



Prince's Trust

Department for Work and Pensions:
In work, better off: next steps to full employment

Written response from The Prince's Trust
(including the views of young people)

October 2007

The Prince's Trust: A brief introduction

The Prince's Trust is a charity that believes in young people who often don't believe in themselves. We seek out those young people that need our help the most and work with young people who struggle at school, are in or leaving care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law. We work with young people aged 14-30 to help them get back into work, education and training. The charity has helped over 550,000 young people since 1976 and continues to support 100 more every day.

In 2006/7 The Prince's Trust supported 40,854 disadvantaged young people; 75% of them moved into employment, education or training. Young people on our programmes receive a variety of benefits including Job Seekers Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefits and Severe Disablement Allowance. Many are also receiving Housing Benefits or a Hardship Allowance. The Trust works with these young people to improve their skills and employability so that they can move off benefits and into work.

The Trust delivers a number of core programmes across the UK. For example;

The Team Programme is a 12 week personal development programme for 16-25 year olds, the majority unemployed, to develop their confidence, motivation and skills through teamwork in the community. In 2006/7 7,909 took part in the programme in over 300 locations across the UK. 62% of unemployed participants find work or enter full time education or training after completing the programme. Through the Team programme The Trust contributes more than £4.75m to local communities through community projects.

Get Into Programmes: these are short courses that develop young people's skills in a specific sector and support them into jobs. Each Get into course is designed according to the sector (e.g. retail, construction, youth work) and is developed with employers. It aims to give young people, who are work-ready but do not have vocational skills, a mixture of practical training and hands on experience, that will enable them to get a job. It also provides them with the opportunity to meet potential employers and support for a six month period as they look for work. 58% move into jobs within 3 months of starting a Get into programme.

Community Cash Awards: these are cash awards for young people aged 14 -25 to set up youth led community projects, with ongoing support. 80% of young people find work or enter full time education or training, with 89% developing their skills. Projects include raising awareness of issues, such as gun or knife crime, or projects that improve community facilities such as setting up allotments or youth cafes. 28% of awards go to BME communities who might not otherwise engage in facilitated programmes.

The Trust's success is dependent on the strength of its partnerships and we work with a range of statutory, private and voluntary organisations to provide better outcomes for young people.

The Prince's Trust has had a longstanding relationship with Job centres, particularly in relation to our Team programme (formerly called the Volunteers Programme). When New Deal was run contractually, The Prince's Trust delivered New Deal contracts in certain regions of the UK.

The Prince's Trust and Jobcentre Plus have recently signed a new agreement which enables disadvantaged young people to access The Trust's employment related training programmes whilst still being able to claim benefits.

Executive Summary:

- The Prince's Trust welcomes the ambitious target of Government to raise the employment rate to 80 per cent and hopes that it can make a valid contribution towards reaching that goal. We also actively work with employers to support young people off our programmes and into jobs and apprenticeships.
- We support the logic behind the Flexible New Deal Approach, however, we feel that forcing people to take jobs they don't feel they have a long-term future in could result in further problems and have the reverse impact intended. We should be helping young people to develop skills and a viable career, rather than going from one 'dead-end job' to another. We hope that these proposed reforms will encourage this approach.
- The Jobs Pledge mirrors what The Prince's Trust is already doing with employers through its Get Into Programme which involves working with employers in specific sectors to identify job opportunities for young people. We would be keen to work with the Government's Jobs Pledge to offer, short, work-focused skills training to improve the employability of disadvantaged young people.
- The Trust is well positioned to deliver pre-employment and pre-Apprenticeship training. This could link into the Flexible New Deal – Stage 3.
- Childcare is one of the key issues that our young people face and is often a major barrier to employment. The Trust welcomes schemes, such as Sure Start, which enable more lone parents to find affordable childcare to help them back into work.
- The Prince's Trust is in a position to work with the Adult Careers Service to be a provider of training for the lowest skilled people. We would be keen to explore this idea with Government.
- All Trust programmes are designed to improve the skills of disadvantaged young people so that they are better equipped to move into education, training and employment. We feel that funding for skills training should reflect the benefits of softer skills such as communication, team work, reliability and hard work.
- The views of young people who have been supported by The Prince's Trust are included in this response and add weight to many of the comments made. Many of the comments focused on the need for a tailored approach to support. For example, one young person said: *"If I get put in a job I don't wanna do.. I won't put much effort into it and it'll be a waste of my time, the employer's time and Jobcentre's time....so I think they should help you out a bit more like selecting jobs not just chucking jobs at you to get you out the Jobcentre..."*

