

Extracts from The Void/Johnny Void website

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Shame of the Third Sector: How Charities Got it Wrong on Workfare

Posted on [February 18, 2012](#) by [Johnny Void](#) | [71 Comments](#)

Several major UK charities now found themselves being in the unfortunate position of being less ethical organisations than corporate bastards Tesco due to their continued participation in the government's workfare schemes. Hot on the heels of Tesco announcing they "will not be taking part in any mandatory (workfare) scheme set by the Government", Oxfam and Marie Curie have also said they will no longer use workfare workers. Housing charity Shelter confirmed that they stopped using the scheme last year after concerns that it was not in the interests of potential volunteers. However several major UK charities, including Age UK, Cancer Research, the British Heart Foundation (BHF), Barnados and the PDSA have so far remained quiet on their use of forced labour. Chief Executive of the BHF, Peter Hollins, earned a whopping £153,000 in 2008, and the average salary of the top 100 charities Chief Execs is now over £166,000. These vast sums don't appear to have trickled down though and the chances are that the person serving you in a British Heart Foundation shop is a workfare slave, paid nothing other than the pittance available on Job Seekers Allowance. Charities have always used volunteers, and no-one has objected to that. What the hundreds, if not thousands of people, who have contacted Tesco this week are concerned about is the punitive measures now being used to recruit these so called 'volunteers'. Workfare staff, as well as being unpaid, have no workplace rights. If they are dismissed for any reason they face having their benefits sanctioned, leaving them destitute and possibly homeless. Increasingly people who are sick and disabled are being bullied onto workfare schemes, and plans revealed in the Guardian show that they could be forced into permanent unpaid positions with charities and businesses alike. Many workfare workers have complained of no longer having the time to look for paid work properly due to workfare schemes. Some, like Cait Reilly, who is currently taking legal action after being forced to work in Poundland, were already volunteering and on the way to gaining a career. Benefit levels are so low that many workfare staff go without lunch. This isn't a few hours a week doing good deeds or helping organise a local church fete. Charities are using workfare staff full time, in what were often previously paid positions. As many charities now have gained contracts to carry out public services, something Cameron claims to want more of, then this could depress wages across the public sector.

And whilst charities are feeling the pinch just as much as every else, with Chief Execs living lives of luxury, then any justification charities need to use slave labour to survive ring somewhat hollow. Unfortunately, for some charities, their involvement with this scheme goes even deeper than merely exploiting workfare staff. Over 300 voluntary organisations have been listed as sub-contractors to administer the government's Work Programme scheme including household names such as Mencap and the Prince's Trust. Many of them, some who already use workfare staff themselves, will be some of the key organisations responsible for helping to implement the scheme. In other words they may

be directly responsible for pushing vulnerable people into workfare whilst the DWP hovers in the background threatening benefit sanctions for non-compliance. Under Work Programme claimants can be forced to work 30 hours a week with no pay for up to six months, something far more draconian than the Tesco workfare position which caused public outrage. Astonishingly these charities have signed contracts which gag them from even being critical of the DWP and the workfare scheme. So far it hasn't quite been plain sailing however and many charities are already raising concerns that workfare isn't turning out to be quite the gravy train they hoped for.

That charities should be quite happy to be actively involved in press-ganging vulnerable people into forced labour, and only really raise concerns that they aren't making enough money out of it, reveals an astonishing gulf between charity bosses and the people they claim to be there to help.

At the forefront of this has been the Disability Works Consortium, an alliance of charities working together to maximise income from workfare, and which includes MIND, SCOPE (who's shops are riddled with workfare staff), The Leonard Cheshire Foundation, Action for Blind People and Mencap.

It's not that these organisations have been unaware of the problems of the workfare schemes and the distress they have brought to some people's lives. Disabled People's Organisations, claimants groups, and perhaps most importantly their own users, have told them time and time again that workfare is exploitative, demeaning and damaging to wages and conditions for everyone. But these charities have chosen not to listen, instead jumping through ever more complex moral and intellectual hoops in order to justify the hundreds of thousands of pounds they've been raking in. Just like free market ideologues and bankers, charities have taken the position that what ever makes them the most cash just happens to also be the morally correct thing to do.

