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ON THE GOVERNMENT SCHEME:

A Sociological Study of Work Experience on Employers'  
Premises.

A Thesis submitted for the degree of Master of Arts  
University of Durham

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March 1983

Angela M. Cockerill



-5. DEC. 1983

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## Abstract

This research examines the Work Experience on Employers' Premises element, (WEEP) of the Youth Opportunities Programme, a government sponsored scheme, which arose as a response to increasing levels of youth unemployment in the late nineteen seventies. It looks at WEEP schemes as they were experienced by eighty, sixteen to nineteen year old, unemployed young people, living in Washington New Town, Tyne and Wear.

The young people are studied against their family backgrounds, their experience of schooling, entry into unemployment, involvement with government schemes and from their present view of the world outside of work. It looks at the interlocking nature of the agencies and significant others who are involved with the young people in this transitional phase of their lives - the family, careers service, school, Manpower Services Commission and sponsors. It provides an understanding of WEEP schemes as they are variously experienced, by all the parties involved with their operation. The sudden emergence of the MSC and its massive growth is seen within the context of the schemes; together with the changes and the need for change which this brought to the careers service. The relevance of schooling, notably the final year of schooling is questioned, in terms of preparing young people for the world outside of school.

The research took place during the early years of the

operation of the Youth Opportunities Programme, and gives the background to the extended government measures, the Youth Training Scheme, for coping with youth unemployment, due to be operational in September 1983.

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## Introduction

This research was carried out in Washington, in the North of England. Unlike many other studies concerned with unemployment, it does not concentrate on the old declining north eastern areas, but on a growing New Town. The research involved eighty unemployed young people, all between sixteen and nineteen years of age. They had a number of factors in common; they were all unemployed, all involved in that element of the governments' Youth Opportunities Scheme, known as Work Experience on Employers' Premises and all attending Life and Social Skills courses at the YMCA Training Resource Centre in Washington.

It looks at the interlocking nature of the agencies and significant others who were involved with the young people during this transitional phase - their families, schools, careers service, Manpower Services Commission, sponsors. It therefore provides a background to WEEP schemes, from all the parties concerned with its operation. The research is firmly based on the experience of many different individuals and my hope is that from such a base a better understanding of how several institutions work will be gained. As argued by Coffield, et al (1980), "...it is only when individual personalities are linked with structural factors and set in their historical and social context, that the complex interaction between all these factors in any one life come alive to the imagination."



During the period of this research, 1980/81 labour market conditions had worsened dramatically. As in any general situation of rising unemployment it is young people who are disproportionately affected. In the first quarter of 1980 there were 1.37 million unemployed (excluding school leavers), by the first quarter of 1981, this had risen to 2.27 million. At the same time, the numbers of jobs being notified to the Employment Services Division fell from 167,00 to 97,00. The situation for young people was worse than that of the general population. The proportion of the labour force under eighteen and registered unemployed rose from 11% in the first quarter of 1980, to 19.2% in the same period for 1981. In the labour force as a whole, the rise was from 6% to 9.8% for the same period. In terms of actual persons involved, this was a rise from 111,000 young people, to 200,000 in a year. Correspondingly, there was a sharp drop in the number of vacancies notified to the careers service,; in January 1981, the vacancy total of 4,000 was the lowest January figure ever recorded, this being 80% down on the previous years figure.

This sharp deterioration in available jobs occurred at the same time as the post war boom of school leavers were reaching their peak. In 1981 there were 918,000 young people aged 16 in the population, and of these, some 715,000 left school and were looking for work. It is the experience of eighty of these young people who are the concern of this research. Before looking in detail, at the experiences of these young people, it is essential to

explain how this research came into being, and the methods employed.

### Methodology

Corrigan, (1979) in his opening chapter of The Smash Street Kids, argued that the main reason for choice of a research topic..."..is to be found in the biography of the researcher. Similarly, the way in which the research is tackled usually reflects the particular stance of the sociologists past." This is a useful starting point. My interest and involvement with the young people who make up this research, and the different methods that I employed to obtain the materials, may be partly attributable to my own past experiences of schooling and similar working class background. I still have vivid memories of failing the eleven plus examination, and thus being sent to a secondary modern school, seven miles away from my home, whilst all my friends attended the grammar school. Changing school at sixteen brought a further trauma, on entry to a recently demoted grammar school, with the headmaster announcing to my mother that I was 'definitely not university material'. Yet suprisingly, I did enter university, on a sociology course, had difficulty with the new codes of behaviour, and carried out my work at a distance. I slipped in and out of my university life and obtained my degree in obscurity - a product of a working class background, taught the art of deference?

This research attempts to uncover some of the reasons for the young people's negative view of their lives. Answers

were found in the attitudes of parents, teachers, careers officers, employers who had told the young people that they were 'thick' and 'useless' and others who used indicators of birth, accent, area and parental interest to assess these young people, rather than talking to the young people themselves.