The Prince's Trust response to the consultation:

Introduction:

The Prince's Trust welcomes the ambitious target of Government to raise the employment rate to 80 per cent and hopes that it can make a valid contribution towards reaching that goal.

The Trust seeks to support the Government in helping more young people off benefits and into work so that they can contribute to the UK economy and society as a whole. The Trust is in a position to do this through a number of its programmes which offer pre-apprenticeship training or employment-related training. The Trust also actively works with employers to support young people off our programmes and into jobs and apprenticeships. All Trust programmes also offer young people the opportunity to develop their skills which help them become job-ready.

This consultation response not only includes The Prince's Trust's official position but also reflects the views of some of the young people that we support. During October 2007 we consulted with two small focus groups of young people on 'In Work, Better Off' – one in West London and one in South East London. They were aged between 17 and 22. All were unemployed and included refugees, lone parents, parents and ex-offenders.

Chapter 2: A chance to work for all:

Ethnic minorities:

One of The Trust's target groups is Minority ethnic communities –particularly the Bangladeshi, Pakistani and African Caribbean communities, recognising the social exclusion and poverty they often face. The Trust's experience is that to engage these groups we need to work more proactively to reach them. We are already running a number of specific initiatives directly targeted at improving the employment opportunities of these groups. For example:

Widening Participation Project: This project, commencing autumn 2007, will target young people from Bangladeshi and Pakistani communities who are socially and economically disadvantaged. The project employs a national Inclusion Manager and regional Development Officers to consult with community organisations and involve young people in The Trust's ongoing programmes, giving them better chances in life through training and development; stronger social networks; and improved partnership working. As part of the project we will encourage young people to work for us, involve young people in reviewing, designing and developing our services, giving young people a voice to influence others and build staff capacity to effectively involve young people in delivering better support to differing communities.

Refugee Enterprise Partnership: The Prince's Trust was a key partner in this project, led by the Refugee Council, run during 2006 for refugees wanting to set up their own businesses. The aim of the project was to improve the uptake and

sustainability of refugee enterprise and improve the quality of advice and support given to them. The Prince's Trust developed a multi-lingual guide for refugees to introduce them to business culture in the UK as an addition to our business start up guides.

Get Into Business: The Trust ran this Get Into course in London in 2007 specifically for refugees. Such was its success that we will be running another Get Into Business just for refugees in London in early 2008.

Shared Road: Working in partnership with Strathclyde Police and Glasgow City Council youth services, this ongoing project has been responsible for groundbreaking work that has brought together young refugees and asylum seekers with young indigenous residents in the Red Road area of Glasgow. In addressing the most difficult task of integrating these communities in an area initially hostile to the dispersal of refugees, The Trust has made excellent use of a youth forum to inform and educate progression of the project. Not only has the project assisted young refugees and asylum seekers by helping them to make friends and integrate into their new communities but they are also bringing a wide variety of skills and confidence to the indigenous people in the area. As a result of the project's work and its effective use of partnerships, Strathclyde Police have stated that the project "has assisted in a notable reduction in youth crime and anti-social behaviour in the area" and the model is being considered as one that can be applied in other areas of social policy.

The Trust would be more than happy to work with Government in this area to develop more programmes specifically targeted at improving the employment rates of ethnic minority groups.