Everyone agrees that disabled people should have the right to work, and access to support and training. No-one disputes that for young people volunteering can be a way to gain valuable experience. The problem is that consent has been removed from the system and the threat of starvation and homelessness has been used to bully people into unpaid labour. It's really not a difficult concept for charities to understand and now the public have been made fully aware of what's going on they have rightly shown their contempt for the whole shoddy operation.

Participating charities should hang their heads in shame for colluding in (and profiting from) this abuse of the most vulnerable in society.

The road the charities have taken has given soft cover to some of the most brutal welfare policies in the Western world. Policies that have failed everywhere they have been implemented. Policies which are now leading to a situation where someone with terminal cancer could be forced to work night-shifts stacking shelves at Tesco, or day shifts stacking shelves in a charity shop, all for no pay.

These charities are just as vulnerable to commercial pressures as the likes of Tesco, Matalan, Sainsbury's and TK Maxx who have all now pulled out of mandatory workfare. A threat to withdraw donations and boycott the shops of MIND (@mindcharity), SCOPE (@scope), and Mencap (@mencap_charity) may well help focus their minds. As resistance to workfare spreads, not for the first time, the likes of SCOPE could see angry mobs of disabled people and claimants outside their shops and offices. It's time they pull

out of these schemes completely, tear up the contracts and issue a clear condemnation of any scheme that uses threats of benefit sanctions to force people to work for no pay.

The collapse of workfare is near complete as the corporate sector runs for the hills in the face of public fury. All that's left propping it up now is these charities, who depend so much on the support of the public for their very existence. We should not be squeamish in holding them to account for their actions every bit as fiercely as we have done to the likes of Tesco and Poundland.

UPDATE!!! SCOPE have just announced on Twitter that they are ending their involvement with workfare with immediate effect. Whether this just applies to workfare staff in SCOPE's shops or whether they will be pulling out as workfare sub-contractors remains to be seen. They say a statement is coming on their website

Chris Grayling is a Lying Bastard

Posted on February 19, 2012 by johnny void | 76 Comments

That an over-privileged Oxbridge twat like Chris Grayling can accuse benefit claimants of being snobs for objecting to forced labour shows how pitifully out of touch this government are.

Grayling, clearly rattled about the ongoing disintegration of the government's welfare policy, has unleashed a torrent of lies in the Telegraph this morning.

Perhaps the most brazen is the quote: *"We won't and don't force anyone to take a work experience placement. Where we use mandation in our welfare policies, it will be to do useful work on community projects. We will never mandate anyone to work for a big company. They wouldn't take them if we did."*

Just one of several new workfare schemes is called the 'Mandatory Work Programme' (the clue's in the name). Under this scheme, which Job Centre advisors can re-refer people onto indefinitely, claimants will be expected to work 30 hours a week, for four weeks per referral, or face benefit sanctions of three months. If they leave and then return to the placement the sanction will still remain in force. Where claimants end up working will be down to providers, almost all of whom are private sector poverty pimps. Claimants could be referred to private companies or charities alike. Whilst it is true that on this scheme the DWP has stipulated that placements should have some community benefit, one of those benefits is astonishingly *'working towards the profit of the host organisation'*.

Presumably this could include working in Poundland, just as the government's 'work experience' scheme has seen thousands of young people employed in High Street stores across the country. Under this scheme participants may opt out after one week, after that they must complete the full eight weeks or face sanctions. Many people say they are not informed of this cooling off period, including Cait Reilly who is currently in the middle of a court case over something Grayling claims doesn't exist.

Lastly, the Work Programme, the government's flagship scheme, leaves private sector providers free to mandate people wherever they want, including workfare. In fact they must, as it states in the DWP's own providers guidance:

"Where you are providing support for JSA participants, which is work experience you must mandate participants to this activity. This is to avoid the National Minimum Wage Regulations, which will apply if JSA participants are not mandated."

