

# **Welfare Working Group**

Forum, 10 June 2010

The origins of the benefit system

An iconoclastic view

- “It is possible to conceive a community in which the necessary diversity of economic functions existed side by side with a large measure of economic and social equality, and in which, therefore, while the occupations and incomes of individuals varied, they lived, nevertheless, in much the same environment, enjoyed similar standards of health and education, found different positions, according to their varying abilities, equally accessible to them, intermarried freely with each other, were equally immune from the more degrading forms of poverty, and equally secure against economic oppression.”

- Tawney

- “a first charge on all wealth created shall be the care of the aged, the ailing, the young..”
- Nash 1922

# What has changed?

- Income statistics available
- Ageing society - increased life expectancy
- From homogeneity to diversity - gender, ethnic, preferences

- From

Prevention of poverty

- To

Facilitation of diverse time preferences

Implication for understanding of equality - customization