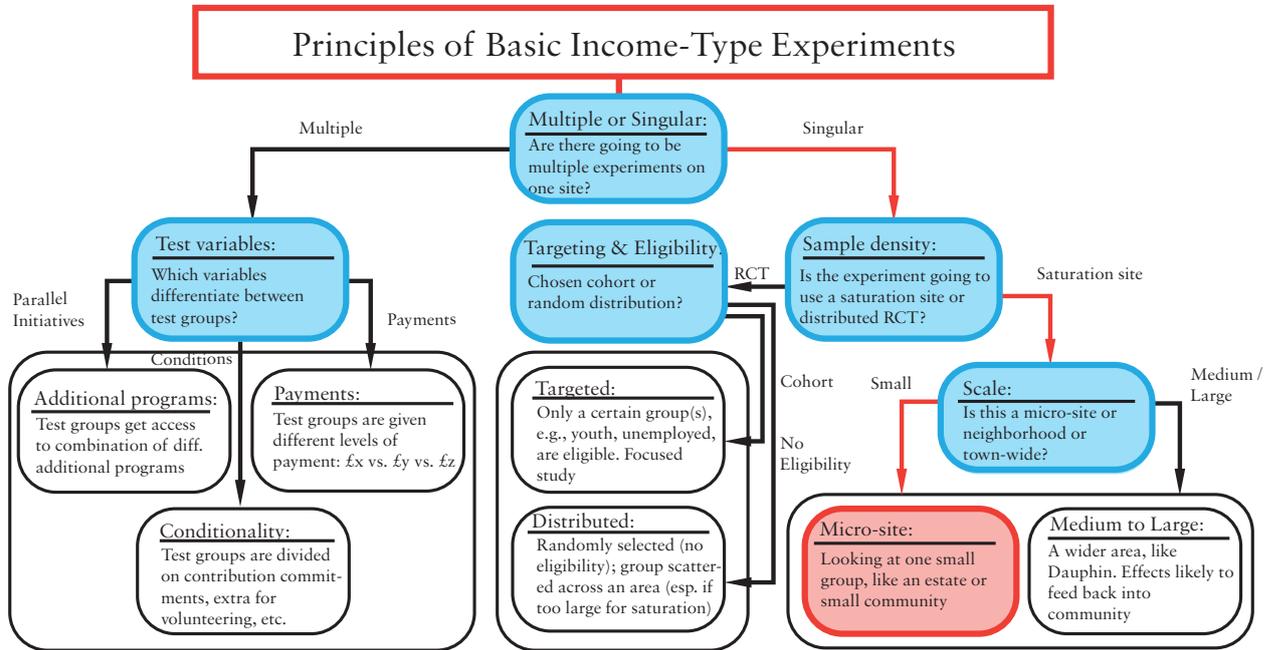


Figure 12: Single test variable -> Saturation site -> Micro-site

This experiment is close to an ‘ideal type’, an application of a wide array of the principles underpinning the concept of a basic income. In this experiment rather than offering BI payments to all residents of an area and relying on the opt-in of a percentage of local residents, this experiment would aim to give BI payments to every resident in an area with a (preferably internally defined) sense of community. This might be a council estate or small and distinct residential neighbourhood.

In order to avoid breaching any ethical boundaries, especially the concept that none be left worse off with the payments, much deliberative local consultation would be necessary prior to the launch of the experiment. If participation is mandatory then individuals on other forms of benefit prior to the experiment must be compensated for any losses incurred as a result of basic income payments.

As discussed, Kela developed a system through which Finnish participants’ payments can be topped-up if BI payments are lower than their benefits would be otherwise. While in the Finnish case the process is relatively simple in comparison with the complex ecosystem of the UK’s tax and benefits system, a small cohort could lend itself to more easily calculating such ‘payment gaps’ on a case-by-case basis.

The administration of this kind of experiment means that related costs would be higher than might be expected for other experiments. This is also the case for the payment levels themselves. The figures below should be taken as minimum payment levels, given that some are likely to see

their benefits fall and hence require additional payments. Even with this condition, participants must be given the opportunity to opt-out if so desired. The below is an outline of BI payment costs for a cohort of 250 people.

Age	Income per person (£)	
	per week	per year
0-4, first child	£84.50	£4,404
0-4, add. children	£67.00	£3,494
5-15	£57.90	£3,019
16-24	£57.90	£3,019
25-64	£73.10	£3,812
64+	£155.60	£8,113

Age	Cost for payments to 250 people (£)	
	per week	per year
0-4, first child	£591.50	£30,828
0-4, add. children	£536.00	£27,952
5-15	£1,853	£96,608
16-24	£1,621	£84,532
25-64	£9,503	£495,560
64+	£7,002	£365,085

Total cost (£)	per week	per year
		£21,106

Table 9: Basic income payment levels and costs for Scenario 3

The age split (and payment levels) in this scenario are identical to that in Scenario 1. As such the total cost of Scenario 3 is one quarter that of Scenario 1, in line with the 1:4 sample size ratio and assumed similar age demographic. Multiple micro-experiments could be conducted in different communities, if desired, so as to closely assess the impacts of BI payments in different types of community.

Below are two modified version of these cost estimates, in line with attempts to ensure the ‘better off’ principle is met. Interactions and agreements with the DWP and HMRC are particularly important for an experiment like this. In the first version total payments are increased by 10 percent. This is illustrative of a scenario in which, say, one fifth of the participants need their payments increased by an average of 50 percent from the baseline, or in which half of the participants need a 20 percent increase from baseline. The second – a 20 percent total increase – illustrates a response to a larger need for payment modifications: with half of the participants requiring an average 40 percent increase in payments, for example. In this scenario the payments would be unevenly distributed between individuals of different needs.

Total cost (£)	per week	per year (~52.1wks)
+10%	£23,217	£1,210,622
+20%	£25,328	£1,320,678

Table 10: Total costs for increased average payments for Scenario 3

Experiment structure: Possible control groups for this scenario should include communities with similar demographics to the test-group. It would also be beneficial for them to be in a similar area with similar levels of welfare support and community cohesion. In order to test the medium-term effects of the BI payments, this experiment should run for at least two years, if not longer. The BI payment cost of two-year implementation is £2.4m for Scenario 3 (assuming a 10 percent increase due to modified payment levels). The social multiplier effect is likely to be especially strong under this scenario given that recipients will be close to each other – geographically and possibly in terms of personal relationships. Mutual aid and collective efficacy will be considerable factors to consider.

It is worth noting at this stage that some proponents of basic income are likely to claim that differing payments between participants contravenes the principle of equality underpinning the policy’s concept. That said, payments are only being made at different levels to different people in relation to the UK’s existing tax benefit system. Aligning payments in the way suggested above could therefore be thought of as leveling the playing field, in other words providing a more equal payment.

Possible hypotheses and variables to test:

Basic income payments will lead to a greater proportional increase in levels of participants’ wellbeing relative to the control group.

- This is to be measured in terms of levels of self-reported wellbeing, mental illness such as anxiety, irritability and depression and stress. Data are to be gathered via ethnographic study, and qualitative interviews and surveys. While this is considered controversial in some sectors, measurements of participants’ cortisol levels using a cheek swab (as has been practiced in

GiveDirectly’s BI experiments in Kenya¹⁹⁶) can offer an instructive proxy for measuring stress, anxiety and other psychological phenomena.

*Basic income payments will lead to a greater proportional increase in participants’ **physical health** relative to the control group.*

- This is to be measured in terms of frequency of GP visits, A&E, and hospital admittance, diet, and exercise habits. Data should be provided by and assessed in collaboration with local health authorities. Additional material will be provided via ethnographic study, qualitative interviews and quantitative surveys and tests with experiment participants and the control group.

*Basic income payments will lead to a greater proportional decrease in the use of **food banks** relative to the control group.*

- This is to be measured in terms of the total usage and frequency per average user of food banks as well as self-reported feelings of dependency on food banks. Data should be collected in collaboration with local food banks and experiment participants (those who use food banks and those who don’t) as well as the control group. Baseline, interim and post-experiment surveys are necessary to evaluate any changes.

*Basic income payments will lead to a greater proportional increase in the **strength of voice** in the community, relative to the control group.*

- This is to be measured in terms of self-reported personal and collective voice, feelings of agency, and the proliferation of collective-voice institutions. Qualitative data should be collected via interviews with key community spokespeople, as well as the test and control groups, with supporting information from ethnographic study and consultation with any existing voice institutions.

Micro-experiments could also involve similarly cohesive but more transient communities. This could mean, for example, rough sleepers or newly arrived refugees.

Case study: Rochdale, UK, upcoming¹⁹⁷; City of London Homelessness Pilot, historical.

Further reading: Hough, J. et al (2010)¹⁹⁸.

	Basic	Regular	Unconditional	Equal and individual	Non-withdrawable	Universal	Better-off	Sample size
Scenario 3: Micro-site	✓	✓	✓	✓/X	✓	✓	✓	250

Table 11: Scenario 3 mapped onto table of basic income principles

The principles checkbox box above implies that this experiment would, again, be very close to the ‘ideal’ type, perhaps even more so than Scenario 1 (although the sample is much smaller). The main points of interest are the results for i) better off; and ii) equal and individual.

Unlike previous scenarios, the better off principle is met. This assumes that the experiment is carried out as explained above (topping up payments) and that experiment designers can predict this with confidence.

This topping up facet of the experiment may, however, contravene the equal and individual principle because some people will get more than others. However, as mentioned above, giving more to those set to lose benefits could be thought of as levelling the playing field in the context of an external environment of means testing, eligibility criteria, income cut-offs and marginal deductions. In this sense, Scenario 3 could even be viewed as even more ‘equal’ than the other scenarios, but this is largely a matter of perspective. Hence the tick and the cross.