Cities:

The Prince's Trust ran 10 Get Into Programmes in London alone last year, with 20 programmes in plan for 2007/8. For example Get Into Construction, Get Into Cooking, Get Into Hospitality, Get Into Retail, Get Into Parks & Green Spaces.

We also ran Get Into Programmes in Manchester (Get into Sport), Birmingham (Construction) and Liverpool (Retail). Over 1,000 young people across the UK will take part in the Get Into programme in 2007/8. 58% of young people who take part in Get Into go onto find a job after three months.

16-17 year olds:

The Prince's Trust would support a move away from the rigid distinctions between age groups both on the New Deal programme and generically across Government youth policy. The Trust works with young people aged 14-30 so creating a 14-19 agenda can be problematic— particularly where we want to run programmes for a mix of young people aged 16-25. The Prince's Trust feels that putting a focus on the 16-17 year old age range could negatively affect those over 18 who have been out of work longer and may need more support and be harder to help.

Low skills:

All Prince's Trust programmes are designed to improve the skills of disadvantaged young people so that they are better equipped to move into education, training and employment. We ensure that young people learn the skills needed for the work place, for example communication, team work, reliability and hard work. We feel that funding for skills training should reflect the benefits of such softer skills, distance travelled by the individual in improving their skills and how these have helped them move towards work.

Chapter 3: Local Employment Partnerships:

Jobs Pledge:

The Prince's Trust supports the Jobs Pledge which will find jobs for 250,000 job-ready people currently on benefits. We also welcome the stronger link between skills and employability by linking the Jobs Pledge to the Skills Pledge.

The Jobs Pledge mirrors what The Prince's Trust is already doing with employers through its Get Into Programme. We work closely with employers in specific sectors (for example Carrilion on our Get Into Construction programme) to identify job opportunities for young people completing the programme. Our experience is that we need to work hard to make sure such partnerships work in practice. For example retailers are often reluctant to employ people with a history of theft. However, having worked with retailers over a period of time we have been able to influence a change in their recruitment practices for the benefit of more young people seeking work.

The Trust, through its Team programme, also works closely with local and national employers who offer 2 week work placements for young people on the programme. For example, The Trust is part of the Marks & Start initiative which offers work placements to unemployed young people on the programme which regularly results in employment at the end of the 12 week course.

The Prince's Trust would be keen to work with Government to offer, as part of the Jobs Pledge, short, work-focused skills training to improve the employability of disadvantaged young people. The Trust is already working with the Learning and Skills Council to deliver our Team programme so we are well positioned to deliver pre-employment training. We are also well positioned to deliver pre-Apprenticeship programmes, such as Get Into.

Of The Prince's Trust Team programme, one young person commented:

"Having the chance to be on a Prince's Trust course is really helpful because I know now I can go out and be something...The Prince's Trust course has given me a different view on the world now and has really helped me...."

The Trust has recently submitted bids to the Learning and Skills Council 'Skills for Jobs' in a number of English regions. We hope to secure funding to help sustain and expand our Get Into Programme and ensure our provision is linked in with other Jobcentre Plus and LSC funded provision, such as Apprenticeships

and Train to Gain. The Trust would also be keen to work with companies using Train to Gain to ensure people have progression opportunities when they start a post.

Many of the young people we talked to also wanted more work experience, they commented:

“If you haven’t got experience you can’t get a job, but how do they expect you to get experience if you can’t get a job.”

“They could basically provide on the job training and not always ask for experience as most employers these days ask for 2 years experience and stuff like that. Most young people that want to get into a job feel they can’t apply for it as they don’t have the experience...if they provide training like on the job I think people would feel they could apply for it and they would have more chance to getting to interview....people like me feel they can’t apply for that job and that’s what gets me down....and like it does affect my confidence as well...if you haven’t had a job for a long time you lose your confidence and you don’t know what steps to take to get a job.....”

By working with Government and the Jobs Pledge partners, we could also develop a partnership where young people who complete the Team Programme or Get Into Programme are given priority for work placements or permanent work on finishing the course. This would reward those that have demonstrated their commitment by completing the courses.

