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Charity Launches Employment Programme for Hard-to-Reach Young People in Plymouth

Employment charity Tomorrow's People has launched a series of 'Working It Out' courses to help hard-to-reach young people in Plymouth into work, education or training.

This innovative personal development programme, which operates from the Scott Business Park, in Beacon Park Road, is designed to help socially-excluded young people aged 16-24 overcome personal, social and economic barriers. The course is shaped to meet the needs of the young people by enabling them to develop skills, confidence and commitment through a 16-week volunteering programme. The programme is funded by Diageo and by v, the new youth volunteering charity.

While thousands of youngsters leave school and move on to college, university or jobs, there are many who leave with no skills or qualifications, no personal goals and little hope of employment. In January 2007 the Office of National Statistics recorded 1.23 million 16-24 year olds' not in education, employment or training (NEETs). Figures reveal that the number of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training in Plymouth equates to 8.2 per cent.*

The centrepiece of the 'Working It Out' programme is a community challenge which is popular with course members and enables them to put something back into their local community. Around twelve young people take part in specific challenges over the 16 week period, supported by a Tomorrow's People leader and co-ordinator.

The current challenge is a 'Scrapyard Challenge' working with Parkside Community College. The college is running a Go-Kart race with twelve teams racing on 30th May from 9.30am-3.30pm at the college. This event is designed to get parents involved in their children's activities. Members of the Working It Out team are collecting recyclable materials for the Go-Karts, building a Go-Kart for the event, helping to set up the obstacle course, choosing prizes for the day and will be motivating pupil's teams during the event.

The previous Working It Out group renovated a community project at Keyham Green Places. The tasks included reclaiming overgrown land, weeding, building small wildlife nests for hedgehogs and birds, painting and tidying to make the area accessible to the community.

*Parliamentary Written Answer published on the 21st February, located in Hansard at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200607/cmhansrd/cm070221/text/70221w0012.htm#07022231002909>



The individuals on the programme also receive structured, one-to-one practical support with personal and social development to help them find work in the long-term. Focus is also put into the aftercare element of the programme, to ensure that when young people move onto employment or training, success continues over the long term.

David Sayer, Local Operations Manager for Plymouth said: “At Tomorrow’s People we aim to open doors for young people that otherwise would remain closed, making them aware of their abilities and personal qualities, and providing them with the support and guidance to identify and achieve personal goals and succeed in their own terms.”

The programme in Plymouth, and now available in three other cities across the UK, is based on a pilot project, run by Tomorrow’s People in Tower Hamlets in 2003. 43% of the participants had a criminal conviction, only 21% had any educational qualification, and 43% reported that they had used drugs more than 11 times a month.

All but one group member completed the 16-week programme– an achievement in itself.

- At the end of the pilot 12 out of the 15 were either actively looking for work, in further education or training, or were actually in employment.
- Follow up four months later showed that 80% were continuing to undertake positive activity towards their chosen careers by either studying, training or job seeking with Tomorrow’s People’s help.

The project in Tower Hamlets, was evaluated by the independent think-tank nef (the new economics foundation), to measure the social return on investment.

- nef found that for every £1 invested in ‘Working It Out’, the return to society was trebled to £3.
- This social return on investment came from reduced welfare costs, increased tax take and reduced costs for the criminal justice system.*

Brian Gibson, Tomorrow’s People National Manager, Young People’s Services, said: “Through ‘Working It Out’ we have transformed the lives of many disadvantaged young people. Some of these people are likely to have very troubled histories, suffering from physical mistreatment, drug or alcohol abuse, low basic skills or mild learning disabilities.

“The ‘Working It Out’ programme is currently available in four major cities and there is a lot more we can achieve if we can secure further funding. The programme is able to secure pound for pound matched funding until 2009 for any private sector investment it attracts across the UK. We are actively seeking corporate partners looking to double the effect of their investment by funding ‘Working It Out’ in areas of deprivation across the UK.”



Anyone requiring further information about 'Working It Out' should visit www.tomorrows-people.co.uk. For details about the programme in Plymouth please email wio.plymouth@tomorrows-people.co.uk or telephone 01752 556104. For information about 'Working It Out' nationally, please contact Brian Gibson, Tomorrow's People National Manager, Young People's Services at bgibson@tomorrows-people.co.uk or call 0141 445 8995.

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Notes to Editors

Tomorrow's People is a national charity with a 23- year track record of success in helping people out of long-term unemployment, homelessness, welfare dependence including incapacity benefits, and into jobs and self-sufficiency. It has helped change the lives of more than 400, 000 people across the UK who had been resigned to long-term, even life-long, unemployment, since it was established in 1984.

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v is the new youth volunteering charity launched in May 2006 whose mission is to inspire a million more young volunteers in England aged 16-25. **v** has been formed as an independent charity using an innovative new model which allows funds raised from the private sector to be matched by the Government.

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