Scenario 4: Combined interventions

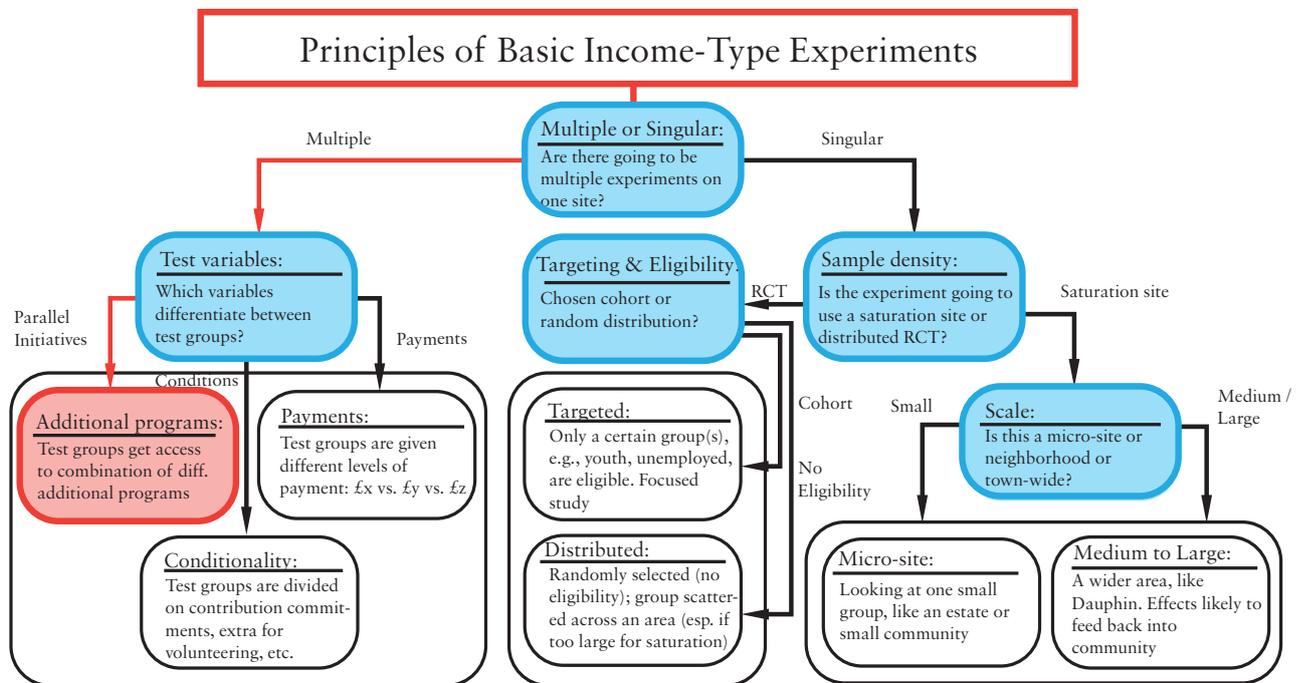


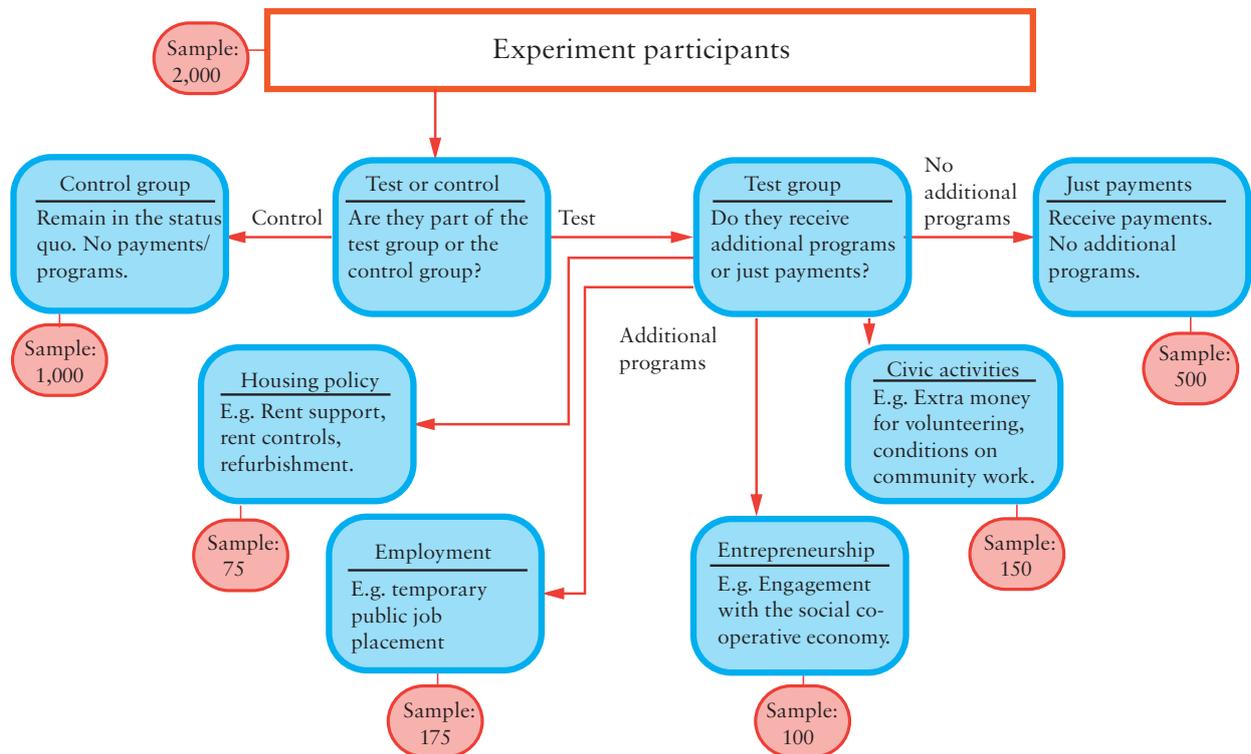
Figure 13: Multiple test variables -> Parallel initiatives -> Additional programs

Scenario 4 can be thought of as a modified version of any one of the scenarios above, supplemented with a range of other interventions such as training and skills programs, new models of employment support, training to set up community businesses or cooperatives, or support with housing payments.

BI payments to experiment participants will be dictated by both scale and the defining eligibility criteria (if any) of the cohort, so should be calculated using the tables for previous scenarios according to the underlying architecture. The additional programs will need to be costed individually according to locality and ambition (helping participants to set up businesses may or may not involve providing loans, for example).

It is imperative that data collection and analysis be predicated on multiple test variables. This scenario, unlike the previous three, will not be able to provide the environment to test the impact on all participants of basic income payments alone.

There are multiple ways in which to structure this experiment. Participants can be given the same treatment across the board, where BI payments and additional programs are available to everyone. This is the approach being investigated in the Rochdale New Pioneers Scheme, delivered in part by the RSA¹⁹⁹. An argument for this is that all participants should have access to as much support as possible, for both ethical and practical reasons. Alternatively, participants can be given access to different programs, or ranges of program. An additional possibility is to allow some participants access to all programs and others to none.



Reproduction of Figure 9: Possible breakdown of experiment participants according to additional programs

In the above scheme, different groups of participants are essentially parts of mini-experiments within a larger experimental context; 1,000 people receive BI payments, half of whom are enrolled in additional programs like entrepreneurial training to facilitate engagement with the social and cooperative economy, or temporary public job placement. Some of these programs might influence the underlying principles of basic income-type experiments, like introducing elements of conditionality by, for example, offering extra payments to those engaging in civic activities.

Each of these groups will need to be tested independently. It is important to note at this point that each splitting of the test group reduces statistical significance (eg a sample of 75 people is unlikely to provide

information that can be extrapolated in any meaningful sense). Unless the sample size is sufficiently increased (which will have significant financial implications) this is a powerful argument in favour of giving all participants the same treatment.

Possible hypotheses and variables to test:

NB: All of these programs should be tested together for similar impacts, such as educational attainment, crime, and/or labour market participation. Below are some examples of hypotheses and variables that are particularly relevant to different test groups. That said, for a comparative analysis, all groups should be tested for all variables. For each, baseline, interim and post-experiment surveys will form the basis of much of the comparative analysis.

Entrepreneurial programs:

*Basic income payments and entrepreneurial programs will lead to a greater proportional increase in the **entrepreneurial motivation** of participants relative to the control group, and to other test groups.*

- This is to be measured in terms of levels of expectancy, instrumentality and valence, and the number of businesses founded. Data are to be gathered via interviews (possibly including psychometric testing), surveys and tracking the number of new business registrations, in collaboration with the program's support team.

Civic activities:

*Basic income payments and civic activity programs will lead to a greater proportional increase in the **sense of community** experienced by participants relative to the control group, and to other test groups.*

- This is to be measured in terms of levels of self-reported social cohesion, including feelings of membership, meeting needs, influence and shared emotional connection. Data are to be gathered via interviews based around an index, like Sense of Community Index version 2 (SCI-2), supported by ethnographic study and input from key spokespeople in the community.

Housing policy:

*Basic income payments and housing policy programs will lead to a greater proportional increase in the quality of **children's health and family wellbeing** for participants relative to the control group, and to other test groups.*

- This is to be measured via indicators including food security, primary care-giver's mental health, and the number of visits to the GP, A&E, and hospital. Data are to be gathered in collaboration with local authority health services and via interviews and surveys.

Employment:

Basic income payments and employment programs will lead to a greater proportional increase in the average income and savings of participants relative to the control group, and to other test groups over the course of the experiment.