The methodology of the research, more by circumstance, than design, is eclectic. Again the manner in which the research came into being provides some answers to this. My employment position, prior to commencement of the research was as Head Tutor, employed by the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) working specifically with the sixteen to nineteen year old age group on personal development courses. This was in fact, my second post after leaving University. My first post, as Assistant Youth and Community Centre Warden in Washington provided me with the 'tools of the trade', before I moved to the YMCA Special Programmes Department, as a tutor. Through the youth and community groups with whom I worked at this time, my knowledge of the New Town of Washington and its people enlarged, and was reinforced when I took up residence there. My YMCA work as a tutor did not take me away from Washington, but I remained there working specifically with the young unemployed. It is this seven years experience and knowledge of the town and its people which I believe gives added credibility to this work. My work brought me into contact with young people involved in the governments' programme for the young unemployed, the Youth Opportunities Programme, and more specifically, with

that element of the programme known as Work Experience on Employers' Premises.

As a tutor for the YMCA, I became involved in the setting up and tutoring of Life and Social Skills courses, which were funded by the Manpower Services Commission. The courses themselves were evolving constantly; the courses known as 'Life and Social Skills' courses were to be written by those tutors providing them. The MSC gave some guidelines, through their booklet 'Instructional Guide to Social and Life Skills', but in practice it was the tutor who decided the content and the MSC link officer who gave his approval on his monitoring visit. From the outset of the YMCA's involvement in this work, I was tutoring three day-release courses a week in Washington New Town with groups of young people (the 16 - 19 year olds unemployed involved in the Youth Opportunities Work Experience on Employer's Premises Programme.) It was a new experience for us all - young people, tutors, employers (known as 'sponsors'), the MSC and the careers service.

As a new scheme, it had little history or past knowledge on which we could draw, all of those involved were embarking on a new experience together. It was my experience of working in the scheme, reinforced by the views of the young people also involved, which first prompted me to consider this research. It was their experiences which began this work and their lives, which are reflected in its content. The original idea, had been to examine the effects of the life and social skills



courses on the young people; this was soon seen to be too narrow and impossible to accomplish without a wider examination of the young people's lives.

My initial contact with the young people was as a life and social skills tutor; this in itself requires comment. The methods I employed as a life skills tutor are important for one to understand the nature of the relationship that I had with these eighty young people. The groups I worked with were of a maximum of twelve members (though on average there were ten to a group). The group operated in informal surroundings, comfortable carpeted training rooms which were, bright and furnished with easy chairs and coffee tables. The young people on the life and social skills courses entered a different learning environment from that of the schoolroom, they were on first name terms with all the staff, they were treated as adults and allowed to smoke. They were embarking on a group learning experience where they had some control over their learning.

The methodology employed was groupwork or developmental groupwork. Dr. Leslie Button, in his work "Developmental Groupwork with Adolescents" defines the meaning of the terms:-

"....Group work is about helping people in their growth and development, in their social skills, in their personal resource, and in the kind of relationships they establish with other people, and it is the purpose of group work to provide the individual with opportunities to relate to others in such a supportive atmosphere, to try new approaches and to experiment in new roles....."

.....The group worker will try to help the group and the individuals within it to work out their own destiny. The relationships between the members of the group and the social controls embedded within the group will be important instruments of development. The group worker will be involved in deliberate action, which implies that he must be well informed about the dynamics of groups, have recourse to a repertoire of techniques, and be skilled in using them."  
(p2)

There is a range of group work, from one extreme, therapeutic work with mental patients to that of group work for the benefit of participants in the field of their education, support or religion at the other. In between there is developmental group work, which emphasises the personal growth and adjustment of the individual; at times the group may move into the other two areas of extremes depending on the nature and stage of the group.

Using group work as my working methodology I was able to learn the thoughts, feelings and concerns of the participants, over the one hundred contact hours of the course. This was partly the result of the materials used on the course, which encouraged self-disclosure, but more so because of the methodology.

Being small in stature, I was often mistaken for a trainee during course visits and therefore experienced personally some of the negative treatment of those young people by adults. The transition I am concerned with is paralleled in previous studies, but with one considerable difference. This study is concerned with the transition from school to a government scheme. As the Youth Opportunities Scheme was in its infancy, the official reports concentrated on

the product end of the continuum, that is, how many people obtained full time employment at the end of a scheme. I was more concerned with the scheme, as it was experienced by its consumers. For this end I used the Life History Method to gain the bulk of my material. Becker, pointed out the usefulness of life history as a sociological method for areas of study that have grown stagnant.

"The Life History, by virtue again of the wealth of detail, can be important at those times when an area of study has grown stagnant, has pursued the investigation of a few variables with ever increasing precision, but has received dwindling increments of knowledge from the pursuit. When this occurs investigators might well proceed by getting personal documents which suggest new variables, new questions, new processes, using the rich though unsystematic data to provide a needed reorientation of the field....."