The Jobs Pledge is currently targeted at those most disadvantaged in the labour market including lone parents, disabled people and those with long-term health conditions, and the lowest qualified. We would also recommend this included those in or leaving care and ex-offenders.

By clearly defining target groups, the evaluation of the Jobs Pledge and the future shaping of it will be much easier. Clear guidelines will also need to be developed on the enforcement of the Jobs Pledge and the obligations of the organisations involved. The Prince’s Trust would be more than happy to advise on the development of the Jobs Pledge and is already working with Jobcentre Plus on Local Employment Partnerships and how The Trust can link into these and share its expertise.

The consultation states that the Government will guarantee to employers that job applicants will have the right attitude to work as well as the right aptitude. We feel this is a very bold claim and guaranteeing a person’s attitude can be a risky approach. However, The Prince’s Trust specifically works with young people on attitude towards work through many of its personal development programmes.

The guiding principles of Local Employment Partnerships (consultation p9):

Balance of rights and responsibilities

The Trust regularly helps young people on its programmes to come off benefits and get into work. We offer a range of employment related training and pre-apprenticeship programmes which offer young people the skills and confidence they need to find work. In relation to employers participating in Local Employment Partnerships, we feel the Government needs to be very clear about what is expected of the employers, for example guaranteeing certain jobs.

Personalised and responsive approach

A personalised approach is exactly what The Trust offers to both young people and employers who are involved in our Get Into programme. Our young people also tell us that a personalised approach works best. Through our experience of working with employers on the Get Into programme we know that a tailored and flexible approach works best. Being sector specific has also worked well for us. Whilst this can be resource intensive, the ultimate results speak for themselves with 58% of young people who complete Get Into getting a job within 3 months of finishing the programme. The Trust would also strongly support a tailored system of support for the individual across a number of areas including health and childcare.

When discussing a personalised approach, one young person suggested:

“...maybe monthly hold like meetings and events that young people are welcome to go to that tells them about jobs that are available at the moment in their area....or offer tests that show their strengths and weaknesses so they know which direction to go...”

Retention and progression, not just job entry:

Helping people to stay in jobs and have the opportunity to progress is crucial. On a number of Trust programmes, including Get Into, The Trust does six months follow up with participants to help them find work, supporting across a range of issues from finding a job to help with housing to maintaining the relationship between the young person and the employer. Our Business Programme is also a good illustration of long-term progression support where we provide each new business start with a mentor for the crucial first 3 years of the business. The Trust strongly feels that by having funding for Progression Workers or Employment Development Co-ordinators it would make a considerable difference to helping disadvantaged young people find employment.

Working in partnership

The Prince's Trust strongly supports a partnership approach across sectors. More details on our partnership work can be found at Chapter 5.

Devolution and local empowerment

The Prince's Trust is a UK wide organisation with regional offices in all the Government regions. Each office has good local relationships with a range of partners from Connexions to Youth Offending Teams.

Chapter 4: Next steps towards full employment:

New Deal:

The Prince's Trust has, in the past, been contracted to deliver New Deal. Our experience is that by limiting its provision to a prime/sole contractor, it can be too rigid and bureaucratic. This can result in young people not being able to access certain programmes, even though they are clearly designed to get young people back into work.

Lone Parents:

One of The Prince's Trust's target groups includes lone parents. They represented 4% of all young people that we supported in 2006/7. Lone parents are particularly interested in our Business start-up programme as self-employment is often deemed to be a more flexible approach combined with childcare. 10% of all business starts in 2006/7 were lone parents.

Our Development Awards (cash awards of up to £500) are also often used by lone parents to pay for childcare, enabling them to join our programmes.

Childcare is one of the key issues that our young people face and often a major barrier to employment. The Trust welcomes schemes, such as Sure Start, which enable more lone parents to find affordable childcare to help them back into work. However, we do feel that continued improvements could be made to Sure Start to ensure that it is being effectively targeted at those who would most benefit.