- This is to be measured in terms of income (gross and net), savings and expenditure. Data could be gathered, with consent, via tax returns and self-reported budgeting and savings plans in collaboration with the program’s support team.

Case study example: Barcelona B-MINCOME (upcoming)

Further reading: B-MINCOME: Urban Innovative Actions (2017)²⁰⁰

	Basic	Regular	Unconditional	Equal and individual	Non-withdrawable	Universal	Better-off	Sample size
Scenario 4: Combined interventions	✓	✓	✓/X	X	✓	✓	?	1,000

Table 12: Scenario 4 mapped onto table of basic income principles

The principles checkbox for Scenario 4 is populated with more uncertainty than Scenarios 1 through 3 due to the higher quantity of optional factors in the experiment design. There are many variations of this model, each of which would have a different principles checkbox. The version above is built on the assumption that the experiment is offered to everybody on a saturation site (see Figure 6) and that different programs are offered to different groups. For example, if this were an RCT then the universal principle wouldn’t be satisfied or, conversely, if a ‘top-up’ system were part of the scheme then the better off principle would be satisfied. In this case, the principles of interest are: i) unconditional; ii) equal and individual.

If some participants (as suggested above) were to be offered extra payments in exchange for performing community work, for example, this is clearly an introduction of conditionality. Different payment levels also mean that the equal and individual principle is contravened. The fact that different groups are being given access to different parallel programs also means the equal and individual principle is not met.

Section 2: Permutations and additions to Scenarios 1-4

Each of these scenarios is a precise demonstration of how different variants of basic income-type experiment might be constructed, along with their associated costs, the basic income-type experiment principles they fulfil, and some of their underlying implementation processes. They are broad enough, however, that each can be modified in a number of important ways so as to best deliver on the aims of those implementing experiments in context.

What follows is an elaboration of ancillary variables of basic income-type experiment design and provide more nuance than has been

incorporated thus far. While the four scenarios have within them a modicum of flexibility, we here explore deeper modifications to the outlined proposals.

One intention is to demonstrate the malleability of basic income-type experiments in design and implementation. Another is to provide a wider set of ingredients that can be mixed in to test desired outcomes. Where applicable, existing real-world examples are referenced and further reading is available in the footnotes.

1) Fluid boundaries of categorisation

The flowchart used above (Figure 6), determining the type of experiment is by no means fixed. For example, saturation sites could also have additional programs or elements of partial conditionality. This could include an initiative – similar to an element of Scenario 4 – **offering extra money** to those willing to engage in, or already engaged in, care-work, volunteering and/or community work. This could perhaps be thought of as a more stringent and explicitly conditional extension of the ‘contribution commitment’ previously outlined by the RSA²⁰¹.

2) Multiple experiments on-site

When it comes to testing **multiple variables**, instead of ‘additional programs’ (Scenario 4), an experiment could test for the effects of **different levels of payment**, or the **timings of payments**. The former was trialled in the US and Canada in the 1960s and ’70s²⁰² while the latter is currently being trialled by GiveDirectly in Kenya²⁰³.

Experiments with different levels of payment could be done either within a single location or across multiple standalone experiments. The latter would probably happen as a matter of course, given that each local authority will likely come to unique decisions on what constitutes reasonable payment. Regardless of whether this is intentional, investigating the levels of payment (especially in relation to local purchasing power parity) and their individual impacts is likely to be of significant experimental value.

Testing out the impact of the **timing of payments** would shed light on the relationship between frequency and spending habits, feelings of precarity, agency and other important factors that basic income aims to ameliorate. Even under the agreement that payments should be regularly, the differences in behavioural response for weekly and monthly payments may be significant. GiveDirectly has been experimenting with the effects of different payment schedules and structures, as well as the **amount of information provided** to payment recipients. While the data is yet to be made public, GiveDirectly is testing for statistically significant correlations between timings and household level socio-economic indices and levels of wellbeing²⁰⁴.

3) Interactions with the tax and benefit system

As discussed in previous sections, each experiment is also going to fit differently into the fabric of the UK’s existing **tax and benefit system**. This will occur for several reasons including the extent to which Universal Credit has been rolled out in the area, levels of unemployment and receipt of benefits. Another important factor to consider is the collaboration of HMRC and the DWP.

While much of this is out of the hands of experiment designers and those involved in implementation, the resulting context within which the experiment occurs will drastically influence the results. For example, should participants remain on Jobseeker's Allowance then basic income payments will not negate the fact that they must attend meetings at Jobcentre Plus. This means that the full effects of a pure basic income cannot be rigorously tested because conditionality is still a prominent feature of participants' lives. As such, we recommend that participants withdraw from benefits entirely (as well as forgoing the benefits of PITA and NI contributions).

Experiments must be designed and budgeted with this in mind. Assessment must also take the complexities of the system into account. The interactions of basic income payments and the implications of full, partial and absence of cooperation from HMRC and the DWP are explored in Chapter 3.

4) Voice

An explicit focus on **voice and agency** would increase knowledge about how important community cohesion is as a catalyst for basic income's impacts. This is posited to be significant, but evidence is unfortunately thin on the ground (both for and against). It may be useful to give identical payments/conditions/outside interventions to two communities - one of which is distinctly cohesive, while the other is comparatively atomised - in order to see how significantly collective efficacy impacts on the effects of a basic income.

There was a significant difference in the impacts of a basic income between two of the pilots in Madhya Pradesh, one of which had an empowered voice organisation. This was the first basic income experiment to actively test for the impact of voice. The community with more collective efficacy – defined by the presence of the Self Employed Women's Association (SEWA), an influential women's trade union – exhibited disproportionately better impacts, including higher levels of savings²⁰⁵.

Groups and institutions that may be considered partners in developing voice include, first of all, local community organisations, but also the Citizens Advice Bureau, charities and/or community centres.

5) Delivery mechanism

The delivery mechanism of BI payments is important for all basic income-type experiments. Some advocate for payments made directly into people's bank accounts, while others insist that a **negative income tax** is a more pragmatic option, in an administrative sense²⁰⁶. The difference is non-existent in terms of total money spent, assuming there are no accounting errors in NIT schemes. In the words of Scott Santens, writer and BI advocate:

“One gives a varying amount of money according to income, and the other gives the same amount to all and taxes different amounts back”²⁰⁷.

Despite what should be expected to be identical financial outcomes, BI and NIT schemes can have a considerably different impact on the lives of those receiving payments. NIT schemes are sometimes delivered in one go

at the end of the tax year, given that they operate on reimbursing tax-payers (and non-tax-payers) in relation to income at different tax brackets. Annual payments should be thought of as a grant rather than income, which, as discussed earlier, has inevitable consequences on consumption habits, savings, budgeting and the experience of precarity.

Even if an NIT were paid on a monthly basis like BI payments, which is possible if income reporting is monthly and feedback loops are tight, NITs also require individuals to file taxes even if nothing is earned. This complex administrative process could have behavioural implications, as a sustained focus on reporting earnings and taxation (even if it's negative taxation) highlights withdrawal and could lead to the kinds of thought patterns associated with loss aversion.

Additionally, there is an incentive to under-report incomes within this system. Another factor to consider is that a flat universal payment is likely far more effective in terms of reducing benefits-related stigma than staggered payments whose levels are dictated by reported income.

An NIT would also be difficult for local authorities to deliver as it is predicated upon modulations in the tax system. Due to lack of control over the tax system it is probably preferable to pay participants in the form of direct, monthly basic income payments.

6) Payment mechanisms: Cryptocurrency, local currency and community institutions

Every experiment must decide on a **payment mechanism**. There are many options. For example, a fraction of the payments could be delivered in the form of a local, social, or Cryptocurrency. One of the benefits of such an approach is that these currencies have a much lower marginal cost to distribute than GBP. A local currency, printed by a local authority, would only cost as much as what is required to print (if physical) or develop software for (if electronic), distribute, spread awareness about, and provide staff for. A Cryptocurrency would only cost as much as developing an app and maintaining dedicated servers, again in addition to staffing costs.

Local currencies have had mixed success across the world²⁰⁸. Some of the more well-known and established examples include the BerkShares²⁰⁹ scheme in Western Massachusetts (where notes have been circulating since 2006) and the Bristol²¹⁰ and Totnes Pound²¹¹, operating since 2007 and 2012 respectively. The latter two have also been translated into electronic currencies, using a combination of text messages and apps^{212, 213}.

Local currencies are generally distributed to the local population in exchange for Fiat currency, usually at a discounted rate, eg 90 pence can buy one unit local currency. After this point, local currencies operate in sections of the community (eg participating shops, businesses, government institutions, and banks) at parity with the national currency. As a result there is an incentive to keep the local currency in circulation within the community. Local currencies have been found to have a greater multiplier effect within communities, with positive implications for local businesses, the economy and residents²¹⁴.

Using a local currency as part of a basic income-type experiment would require that payments be given to residents, rather than purchased. This would have a considerable impact on the collective interpretation of money as a social means of exchange, thereby possibly limiting its value

and reach on some level. Banks and businesses, for example, would be unlikely to buy back such local currencies if they were (or even just believed they were) unable to sell them on or convert them to Fiat currency. The primary purpose of local currencies – keeping money in the local economy – could be its main drawback in a free giveaway basic income context. If it were non-transferable it would be valueless.

A significant amount of research would need to be done in order to ascertain the value of using local currencies in a BI experiment, but the idea does hold promise, especially due to its low marginal cost. Coming up with structured and planned interventions surrounding a new local currency seems to be the key to success. Some in-depth investigation on integrating local currencies and basic income has already been done, including by Professor Alf Hornborg of Lund University²¹⁵. There is scope to build on and apply such research to UK localities.

