

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

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Our Ref: IR197 review of FOI1142

20 April 2012

Dear Mr Taylor,

Thank you for your email dated 31 March 2012 requesting a review of your previous FOI request (FOI 1142).

Please be assured that your request has been given our full consideration and that all aspects of your review were taken fully into account. The review was conducted by an independent official of the Department, of the relevant grade and authority to carry out such requests. The case has been examined afresh, and guidance has been sought from domain experts to ensure all factors were taken fully into account.

In your review request you asked the following:

*I am writing to request an internal review of Department for Work and Pensions's handling of my FOI request 'Is the Work Programme a punishment'.  
I have asked which of your work placement schemes a claimant put on the work programme can be put onto. As usual you avoid giving an answer which forces me into the position of having to request a review.*

DWP Work Programme contracts do not specify the type of activities participants should undertake. This gives Work Programme providers and their subcontractors the flexibility to design an innovative and personalised approach to support each individual into sustained employment; this could include work experience placements.

The type, duration and number of work experience placements a participant may undertake will be determined by the Provider's individual assessment of a participant's needs.

Work experience placements can be an extremely valuable way for a participant to gain or update experience of the work place and re-adjust to it. A provider will work with a participant to discuss these benefits and gain agreement on a way forward to help them into work. Providers do however have the discretion to mandate the vast majority of participants to undertake a work experience placement. Further information can be found in the link below to provider guidance.

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wp-pg-chapter-2.pdf>

Where providers require there to be a sanctionable consequence should a participant fail to undertake an activity including work experience placements they are required to mandate correctly.

Further details about mandatory activity within the Work Programme can be found in provider guidance, see link below.

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wp-pg-chapter-3.pdf>

Therefore the Department does not hold any information to confirm that the work experience placements within the Work Programme are entirely voluntary, as outlined above any activity including work placements can be mandatory.

You have now exhausted the Departmental internal review process; if you are not content with the outcome, the next step is for you to apply directly to the Information Commissioner's Office for a decision.

Yours sincerely,

DWP Central Fol Team

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

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)