

# Freedom of Information request 2903/2011

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## Information request

1. Details of guidelines given by the DWP to Jobcentre Plus and providers to determine the suitability of employers to provide work experience placements under the 18-24 work experience scheme, Work Programme or Mandatory Work Activity programme.
2. Requirements demanded of employers giving the placements (eg providing a reference when the placement is finished, not making people do unsuitable work etc).

## DWP response

For ease of reference I will answer each of your questions in the order in which you raised them.

### Question 1

The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) issued instructions to providers setting out the legislation they and their subcontractors must comply with and the steps they must take to ensure people on work placements are not exploited by employers. The following link to DWP Provider Guidance Chapter 2 gives more detail, particularly paragraph 73 onwards:

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

Information relating to Mandatory Work Activity and work experience placements can be found within the Provider Guidance (Annex 2). This section covers 'Ensuring customers are not exploited by employers' as well as 'Unsuitable types of activity' although not 'determining the suitability of employers' specifically. <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/docs/pg-part-p.pdf>

### Question 2

Work Programme providers are responsible for ensuring that participants are not exploited by employers when undertaking a period of work experience.

Before arranging work experience or other periods of attachment to an employer, providers must ensure that there is a genuine reason why the employer wants to offer participants the opportunity to work with them. The placement must also be genuinely additional e.g. a participant must not fulfil a role which would otherwise be advertised as vacant. Once a participant is undertaking work experience with an employer the provider is responsible for monitoring their progress, and in doing so will have the opportunity to assure themselves that they are not being exploited.

In addition providers must ensure the placement does not put the participant at risk or bring either Jobcentre Plus or themselves into disrepute. The placement offered needs to take into account a participant's personal beliefs, for example, some individuals may have personal beliefs about working within certain types of industry, for example with food.