

DWP Central Freedom of Information Team

e-mail: [freedom-of-information-rexxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx](mailto:freedom-of-information-rexxxxx@xxx.xxx.xxx.xx)

Our Ref: VTR988

DATE 28.03.2012

Dear Mr Travers,

You asked:

On the 29 Feb the DWP released a press release which quoted Chris Grayling as saying:

"Following a productive meeting with employers I am delighted that we have pledges from some of the UK's top companies to take part in the scheme. The likes of Airbus, Center Parcs and HP Enterprise Services will join in Voluntary Work Experience helping our young unemployed people get their first vital step into employment.

"Despite the persistent campaign of the last two weeks we have had contact with over 200 small or medium enterprises also wanting to get involved. The work experience scheme remains and is totally voluntary.

"The sanction regime remains in place. Employers continue to have the protection with the use of sanctions for gross misconduct. We have used the meeting to explain how the regime applies. It has never been an issue with the programme as only 220 people have been sanctioned since it started."

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/newsroom/press-releases/2012/feb-2012/dwp020-12.shtml>

Since the start of the Work Experience scheme could you please inform me the number of claimants who have turned down a "totally voluntary" placement. And also the number of those who have subsequently been referred to one of the Mandatory Work schemes or have been sanctioned.

The Department does not collect information on the number of claimants who decide not to take the offer of a voluntary placement and, therefore, we cannot provide information on the number of those claimants might subsequently have been referred to Mandatory Work Activity. Participation in Voluntary Work Experience is a decision for the young person to make. If they do not want to take up a placement, they are not subject to a sanction for that decision.

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@dwpgsi.gov.uk](mailto:freedom-of-information-request@dwpgsi.gov.uk) or by writing to DWP, Central Fol 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)