A similar situation is faced by **Cryptocurrencies** like Bitcoin, Ethereum, and Litecoin, the widespread success of which relies on a key innovation in their collaborative structure. Cryptocurrency transactions are all logged in what's called the blockchain; a public digital ledger. Transactions rely on encryption, each transaction being marked with a unique personal string of numbers to verify and protect identity.

This means, among other things, that the blockchain is immutable and transparent, prohibits cheating such as double spending (one user paying another twice) and thereby maintains the credibility of the currency. Cryptocurrencies are largely decentralised and horizontal and the creation of units of unestablished Cryptocurrencies is at near-zero marginal cost.

The idea of using Cryptocurrency as a delivery mechanism for basic income has gathered much interest in recent years. Initiatives such as Grantcoin²¹⁶, the Universal Basic Unit²¹⁷, and Circles²¹⁸ offer versions of what the latter refers to as “a basic income on the blockchain”. Under these schemes, equal payments are made to recipients on a regular basis – like in most basic income-type experiments – either via phone banking or using an app similar to a FairCoin wallet. Both Grantcoin and Circles have conducted pilots; in South Africa and Berlin, respectively.

There are considerable challenges, chiefly that the value of these currencies can fluctuate rapidly and that they are not always convertible in a frictionless way. Other than these, the successes of the basic income Cryptocurrency experiments seem to have been dependent on the levels of take-up and usage, both in terms of recipients and participating businesses.

Similar to a local currency, if only one major business accepts the currency then money will pool there, meaning there is a lack of circulation that is likely to cause a feedback loop of depreciation and liquidity problems. Without the appropriate social infrastructure, similar to local currencies, participants would be limited in where they can spend these currencies.

If there is a concerted effort to involve multiple stakeholders and address concerns like problems of inflation early on and the growth of usage, throughout, then a Cryptocurrency could effectively act as transferable capital. This might be done by, for example, including a local government-run sports centre, post-offices and local businesses,

or collaborating with an organisation that doesn't have a problem with supply, like a food bank. Another benefit of this approach is the possible creation of resilient **peer-to-peer** (P2P) networks²¹⁹.

Incorporating a Cryptocurrency into a basic income-type experiment would have the additional benefit of providing researchers with real-time data on spending, providing app users consent to this. Cryptocurrency apps could also be used to gather survey data as well as acting as a platform for parallel local community related initiatives, such as **Timebanking**²²⁰.

These are complex and overlapping interventions. While they might have intriguing elements, incorporating any of them would require extremely careful consideration of knock-on effects. Our instinct is that adding many additional layers of complexity may be unhelpful in the context of assessing the impacts of basic income – albeit interesting topics of investigation whether in and of themselves or in parallel.

Any such changes to the experiment structure, whether in terms of the tax benefit system, conditionality, payment timings, voice, eligibility criteria, alternative payment methods, delivery mechanisms or otherwise, will necessitate a reassessment of what likely effects may be, what should be measured and tested for, and what can be expected in terms of usable data and information.

The above has been an exercise in mapping out the various theoretical and practical stages necessary for the comprehensive design of basic income-type experiments, with particular emphasis on the UK context. What follows is an investigation of how to learn as much as possible from such experiments in a systemic manner and how this fits into wider basic income dialogue.

Understanding complexity - from research to reality

Developing an assessment and evaluation framework for basic income-type experiments

Section 1: Classifying impacts and choosing areas of focus

Basic income proponents connect the idea to a wide variety of beneficial impacts, from reducing homelessness to increasing educational performance and freeing precarious workers from poverty traps. Historical experiments provide context-specific evidence for many of these claims, such as mental health and the reduction of stigma, but the extent to which many of these arguments are settled and associated claims definitively accurate is still a matter of debate. Deciding which claims to focus on requires not only the consideration of local context and specific policy goals but also which factors and dynamics require deeper investigation.

Each hypothesis thus far covered has been relatively straightforward, requiring the measurement of one indicator or factor over the course of the experiment. This section is about unpicking and developing these hypotheses. Each one so far has been attached to an individual scenario, while they could technically have been applied to any scenario once scale, the make up of control and test groups, and the presence of additional programs, etc have been accounted for. We would argue these and their associated measurement are necessary but not sufficient. Moving from basic hypotheses toward a more holistic assessment methodology requires an understanding of different kinds of impact.

It may therefore help to first classify the potential effects of a basic income into ‘direct’, and ‘indirect’ impacts. In essence, the former is an impact on a participant as a direct result of receiving payments, while the latter is an impact on anybody else (including other participants) as a result of changes in circumstance and behaviour of the aforementioned participant. This dualism – between direct and indirect – should in fact be thought of as a spectrum for experiment designers to refine depending on resources and focus. For example: i) direct effects on an individual; ii) direct effects on a group; iii) indirect effects from a particular relationship; iv) indirect effects as a more emergent dynamic.

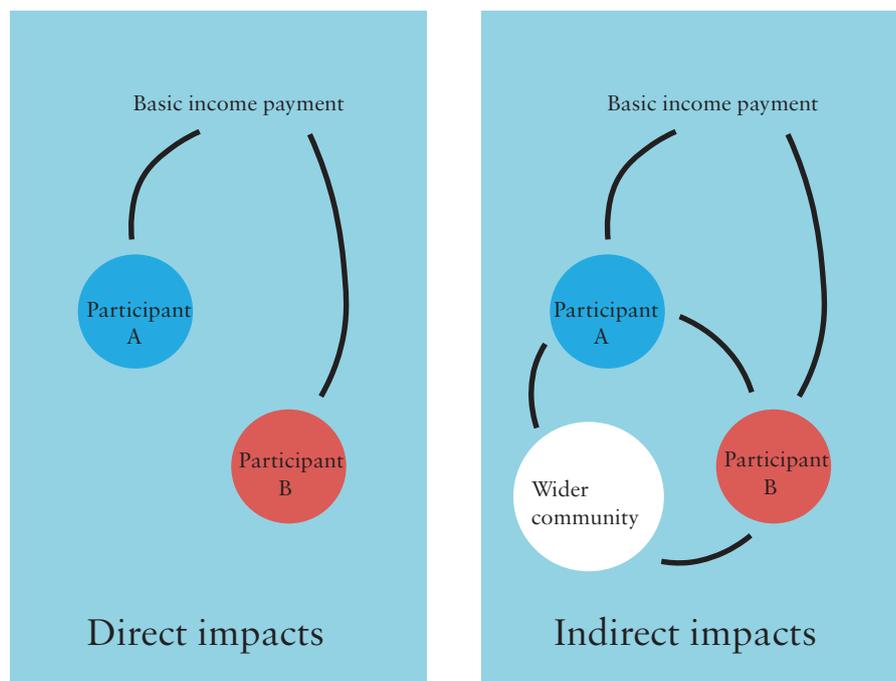


Figure 14: Simplified diagram depicting different classes of impact in a basic income-type experiment

Many measurable effects, poverty for instance, span both the direct and indirect categories. Poverty can be reduced on an individual (direct) level through payments alone, or poverty can be alleviated through (indirect) methods such as the cooperation of experiment participants through lending money, caring for children, the founding of community enterprises, economic multiplier effect, increased interactions with the wider community through additional programs like job placement or community-founded support services, or behavioural changes as a result of improved mental health or decreased stigma.

Indirect effects are manifold and complex in nature. They can be collectively understood as a result of what we've previously referred to as the 'social multiplier' – wherein new forms of interaction between participants mean that the impacts of payments are greater than the value of the payments alone. Our suggested approach to analysing and ultimately understanding these dynamics is laid out in Section 2 of this chapter.

The following collects various impacts, indices and factors that are attached in some significant way to basic income discourse, relevant in an experimental context. The list should be thought of as an important tool for experiment design, a skeleton framework to be used to isolate key areas of interest and then building a 'thicker' evaluation and assessment methodology around them.

To facilitate this, each impact listed below has associated material in the footnotes, in which measurement tools and/or relevant dynamics are discussed. These sources are meant as guides for further reading and practical use. Experiment designers might want to add additional impacts that are particularly relevant to local circumstances, needs and associated policy goals.

a. Direct impacts

Health, lifestyle, and connecting

Nutrition²²¹ | Time spent with family and loved ones²²² | Physical health²²³ | Mental health²²⁴ | Care-related activities²²⁵ | Wellbeing²²⁶ | Volunteering and doing community work²²⁷ | Consumption of “temptation goods” (eg drugs, tobacco, alcohol)^{228, 229}

Personal development

Educational attainment (eg graduation, grades, attendance)²³⁰ | Engagement in skills and training²³¹ | Creativity, entrepreneurship, and risk-taking²³²

Labour and work

Participation in labour-market (work hours, unemployment, underemployment, overemployment)²³³ | Type of labour engaged in (eg by contract; NS-SEC)²³⁴ | Satisfaction with labour-related activities²³⁵ | Wage levels²³⁶ | Non-compensatory work²³⁷

Finances

Use of rent-to-own and payday loan companies²³⁸ | Levels of personal and household debt²³⁹ | Disposable income²⁴⁰ | Personal savings and assets²⁴¹

Poverty, precarity and prejudice

Poverty levels²⁴² | Child poverty²⁴³ | Fuel poverty²⁴⁴ | Use of food banks²⁴⁵ | Homelessness²⁴⁶ | Feelings of security (financial and otherwise)²⁴⁷ | Status and role of women²⁴⁸ | Treatment of marginalised groups in the community²⁴⁹ | Domestic abuse and sexual exploitation²⁵⁰ | Experience of stigma²⁵¹

Crime

Theft and robbery, violence and hate crime²⁵²

b. Indirect impacts

Community

The creation of community groups²⁵³ | Community cohesion and collective efficacy²⁵⁴ | Voice and agency²⁵⁵ | Experience of stigma²⁵⁶

Micro-economic impacts

New businesses²⁵⁷ | Total loans taken out by participants²⁵⁸ | Total rent-to-own purchases²⁵⁹

Meso-economic impacts

The effect of (hypothetical) savings to: the council; hospitals; schools; police and effect on their operations, interactions with the community, and each other²⁶⁰

Macro-economic impacts

Inequalities of wealth and income²⁶¹ | Aggregate spending (households

and firms by income level)²⁶² | Aggregate poverty measures²⁶³ | General equilibrium effects²⁶⁴ | Labour-market response²⁶⁵ | Marginal propensity to consume²⁶⁶ and the multiplier effect²⁶⁷ |

Costs

Cost of BI payments²⁶⁸ | Costs/savings to the council²⁶⁹ | Costs/savings to the exchequer²⁷⁰ | Social return on investment (SROI)²⁷¹

Measurement: Further organisation of resources

Measuring impacts requires tailored tools. The direct impacts chosen for study could be measured using **baseline** and **intermittent surveys** throughout the experiment, bolstered by local **government data** on, for example, changes in self-reported income, or hospital admittances. Measuring direct outcomes would also benefit from **ethnographic study** and **interviews with key stakeholders**, especially for the more qualitative, subjective measures. This would be helped massively through the use of real-time data provided via the use of **smartphone apps**. Direct outcomes will underpin valuable **case study** work.

