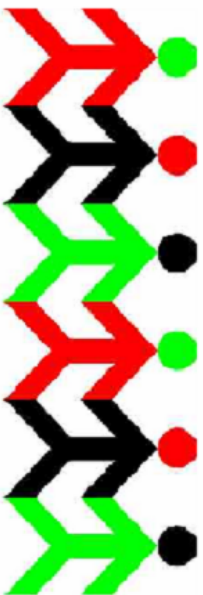




## BOURNEMOUTH & POOLE



### ANTI CUTS COALITION

*We reject the cuts as simply malicious ideological vandalism hitting the most vulnerable the hardest - Join us in this struggle*

**There is no evidence that swathes of people are suffering from a "habit of worklessness". In fact the gov't's own figures show that benefit fraud amounts to only 0.5% of the total bill. Building social policy on the basis of a tiny minority is expensive narrow minded folly.**

With over 2.5M people out of work and less than half a million vacancies, the underlying founding principle of the Welfare State to provide people with social insurance to give them dignity and an income when out of work or incapacitated has never been more important. It is imperative that we avoid the demonising and bullying that dominates the welfare debate and oppose the government's workfare schemes that will have dire consequences for everyone, not just the unemployed.

Unpaid work placements are being used by a vast array of employers. Workfare is being used to boost the profits of big companies and Work Programme providers at the expense of taxpayers.

# END UNPAID WORK

If jobs are there to be done, people should get the rate for the job, instead of being part of a growing, publicly funded, unpaid workforce which, apart from being immoral, actually destroys paid jobs.

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## Facts about the Gov't's Workfare Schemes

The vast majority of jobseekers, are desperate to find paid work of any description, including stacking shelves. The term "job snobs" is therefore a misleading and offensive buzz word being used by the Government to discredit Britain's 2.6 million unemployed. What people need is support from the Government to make the most of their skills and plug their skills gaps, in order to ensure that they not only enter the job market, but stay there.

Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) ranges from £56.25 to £71 per week. It is paid for one specific (and obvious) purpose – to support people whilst they seek employment. It is not remuneration for work, and even if it were, it would mean people on Back to Work schemes being paid as little as £1.78 per hour, often whilst working for some of our biggest companies. Many of these are now realising that such a scenario is unacceptable and have either pulled out of the schemes or demanded that the Government thinks again.

Govt ministers claim that unpaid work under the various schemes is not forced but voluntary. This is not correct. The Community Action Programme, Work Programme and Mandatory Work Activity Scheme (the clue is in the name) are mandatory, and jobseekers lose their JSA if they do not participate. The Govt says the sector-based work academy and work experience schemes are voluntary, but people are often told in no uncertain terms that participation is "mandatory".

Some claim the schemes help people into employment. Yet, international research commissioned by the Govt gave two very clear answers:

- "There is little evidence that workfare increases the likelihood of finding work. It can even reduce employment chances by limiting the time available for job search and by failing to provide the skills and experience valued by employers."
- "Workfare is least effective in getting people into jobs in weak labour markets where unemployment is high."

**The schemes are not all aimed at the long-term unemployed. For example, the sector-based work academy can apply to any jobseeker, even if he or she has only been unemployed for one day.**

Media attention has focused on the sector-based work academy, but this is only one of a plethora of complex schemes, many of which are much worse. The sector-based work academy involves 6-8 weeks of unpaid work. Other schemes involve six months, and there appears to be nothing to stop those six-month periods from being renewed.

The Employment Minister has stated that "half" or "something like half" of those on work experience have received permanent jobs. He has not advanced any evidence to support this, and Tesco has offered only 300 jobs having taken on 1400 unpaid workers. Source: Public Interest Lawyers