

# Spring 2018 Directive

## Part 1: Charity and the Welfare State

### Your political views

**Before you begin answering this directive:**

We realise that political parties often don't align with our own individual political viewpoints; but please could you tell us, ***IN JUST ONE SENTENCE***, which British party best represents your political views at this point in time. (Mass Observation writers were asked about this several times during the 1940s and 1950s)

Please start each part of your Directive reply on a new sheet of paper with your MO number, sex, age, marital status, the town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

Remember ***not to identify yourself or other people inadvertently within your reply***. It is best to use initials instead of real names.

### Views of different generations

For this Directive we would like to know what you think about the welfare state, and the role of charities and voluntary organisations, in supporting those in need.

We are particularly interested in the views of different generations, so when writing, could you also please reflect on any views of family and friends.

### Relevance and importance of the Welfare State today

What five words come to mind when you think of 'The Welfare State'?

What do you think the welfare state currently does for people in the UK? Is it still relevant to our society?

What are your thoughts on the sort of welfare services that central and local government should or shouldn't fund? Could you describe what you feel are essential needs?

At the moment, a lot of welfare services (such as care for older people, children and families' services, or services for young people) are delivered by a mix of government, private companies or charities. Who would you say should be providing these services? Please explain why.

### Charity - its importance and relevance today

What five words come to mind when you think of charity?

What do you think is the relevance of charity in the UK today? What should be the key roles of charities? Please give examples.

Please share your thoughts and feelings about those who use charities or benefit from charitable support?

What are your thoughts on charity appeals?

What do you think about charities lobbying government?

More generally, what do you think about the relationship between charities and government?

### **Your experience**

How have you, your family or friends used, or been helped by *government or local authority run* welfare services (for example, help or care for an elderly relative, or a child)? What was your/their experience like?

What about *voluntary organisations or charities* (for example, an elderly relative being helped to live independently; a young person looking for work; or a relative struggling with mental health?) Can you describe your experience?

Since 2010 the government has run a programme of austerity, what impact do you think austerity has had, and is having on the country, and your local area?

Have you noticed any changes to the provision of welfare by the government or by your local authority? What about the support provided by charities and voluntary organisations?

### **Needs of different groups of people in the 2010s**

In the 1940s Mass Observation asked people about the needs of children, young people and older people.

To finish we would like you to think about what should be done for children, young people and older people in the 2010/20s? Are there outstanding needs or issues that you feel strongly affect any of these groups that need addressing?

Do you think there are people living in Britain with strong needs that are not currently being met?

Are there people who you feel are receiving too much support?

## **Part 2: Disability**

As explained in the covering letter, Part 2 of this directive has been commissioned as part of the Beyond Boxes project. It has been designed in consultation with Blind Veterans UK. The main aim of this directive is to have a record of everyday experiences of disability. Whether you consider yourself to be disabled or not, we would like to hear from you.

### **A task to get you started**

What are the words that come to mind when you think of the word 'disability'? Why did you think of those words?

Please start each part of your Directive reply on a new sheet of paper with your MO number, sex, age, marital status, the town or village where you live and your occupation or former occupation.

Remember *not to identify yourself or other people* inadvertently within your reply. It is best to use initials instead of real names.

## **Language**

Language and words in reference to disability have changed over time and continue to develop along with our understanding and awareness. Are there words that you think should or should not be used in relation to disability, or to refer to disabled people? If you consider yourself to be disabled, what words, phrases or terms do you prefer to use?

## **Understanding and perceptions**

What level of understanding do you think the public has in relation to disability? Are you aware of the social and physical barriers disabled people face? What about any attitudes faced? Have you or any of your family experienced barriers?

Has your understanding and perception of disability and disabled people changed over time? If so, why is this? Did anything specific change your perception and understanding?

## **Your own experience of disability**

Do you consider or identify yourself as a disabled person? If so, what are your everyday experiences? Do you encounter barriers in your everyday life? What about the experiences of friends or family members?

## **Accessibility**

Each week there are numerous media reports about how many disabled people cannot physically access services. Do you have any thoughts on how service providers can improve accessibility for disabled people? This may include public services, universities, schools, museums & theatres, cinemas & pubs, roads and pathways, and shopping centres.

We would be interested to know about your everyday experiences of access issues.

## **Hidden disabilities**

There has been recent media coverage of the Paralympics and an emphasis on and awareness of physical disabilities and access requirements. However many people live with hidden disabilities or health conditions, which are not obviously visible such as dementia, diabetes, dyslexia, MS, anxiety and many others.

This can make accessing services and everyday life more difficult as people may not understand or be aware they need assistance if their disability or health condition is not apparent.

Have you noticed any measures, such as the 'Please give me a seat' badges created by Transport for London, aimed at educating people about hidden disabilities or health conditions? Are there any incidences you are aware of, in which people have been challenged for using accessible toilets or parking spaces for example?

What ideas do you have about raising awareness of hidden disabilities or health conditions?

## **Visual impairment**

We are interested to hear about your everyday experiences of having a visual impairment. Could you share with us whether your everyday life has changed due to adaptations to your home, or in public places? Are there any technologies you use which are particularly useful? Are there any organisations that you have been part of or use the services of? Have you ever experienced unwarranted help from well-meaning members of the public?

## **Disability and ageing**

As we write this directive there has been a number of reports in the media about acquiring disabilities in later life. Amongst others, these reports have focused on dementia, arthritis, hearing loss and depression. Do you have any experiences of these?

We would welcome any further thoughts or experiences you would like to share on this subject.

# **Part 3: The Royal Wedding Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> May 2018**

For Part 3 of this Directive we would like you to share your thoughts and feelings about the upcoming wedding of HRH Prince Harry and Meghan Markle on Saturday the 19<sup>th</sup> May.

Since the coronation of King George VI in 1937 Mass Observation has captured peoples thoughts and opinions of royalty and royal events.

Please write about your thoughts, the conversations you have with others and any reactions to media coverage about this royal event.

## **Day diaries**

We would also like you to record what you get up to on this day, from the moment you wake until you go to bed. Please document any activities, thoughts and feelings on this day, paying particular attention to the royal wedding. If the wedding does not affect your day in any way, we still would like to receive your diary.

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Please post your response to: **Freepost: RTGU-AYJE-YSSC, The Mass Observation Archive, The Keep, Woollards Way, Brighton, BN1 9BP** or by email to: [moa@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:moa@sussex.ac.uk)

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