



**Prince's Trust**

Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills and  
the Department for Children, Schools and Families:

World-class apprenticeships: Unlocking talent,  
Building Skills for All

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

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### **The Prince's Trust: A brief introduction**

The Prince's Trust is a charity, which believes in young people who often don't believe in themselves. We seek out those young people that need our help the most and we 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 back 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 of whom are unemployed, to help develop their confidence, motivation and skills through teamwork in the community. In 2006/7, 7,909 young people 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 Team 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 a specific sector (e.g. retail, construction, youth work) and is developed in conjunction with employers. In essence it is a 'pre-apprenticeship course'. The course aims to provide young people, who are work-ready but do not have vocational skills or certain 'life-skills' with a mixture of practical training and hands on experience, that will enable them to get a job. It also provides young people with the opportunity to meet potential employers and provides financial support for a six-month period as they search for work.

The Prince's Trust 'Get Into' Programme is delivered in partnership with a number of major employers from across a range of skill sectors, e.g. construction, retailing and hospitality. The aim is to focus on the development of skills essential for employment into a specific sector, which will lead to the opportunity of taking up an apprenticeship or a job. Thirty-six per cent of young people who took part in the Get Into Programme in 2006-7 were 16-17 year olds – the majority had disengaged with school, were regular truants and were

leaving school with few or no qualifications. Of these, over **50%** were **in work** 3 months after completing the programme.

The Prince's Trust 'Get Into' pre-apprenticeship programmes will be discussed in greater detail further on in this document.

**The Prince's Trust xl clubs:** these are team-based programmes of personal development for students in the last two years of compulsory schooling. They are deliberately informal, with around 1000 xl clubs across the UK which help young people who are facing difficulties at school, including those at risk of exclusion. xl clubs operate in schools on a 'closed' 2 year programme with between 12 and 15 members. They meet for at least 3 hours a week and guided by an xl club Adviser, club members are encouraged to work together to achieve goals relating to their education, training and future lives.

**Community Cash Awards:** these are cash awards for young people aged between 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 after having been involved in a Community Cash Award Project. 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).

Questions arising from this consultation document:

- Have the barriers to the growth of the Apprenticeship programme been accurately and comprehensively identified?
- Will the proposals to strengthen the Apprenticeship programme- including revisions to the blueprint- be welcome among Apprentices, training providers and employers?
- Have we identified the right range of functions for the National Apprenticeship Service?
- What more can be done to encourage employers to offer Apprenticeship places? How can we encourage those who already do, to offer more places?

- Have we identified the right measures for effecting a culture change around Apprenticeships?
- Have we identified the right measures to address the Apprenticeship programme's diversity issues?

**The Prince's Trust aims to answer the above questions holistically in the comprehensive response below:**

#### **Introduction and Key Messages:**

- The Prince's Trust welcomes the ambitious target of Government to create a system of 'World-class apprenticeships: Unlocking talent and building skills for all' 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 and hope that through our lessons learned, we are able to share these lessons constructively with Government.
- The Prince's Trust recognises that all young people from every level of society, have talents and abilities and that certain young people have a greater need for specific support in enabling them to obtain work or to obtain and sustain an apprenticeship.

We support the logic behind 'Unlocking Britain's Talent', however we recognise that certain young people might not immediately benefit from an apprenticeship programme because they do not have the basic 'life skills' or educational skills necessary to equip them in proceeding with an apprenticeship course. We hope that the Government will encourage young people to develop necessary 'life- skills', by providing suitable resources to equip them in eventually taking up an apprenticeship. It is hoped that Government through the apprenticeship programme, will help young people to develop skills and a viable career, rather than going from one 'dead-end job' to another.

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 focus on the need for a tailored approach to support, for example, ensuring that young people have the necessary educational basic numeric and literacy skills before they leave school at 16, which will be important in any apprenticeship, which they might adopt.

#### **The Prince's Trust 'Get- Into' or pre-apprenticeship programme:**

- The Prince's Trust recognises that apprenticeships are a very effective means of learning career skills whilst earning money and that 'apprenticeships across all sectors' are often an effective way of 'learning whilst working' and earning money.

