**A call for councils to boycott workfare**

As workfare, i.e. compulsory work for benefits, is being rolled-out across the country, we call on public sector bodies being offered these placements to join others in signing a pledge to boycott the scheme.

We have knowledge of claimants being inadequately trained for the work they do (particularly health and safety training), working exceedingly long shifts, and bullying in the workplace. Claimants are often not given any choice as to where they work or the sort of work they do.

Workfare placements will not benefit your organisation:

* Signing the pledge will improve your public image
* Workfare will create a two tier system in your work places, where people are not treated equal, which is contrary to the council’s equal opportunities policies and the law.
* Forced volunteers will not have had to the necessary in-house training or other training opportunities
* Single parents will be forced to leave their children unattended and unprotected when they are forced to work, which is illegal.
* People will be prevented from seeking proper work with a proper wage and employment rights. They will also be prevented from training or studying for better work.
* Compulsory unpaid labour will create an atmosphere of resentment as existing public workers are sacked as they are under-cut by the Single Work Programme.
* No organisation wants to be seen to be using slave labour.

We want decent work, training and income for everyone. Workfare will not provide any of these. It is being rolled out at a time when education and training schemes, housing benefit and other public services are being cut. Unpaid work inevitably replaces paid jobs and pushes wages down.

You may be asked to accept workfare placements for anything from a month to six months as part of the new ‘Single Work Programme’.  Something similar is already in place under The Flexible New Deal.

Many claimants wish to contribute to their communities and learn new skills through freely choosing to. However, under workfare arrangements public sector bodies will end up having to police the very people they want to help.Public sector bodies will be expected to monitor the attendance of people on these work programmes, report on their behaviour, and provide other information to the DWP that can result in severe penalties for recipients.

There have been **'679,820 New Deal Sanctions'** since the year 2000 creating great hardship for the poorest of those amongst us

We are asking you to refuse to participate in compulsory work placements and to do so publicly.  Even if your council or department has no intention of accepting workfare placements it would help us prevent the imposition of workfare elsewhere if you would sign the pledge.

In addition we are asking you not to enter into contractual relationships with companies, groups or organisations who are using people who are on these compulsory work programmes. You should not grant trading licences or planning permission to organisation or companies who are signed up to the Single Work Programme.

**Pledge to boycott workfare placements**

We the undersigned commit to refusing to support or participate in compulsory work-for-benefits placements. We want volunteering to remain just that!