

Freedom of Information request 4836/2012

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Information request

The data I am seeking, per message subject, relates to the current workfare programme(s) operated by the Department of Work And Pensions. My specific interest is the criteria used in assessing the suitability of any organization or company to take people on-placement.

1. I wish the complete criteria applied in assessing any organization's, or company's, application to participate.
2. In addition, a summary of number of applications to participate per month, and number accepted/rejected since instituting the programme(s).

If time permits, and I am well-aware that identifying information for 3rd parties would require redacted, it would be most-useful to see one or two samples of accepted and rejected applications to participate in the workfare scheme.

You subsequently provided the following clarification of your request:

"workfare" is to be construed as measures under the Community Action programme, or any other programme where any policy of the DWP seeks to forcefully encourage those currently on any form of unemployment benefit into work where they receive no significant (5-10%+) increase of financial income above the value of their benefits.

DWP response

In the first instance, the Department for Work and Pensions does not operate any "workfare programme(s)" or a "workfare scheme". Nor does it operate any programme or policy where the Department "seeks to forcefully encourage those currently on any form of unemployment benefit into work where they receive no significant (5-10%+) increase of financial income above the value of their benefits."

While the Department does not operate any programmes which meet your definition, you specifically asked about the Community Action Programme. This was one element of the Support for the Very Long Term Unemployed (SVLTU) trailblazers, which ended in July 2012.

The Community Action Programme was delivered by providers contracted by the Department. The providers liaised with host organisations to set up work placements for participants. There was a requirement that those work placements met certain community benefit principles.

The contract documents are publicly available. As an example, please see here:

<http://www.contractsfinder.businesslink.gov.uk/Common/View%20Notice.aspx?site=1000&lang=en¬iceid=324102&fs=true>

Annex 7 of the specification, which can be found within the 'Additional T and Cs and Specification' archive under 'Documents' on that webpage, sets out the community benefit principles, which are reproduced below.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT PRINCIPLES OF A WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT.

*A7.01 A Community Action Placement must be of benefit to the community **over and above** the benefit of providing a placement to the individual. This means the role can include:*

- *working directly towards the community benefit goal of the host organisation. In this case the duties of the claimant would contribute directly towards the benefit to the community. An example of this would be the employee working with the public on a community project;*
- *working indirectly towards the community benefit goal of the host organisation. In this case the duties of the claimant would contribute indirectly towards the benefit to the community, as the duties of the claimant would be contributing towards the work of the organisation which delivers community benefit. An example of this could be the employee working 'behind the scenes' on the organisation of a community project'; and*
- *working towards the profit of the host organisation, providing that the majority of the role is dedicated towards delivery of benefit to the community.*

A7.02 Additionally, the provider should consider whether there is an economic profit to the placement organisation and their objectives to deliver community benefit or whether their profit be used for community benefit.

A7.03 Examples of organisation types that come under this definition include;

- *Local authorities and councils;*

- *Government Departments and Agencies;*
- *Charities and third sector organisations;*
- *Social Enterprises; and*
- *Environmental Agencies.*

Please note this list is not exhaustive.

- Annex 7, Community Action Programme specification.

The contracts for the Community Action Programme did not require providers to supply the Department with details of their negotiations with placement hosts, and therefore the Department does not hold information on the number, content or outcome of applications to participate in that scheme from prospective host organisations.