- On 23 August 2007, The Prince's Trust announced a five year apprenticeship initiative where The Trust agreed to offer tens of thousands of the lowest achieving youngsters in our society, the opportunity to be placed on work-based, pre-apprenticeship schemes, in the construction, social care, retail and hospitality sectors. These are referred to as the 'Get Into' programmes and this scheme has been piloted with a few key corporate players. Our research has shown that two thirds of young people who participated in the retail sector pre-apprenticeship 'Get Into' programme were still on the programme and in work three months after commencing the 'Get -Into' programme. Over 10 000 'Get-Into' places will be available over the next five years.
- The length of the pre-apprenticeship depends on the employer in the Get Into programme, but The Trust provides follow up support for six months after the commencement of the programme and ensures that young people are able to begin a new job or receive follow up training after completing a 'Get Into' programme. The experience of The Trust is that more 'on the job' training is required by young people to avoid a lifetime of living off benefits.
- The Prince's Trust would be happy to discuss the methodology and practical workings of our 'Get into' programmes with Government at a later date. The Prince's Trust is already in discussions with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills on this matter, but would be happy to share further information on our experience of working with young people, with the DCSF and DIUS.
- The Prince's Trust endorses the principles of apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship as a useful employment *social networking opportunity* for young people who might not have such social opportunities available within their home or social environments. The Prince's Trust 'Get into' programme also develops new social networking opportunities for young people, by introducing them to potential employers. It provides a valuable opportunity for employers to meet young people who could make a helpful contribution to their business, were they to participate in an apprenticeship programme.
- 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 believe that funding for skills training should also reflect the benefits of softer critical employability skills such as communication, teamwork, reliability and hard work.
- **Job Lot** : This was a research summary conducted by The Trust in 2005 to explore the links between a series of issues that relate to the employability of disadvantaged young people. The research indicated that 84% of young people did not chose the job that they were in. There was evidence that disadvantaged young people have considerable ambition to take a job that requires higher skills, offers the opportunity to develop those skills further and provides an opportunity for progression and promotion. The research

identified the most frequent barriers to finding work were lack of qualifications and lack of experience.

Cited below is the experience of a young person who completed one of The Trust's 'Get Into' vocational programmes:

### **Sam Todd, Get into sport**

Sam left school at 16 with very few GCSE's. He suffers with mild dyslexia and found it hard to concentrate in a classroom environment. Since leaving school Sam has had various labouring jobs but nothing that could lead to a career. He then got mixed up with drugs and alcohol and was asked to move out by his mum. He lived in several hostels in Southampton before getting help to sort his life out. He has been clean for just over a year and is now living back at home.

Sam was unemployed for around eight months and became involved on The Prince's Trust 12 week programme. This helped to spark his interest in working outdoors and he completed a work placement at a YMCA activity centre assisting with canoeing, kayaking and raft building.

During the 'Get into' Maritime course Sam, now 21, gained qualifications in Power boating and Dinghy sailing, as well as getting career information and help with employability skills. Since the course finished in May 2007, Sam has been working with a progression worker from The Prince's Trust and has had access to bursary funding through The Peter Harrison Foundation. He is now due to start a 10-week Professional Instructor course at UKSA in September to gain qualifications in Dinghy sailing, kayaking and windsurfing. Sam has also recently participated in the Tall Ships race in the Baltic with the Discovery sailing project.

Below is the example of another young person who participated in a Prince's Trust 'Get into' construction course:

"When I'd done my stint [in prison] a mate told me about The Prince's Trust Get into Construction course, so I applied and got a place. "I learnt loads – stuff like what you do at job interviews, how to approach people and basic construction skills. It gave me something to do and something to wake up for. I felt like I was needed somewhere and that people were bothered about me. That helped me get away from my past. It changed me a lot, and since I did the course I've not been in trouble and I look at things much more positively.

"I've got an apprenticeship in painting and decorating at the Carillion Training Centre in Hull now too. When that's finished I hope to get a job and stay out of trouble. "My life's much better now, and best of all, I get to spend more time with my nephew and be a role model for him. Since coming out of prison I've taken him to the rugby like he wanted and I even got him a season ticket. For me that's just brilliant. "

### **The Importance of 'Taster Sessions'**

The Prince's Trust welcomes Government's announcement of the new online 'matching service' and the provision of more work experience for schoolchildren in the form of taster sessions. The Trust would suggest that Government encourages the investigation and exploration by schoolchildren of potential apprenticeship programmes that might be available to them, long before they reach the age of 16.