Yet again a DWP minister is telling outright lies to defend the government's flawed welfare policy. And he doesn't stop there. Grayling claims that under Labour if someone did work experience they *'lost their benefits – simple as that'*. Which is a huge porky. To their absolute fucking shame Labour introduced workfare, in fact the New Deal was one of Blair's flagship policies. In those days workfare came with a benefit top up under the subsidised employment scheme, where young people received an additional payment on top of their benefit if they worked for a private company. They also had the option of taking up full time education or training instead.

or joining the doomed Environmental Task Force. This all changed with the introduction of the Flexible New Deal which saw tens of thousands of people forced into workfare at places like Primark. So in fact compulsory 'work experience' was very much a part of life for claimants under Labour, the only difference under the Tories is that its use has been massively extended, sanctions have been toughened, and now sick and disabled people will also be forced to take part. Finally Grayling claims that 20,000 young people have found work after taking part in work experience. This may or may not be another fib, as the DWP have been dragging their feet on releasing information on exactly how many people have got jobs through their workfare schemes. Even if it is true, then the question should be asked how many of those 20,000 (which isn't actually that many) would have got jobs anyway, without being subject to slave labour. Young people get jobs under their own steam everyday – it's entirely possible that workfare is in fact hindering people's job search and just providing a fat payment for poverty pimps like Emma Harrison who recently trouserred £9 million on the back of bullying claimants into workfare. One thing we do know is that despite all these schemes youth unemployment is still soaring. Grayling claims that objection to workfare is down to 'utterly misguided left-wing commentators, newspapers, broadcasters, trade unions and lawyers'. Yet it hasn't been Guardian journalists bombarding Tesco's facebook page demanding they pull out of workfare. Grayling is correct to accuse the Guardian of hypocrisy for condemning workfare whilst offering unpaid internships. It's also telling that the Guardian have remained somewhat quiet about the use of workfare by charities (major advertisers). But whilst it's true that the intern system in media outlets effectively bars working class young people from becoming media luvvies, it is hardly comparable to working in Poundland or a charity shop for 30 hours a week with no prospect of a job at the end of it. Grayling should be all too aware of this, as after Cambridge he began his career as a trainee with the BBC. A year later he became a producer. Now he owns four properties, two of which we paid for, two of the others he rents out. That an Oxbridge toff, landlord, thief and liar can claim that his experience is comparable to working class kids facing forced labour is beyond belief. That he can lie so blatantly about his own department's policies just highlights the arrogance of this incompetent government. Tesco appear to be hiding behind Grayling's lies that their use of workfare has not been mandatory. Some companies and charities alike, including Argos and the Salvation Army are unrepentant over their use of forced labour. Resistance is growing fast however. The National Day of Action Against Workfare on the 3rd March will see action against workfare exploiters in Birmingham, Brighton, Bristol, Cardiff, Leeds, Liverpool, London, Sheffield and Tunbridge Wells, with new towns and cities signing up every day. More companies are likely to pull out of the scheme this week leaving the Government's welfare scheme in tatters. The online storm shows no signs of dying down. It's time to say enough is enough and condemn workfare to the dustbin of history where it belongs. No-one should be forced to work without a wage

16 April 2012

Dear Ms Smith

FOIA – s50 complaint – Mr F Zola
Case reference: FS50438037

Thank you for your email and attachments of 13 April.

The response that you provided refers to possible consideration of the exemption at s36(2) of the Act. If the department intends to rely on the exemption in order to withhold the information please can you forward the relevant arguments now in order to support it.

I trust you will appreciate that the Information Commissioner cannot be expected to wait until after the conclusion of his investigation before full and complete arguments may be supplied by the department.

Should the department seek reliance on the s36 exemption:

(i) Please can you provide the name and job title of the designated qualified person.

(ii) In relation to the opinion of the qualified person the Commissioner is mindful of the Information Tribunal's statement in *McIntyre v Information Commissioner and MOD* (EA/2007/0068):

"We would recommend to the Commissioner that in future investigations for complaints where a s36(2) exemption has been claimed that he should require to see more evidence in relation to the opinion given by the qualified person..."

Therefore please can you provide your response to the following questions:

(a) When was the qualified person's opinion sought and when was it given? Please provide the relevant dates.

(b) What information did the qualified person have access to when giving the opinion?

(c) Was the qualified person provided with any submissions supporting a recommendation that the exemption was engaged?

(d) Was the qualified person provided with any contrary arguments supporting the position that the exemption was not engaged?

(iii) Please can you ensure that the relevant sub section of s36 upon which the department may be reliant is specified. If the department intends reliance on more than one sub section please ensure that the arguments submitted are differentiated under the particular heading of each sub section.

(iv) Please ensure that the opinion as to whether disclosure of the withheld information would, or would be likely to cause prejudice is clearly indicated. In this respect please be advised that the causal relationship between potential disclosure of the information and the prejudice or likelihood of prejudice needs to be specifically demonstrated. General statements to this effect will be insufficient.