Indirect impacts may require more detailed **demographic, health-related** and **economic data**. Findings for some categories, like entrepreneurship, innovation and the experience and incidence of poverty, require multi-layered analysis on both the **individual** and **site-wide** scale using qualitative and quantitative data. **Cross-tabulation** of results could draw out economic trends and dynamics at the micro, meso and macro-level, revealing, for example, the percentage change in income or work hours by income bracket, demographic, gender, family structure and neighbourhood.

The measurements, techniques and resources flagged above are the tip of the iceberg. Directly below several of these areas of investigation are expanded to demonstrate the potential utility of integrating existing UK and international surveys. Multiple sources of data already collected by national and regional government are openly accessible and could be of immense use in constructing research proposals, gathering data and developing surveys. For macro-level metrics (national/international), similar methodologies for data gathering could be repurposed for local or regional use. Again, the footnotes are meant as part of a toolkit, pointers to practical and applicable resources.

Wellbeing and emotional circumstances: Gallup reports including What Happiness Today Tells Us About the World Tomorrow²⁷² and the 2017 Global Emotions Report²⁷³ could be useful as reference guides for writing up surveys, as could those conducted by the basic income-focused charity GiveDirectly²⁷⁴. Similarly, the Office for National Statistics (ONS) collects wide-ranging data on subjective levels of wellbeing, quality of life and community. Their surveys are available online²⁷⁵.

Poverty, inequality, and quality of life: Raw data, thresholds and government survey methodologies - like those conducted by the ONS – are available online and in more detail by request²⁷⁶. Secondary analysis like the IFS' Living standards, poverty and inequality in the

UK²⁷⁷ are similarly valuable here. Investigating underlying dynamics²⁷⁸ of poverty, inequality and quality of life is crucial for (necessarily) small-scale experiments, as will be discussed in Section 2 of this chapter. Economic security is a considerable part of this²⁷⁹, as is poverty psychology²⁸⁰.

Crime: UK Crime statistics provide clear and detailed local statistics, distilled from government data. The results are refined to 1.7m UK post-codes and categorised by type of crime²⁸¹.

Employment and work hours: Employment and hours worked should first be self-reported²⁸². Additional information could be garnered by modelling surveys on the same basis as ONS studies of the UK labour market, which covers topics including employment, unemployment and economic activity²⁸³. This is key for analysing labour market response to basic income.

Levels of indebtedness: If updated, the resources and indexes used in the 2003 Church Poverty Action report Drowning in Debt²⁸⁴. These could be valuable in an experimental context.

Savings to government: Previous experiments have indicated savings to government, particularly health services. Analysing potential financial savings from basic income payments would bolster arguments for equivalent reimbursement from HMRC and the DWP, while also highlighting fiscal benefits basic income may offer to local councils. This might be done using the rubrics of Social Returns on Investment (SROI)²⁸⁵ and Capgemini's work on financial modelling of social value²⁸⁶. These are methodologies rather than datasets but are keystone resources that would inform any work in this area.

Tax receipts and benefit expenditure: HMRC may be willing to cooperate on supplying details of tax receipts and benefit expenditure in the test region. Participants will need to consent to any study, particularly if it is more fine-grained and precise than this. Individualised and aggregate tax-take and benefit expenditure over the study period - in a similar format to current HMRC statistics²⁸⁷ - would be an invaluable resource for economic analysis.

Aligning policy goals with assessed outcomes

In 2016 Hugh Segal, the former Canadian senator and senior advisor to Ontario's current basic income-type experiment, wrote an in-depth discussion paper on how to run a pilot. See Finding a Better Way: A Basic Income Pilot Project for Ontario to see how the above might be elaborated on at a later stage in the design phase (especially pp 39-45)²⁸⁸. We present our own model in the Section 2 of this chapter.

Areas of interest must be chosen and refined prior to the experiment's launch. The Ontario basic income pilot that launched in 2017 set out to explicitly track the following²⁸⁹:

- Food security
- Stress and anxiety

- Mental health
- Employment and labour-market participation
- Housing stability
- Education and training
- Health and healthcare usage.

Beyond focusing on these outcomes, however, it is unclear which methods will be used to assess the impacts of and dynamics created by basic income payments. This is similarly true for the current Finnish and American trials, largely due to the (understandably) guarded communications of those organising contemporary basic income experiments²⁹⁰. Direct communication and consultation with those running experiments will be fundamental to building a holistic design architecture.

Historically pilots have primarily focused their assessment methodologies on measuring individual indicators. The intense labour market focus of the US trials of the 1960s-'80s, for example, meant that much data and information that could have led to more in-depth analysis – both quantitative and qualitative – was either never collected or went to waste. Such a process is common.

While there is a great body of literature on basic income, only a small section of it can focus in a scientifically rigorous manner on behaviour change and dynamic interactions between these indicators, let alone the complex challenges for which those indicators are proxies. It is fundamental that we have a better understanding of how basic income affects measures and indices of individuals for the duration of the trial, as well as how basic income feeds into wider issues and influences people on a systemic level. How does economic security affect community cohesion and collective efficacy, and how do these in turn affect issues like homelessness, inequality and poverty?

There are myriad academic and research papers on basic income claiming it is or isn't affordable or making precise predictions that the policy will result in a certain percentage change in inequality and poverty. A key critique of such studies, and of micro-simulation and macro-economic modelling more generally, is that they're based on temporally static calculations. This means there can be little or no accounting for behaviour change.

This is a profound gap in our understanding of basic income given that behaviour change is a key part of its character: a civic intervention providing a new ecosystem of incentives as well as potentially immense psychological, relational and wellbeing implications. If we apply a new and appropriately dynamic methodology that factors in and tries to make sense of behaviour change, a series of UK basic income-type experiments could fundamentally change the way we research, conceptualise and debate basic income around the world.

Section 2: Crafting a more dynamic assessment methodology

An innovative approach to assessment

Most basic income experiments to date, by far, focus primarily on a few headline indicators and do not analyse second and third order effects. We

recognise this work has been immensely helpful in understanding basic income's real-world implications, as well as massively increasing the idea's prominence. We have developed an impact framework that hopes to build on this. It is aimed at supporting the design and assessment of experiments to analyse the interplay between different socio-economic factors as part of a broader and more systemic research program.

In order to develop such a methodology, we propose a dynamic and relational mode of analysis in addition to direct measurements of expected effects. This would involve correlational analysis and causal hypothesis testing. For example:

A basic income will lead to new parents spending more time with their children, which in turn will increase the mental and physical health of the parents, relative to the control group.

This claim has to some extent been made before. The aforementioned Dauphin, Manitoba study found conclusive results indicating similar dynamics. The primary evidence collected by those running the experiment was far from exhaustive and had to be bolstered by using already existing data gathered by the state, separately from the program. As a result, the conclusions, while groundbreaking, were not as strong as they could have been. We argue that a rigorous assessment framework must be put in place from the outset of the study in order to reach even more solid, well-evidenced and generally applicable conclusions from a systemic perspective.

There are several benefits to this kind dynamic approach:

- Providing information on how basic income payments influence behaviour would provide more extensive evidence for proving or disproving various claims of basic income proponents and critics.
- Better understanding not only headline impacts, but also the dynamics through which they come about, could help refine future experiments and policy to be more successful in terms of impact. Delivering positive impacts is far easier if multilayered and overlapping causes are illuminated.
- The study of second and third order effects would constitute a move towards analysing basic income as a systemic intervention. A systemic analysis of basic income-type experiments could contextualise the policy (seeing how payments impact different people, on different places, for different reasons). As a result it could more precisely and accurately extrapolate the insights of localised trials into larger geographical contexts, as well as expansionary fractal impacts (eg how mental illness and economic insecurity might affect entrepreneurship, engagement in the workforce and community solidarity). This would help map out the internal dynamics of the proverbial black box, working out as exhaustively as possible not just what happens but what kind of an intervention basic income is how it works and why.
- Behaviour change is one of the more important missing pieces from analyses of the effects of, and feasibility of, prospective

national policy. Bridging the insights of static microsimulations of large-scale policy (which cannot adequately factor in behaviour change) with those of small-scale experiments which, to date, are not of sufficient scale and/or intricacy to reliably predict the role behaviour change would play in an extended and widely applied basic income policy. Integrating the macro- and micro-levels (or even starting to) requires holistic knowledge of behaviour change – not just in terms of people withdrawing from benefits and potential reductions in the costs of bureaucracy, but also investigating the possible multiplier effects of, for example, rejuvenating local economies, impacts on debt, community cohesion and reduced spending on healthcare. This could have radical implications.

