

2 May 2012

Dear Mr Johnson,

Thank you for your Freedom of Information request of 22 March. You asked:

*Dear Department for Work and Pensions,*

*Minister Chris Grayling said*

*"They have the power to mandate but they will only mandate to community benefit projects. All participation in Work Experience with commercial organisations will be done on a voluntary basis in the Work Programme as well as through Jobcentre Plus. So we have exactly the same rules applied across the board and we are making sure all the guidance is in line with that."*

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmworpen/uc1903/uc190301.htm>

*Can you supply all the Work Programme (WP), Mandatory Work Activity (MWA), Community Action Programme (CAP) and Youth Contract (YC) guidance and rules that the Minister says now exist across the board, that support the quotes above.*

*Can you supply information you hold that states that it is now unsuitable to make it Mandatory to participate in "community benefit" projects that have any element of contributing to the Profit of the Work Experience host organisation, as this would be commercial for profit activity?*

**Question 1: Can you supply all the Work Programme (WP), Mandatory Work Activity (MWA), Community Action Programme (CAP) and Youth Contract (YC) guidance and rules that the Minister says now exist across the board, that support the quotes above.**

Under the Freedom of Information Act, the Department is permitted to direct you to information that is reasonably accessible to you by other means. In this case the Department's guidance to providers on Mandatory Work Activity (MWA), the Community Action Programme (CAP) is in the public domain can be viewed at:

- MWA: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/pg-part-p.pdf>
- CAP: <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplying-dwp/what-we-buy/welfare-to-work-services/provider-guidance/community-action-programme.shtml>

Both these sets of guidance require providers to ensure that placements deliver a community benefit (paragraphs 3.15 and 4.13 in the MWA guidance; Chapter 4, paragraph 9 in the CAP guidance), and guidance on what is meant by community benefit (Annex 2 in each document).

In line with the Minister's commitment to the Work and Pensions Select Committee, the Department is in the process of reviewing its guidance to Work Programme providers on work experience to ensure it fully reflects the policy intent. The current guidance can be viewed at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplying-dwp/what-we-buy/welfare-to-work-services/provider-guidance/work-programme-provider.shtml>

The Youth Contract does not introduce any new work experience or work placement schemes, and so no specific guidance exists on this point in relation to the Youth Contract.

The decision about whether to participate or not in work experience is entirely one for the claimant to make; sanctions will no longer apply for failing to start the placement or leaving the placement early. A sanction will only apply where the claimant has been asked to leave by the host employer for reasons of gross misconduct, such as stealing or racial abuse. Staff were informed of the new process on 01 March, a copy of which is attached to this letter

***Question 2: Can you supply information you hold that states that it is now unsuitable to make it Mandatory to participate in "community benefit" projects that have any element of contributing to the Profit of the Work Experience host organisation, as this would be commercial for profit activity?***

As set out above, the Department's guidance to providers on MWA and CAP includes a definition of community benefit. This guidance does not rule out the possibility that placements may, in some cases, include some element of working towards the profit of the host organisation, provided that, in all cases, it is clear that the majority of the placement is dedicated to the delivery of a benefit to the community.

If you have any queries about this letter please contact me quoting the reference number above.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

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## **Your right to complain under the Freedom of Information Act**

If you are not happy with this response you may request an internal review by e-mailing [freedom-of-information-request@dpw.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dpw.gsi.gov.uk) or by writing to DWP, Central FoI Team, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor The Adelphi, 1-11, John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT. Any review request should be submitted within two months of the date of this letter.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review you may apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision. Generally the Commissioner cannot make a decision unless you have exhausted our own complaints procedure. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at: The Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow Cheshire SK9 5AF [www.ico.gov.uk](http://www.ico.gov.uk)