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Mandatory work placements: a guide for potential host organisations

What is a mandatory work placement?

Mandatory work placements are linked to specific Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) programmes to help people back to work.

Jobcentre Plus work coaches refer claimants when they believe this will help move them closer to work. Mandatory work placements must not replace jobs and have to be of benefit to the community.

“

The service has been great for both the charity and the people on the placement. The charity gets additional support, while the participants enjoy their time with us and develop important skills to get them back into work.”

Community Centre Manager

What are the benefits of mandatory work placements?

Hosting a mandatory work placement enables you to fulfil a social responsibility and provides extra support for your work within the community.

Through a mandatory work placement claimants develop the skills required to return to work. They gain a sense of job satisfaction and achievement whilst building confidence, self-esteem and ambition. We also know that work is good for physical and mental health and well-being.¹

72% of mandatory work placement participants surveyed felt that attending had boosted their confidence².

89% of participants surveyed said that attending a mandatory work placement had helped them to recognise the benefit of a working routine².

Will I get paid for hosting a mandatory work placement?

Providers work with DWP to offer personalised support for claimants who need extra help to find and stay in work. Providers may pay organisations for hosting placements however this is an agreement between both parties and DWP has no involvement with this decision.

How does a participant get referred?

Jobcentre Plus work coaches will refer suitable claimants to the provider who will then match claimants with suitable placements.

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The placement gives participants the opportunity to be up in the morning. A place where what they do is directly linked to the happiness of members of the community.”

Conservation Charity

Do I have to pay participants?

No, you are not employing them because mandatory work placements do not replace paid jobs. Participants are with you to build valuable skills and experience, and will continue to receive benefits. The provider will cover any expenses associated with the claimant, such as travel costs and childcare.

What if someone didn't attend or participate?

As a host organisation you would need to inform providers if a claimant did not attend or participate as this may affect their benefit.

Are mandatory work placements the same as voluntary work?

Hosting a mandatory work placement is not the same as having a volunteer. Participants are referred to the placements by Jobcentre Plus work coaches so they can gain valuable experience. Often our claimants choose to become volunteers once they have completed their mandatory work placement.

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Most of the participants may have the wrong attitude to the government's plan for getting work experience to get a job. However by the end of the four weeks, 95% of the participants want to remain on the placements.”

Community Centre Manager

How can I help turn a life around?

Gina had never worked and was referred to Mandatory Work Activity to gain valuable work experience. She was given a placement in a community organisation in Sheffield that provides basic literacy and IT training for young adults.

56% of mandatory work placement participants surveyed^{2 3} had their work-related ambitions raised by attending a mandatory work placement.

Gina's role involved general administration and reception duties. After two weeks, the placement host was extremely impressed with her eagerness and dedication to the role, and has since offered her an apprenticeship and job. Gina was very grateful for the opportunity she was given and was excited about starting her new job.

Are mandatory work placements the same as work experience?

No. Work experience is offered on a different basis and it is accessed voluntarily by claimants.

What happens when the mandatory work placement ends?

If you would like to continue hosting more placements, you can continue to have participants referred to you from the provider.

For more information

GOV.UK Contracts Finder

<https://www.gov.uk/contracts-finder>

¹Waddell G and Burton K (2006), Is work good for your health and well-being? London: TSO.

²Evaluation of Mandatory Work Activity (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-mandatory-work-activity-rr823>)

³Evaluation of Support for the very long term unemployed trailblazer (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-support-for-the-very-long-term-unemployed-trailblazer-rr824>)