



Glasgow's Poverty Leadership Panel (Volunteering Group) is calling on DWP Job Centre Plus to help the city's partners maximise a Glasgow 2014 volunteering legacy - by bringing DWP guidance up to date, and by ensuring people claiming benefits are as free as anyone else to volunteer their time and skills to help their communities:

- The detailed guidance booklet, published by DWP as an online PDF document¹ should be updated and replaced as quickly as possible. It is only accurate at Oct. 2010 and was marked as 'archived/no longer current' on 30th January 2015.
 - Sickness and disability related benefit claimants should not be required to talk to Job Centre Plus before they begin volunteering, and DWP should state this clearly in line with their January 2014 letter to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games Organising Committee.
 - People claiming job-seeking benefits should:
 - Continue to be encouraged to consider volunteering opportunities by DWP Job Centre Plus advisers.
 - Be able (as they are now) to include volunteering on their "claimant commitments" if they have agreed to it, as part of a reasonable, realistic and personalised approach, and count volunteering towards half of their required 'work search' hours per week.
 - *Not* be subject to DWP sanctions for their volunteering when it appears on their "claimant commitment": volunteering should remain *voluntary*.
 - Training and guidance for DWP staff should be improved to ensure that the approach to volunteering is consistent throughout the city: both the Panel and Volunteer Glasgow specifically can support DWP to achieve this.
- * DWP Jobcentre Plus advisers should allow claimants flexibility and change signing on dates and/or times when there is a clash with volunteering commitments.

The PLP Volunteering Group members agreed this call for policy changes at their meeting in August 2014 with 2 amendments made by email following the meeting.

** And this point was added following claimant feedback at a PLP/DWP meeting in February 2015. Please note that the full membership of the Panel which meets 3-4 times during the year has not yet had the opportunity to approve this latest version.*

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/volunteering-while-getting-benefits-leaflet>