When we asked young women with young children whether there were any specific barriers for young women where they lived to access employment, the issues they cited were: age, Lack of training opportunities; Travel costs; being pregnant; having a baby; childcare costs; not having experience; grades; CV and 'being unemployed in the first place'.

They commented:

"The child care thing... it's a lot of money so the job that I get if there is not enough income it's not beneficial to me so I won't do it"

"As a young parent I've got a dependent and the benefit is not doing it for me...but just throwing me into work is not going to help me...I prefer to be on a programme where I can develop the skills I need and the confidence so that when I do walk into the work placement I will last... I think the [Prince's Trust] training programmes help...cos a training programme is hands on, you know you are getting experience you needrather than getting thrown into something where you don't have no interests because you won't do well at it-you won't perform to your best ability....."

"9 out of 10 per cent of the [lone parents I know] do not work no more... they came off benefits for at least 5 years and more went into full time work and then

turned out that they have gone back to benefit anyway and they are left with this big [child care] debt to pay....so if I could get a job that would cover 100% of my child care fees you know with a bonus that if I was to get help there has to be enough for me to live on, not say enough to own a car or buy a house, but just enough to live comfortably so I can see the benefits of working compared to not working”

When asked about getting lone parents back into work one lone parent commented:

“You see people like mothers that are on benefits not working especially when their children reach a certain age like 12. I think they are so used to doing that home role they have no intention of doing anything else...but if they were offered some training where it would stimulate them they would see that they would be better parents, better role models. When their child reaches a certain age I think there should be a certain programme for them to encourage them into working ...there is no real reason why they don't work they are just comfortable not working.....”

When we asked young mothers whether they wanted to go back to work the response was mixed. One commented:

“I want to be the one that raises my baby, I don't wanna be at work and find out that I've just missed my baby's first steps or first words.”

When asked what more could be done to support young mothers into work issues cited were: child care; more information on support available (e.g. New Deal) and support with transport, *‘After paying rent, buying food, buying baby clothes and nappies, I ain't got enough for travel.’*

The Flexible New Deal Approach:

Job Seekers:

We support the logic behind the Flexible New Deal Approach, however, we do have one major concern. This is about Stage 2 and defining a person's ability to do a job by external factors beyond preference. Forcing people to take jobs they don't feel they have a long-term future in could result in further problems, particularly mental health problems, which could result in a greater dependence on the very benefits the Government is trying to get people off, namely incapacity benefit. It could also result in a cycle of unemployment then employment which could result in greater dependence on the benefits system and the state as a whole. It would also affect their mental health by negatively impacting on confidence and motivation.

Young people said:

“I am training to be a youth worker so I don't want to work stacking shelves and all that cos I've been doing labouring for years and like going nowhere... and like I want to have a career... I don't want to have a dead end job and the Jobcentre trying to get you to do stupid jobs when you want to get a career is just stupid.”

“They [the Government] just want you to do any job they don’t care what your needs are or what you want to do they just want to chuck you into any job you know what I mean like, stacking shelves, cleaning or anything they just want you to be off the list...another name off the list...they don’t really care. I think they should especially help young people out more like with career options and all that...as they are still young to choose what they wanna do. If they don’t they will be back on the social again.”

“If I get put in a job I don’t wanna do.. I won’t put much effort into it and it’ll be a waste of my time, the employer’s time and Jobcentre’s time....so I think they should help you out a bit more like selecting jobs not just chucking jobs at you to get you out the Jobcentre...”

Another young person felt that being forced into interviews would be a good thing:

“I don’t get interviews in the first place so it might make it easier to get that first interview”

Another felt it important to be motivated not just by money:

“They need to have something other than money to work for... to sell drugs for a day the money they are getting is like a month’s wage...so they need something more stimulating more beneficial for them...otherwise they are never going to work.”