Before sketching out the fundamentals of this new methodological approach to the summative assessment of basic income experiments, we should highlight two particular constraints and complications:

Application in context

A relational model has different applications depending on the typology of experiment design. A saturation site is the ideal context in which to assess both the interactions between various impacts of basic income payments and the investigation of emergent phenomena that arise as a result of social multipliers (positive feedbacks between experiment participants).

A distributed randomised control trial targeting a specific cohort would make it more difficult to test impacts that operate beyond the individual level – like reciprocal engagement with support networks or collective efficacy. It would be possible, however, to look at how different factors in an individual's life might interact. For example, how changes in the regularity of work affect consumer debt and feelings of stress and anxiety. Context must be for when developing

Increasing the sample size

Assessing second order impacts and investigating causal relationships between impacts requires a far larger test group than looking at first order indices alone. But even if second-order factors are valid for a micro-sample, they can nonetheless aid in hypothesis development. This is due to several factors, including the fact that dividing up or isolating a portion of a test group for cross-comparison effectively reduces the sample size and therefore the statistical significance of the results. Basic income experiments to date have often sampled a fraction of their test group, focused in on a handful of impacts and/or gathered data infrequently – primarily due to logistical constraints.

In theory we can increase statistical significance without drastically increasing the size of the test group. This could be done by: i) gathering more detailed data from each participant; ii) gathering it more frequently, and iii) doing so from a larger proportion of the test group. This poses a number of challenges, but they are not necessarily insurmountable. One timely option is using web and smartphone apps, particularly personalised data platforms with two-way

encryption. This could offer the test group a far more user-friendly, trustworthy and direct means of communication with those running the experiment. Giving participants an easy way to fill in short surveys on wellbeing, hours spent working, or consumption – all while on the bus, say - could result in not just richer information but also a more direct means through which to support those receiving basic income payments.

The application of new kinds of communication infrastructure could go a long way toward increasing the flexibility and responsiveness of reporting. Exploring ways to expand sample size is a precursor to reliably analysing the dynamic effects of basic income in an experimental context.

Foundational aspects of the model

In order to assess more relational and dynamic impacts, we first need to look at the sub-variables within each first-order variable. Below are two examples of this for i) work participation and ii) active citizenship. The former is a key focus of many historical and contemporary basic income experiments, while the latter is another important factor of behaviour change associated with basic income and a keen focus of the RSA's work, in the area of inclusive growth²⁹¹, for instance.

1) Unpacking headline indicators

Labour market participation:

Hours worked | Gross and net income | Dependency | Debt and savings | Economic security | Job satisfaction | Contract type | Unemployment, underemployment and overemployment |

Active citizenship:

Non-compensatory work (eg volunteering and community and care work) | Support networks | Use of public services | Time spent with family | Wellbeing | Physical and mental health | Community enterprise | Use of communal space | Collective efficacy and community cohesion | Stress and anxiety | Voice |

These kinds of elements, even if broken down from first-order variables into their sub-variables, are conventionally looked at in isolation. And yet, their dynamic interrelations are of great importance. They should be understood together as a complex ecosystem of drivers. As such, they could form a rudimentary proxy for some of the dynamics underlying other issues such as poverty – which has many underlying complex causes²⁹², many of which have been looked at theoretically in the context of basic income²⁹³, but is difficult to accurately study directly over the short-term in a restricted geographical area.

A conceptual map, detailing how each element relates to the others, is an important initial step towards this systemic assessment of basic income. The diagram below is an attempt to visualise some of the complex dynamic relationships in question. These are merely hypotheses and should by no means be considered fixed as relationships will change according to context and the cohorts analysed, though they will

presumably be broadly similar in many different spaces. This kind of visualisation would later be used to create more elaborated and formalised hypotheses that could be tested over the course of the experiment.

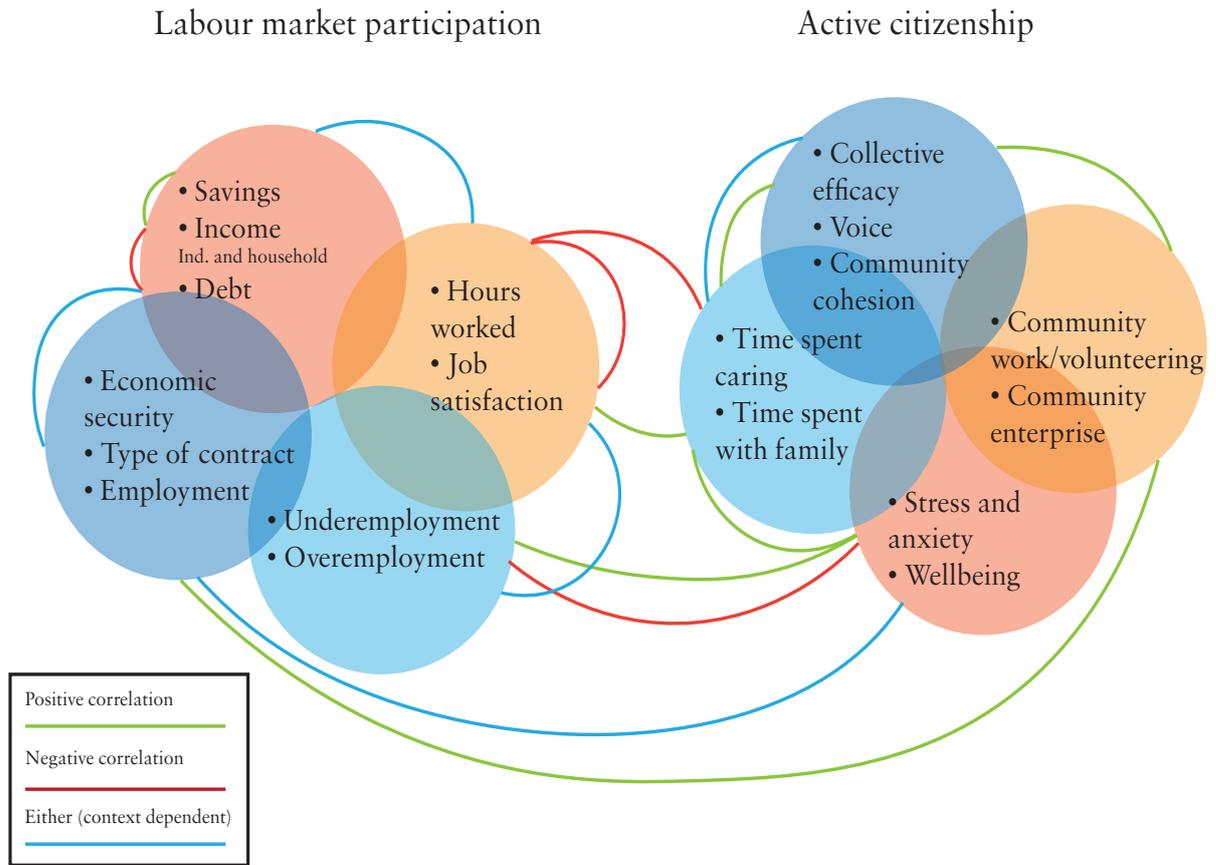


Figure 15: An example visualisation of dynamic relationships between two first-order impacts and their sub-variables

The diagram above predicts positive (green) and negative (red) correlations within and between groups of sub-variables, while some relationships are left contextually undefined (blue). One of the innovative characteristics of our approach is a measurement that accounts for multiple layers of causation based on different weightings of grouped sub-variables – those conducting experiments must decide which areas are most important or impactful, preferably through consultation with communities.

The above diagram can be developed into more focused sub-sections so that choice relationships can be investigated in more detail. The relationships between collective efficacy, voice, and community enterprise are deeply complex and embedded in local culture, for example. Zooming in on these kinds of areas will provide more fine grained and accurate detail. These maps – particularly the correlational linkages – should be drafted and redrafted whenever necessary and different groups may call for different maps (young people’s behaviour will be very different from retirees, for example).

2) Application: An example hypothesis

Young people (aged 18-30) in the test group who were on benefits at the experiment's start are more likely to be employed in comparison to their equivalent demographic in the control-group. These same participants are also more likely to be working fewer hours and be more likely to be involved in support networks in their community, while also exhibiting higher levels of wellbeing.

There are many unpacked terms and assumptions embedded in this hypothesis. Some of the possible drivers of causation between the hypothesis' various factors are outlined below, as well as some of their various interrelated characteristics.

This is all assuming a context similar to Scenario 1 (see Chapter 5) – a saturation site with non-withdrawable and unconditional payments.

Basic income payments -> Employment

Low-income young people on benefits will either be receiving Universal Credit or benefits attached to the old tax benefit system, like Jobseeker's Allowance. Both these options contain significant barriers to employment. The marginal deductions embedded in UC act as disincentives to work, as is the case with other non-UC benefits such as income-based JSA, which is conditional with regard to the claimant's (and if in a relationship, the claimant's partner's) savings, income and work hours. Given that basic income payments are non-withdrawable, they remove this disincentive to work - meaning that participants keep a larger portion of earnings. This is still the case when National Insurance contributions and the removal of PITA are factored in (as demonstrated in Figures 3 through 5).

The vast majority of previous basic income-type experiments in countries with welfare provision applied marginal deduction rates to basic income payments. Despite this, participants exhibited very little reduction in work effort, on average^{294, 295}. If a UK experiment were to fulfil the non-withdrawability criteria then, mainstream economic theory would lead us to assume that the labour supply of ex-benefit recipients would increase (even using a neoclassical model of labour-leisure choice)²⁹⁶.