Please can you let me have the information that I have requested as soon as possible and in any event within 10 working days of the date of this email.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Brian Payne
Senior Case Officer

FAO - Brian Payne - Senior Case Officer

Mr F Zola - Case reference: FS50438037

Dear Mr Payne,

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to further consider this case.

I can now confirm that following a submission to the Minister for Employment, the Minister has agreed the use of the section 36(2)(c) exemption in this and the [REDACTED] cases.

A copy of the submission and confirmation email from the Minister is attached for your reference.

Please treat this information as confidential.

[REDACTED] - the information owners are now in the process of pulling together their responses to these complaints, which I hope to have with you on or before 9th May.

Kind regards
Carol

Carol Smith

FOI/Data Protection Policy Adviser | Information, Management, Devolution and Governance Division | Department for Work and Pensions | Professional Services | Information, Governance and Security (IGS) Directorate | The Adelphi | 1-11 John Adam Street | London | WC2N 6HT |

[REDACTED]
E_M_A_I_L_B_L_O_C_K

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-----Original Message-----

From: casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk [mailto:casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk]

Sent: 16 April 2012 15:49

To: Smith Carol LEGAL GROUP INFORMATION-DEVOLUTION AND GOVERNANCE

Subject: Freedom of Information Act - s50 complaint[Ref: FS50438037]

16 April 2012

Dear Ms Smith

FOIA - s50 complaint - Mr F Zola
Case reference: FS50438037

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Yours sincerely

Brian Payne
Senior Case Officer

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From: Derek French
Work Programmes Division
Contracted Customer Services Directorate

To: Minister for Employment

Date: 24 April 2012

FoI complaint to the Information Commissioner

Issue Summary

1. In January we received an FoI request for the names of the work placement organisations used by the providers in each of the eleven Mandatory Work Activity (MWA) contract package areas. Lists relating to a small number of individual providers had been disclosed previously in response to FOI requests; however in the light of recent campaigns targeting these organisations and providers we withheld the information this time on commercial grounds. The requester then appealed to the Information Commissioner who is now investigating the Department's handling of the request. We have already submitted detailed commercial interest arguments and asked for the opportunity to apply another exemption in the alternative (Section 36 of the FoI Act) if the Commissioner was minded to reject our commercial arguments.
2. The Commissioner's office responded by asking for details of any exemptions we want to rely on. This note therefore invites you to apply the exemption which applies where the release would, or would be likely, to prejudice the effective conduct of public affairs. The use of this exemption (at section 36(2) (c) of the FoI Act) requires the agreement of a Minister.

Recommendation

3. That you agree to apply the exemption from disclosure at section 36(2) (c) of the FoI Act to the information sought in this request and to information sought in two similar requests which the Commissioner is also considering.

Timing

4. A reply by 1 May would enable us to meet the Information Commissioner's deadline.

Discussion

5. On 25 January we received an FoI request via the WhatDoTheyKnow.com website (where requests and responses are visible to all) asking:

I want the names of the placement providers for Mandatory Work Activity during the last six months in:

CPA 1, CPA 2, and CPA 3; and if within your fees for CPA 4, CPA 5, and CPA 6; and if within your fees for CPA 7, CPA 8, and CPA 9; and if within your fees for CPA 10 and CPA 11 for your successful bidders

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplying-dwp/what-we-buy/welfare-to-work-services/notices-toproviders/mandatory-work-activity-preferred.shtml>

This information was readily available from our suppliers who hold it on the Department's behalf, and are contractually obliged to provide it to us, so the FoI cost limits did not apply.