For example one young person whom we interviewed said the following about taster days: '... I feel that you need to have a really good idea of what career path you wish to follow, before becoming involved in apprenticeship schemes'.

The Prince's Trust would strongly recommend that Government implements a series of 'Taster day programmes' for young people from an early age, which would enable them to experience a 'taster' of the proposed apprenticeship in which they are interested and to give them an idea of career options available to them once they leave school. In our experience, the age of 16 is a very young age to determine one's future career path, therefore the opportunity to experience 'tasters' of a variety of available apprenticeships could be very helpful and could assist young people in making a future career success, as opposed to a career error.

Taster selection days might also provide the employer with the opportunity to select young people that it believes might be suitable for a potential apprenticeship.

### **Women and Minority Ethnic Groups**

The Prince's Trust would also suggest that in certain gender dominated professions such as plumbing and engineering, exclusive taster days are made available which might encourage minority groups to take up an apprenticeship which traditionally was associated with the male gender.

### **Numeric and Literacy Skills**

- With regard to providing vulnerable young people with basic numeric and literacy skills The Prince's Trust would suggest that young people should be able to acquire these skills during the course of their apprenticeship and that these skills should be embedded as part of the apprenticeship course and should not be an exclusive skill-set, learned outside of the apprenticeship environment.
- We consequently endorse the principle of practical learning at every level.

One young person leaving the care system said "I do have basic numeric/literacy skills however; there are a number of young people, including those leaving the care system that do not. I feel that more can almost certainly be done to target this issue from an early age"

## **The term 'apprentice'**

- In our experience the term 'apprentice' is either misunderstood by young people or not understood at all. The Trust would suggest that early on in a school career, schoolchildren are taught the difference between an academic and vocational apprenticeship, as well as other education options that might be available to them once they are ready to leave school. In a recent Prince's Trust focus group of young people, not one young person understood or knew what the term 'apprenticeship' meant, or what an apprenticeship might entail.
- The Prince's Trust encourages early 'career matching' for schoolchildren which will provide them with opportunities to gain experience or tasters in order to assist them in making more informed career choices.
- Furthermore, The Trust would also suggest that in the United Kingdom a 'cultural stigma' is often attached to the term 'apprentice' and that the Government will need to implement cultural changes to alter the potentially negative perception attached to the term 'apprentice'.

## **Financial support for SME's ( Small and Medium Sized Enterprises)**

**Financial support for young people.**

**Childcare support for young parents.**

- The Prince's Trust welcomes the Government's proposed ideas of providing 'Direct Incentive' payments to business in order to encourage the growth of apprenticeship places and would be keen to know more about how the Government proposes to implement these financial plans.
- The Prince's Trust would encourage the Government to provide more financial incentives particularly to SME's (small and medium sized enterprises), to allow them to effectively provide apprenticeships to more young people that they otherwise might not be able to employ, due to lack of financial and/or human resources.
- The Prince's Trust would suggest that Government provide certain basic financial support to those disadvantaged young people at the initial commencement of an apprenticeship programme and that this financial support should continue for six months into an apprenticeship programme. In our experience, young people commencing an apprenticeship programme might not be able to afford travel costs to and from work and might also not have the means, or money to pay for lunch. A financial bridge needs to be created for these young people before they receive a first pay cheque to ensure that they do not 'drop out' of an apprenticeship programme due to lack of resources.
- The Prince's Trust cannot emphasize enough the importance of providing relevant financial support to specific young people, especially those that live

independently, either in a hostel, or in private accommodation. In our experience, it is these young people that would be the most precluded from taking up an apprenticeship because of the severe financial constraints placed upon them.

- **Childcare support for young people**

Childcare is one of the key issues that young people face and is often a major barrier to employment. The Trust welcomes schemes, such as Sure Start, which enables lone parents to find affordable childcare to help them back into work. We are particularly concerned that in certain low paid vocational apprenticeships (such as hairdressing); the level of pay might preclude a young single parent, living alone with a child, from taking up a specific vocational apprenticeship. The Trust would suggest that the Government explore specific methods of assisting specific young people in this particular situation.

