

**Community Works is the membership and representation organisation for the voluntary and community sector in Brighton and Hove.**

**We believe it is timely to make a statement regarding employment programmes where participation is compulsory and where non-participation carries a punitive response.**

## Pathways to employment

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Community Works acknowledges that activities to support people into employment or increase their employment prospects come in many forms.

Work tasters, work placements, secondments and internships are all familiar terms. Some of these experiences are paid and some are not; they may take place in a variety of contexts, across all sectors and within wider programmes and initiatives.

We recognise that many of these activities are of high value. They are often willingly engaged in by participants, and can offer the opportunity to use and build skills, improve confidence, increase ability to engage in the paid work environment and potentially to secure paid work itself. Employment-focused activities can also be a key way for organisations to provide a step-change opportunity for their service users.

We believe the 'Help to Work' initiative does not offer the opportunities above.

## 'Help to Work' – Community Work Placements

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'Help to Work' is the new government's programme for Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimants leaving the Work Programme. JSA claimants who have been on the Work Programme for two years, without finding a job, are 'handed back' to Job Centre Plus where they are then assessed and placed on one of three routes available – the Mandatory Intervention Regime, Community Work Placements or Daily JCP Sign-Ins.

## The Community Works Position

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'Help to Work' Community Work Placements are not consistent with key values that underpin our service delivery – choice, diversity, mutual benefit and recognition - and we believe this programme does not best meet the needs of the most vulnerable.

Community Works supports the view that punitive action taken on individuals for non-participation will have a significantly negative impact on the more vulnerable in our society. It risks increasing poverty, decreasing health and well-being and disempowering participants.

The Community Works position is:

- We will not be hosting 'Help to Work' Community Work Placements within any of our service areas
- We have signed up to the 'Keep volunteering voluntary' campaign to register our concerns
- We will continue to promote and develop high-quality volunteering opportunities underpinned by the values of choice, diversity, mutual benefit and recognition
- We will not be promoting and/or developing 'Help to work' placements nor seeking funding or contractual arrangements to do so
- We will continue to speak up for the vulnerable and under-represented; seeking advice from our membership as to the needs of their service users

Community Works wants voluntary and community action to have the greatest possible impact on people in Brighton & Hove, to do this:

- We make it easier for people to volunteer their time to the greatest effect
- We speak up for the vulnerable and under-represented in our society
- We champion and offer a united voice to everyone in the sector

**Community Works Board of Trustees, June 2014**