6. Similar information in relation to a small number of providers had been released previously by the Department in response to earlier FoI requests but we decided to withhold it in this instance in the light of the impact of various anti-Work Programme campaigns which had been targeting placement providers. The information was therefore withheld citing commercial interests. This position was upheld on review and the requester subsequently appealed to the Information Commissioner who is now investigating the case.
7. We have already submitted detailed arguments supporting our use of the commercial interests exemption and the Commissioner's office has now asked that we also provide arguments for any additional exemptions we want to deploy. The only other relevant exemption is section 36(2)(c) of the FoI Act which applies if, in the reasonable opinion of a qualified person, disclosure under the Act would otherwise prejudice, or would be likely otherwise to prejudice, the effective conduct of public affairs. The qualified person for central Government Department's is a Government Minister.
8. This exemption (Section 36(2) (c)) is not limited to particular types of information but works by reference to the effects of disclosure rather than to content. This exemption is not "absolute" and is therefore subject to a public interest test. It can only be used when prejudice or harm can be demonstrated and means that even where prejudice can be demonstrated it is still necessary to consider whether the public interest in withholding outweighs the public interest in disclosure.
9. So this exemption can only be applied when, in the opinion of a Minister, harm would, or would be likely to follow the disclosure of the information. It was intended by Parliament to cover residual situations that could not be foreseen where it was necessary to withhold information in the interests of good Government. Because this exemption is so broadly expressed, we need to explain clearly why we think the exemption is engaged and set out the risk of harm or damage that could result from the release of this information.
10. The Information Commissioner's office requires sight of this submission, and your response, to be satisfied that there is an audit trail of your agreement to the application of this exemption.

Mandatory Work Activity (MWA)

11. As you know MWA provides extra support to JSA claimants who would benefit from a short period of activity. It helps them re-engage with the system, refocus their job search and gain valuable work-related disciplines, such as punctuality, carrying out specific tasks and working under supervision. This approach is part of the Department's plans to ensure claimants receive the personalised, responsive support that they need to find and remain in employment. This initiative recognises that when considering whether to take a young person on, employers will highly value any relevant work experience; MWA is now available in all areas of GB (a list of the contract package areas is attached at **Annex A** for ease of reference, also attached

as a separate document and entitled **Annex C** is the disputed information i.e. the most up to date list of organisations used in each contract package area to provide job opportunities for MWA participants) and is a key plank of the Government's objective to secure sustainable employment for all.

12. There have been widespread campaigns from critics who oppose the MWA policy including groups who expressly aim to boycott what they characterise as forced unpaid work for people who receive welfare. **Annex B** contains a list of such websites, an extract from the Boycott Welfare website and a list of placement organisations which have since withdrawn from the MWA placement programme due in large part to the activities of these campaign groups.

What harm would release be likely to create?

13. It is clear that a minority of people appear to be seeking to undermine the goodwill of employers who are prepared to offer opportunities to unemployed people by attempting to damage the reputation and standing of those companies. The use of the earlier (now outdated) lists of MWA organisations by these websites in this way is evidence of the need to protect this information in this instance.

Release of an updated list of MWA organisations (it changes over time as some leave and others join) runs the risk of campaign groups targeting afresh these placement organisations, including new ones, to cause them to withdraw from the scheme. The websites make it clear that these actions aim to create a climate which also discourages other organisations from joining the scheme with the intention of disrupting the delivery of the Government's employment programme. This risk, if realised, would be prejudicial to a policy which is designed to move more jobseekers into sustainable work. Thwarting the delivery of the policy in this way would be likely to undermine the benefits to the wider economy of moving more jobseekers off benefit into employment. Such disruption is also detrimental to the job prospects of individual jobseekers who will not benefit from the disciplines and work experience that the MWA scheme offers. The list included at the end of **Annex B** provides details of a number of key placement providers who have withdrawn their offer of support for MWA; impacting significantly on delivery of provision.

Public interest arguments for and against disclosure

14. The exemption at s36(2)(c) is a qualified one which means that in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption must outweigh the public interest in disclosing it.
15. Factors in favour of disclosure include the general public interest in greater transparency to improve accountability of and trust in Government. The greater the impact on the country or on public spending the greater the public interest may be in Government being more transparent
16. Factors against disclosure are that:
 - Actively discouraging employers from participating in Government employment programmes undermines delivery of its Get Britain working policies, which are supported by business and the majority of the population. This is not in the public interest