The proposals reference mandatory activities as part of New Deal which, if not complied with, would result in an appropriate sanction. The Prince’s Trust would like to know what is proposed for such sanctions.

As part of the staged New Deal proposals there are certain points at which The Prince’s Trust could offer support to participants. For example at Stage 3, both our Team and Get Into programmes offer pre-employment training which prepares people to become job-ready. The Trust could act as an official return to work provider offering an intensive, outcome-focused service. The Get Into programme would fit perfectly with this and we would be keen to discuss this further with Government.

We also support the concept of bringing forward Stage 3 for certain individuals for whom job search alone is clearly not producing results. This fast-tracking should be for those that lack the skills to get them into a job and those that have a history of not being able to hold down long-term employment.

We feel that more consideration should be given to Stage 4 and the increased responsibilities on the individual. We appreciate the reason behind this, however, there will be many individuals for whom increased pressure and responsibility could result in exacerbating existing mental health problems and have the opposite desired effect - moving them away from the labour market. The Flexible New Deal – Stage 4 really needs to remain flexible and be tailored

according to the needs of individuals. Enforcing full time activity does not seem to reflect a flexible approach.

Whilst we recognise the need to move people off benefits we also have concerns about completely taking benefits away for the most disadvantaged groups who have failed to find work through the New Deal scheme. For example the most vulnerable groups of young people who may have fallen through the net, such as young people leaving care who are at an extremely vulnerable stage in their lives. This also doesn't take into account people leading chaotic lives and with multiple problems such as those experiencing drug misuse, homelessness and abuse to name a few. By taking their benefits away we will only be exacerbating the problem. We believe that more realistic aspirations need to be set for those most vulnerable and disadvantaged with complex and multiple needs.

One person suggested:

"Some people have different problems.... some might lack confidence and stuff like that ...rather than shove us in a programme where we don't have a choice...maybe find out what everyone's individual issues are and work at it from there....."

Despite this, some of the young people agreed with the proposals that benefits should be stopped or reduced for the long-term unemployed:

"I think if people sign off for too long and they haven't got anything wrong with them then they should stop their benefits then that might encourage them more to get a job...especially cos people do sponge off the Government too much..."

On the issue of forcing people into work or training, young people's comments were mixed. We feel this reflects that fact that everyone's needs are very different. We would also suggest it supports a more tailored approach to helping people:

"It is good that the Government is enforcing people to go to work and go training because... yes in the past I made a mistake I didn't do well but then having this chance to do this course [Prince's Trust Team programme] or having interview training would help quite a lot cos most people give up... to have the chance to go back to redo what you did wrong is a great idea...."

"I don't think they should force them into work or anything like that I think they should be guided to a careers person who can help them and work with them on that... if you feel more confident...if you could talk to someone about your weaknesses and stuff then it would encourage you and you would feel there was someone there for you and that you could talk to them about what stuff you want to do and you not just doing it because the Government is going to stop your benefits or something like that...if they had a place where we could go we would stay in a job for a longer time rather than doing a job for the sake of it...."

"I'd rather have the Government on my case... you never get anything unless you are pushed...actually it's better because you can't cheat through life."

"I was forced into looking for a job when I was 27 weeks pregnant, but because I was 27 weeks pregnant I couldn't get a job!"

"It is very easy to be lazy and fussy...the long and short of it is if you need to work you go out there and you work...if you want a job you enjoy you make the effort to do it... and if after 3 months you still haven't found nothing then yes I think you should be forced into doing something and it will give you the incentive to get that job and get the job you really want ...I think it's a good idea..."

The lowest skilled

The Prince's Trust is in a position to work with the Adult Careers Service to be a provider of training for the lowest skilled people. All Prince's Trust programmes aim to improve disadvantaged young peoples' skills, some more vocational than others – such as the Get Into Programme which relates to skills in specific industries. We have also run a specific Get Into focused on Customer Service and Retail. Other programmes, such as the Team programme, can offer support with basic skills and softer skills such as confidence, team work and motivation. We would be keen to explore with Government how The Prince's Trust might be able to help in this regard.

