Main points:

1. The Victorian state made a difficult, and often contradictory, move away from ………………………….. to …………………………… in social policy.

2. Despite these interventions, Victorian poor had to rely mainly upon ……………………………... and …………………………………………….

3. Social investigation – moved from statistical to firstly, ……………………………... and secondly, ………………………………………

4. Question shifted by the Edwardian era to the question of ……………………………………………………………

Early legislation:

1833 Factory Act

- No child workers under nine years of age
- Children of 9-13 years to work no more than 9 hours a day
- Children of 13-18 years to work no more than 12 hours a day
- Children not to work at night
- Two hours schooling each day for children
- Four factory inspectors appointed to enforce the law.

1834 New Poor Law

- Outdoor relief to be replaced by indoor relief in workhouses
- Administered by Boards of Guardians
- 1848 guardians enabled to grant outdoor relief to widows
- 1870s central government policy begins to tighten up the poor law – e.g. that deserted wives should not be given outdoor relief for at least the first twelve months after their desertion.

1835 Municipal Corporations Act

- Abolished closed corporations and allowed boroughs to form councils
- Councils were required to form a police force
- Councils, if they so wished, could take over improvements such as proper drainage and street cleaning

By 1848 only twenty-nine boroughs had taken any action in terms of public health.
Many towns failed to apply for incorporation because the procedure was complicated and expensive. In 1848 there were still sixty-two large towns without councils.

1842 Mines Act

- No female was to be employed underground
- No boy under 10 years old was to be employed underground.
- Parish apprentices between the ages of 10 and 18 could continue to work in the mines.

There were no clauses relating to hours of work, and inspection could only take place on the basis of checking the 'condition of the workers'.

Charity

1869 Charity Organisation Society founded

1884 University settlements – Toynbee Hall and Oxford House – founded

1884 NSPCC founded – designed and campaigned for the Children’s Charter of 1889 and Children’s Act of 1908.

Social Investigations:

The Journalists:

**Henry Mayhew**, *London Labour and the London Poor* (1861-62)

**W.T. Stead**, editor of the *Northern Echo* and later the *Pall Mall Gazette*

The Evangelists:

**Andrew Mearns**, *The Bitter Cry of Outcast London: An Inquiry into the Condition of the Abject Poor* (October 1883)

**William Booth**, founder with his wife, Catherine, of the Salvation Army, published *In Darkest England and the Way Out* (1890), ghost-written by Stead.

The Investigators:

**Charles Booth**, *Inquiry into Life and Labour of the People in London* (1886-1903)

**Benjamin Seabohm Rowntree**, *Poverty: a Study of Town Life* (1901)

…In the better lodging houses the shakedowns are small palliasses or mattresses; in the worst, they are bundles of rags of any kind; but loose straw is used only in the country for shakedowns…At some of the busiest periods, numbers sleep on the kitchen floor, all huddled together, men and women (when indecencies are common enough) and without bedding or anything but their scanty clothes to soften the hardness of the stone or brick floor…More than 200 have been accommodated in this way in a large house. The Irish, at harvest time, very often resort to this mode of passing the night.

I heard from several parties, of the surprise and even fear or horror, with which a decent mechanic – more especially if he were accompanied by his wife – regarded one of these foul dens, when destitution had driven him there for the first time in his life.

Liberal Reforms:

1904 Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration

1905-9 Royal Commission on the Poor Laws

1906 The *Education (Provision of Meals) Act* saw the introduction of school dinners and an acknowledgment that the poor feeding of children was not simply a matter of maternal ignorance.

1907 Introduction of compulsory school medical inspections with treatment for common ailments.

1909 Charles Masterman, Liberal MP for West Ham, published *The Condition of England*

1909 Introduction of *Old Age Pensions*. 5s per week for individuals and 7s 6d for married couples. It was means tested and only available to those over 70. Nevertheless by 1913 nearly 1 million people were drawing their pension at their local post office.

1911 *National Health Insurance Act* was introduced to cover workers for lost earnings due to sickness. It was not intended to provide a national health service, although payment did give access to a doctor on a local list or ‘panel’. TB treatment was provided for free. The scheme covered workers with an income of less than £160 per annum, and all manual workers
irrespective of earnings. Contributions were 4d from the worker, 3d from the employer and 2d from the State. The intention was to cure pauperism not illness.

Further Reading:


http://booth.lse.ac.uk/- Charles Booth online archive and poverty maps of London