- Disrupting employment programmes could damage the employment prospects of young jobseekers many of whom will have been out of work for a long time and is not in their own or the wider economy's interests
 - Individuals still going through the MWA process can still discuss their personalised options with JCP advisors thus making them aware of which organisation will be supporting them. This meets the general public interest in transparency whilst mitigating the boycott activities of campaign groups which a national updated and revised disclosure would encourage.
17. On balance officials believe that the public interest in maintaining the exemption at section 36(2) (c) outweighs the public interest in disclosure. **You are invited to agree that this exemption should be applied to the information in question.**
18. There are two similar and related FoI appeals to the Information Commissioner. They seek subsets of the same information in this case and also engage the s36 (2) (c) exemption and the same arguments set out above apply. These requests are as follows:
1. *The names of all organisations who have provided work boost placements, work experience, or other unpaid work activity to customers of Seetec within Contract Package Area 4 (East London) within the past 12 months. In cases where a subcontractor to Seetec was involved, please note which subcontractor or subcontractors were involved with each organisation*
 2. *The names of the organisations that JHP Group use when delivering Mandatory Work Activity in Scotland (CPA1).*
19. **You are also invited to apply this exemption to the information sought by these requests for the same reasons set out earlier.**

Clearance

20. On my own authority.

Copy list: Ministers/Special Advisers
Perm Sec
Alan Cave



Annexes

21. Annex A - MWA providers in each Contract Package Area

Contract Package Area	CPA sub-divisions	Provider
CPA 1 South East	Hampshire and Isle of Wight Thames Valley (Berkshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire), Kent, Surrey and Sussex	A4E
CPA 2 South West	Devon and Cornwall Dorset and Somerset, Gloucester, Wiltshire, and Swindon, West of England	Rehab Group
CPA 3 London	Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Brent, Harrow, Hillingdon, Hounslow, Richmond Upon Thames, Kingston Upon Thames, Wandsworth, Enfield, Kensington & Chelsea, Barnet, Camden, Westminster, Islington, Haringey, Hackney, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Barking & Dagenham, Redbridge, Havering, Waltham Forest, City of London, Croydon, Bexley, Lambeth, Bromley, Greenwich, Lewisham, Southwark, Merton, Sutton	Seetec
CPA 4 East of England	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire, Cambridge and Suffolk Essex, Norfolk	Seetec
CPA 5 East Midlands	Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Rutland Leicestershire and Northamptonshire	Ingeus
CPA 6 West Midlands	Birmingham and Solihull Black Country, Coventry and Warwickshire, Staffordshire, The Marches	ESG
CPA 7 North West	Cumbria and Lancashire, Merseyside, Halton, Greater Manchester Central, Greater Manchester East and West Cheshire and Warrington	JHP Group
CPA 8 Yorkshire and Humber	West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire, North East Yorkshire and The Humber	BEST
CPA 9 North East	Northumbria, South Tyne and Wear Valley, Tees Valley	Ingeus
CPA 10 Scotland	Ayrshire, Dumfries, Galloway and Inverclyde, Edinburgh, Lothian and Borders, Forth Valley, Fife and Tayside Glasgow, Highlands, Islands, Clyde Coast and Grampian Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire	JHP Group
CPA 11 Wales	North and Mid Wales, South West Wales, South Wales Valleys, South East Wales	Rehab Group

Annex B - Website links and extracts from the 'boycott workfare' website. Also, a list of placement organisations which have recently withdrawn from the MWA placement programme.

http://www.boycottworkfare.org/?page_id=711

http://www.boycottworkfare.org/?page_id=82

http://www.boycottworkfare.org/?page_id=16

<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/2012/03/493096.html>

<http://www.indymedia.org.uk/en/actions/2012/workfare/>

<http://radicalglasgowblog.blogspot.co.uk/2012/02/boycott-work-fare.html>

<http://johnnyvoid.wordpress.com/2012/03/11/action-against-workfare-continues/>

<http://benefitclaimantsfightback.wordpress.com/>

<http://righttowork.org.uk/category/news/page/5/>

<http://righttowork.org.uk/2012/02/tesco-withdraws-from-workfare-protest-works/>

<http://theunhivemind.com/wordpress/?p=24200>

<http://northernvoicesmag.blogspot.co.uk/2012/02/firms-pull-out-of-condem-government.html>

<http://www.spanglefish.com/onlineprotestagainstworkfare/index.asp?pageid=379936>

<http://www.spanglefish.com/onlineprotestagainstworkfare/>

<http://unemploymentmovement.com/forum/welfare-to-work/1612-charities-pull-out-of-controversial-work-experience-scheme>

<http://www.recruiter.co.uk/companies-%E2%80%98pulling-out%E2%80%99-of-government-work-experience-scheme-were-never-in/1012984.article>

Extract from the Boycott Workfare website

Boycott Workfare

Boycott Workfare is a UK-wide campaign to end forced unpaid work for people who receive welfare. Workfare profits the rich by providing free labour, whilst threatening the poor by taking away welfare rights if people refuse to work without a living wage. We are a grassroots campaign, formed in 2010 by people with experience of workfare and those concerned about its impact. We expose and take action against companies and organisations profiting from workfare; encourage organisations to pledge to boycott it; and actively inform people of their rights.