Of the Team programme, one young person commented:

"Personally before this programme [Prince's Trust Team programme] I didn't know what to do but now I know I have a lot to offer...and make people recognise their worth so they know where they are going...."

Many of the young people we talked to wanted more careers advice from the Government. When asked if the Government is encouraging them to work they said:

"Not really I think they could like help us more by guiding us in the right direction. If you want to look for careers advice.... I don't really I have anywhere to go.... Most of the time I find myself getting to a job and am doing it for the sake of it I don't really enjoy it but am doing it cos I need money and stuff...."

"I just feel they should have careers people in the Jobcentre yeah so that people can talk to them instead of showing them evidence they have been looking for a job its not really motivating ...they need to have these careers people who understand where they are coming from..."

Ethnic Minorities

One young refugee said:

"I as a black person know it is really hard to go through the education system because we are seen as downgraded cos of our colour ...if you like walk into a big employment industry they are going to downgrade you cos of your colour"

cos they think like he's going to steal things from us . I think the media could do something more to help the Black community than show us doing the bad thing. Most of us are friendly, we like caring about other people we don't want to steal or take things."

Chapter 5: Delivery through partnership

The Trust welcomes the proposal for greater use of expertise across the private, public and third sectors.

The Prince's Trust has a strong track record in working in partnerships across different sectors, resulting in successful outcomes for young people. For example, The Trust works with further education colleges to deliver the Team programme in numerous locations across the UK. We strongly feel that the third sector can really add value to the overall aim of increasing employment to 80 per cent.

The Trust works in partnership with employers across all sectors in a range of different ways, particularly through our Get Into and Team programmes, enabling disadvantaged young people to find jobs on completing our programmes.

"Our work with The Prince's Trust is a genuine partnership. By combining PA time with good quality programmes we have achieved a significant reduction in NEETs. I have found programme staff to be very professional, well trained and client centred. The Get Off the Bench programme has quite literally changed young people's lives."

Sue Baker, Operations Manager, Connexions Bury

The Prince's Trust has also developed a document which illustrates how we can work with local authorities and contribute to key outcomes set out in Local Area Agreements, **this document is attached.**

The Trust is tapping into both City Strategies and Deprived Area Funding across the UK. For example, in the North East we are bidding, as part of the City Strategy, to Northern Way to deliver our Live Programme in the Easington District - one of the most deprived communities in the UK.

In the West Midlands, the Deprived Area Funding is shaping The Trust's thinking on progression for young people and we are hoping to submit a bid for this.

Commissioning:

One of the biggest challenges for third sector organisations is finding the capacity to engage with local authorities and public bodies. In a survey conducted by The Prince's Trust and the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services (NCVYS) with local authorities in January 2006 71% of those local

authorities responding said that capacity was a key barrier to commissioning services to the third sector.

Anything which facilitates, and resources, communication between third sector organisations and commissioners/policy makers will be extremely helpful to the sector. It is particularly important that the sector has meaningful access and a voice on Local Strategic Partnerships. Building relationships at this local level is time consuming and competes with staff time on core delivery. Our experience is that the co-ordination of service delivery across more than one local authority area is essential in order to maintain cost effectiveness. Local commissioning threatens to disrupt this economy of scale.

We would recommend the introduction of a mechanism for third sector bodies to negotiate at a regional or sub-regional (County) level. This might take the form of a regional event to showcase different organisations service “offers” to a group of commissioners or public funders.

An additional challenge for national third sector organisations occurs because they are sometimes disregarded in favour of small local organisations by commissioners. There is a responsibility on the larger charities to avoid “crowding out” smaller ones but the criteria for engagement should be about quality not size. National organisations often have stability and robust quality systems in place.

It is important that the diversity of the third sector is recognised and there are opportunities for small, medium and large voluntary organisations and social enterprises to have a voice at national, regional and local level.