



## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Charity Launches Employment Programme for Hard-to-Reach Young People in London**

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

The programme operates from the Gateway Training Centre, Lancaster Street, Southwark and incorporates community challenges. It is designed to help socially-excluded young people aged 16-24 in Southwark and surrounding boroughs overcome personal, social and economic barriers.

The programme is funded by City Parochial Foundation and Southwark Council. Additional funding is provided by BUPA, Pinsent Masons and PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP which all belong to the Gateway Corporate Partnership, supporting the work of Tomorrow's People.

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). In addition, many of the participants on the Working It Out programme in Southwark are homeless, which means that the charity has to work closely with a number of other support organisations.

The centrepiece of the 'Working It Out' programme is a community challenge which enables participants to put back into their local community. Twelve young people take part in specific challenges over a 13 week period, supported by a Tomorrow's People leader and co-coordinator.

The current group is organising a five-a-side community football friendly for children living in a deprived London estate, in order to keep them active and safe at the start of the school holidays. The team has raised money for use of an Astroturf pitch by undertaking a sponsored walk and cycle ride of 5 and 10 miles respectively. They have also promoted the challenge through local schools, community centres and door-to-door on the Aylesbury estate. Football coaching sessions have been held for local children in a park adjacent to the estate, over a period of nine days and will culminate in a five-a-side football friendly at Burgess Park Astroturf (Neate Street, off Trafalgar Avenue, SE5) on Friday 3 August, between 10.30am-12pm)

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.

Carl Perkins, Head of Project for Working It Out Southwark 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 London and four other cities across the UK, is based on a pilot project, run by Tomorrow’s People in Tower Hamlets in 2003. On this programme, 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 (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 five cities around the UK, but there is a lot more we can achieve if we can secure further funding.”

For further information about ‘Working It Out’ visit [www.tomorrows-people.co.uk](http://www.tomorrows-people.co.uk). For details about the programme in London please email Carl Perkins at [cperkins@tomorrows-people.co.uk](mailto:cperkins@tomorrows-people.co.uk) or telephone 020 7928 7232  
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](mailto:bgibson@tomorrows-people.co.uk) or call 0141 445 8995.

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## **Notes to Editors**

### **Tomorrow's People**

Tomorrow's People is a national charity with a 22 - 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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