The tide is turning and following massive public pressure, we are pleased to say the following companies and organisations say they will no longer take part in workfare:

- [TK Maxx](#)
- [Sainsbury's](#)
- [Waterstones](#)
- [Shelter](#)
- [Marie Curie](#)
- [99p stores](#)
- [Maplin](#)
- [Oxfam](#)
- [Mind](#)
- [BHS](#)
- [Burger King](#) – although they have only mentioned one of the five workfare schemes
- [HMV](#)
- [Boots](#)

The following have suspended their involvement. We look forward to them confirming that they will stop involvement in any of the government's workfare schemes:

- [Scope](#)
- [Matalan](#)
- [Argos](#)
- [Superdrug](#) – see [their tweet](#)

The particularly misleading ones

- [Poundland](#) have said they will pull out of the Work Programme but remain in the Work Experience Scheme
- [Tesco](#) are still involved in the scheme
- [Pizza Hut](#) says they have the scheme under review.
- [Age UK](#) is investigating.

Hold them to it!

Ask in your local stores to confirm that no one is on DWP "Work Experience", [Mandatory Work Activity](#), the Community Action Programme, Sector Based Work Academies, or Work Programme placements: all of these are forced unpaid work, or workfare schemes. [Let us know](#) if you hear otherwise.

Confidential

-----Original Message-----

From: Minister for Employment

Sent: 30 April 2012 18:02

To: [REDACTED] REG DELIVERY DIRECTORATE; Minister for Employment

Cc: [REDACTED] PROFESSIONAL SERVICES IGSD

Subject: RE: For clearance - ICO (PS50438502) Frank Zola - Ministerial submission

[REDACTED]

The Minister has seen this submission and agrees with the use of the section 36(2)(c) exemption in this and the other two cases you have highlighted.

Thanks

[REDACTED]

Private Secretary to the Minister for Employment
Department for Work and Pensions
Caxton House, London, SW1H 9NA

[REDACTED]

Minister Employment@dwp.gov.uk

BOX TIMES: Mon Thurs 2pm; no box on a Friday

To arrange for clearance of urgent work outside these times,
please call the relevant Private Secretary to discuss

E_M_A_I_L_B_L_O_C_K

24 May 2012

Dear Ms Smith

FOIA – s50 complaint – Mr F Zola
Case reference: FS50438037

Thank you for your email and attachments of 1 May regarding the above complaint.

Please can you confirm the name of the minister who provided the opinion as the qualified person for purposes of s36 of the Act.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Brian Payne
Senior Case Officer

FAO - Brian Payne - Senior Case Officer
Mr F Zola - Case reference: FS50438037

Dear Mr Payne,

The name of the minister who provided the opinion as the qualified person for purposes of s36 of the Act is the Minister for Employment is the Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP.

Please see attached link to our /Ministers for completeness.

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/about-dwp/ministers/#cg>

Kind regards
Carol

Carol Smith
FOI/Data Protection Policy Adviser | Information, Management, Devolution and Governance
Division | Professional Services Group | Information, Governance and Security (IGS) Directorate
| Department for Work and Pensions | Caxton House | 6-12 Tothill Street | London SW1H 9NA |
[REDACTED]

Please consider the environment before printing
[DPA and FOI guidance](#)

-----Original Message-----

From: casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk [mailto:casework@ico.gsi.gov.uk]
Sent: 24 May 2012 11:49
To: Smith Carol PROFESSIONAL SERVICES IGSD
Subject: FOIA - s50 complaint[Ref: FS50438037]

24 May 2012

Dear Ms Smith

FOIA - s50 complaint - Mr F Zola
Case reference: FS50438037

Thank you for your email and attachments of 1 May regarding the above complaint.

Please can you confirm the name of the minister who provided the opinion as the qualified person for purposes of s36 of the Act.

Thank you for your help in this matter.

Yours sincerely

Brian Payne
Senior Case Officer

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