

Boycott Workfare

Workfare - compulsory work for benefits - is being rolled-out across the country. It is replacing paid jobs and forcing unemployed people to work for the equivalent of £2.25 an hour.

Boycott Workfare is a coalition of unemployed people, anti-cuts campaigners, charity workers, trade unionists and allies. It is an ongoing campaign to challenge the government's Work Programme, or 'workfare', and the companies profiting from the free labour it provides.

We believe volunteering should remain just that!

Eventually it might be your job that is replaced by someone forced to "volunteer".

We call on trade unions and workplaces to sign a pledge to boycott the scheme. Workfare threatens us all. Please take part in the campaign.



Last year, 800 station staff were made redundant on London Underground. Early this year, 200 workfare placements were rolled out across North London stations to make "people feel much safer". The need for a uniformed presence remains, the paid employment does not.

**More info and download a union motion:
boycottworkfare.org**

**Get in touch:
info@boycottworkfare.org**

Motion for union branches: A call to boycott workfare

This Union Branch notes:

- That under the new 'Single Work Programme', benefits claimants will be placed on compulsory workfare placements. Something similar was already in place under Flexible New Deal.
- Under these reforms, 'volunteering' will lose its voluntary aspect and become compulsion, watched over by charities. Voluntary groups 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.
- Compulsory work placements are being offered to both the voluntary, public and private sectors. If the voluntary sector refuses to participate, this would make the programme much less viable.
- The reform 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.
- There have been 679,820 'New Deal Sanctions' since the year 2000 creating great hardship for the poorest of those amongst us. Under workfare, this hardship will only be exacerbated.

The Union Branch/Region believes:

- That everyone is entitled to decent work, training and income. Benefits are also a right, not a privilege and need to be protected.
- That we need to act in solidarity with the most vulnerable in society to protect benefits as part of defending society against a wider attack on the welfare state as a whole
- That many claimants wish to contribute to their communities and learn new skills through freely choosing to do voluntary work. But compulsory placements cause resentment, are against the ideal of volunteering and take advantage of the most vulnerable.

The Union branch resolves:

- To support the call for a boycott of workfare placements by putting its name to the pledge (note below*)
- To publicise the campaign, as well as the details of different claimants' support groups, amongst our networks and amongst members of the branch
- To make suggested donation of £50 to London Coalition Against Poverty, which offers mutual support and campaigns on housing and benefits.
- To raise this issue to regional/national level of the union.

*** The Boycott Workfare pledge reads: *We the undersigned commit to refusing to participate in compulsory work-for-benefits placements. We want volunteering to remain just that!***