

Are all your 'volunteers' voluntary?

Help to work?

In April 2014, the Government launched the so-called 'Help to Work' programme. This is the latest in a series of 'workfare' schemes that make unemployed and disabled people do unpaid work in return for their benefits. These schemes are backed up by sanctions - withdrawal of benefits to punish claimants if they fail to do what they are told. The Trussell Trust recently reported that benefits sanctions are a major factor in the dramatic increase in the use of their food banks. This is a case of the government creating hardship and destitution.

Help to Work requires claimants to undertake a 'Community Work Placement' with a charity or voluntary group, working unpaid for 30 hours a week, for 6 months, plus job search, in order to receive just £72 of Jobseeker's Allowance. Claimants have no choice about being sent on this placement nor where they are sent - in effect forced labour.

Community Work Placements are run by private companies like G4S and Interserve who have been recruiting voluntary groups to take placements.

Keep Volunteering Voluntary

The **Keep Volunteering Voluntary** (KVV) campaign was set up to persuade voluntary groups not to take part in any workfare schemes and to sign a pledge to show their commitment. Over 500 organisations have so far signed up. Some reasons not to take part in workfare are:

- workfare does not improve the chances of finding a job
- it puts claimants at risk of sanctions and hardship
- it undermines genuine volunteering and supports exploitation
- it discredits charitable values

Sign the pledge

Please get your organisation to sign the pledge:

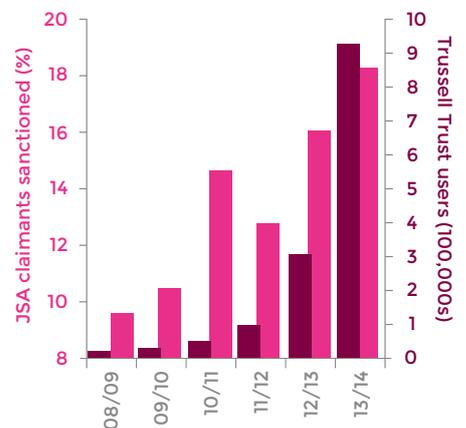
“As charities and voluntary organisations we know the value of volunteering. Volunteering means people independently choosing to give their time freely to help others and make the world a better place. Workfare schemes force unemployed people to carry out unpaid work or face benefit sanctions that can cause hardship and destitution. We believe in keeping volunteering voluntary and will not participate in government workfare schemes.”

Please order stickers or posters to raise awareness and get in touch if you'd like to help with the campaign in anyway!

“In the last year we've seen things get worse, rather than better, for many people on low-incomes. It's been extremely tough for a lot of people, with parents not eating properly in order to feed their children and more people than ever experiencing seemingly unfair and harsh benefits sanctions.”

Chris Mould,
Trussell Trust's Chairman

The correlation between JSA sanctions and food bank usage



Involvement with workfare and sanctions helps create hardship and destitution.

**keep
volunteering
voluntary**



The ABC of keeping volunteering voluntary and workfare-free!

Responsible voluntary organisations make sure they play no role in workfare and sanctions nor the destitution and hardship they cause. Remember A, B & C to keep your charity or voluntary group workfare free!

Approached by a potential volunteer?

Ask them:

- Have you been asked to find a placement by the job centre or a training provider?
- Are you required to find a placement as a condition of claiming welfare?

If the potential 'volunteer' answers yes to these questions, its a workfare placement. Explain your organisation does not wish to play any part in welfare sanctions so cannot accept workfare placements.

Beware if approached by a 'provider' or company offering 'volunteers'. Ask them:

- Is it a scheme run by the Job Centre or DWP?
- Are the people being offered required to find a placement as a condition of claiming welfare?
- Will these people be sanctioned if they do not take part?

Be aware that workfare providers are sneaky. It is very important to ask:

- What's the name of your company? What's the scheme you are running called?
- Contact Keep Volunteering Voluntary to confirm whether it is a workfare scheme if you are not sure.

Check with your colleagues to make sure your organisation is not using workfare unintentionally.

- Check they have not been misled by workfare providers to accept placements
- Check that none of their "volunteers" are on the schemes listed on this page
- Encourage them to follow this ABC to help your organisation stay workfare free!

Avoid these workfare schemes:

Community Work Placements /
Mandatory Work Activity /
Sector Based Work Academies /
Steps to Success (Northern Ireland) /
Work Experience / Work Programme

(This list is not exhaustive)

Avoid these providers:

Rehab group
Avanta Permatemps
Employability
and Skills Group
G4S Groundworks
Newcastle College
Interserve A4e
Prospect Services
Maximus Ingeus
Working Links Serco
EOS Shaw Trust
Seetec Reed

Don't accept work placements from these companies or their sub-contractors. The schemes they run are backed by sanctions - withdrawal of benefits to punish claimants if they fail to do what they are told. This is effectively forced labour and undermines volunteering.