Additionally, the stability provided by basic income payments would help some particularly precarious participants avoid losing existing jobs. A regular and predictable income stream would support participants in covering basic job-related expenditures, such as travel costs.

Basic income payments + Employment -> Work hours

As alluded to above, some experiments like those in Canada²⁹⁷ and the US²⁹⁸, showed that employed individuals receiving basic income payments were somewhat more likely to dedicate time to productive non-compensatory work (eg caring, training, education). It is unclear what this aggregated information means about the behaviour of individuals and subsections of the population – how time is shared between these activities in different sub-groups over time, for example. By testing this hypothesis it would be possible to find the extent to which low-income, young peoples' labour participation changes and what they do with any spare time, or stop doing in order to make time, while incorporating other factors influencing those decisions.

One possible theory is that those receiving basic income payments will have greater economic security and so – even if they are more likely to work as a result of reduced marginal deduction rates – they don't have to work as much as they would otherwise have to, and so could dedicate time to important but conventionally uncompensated work.

Work hours -> Support networks

The next element of this hypothesis is the relationship between work hours and engagement with support networks. In this case, by support network we are referring to a network of individuals who are supporting each other around a particular challenge, in parallel to public service provision. This could mean sharing childcare responsibilities and might include babysitting, shared school pick-up and/or involvement in extra-curricular activities. Another example of engagement with a support network might be attending a support group - such as those related to mental health or addiction. Further examples could include skills-sharing workshops, attendance at community gatherings or locally generated financial support systems. A list of these will have to be drawn up and monitored in order to track change over time.

A number of basic income experiments (eg India³⁹⁹ and Canada³⁰⁰) demonstrated that changes in work practices can coincide with increased engagement with thicker support networks. In the context of low-income young people, decreases in work hours might allow for an increase in community participation, perhaps as part of educational, re-skilling, training, or self-care.

Support networks -> Wellbeing

We suspect that engagement with support networks of this kind will lead to higher levels of wellbeing. Research shows that: thicker support networks can increase 'mental wellbeing'³⁰¹; volunteering is, similarly, positively correlated with wellbeing³⁰²; and increasing feelings of connectedness can even improve physiological health, particularly through the reduction of stress hormones³⁰³. Support networks come in many shapes and sizes and finding out what participants consider to be support networks will provide important insight.

Holistic assessment, holistic policymaking

Basic income through the lens of deliberative participation and inclusive growth

The presence of supportive community institutions and deliberative processes can amplify all of these factors and collectively reinforce the dynamics described above. Traditional basic income experiments could be strengthened by a number of interventions, new institutions and civic enterprises aimed at supporting, for example, a successful and sustainable transition into employment. Such interventions could also include increasing the density of support networks, setting up community finance initiatives, and providing spaces for collective decision-making – facilitated by local authorities or coalitions of civil society organisations, for example.

The nature of these interventions and their prioritisation should be determined through deliberative processes, like those used for the RSA's Citizen's Economic Council, namely consulting citizens about their needs and aspirations. For the purposes of assessment and evaluation of experiments, regardless of the specific hypothesis being tested, voice institutions should be identified, monitored and factored into any research – whether their presence is pre-existing or an intervention running alongside the experiment.

An assessment mechanism of this type could bring basic income's multitudinous impacts on social phenomena into a new light, and by extension provide important information on issues such as social isolation, productivity and inequality. Combined with the institutions and deliberative processes just described, a basic income-type experiment could contribute to a better understanding of what the RSA refers to as inclusive growthⁱⁱ, as well as how best to achieve it. Inclusive growth is a recognition of and approach to tackling the twin problems of economic stagnation and inequality through active institutions, local collaboration, and civic empowerment.

The framework that we have developed above allows for an effective integration of different interventions in the areas of basic income, deliberative participation and inclusive growth. Their collective impact can be assessed, as well as the character of their individual contributions towards wider phenomena such as poverty and structural inequality.

ⁱ Patel, R., Gibbon, K., and Greenham, T. (2018) Op cit

ⁱⁱ RSA (2017) Inclusive growth commission: making our economy work for everyone; RSA. [Online] Available at: www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/final-report-of-the-inclusive-growth-commission

3) Evaluating hypotheses

Providing sufficient evidence for (or against) hypotheses like the above requires extensive quantitative data and qualitative information. This will need to be knitted together to form a coherent understanding of the dynamics at play. Different classes of data have different primary purposes and functions. The outcome framework below outlines one way in which this might be gathered for the above example over the course of the experiment.

	Quantitative tools	Qualitative tools	Data collection tools	Success indicators	
Employment rate	Pre-experiment, interim, and post-experiment surveys; Digital surveys (more regular data); Routinely collected and tailored Government data (e.g. tax returns); employer information (with consent).	Pre-experiment, interim, and post-experiment interviews; user-need study; key-stakeholder testimony. E.g. Q: what were the significant factors that made you apply for the job?	Encrypted, personalised data sharing software (app & web); Personnel for interviews and user-needs study; Survey administration; legal agreements with government and employers over data sharing.	Rate of Employment (%), broken down into full and part-time; Tax returns; Job sector (incl. self-employed); Kind of work (NS-SEC).	<p>Correlation over time by looking at mean, median and mode of total test group vs. control group; then in more detail by cohort; assess whether there is a correlation in the quantitative data; further explore possible confirmations/refutations of hypothesis in qualitative data with regard to causation.</p> <p>Comparison between number of work hours and number of hours spend involved in i) support networks and ii) community; express as ratio (again according to mean, median and mode for entire cohort and smaller groups); further explore possible confirmations/refutations of hypothesis in qualitative data with regard to causation.</p> <p>Cross-reference levels of engagement in support networks and corresponding levels of wellbeing, particularly in relation to feeling supported in tackling specific problems; Tease apart the qualitative elements that blend between 'support network' and 'wellbeing', clarifying whether cross-over is the result of confusion around categorisation or an perception of interdependence between categories on behalf of the participant; Reinforce findings by explicitly asking participant whether there is a sense of a causal relationship.</p> <p>Closing the loop: is there a sequential feedback between levels of wellbeing and seeking/gaining/retaining employment?</p>
Work hours	Pre-experiment, interim, and post-experiment surveys; Digital surveys (more regular data); Routinely collected and tailored Government data (e.g. tax returns); employer information (with consent) vs. self-reported.	Pre-experiment, interim, and post-experiment surveys; Digital surveys (more regular data); Routinely collected and tailored Government data (e.g. tax returns); employer information (with consent) vs. self-reported.	Encrypted, personalised data sharing software (app & web); Personnel for interviews and user-needs study; Survey administration; legal agreements with government and employers over data sharing.	Number of hours per week (hrs); Tax returns.	
Support networks	Attendance numbers at various community centres/enterprises/events; number of newly developed support networks (as defined by study); Pre-experiment, interim and post-experiment surveys; Digital surveys (more regular data).	Pre-experiment, interim, and post-experiment interviews; user-need study; key-stakeholder testimony (incl. support group facilitators, family, peers). E.g. Q: How do you structure your time? AND Q: What are the key challenges in your personal life and which of your relationships and/or services are helping you address them?	Observational frameworks throughout support networks (incl. practitioners going into community to assess objectives and effectiveness); Assessment of maximisation of local resources and community capabilities; user-needs study; Focus groups; Beneficiary assessment approach.	Trust in local informal institutions for support; Satisfaction with functioning of support networks; Self-reported confidence in resilience of community; Collective efficacy (multiple indices).	
Wellbeing	Pre-experiment, interim, and post-experiment surveys; Digital surveys (more regular data); Routinely collected and tailored Government data (e.g. National Wellbeing Survey); Cortisol levels (medical); The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire.	Pre-experiment, interim, and post-experiment interviews (incl. structured interviews built around psychological metrics, and unstructured interviews); user-need study	Carrying out unstructured and semi-structured interviews; Medical tests; Focus groups; Aggregation of quantitative data - digital, surveys, questionnaires; Beneficiary assessment approach.	Self-reported wellbeing (multiple indices); Levels of stress and anxiety (incl. key identified obstacles and challenges); Cortisol levels (with consent); Self-reported levels of confidence around ability to solve problems; Self-reported quality of relationships; Sense of agency.	

Table 13: Example outcome framework for tracking indicators related to hypothesis.

The outcome framework is helpful for:

- a. Outlining the types of indicators and processes researchers might investigate;
- b. Isolating these indicators and processes;
- c. Crafting a coherently joined-up strategy for assessing multiple effects and their interrelation;
- d. Providing a guide for information gathering, data collection and communication with participants during the experiment design phase, throughout implementation and delivery, and analysis of results.

It is worth highlighting the box on the far right of Table 13. This is a tool through which to assess whether or not there are visible mutually reinforcing feedback loops (ie what impact do changes in wellbeing have on work participation). All indicators outlined in the table should be tracked as frequently as realistically possible so as to enable the analysis of fluid change over time (rather than just pre-, mid-, and post-experiment evaluations).

The indicators and methods chosen in this outcome framework are only one example of how to track and analyse the hypothesis in question. Specific outcome tables for testing hypotheses in real-world experiments should be purpose built, not only in terms of what is being measured but also in terms of what kinds and classes of information will most usefully serve the overarching goals of the project.

If the aim is to target economists then structural equation modelling and other technical quantitative methods should be used. Should the intended audience be the wider public and policy makers, however, it might be more productive to focus on case studies, ethnographic storytelling and other qualitative narrative-based information. The feasibility and design phases should make sufficient space for deciding on the desired balance between these kinds of outputs, whilst also acknowledging that outcome frameworks must not be completely rigid. They should be consistent but also open to adaptation as the experiment progresses.

