In The Welfare Trait, Dr Adam Perkins of the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, argues that welfare-induced personality mis-development is a significant driver of the tendency, observed in many western nations, for the welfare state to undermine work motivation. In support of his theory, Dr Perkins presents previously unpublished UK government data which show that the number of children born into disadvantaged households rises in step with income from welfare benefits. He also draws on his own research and data from studies in the US, UK, and other parts of the western world to show that exposure to childhood disadvantage promotes the development of an employment-resistant personality profile, characterised by aggressive, antisocial and rule-breaking tendencies. Combining these two lines of evidence, Dr Perkins argues that a welfare state which increases the number of children born into disadvantaged households will erode the nation's work ethic by increasing the proportion of individuals in the population who possess an employment-resistant personality profile, due to exposure to the environmental influence of disadvantage in childhood.

Dr Perkins concludes by arguing that welfare policy should be altered so the average number of children in workless households falls to the same level as that seen in working households, in order to avoid an ever-increasing number of people within the population who possess the employment-resistant personality profile. A staunch supporter of the welfare system and a past recipient of unemployment benefits himself, Dr Perkins wants to ensure its longevity and argues that only by truly understanding the personality-related flaws of the welfare state can we build a sustainable system which will last for generations to come.

'The Welfare Trait is electrifying – energising and shocking. Dr. Perkins, an expert in the neurobiology of personality, argues that a generous welfare state can proliferate employment-resistant personality characteristics. The scientific discharge of this new theory is sure to spark high voltage debate – be prepared for a jolt!' – Philip Corr, Professor of Psychology, City University, London, UK

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About the Author
Dr Adam Perkins is Lecturer in the Neurobiology of Personality at the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology and Neuroscience, King's College London, UK, and is the recipient of the 2015 Early Career Award from the International Society for the Study of Individual Differences (ISSID). He brings to this book a wealth of scientific knowledge about personality, gained during more than 15 years researching the topic. Before he became established as a scientist, he spent years working as an unskilled labourer and has also claimed welfare when unemployed.

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