For example one young person said: “Each apprenticeship should be tailored to meet an individual’s needs, and not based on any company policy. Single parents may need to have a child minding facility – so there is an opportunity for the Government to offer advice/help to set this up and the same for those with elderly family members. Peer support would also be invaluable, so a buddy system could be put in place so there is someone that regularly meets the apprentice, which would help them get into the working culture’.

**Pastoral care and counselling for young people, during the course of an apprenticeship.**

The Prince’s Trust would suggest that it is not the responsibility of the employer, but the responsibility of Government, to provide funding for additional support to young people to help them with personal life skills and pastoral care during the course of an apprenticeship.

One young person who is currently completing a hairdressing apprenticeship has commented to one of our staff as follows:

‘He is very glad that he started the apprenticeship (approximately 6 months’ ago). He finds hairdressing creative, and chose this route after talking to hairdressers and becoming very interested in a career in this area. He stated that many people at aged 16 would be less sure about what they wanted to do and would find it hard to choose a particular apprenticeship. To support them in this choice, the young person thought that apprenticeship options should be better publicised [by Government] - young people know that you can go to college, or get a job but fewer people know about apprenticeships which combine these options. Advice and guidance should also be available on the different types of apprenticeships available to young people. Apprenticeships are a positive way to learn new practical skills and combine these acquired skills with learning at college, so there is a lot of variety for the apprentice. You are

also earning money while learning. You feel 'grown-up' and your confidence increases. Being an apprentice is a great way to learn the skills you need to succeed in a work environment - social skills, communication skills. Support from a mentor or counsellor is invaluable for young people, particularly at the start of the scheme when you don't know anyone in the workplace very well and don't know who you can talk to about any issues you may have - but things get easier as you gain more experience. The Taster Day was a great experience - it allowed the applicants to have a taste of the work and to get to know the people they would be working with. The pay is low - it is ok if you live at home and your family can help with travel but it is very hard to survive without that support. The pay should be increased a bit.'

**Young people have also told us that the following assistance would be helpful to them in making the right decisions about their future careers and in potentially taking up pre-apprenticeships:**

Leaflets / information packs about the apprenticeships that are easy to read  
Better facilities to work and study  
Internet access  
Talks with people who are already participating in an apprenticeship  
Information on the type of apprenticeships available and what needs to be done, to achieve an NVQ Level 1 apprenticeship qualification.  
Information on the end result of completing an apprenticeship  
What happens if you leave an apprenticeship early?  
Open days / taster days

**When asked what options would be good for people who did not want to complete academic qualifications such as A levels, suggestions included:**

Bricklaying, plastering, mechanics and practical stuff  
Work placements

### **Investment in young people pre-16**

The Prince's Trust recognises that in order for an apprentice to participate in NVQ Level 1 apprenticeship training, basic levels of literacy and certain basic numeric skills will be required. The Prince's Trust would be interested to know how Government intends to prepare young people with these basic educational skills before they embark on an apprenticeship at the age of 16.

There are doubts as to whether compulsory education will work post-16 where it was not previously effective. The experience of The Prince's Trust xl clubs shows that working in smaller groups is very successful in re-engaging young people back into education and into learning new skills. Our experiences suggest that if we kept more young people engaged in education pre-16, the task of post-16 education would not be as challenging.

The Prince's Trust would therefore advocate that more investment in pre-16 education is needed earlier on in the education system to help young people develop skills, confidence and motivation.

### **The options at 16**

The Government proposals suggesting compulsory participation up to 18 should include participation in school, college, work-based learning and accredited training provided by an employer.

However - in light of some of the comments from our research and the levels of disengagement before the age of 16 (The Trust pointed out back in 2002 that more than 30,000 young people leave school every year with no qualifications and this figure is still being used today) - we suggest making more options available to young people at this vital age.

Young people who have no qualifications at 16 usually have low confidence and low motivation, and sometimes more serious mental health issues. In order for these young people to be successful in further education, training or employment, they need assistance in re-building their confidence and developing skills - skills that other 16-year-olds perhaps take for granted.

There are schemes run by the voluntary sector that do assist young people to develop necessary life-skills, but these are not as yet reflected by draft legislation.

By forcing young people to try to achieve qualifications we could be setting them up to fail and in the process de-motivate and discourage them.

The Prince's Trust thanks the DIUS and DCSF for the opportunity to respond to this consultation document and would be happy to discuss further any of the ideas proposed in this consultation response.

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