This outcome table does not include the additional indicators necessary to avoid the generation of informal fallacies – or unsubstantiated claims of causality. Qualitative accounts will help highlight causality, as can be seen in the cases of the interim and final outputs of the basic income experiments in Kenya³⁰⁴, Namibia³⁰⁵, India³⁰⁶ and Dauphin, Manitoba³⁰⁷.

Formative evaluation

In addition to summative evaluation - the impact and outcomes of basic income payments - it is also important to evaluate the process of the experiment itself. The results of the summative evaluation must be seen in relation to the quality of the experiment's delivery. A good experiment is one that is able to maximise impact while not compromising on key elements that constitute a good process of implementation. These include: ethical considerations; sustainable financial choices; communication

between different stakeholders; and the maximisation of efforts and resources. This is crucial for building a scalable model to be implemented across different regions, cohorts and research areas.

Resources from the National Audit Office³⁰⁸ and the Centre for Public Impact (CPI)³⁰⁹ may be helpful in sketching out possible approaches to this. The CPI's metric is based on a combination of policy, legitimacy and action. Recent analysis by the RSA has elaborated on the CPI's insights, demonstrating that it is not only the absolute score that is important but also the balance between them³¹⁰. Holistic methodologies for formative assessment are crucial and should be chosen prior to the experiment's launch so that they are kept in mind over the course of implementation.

Using the techniques, processes and models outlined above could catalyse an important transition toward the holistic measurement basic income's impacts. If developed and applied correctly, this methodology would help extend the lessons learnt from experiments into the realm of wider policy-making. It could also broaden the conversation about basic income beyond responses to inaccurate simplifications of the idea (eg 'I believe in work so I don't believe in basic income').

Advocates claim that basic income is a systemic response to systemic challenges, a transformative policy that operates on many different planes: from healthcare, psychological wellbeing and community cohesion to productivity, the meaning of work and economic security. If we want to better understand basic income's purported systemic impacts, we must investigate dynamic interrelations in the context of this complexity. We must also study the emergence of any new behaviours and relationships affecting the social fabric. These processes will similarly inform wider policy goals like the reduction of inequality and poverty.

Collectively, the framework constitutes a new lens through which to view basic income and, depending on the output of experiments, strengthen the case for its implementation. Applying it on the ground would be a contribution of international significance.

Concluding remarks

Experimentation for the greater good

Towards a universal system of social justice, freedom and basic security

Many basic income advocates believe that the strongest arguments for the policy's realisation are moral ones, specifically those of universalism, social justice, freedom and basic security. These arguments are strong indeed, and rest on solid foundations bolstered by an extended philosophical lineage.

Occasionally it is suggested that the moral imperative is paramount and the evidence in favour of basic income is already clear, meaning that experiments are unnecessary or even a waste of time. We see it differently. The moral arguments are powerful and important, but their validity by no means precludes the utility of carrying out experiments. We believe the two are complementary. Moral and practical, evidence-based justifications of qualitative and quantitative power will together make a stronger case for change than either could in isolation.

This paper has been an exercise in catalysing that process and an attempt to crystallise our understanding of the steps needed along the way. As anyone who has made a foray into the basic income world knows, the idea is anything but basic. In terms of its status in the wider polity, basic income is still in its relative nascency and thus bending and morphing as it moves toward maturation.

This plasticity is true at all levels. When it comes to ideology, libertarian, conservative and progressive proposals differ greatly, as do the proposals of their internal factions. On the financial front, debates rage about whether basic income should be funded through taxation, welfare expenditure, a sovereign wealth fund or a combination. In terms of strategy and the dynamics of change, people disagree on whether experiments, campaigning, private initiatives or other activities will best facilitate basic income's entrance into the mainstream. There is also uncertainty about what the likely effects of the policy will be, at every scale. When it comes to on the ground experimentation, there's apparent confusion about issues as fundamental as what should actually count as basic income.

These arenas of controversy are all of considerable importance. This piece, however, is concerned with the latter three: strategy and the dynamics of change, the effects of the policy, and classifying on the ground experimentation.

The first was covered in the first section, exploring the ways in which basic income-type experiments might fit within the structure of the UK welfare state, situating the concept within a narrative of systemic change, along with identifying spaces for intervention and best practices for sustainable progress.

The second, the consequential (testing the validity of various basic income claims) has been woven throughout the report. This has mainly consisted of two distinct but interconnected kinds of information: evidence for and against a variety of claims (like whether or not recipients decrease labour market participation); and which hypotheses might be tested during experiments and in what fashion.

The third category of debate is the extent to which different policies can be classified as basic income. This includes the mechanisms of the design and delivery of basic income-type experiments in the context of typological distinctions. This third category forms by far the greatest proportion of this publication. By condensing the key principles of basic income, identifying the fundamental variables of basic income-type experiment architecture and design, crafting a typology of experiments, an impact framework, and assessment methodology – while linking these together in real-world proposals – we hope to have formally drawn together and usefully categorised what is otherwise a maelstrom of competing terms, claims and practices.

The concepts and frameworks outlined in this publication thus represent a diligent and dedicated attempt to guide those interested in implementing experiments through the dizzyingly complex mazes that make up basic income's conceptual and practical landscape.

We have covered critical parts of the implementation process – from conceptualisation to the refining of design architecture, and experiment assessment and evaluation. There is obviously more to carrying out experiments than this alone. What we've outlined is, we would argue, necessary but not sufficient. Further work includes not only the detailed, fine-grained planning and logistical organisation necessary to produce actionable steps in local contexts, but also the development of established processes to ensure successful implementation over the long term.

These are, firstly, the development of a collaborative network across local authorities experimenting with basic income and second, finding reliable strategies and sources for raising sufficient funds. These tasks are all part and parcel of implementing any social policy experiment of this kind, hence its absence from this particular piece of work. That is not to say that we don't intend to cover it in the future.

We hope that this piece aids the construction of the roadmaps necessary to successfully design, implement and assess the effects of basic income-type experiments. To do so in the UK in general, and Scotland in particular, would put the country on the global stage and solidify a position within the international basic income movement. Crucially, a series of UK experiments could improve our ability to tackle major endemic challenges, interrelated issues of great import – stubborn obstacles that are little understood and appear to be immune to the remedies so far prescribed. Positive evidence from basic income-type experiments, together with narrative momentum and political capital would open the door to re-stitching the torn fabric of our socio-political and economic system. We can only find out if we try.

Appendix

Implications for basic income experiments according to DWP and HMRC collaboration scenarios

Situation	Description	Comparative cost	Considerations
A1	All benefits are replaced (voluntarily forgone), along with PITA and associated tax credits, and made up for via basic income payments. DWP and HMRC collaboration is unnecessary, other than possible recouping of expenditure.	Very high ++++++	Basic income payments will need to fully replace all previously received benefits provided by the state. This means that for nobody to lose out, payments must be comparable with the highest combined pay-out for the benefits being replaced. Despite the fact that this does not necessarily include housing benefit, incapacity benefit, disability benefit etc, the figure will be extremely high - especially if this applies to a saturation site. Marginal deductions do not apply as all income-related benefits are now absent.
A2i	Some benefits are replaced (e.g. JSA and PITA) while others remain in place. DWP and HMRC agree to disregard basic income payments, and so continue to pay out choice benefits as before, unaffected.	High ++++ or Medium +++	Basic income payments will need to fully replace some benefits, namely those that are work-related and/or tax credits and others. Those benefits that are retained (in addition to those listed in A1) like free school meals, bus passes and/or the retaining of the lower (0%) bracket for National Insurance contributions or Personal Income Tax Allowance. If DWP and HMRC are willing to disregard basic income, or put a system in place to provide those in need with free public services, then losses will be significantly reduced (and overall costs lowered considerably). If willing, DWP and HMRC may recycle back into the experiment funds saved by reduced expenditure from benefit payments forgone.
A2ii	Some benefits are replaced (e.g. JSA and PITA) while others remain in place. DWP and HMRC are uncooperative and so basic income payments interact with remaining benefits (e.g. housing benefit).	Higher +++++	Basic income payments will need to fully replace some benefits, as above (A2i). That said, the lack of DWP and HMRC cooperation will mean that those benefits retained (e.g. housing benefit, PITA and NI contribution brackets) will need to be taken in to consideration when setting the basic income payment level. This is because participants' benefits will be reduced in accordance with what will be regarded as increased income (basic income payments). The scheme will therefore be more expensive to ensure no one loses out in comparison to the old system, and many more people are at risk of falling through the cracks between old system and experiment. Marginal deductions must be considered, as well as participants no longer being eligible for certain benefits and free public services.
B1	All benefits are retained, and the DWP and HMRC are fully cooperative and agree to pay benefits as per usual. Basic income payments are disregarded so do not interact with benefits.	Very low +	This is arguably the ideal scenario from an implementation perspective. Basic income payments, in this case, would all sit on top of other benefits payments and the effects of the experiment would clearly be related to the payments themselves. DWP and HMRC cooperation means that benefits be paid out as normal, and that basic income payments need not be particularly large as a result. That said, some might consider this situation unrealistic, and possibly even unhelpful for the purposes of investigating basic income as a potential national policy.
B2	All benefits are retained. DWP and HMRC are uncooperative, and so basic income payments interact with benefits as they are not disregarded.	Low ++ or Medium +++	Basic income payments will replace a portion of income-conditional benefits. Payments are not disregarded due to a lack of cooperation with the DWP and HMRC, so the basic income will trigger marginal deductions in all income-related benefits within a certain threshold (and could push people into different tax and NI brackets). This experiment would, in large part, be a test of the impacts of removing or reducing conditionality, as well as a slight increase in income (mitigated against by reduced benefits). It will also be largely impacted on by the architecture of the existing tax and benefits system.

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