



MERSEYSIDE OBJECTIVE ONE

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PRESS RELEASE

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

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 Liverpool into work, education or training.

The programme, which operates in Croxteth and Norris Green, incorporates community challenges and is designed to help socially-excluded young people aged 16-24 overcome personal, social and economic barriers. The programme is funded by the Liverpool Neighbourhood Regeneration Programme (LNRP).

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 Liverpool equates to 12.4 per cent.

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 renovating a community garden in Fazakerley, which is in disrepair and cannot be used by the local community. The 'Working It Out' group is helping to make the garden accessible for disabled people and OAPs using joinery skills, paving, brick-laying, painting, leveling and removing debris.

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. Two people on the programme have already secured work in horticulture and hospitality. 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.

Chris Jones, Local Operations Manager for Merseyside 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 Liverpool, 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."

For further information about 'Working It Out' should visit www.tomorrows-people.co.uk. For details about the programme in Liverpool please email Eddy Mullin at emullin@tomorrows-people.co.uk or telephone 0151 2551400 or mobile 07823 335 047 (Working It Out Co-ordinators are Helen Larkey, Mark Little and Eddy Mullin).

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.

-Ends-

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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