(Becker, H.S. (1925) "The Jack-Roller: A Delinquent Boy's Own Story" University of Chicago Press)

The Life History material was gained initially by giving the young people the following brief:- I am trying to find out what it feels like to be sixteen, seventeen or eighteen years of age, unemployed, living in Washington New Town and involved in the government scheme, work experience on employer's premises. I asked them to relate the story of their lives to date; concerning their families, their schooling and their entry into a non-work situation, together with information on their leisure time. This was left very open-ended. They were to identify whatever they thought to be important, with few prompts from myself. The material was taken down directly onto the typewriter. My initial reservations on this were soon dispensed with; this method appeared to make the

trainee more relaxed, my attention being on the typewriter and not on them. It appeared to facilitate an easier release of material. It was like a monologue - much of the trainees own personality and character ever-present in their language which I was able to take down exactly. These young people were not used to talking at such length about themselves - several sessions, took two or three hours to complete.

At this stage, I was not simply a researcher - I was someone who they knew and often considered a friend and confidante - they were not talking guardedly to someone who was anonymous. As a consequence, this relationship allowed me to explore difficult, and often painful areas with them during the course of their life history. They shared their family situations (often difficult areas, where violence and problems with drink were all too apparent) without restraint, though often not without great concern, pain and guilt.

The depth of their sharing of personal details, I feel was afforded to me, due to the relationship between us, an extremely privileged position for any researcher, and I consider a direct product of the methodology. An unintended consequence, of sharing some of their personal details may have been the alleviation of some pressure, by simply being able to talk through their problem, and be listened to, by someone who was not seeking to advise or direct them.

All of the information was gathered in the trainees' own time. One can hypothesise that they did this partly due to the relationship that existed between us, and also because the research gave them some importance. I was aware of this latter fact and the effect that it could have on the research findings. The young people often asked to be identified fully, not to have their names disguised in the text. They wanted to be identified (except when relating material, of which their parents may disapprove.) This was possibly one time in their lives when they could become important. Certain facts of their life histories could be checked out for authenticity within the main training group, where concerns over peer group pressure produced a high degree of 'on the level' material.

The Life history method, has been questioned as a valued sociological method. Yet, from the materials I was able to obtain, I could not agree that it is not of value. Although Faraday and Plummer (1979), do not go so far as to say it is 'the perfect type of sociological material' that is gained, they do argue that this method has three predominant strengths. It allows one to gain the subjective reality of the individual, to focus on process and ambiguity and to focus on the totality. I trust that some of these strengths will be borne out in this research. I do not believe that the life history methodology can be underestimated. I believe my interpretation of these young people's lives were valid, because I was not a detached observer. The latter, I believe would have misinterpreted the young people's

experience. Although I am doing a lot of interpreting, my justification for this is that I occupied a position similar to an anthropologist amidst a strange tribe! Although I was involved in considerable interpreting, it was controlled and based on extensive contact with the young people concerned. The research is not based on a manipulation of statistics, but on the life experiences of the young people themselves.

Alongside these hours spent with the trainees I also spent time with a number of others connected with the lives of these young people. I went into the schools which these young people had attended, spoke to the teachers who had worked with them in their final year. I gained information on their backgrounds attitudes and values and teachers comments on how they viewed their pupils. The time spent within the schools was considerably less than that spent with the young people, and the relationships were not developed to any notable extent; therefore the same level of disclosure was not possible. Nonetheless, the insight I gained into this area of the young people's lives, from a different standpoint, was in itself revealing.

Also within the schools I spoke with the careers teachers who had been responsible for directing these young people on leaving school and gained their impressions and experiences of this part of the school service. Following on from this a considerable period of time was spent with the careers service, whom I had contact with throughout the

period of research. It was the careers service who played a large part in arranging the scheme for these young people and who gave guidance on their potential work areas. I became knowledgeable of the workings of the local careers offices and officers and was also able to conduct life histories with many of their staff, together with exploring their views of the young people who were their clients.

A further group that I spent time with were the employers ('sponsors') who had provided the work experience placements for the young people; with them I looked more at the organisational integration of the young people and the concerns which the sponsors had about these young people, although it is obvious that, the employers attitudes and values often shone through during these meetings. Their participation in the scheme was often in conflict with the original philosophy of the schemes.

The final group of people who were involved in the lives of these young people, more in the operation of policy than their direct contact were the Manpower Services Commission local officers who were responsible for the setting up, progress and ongoing monitoring of the work experience on employers' premises schemes. My constant contact with these people enabled me to gain an insight into their working practices, together with knowledge of their personality. So the research itself included a network of people who are involved with the lives of the young people with whom we are concerned.

Before looking at the world that these unemployed young people inhabited we will trace the background to the sudden arrival of the governments' schemes developed to alleviate the effects of unemployment on young people.



1. GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

GOVERNMENT RESPONSES

Unemployment is not a new phenomenon in the North East, it is part of its history. The traditional industrial base has experienced long term and continuing decline. There have been massive reductions in coal-mining, numerous pit closures and a loss of over 60,000 jobs since the mid-sixties. Traditional industries in the manufacturing sector have also experienced large scale decline in employment, most notably in the iron, steel and shipbuilding sectors. The level of unemployment in the North East has increased dramatically over the last two years, with a continuing upward trend. The scale of the problem has not been experienced since the thirties. The figures below illustrate the extent of the problem.

Table 1.1

UNEMPLOYMENT  
UK SUMMARY

UNITED KINGDOM	<u>MALE AND FEMALE</u>			<u>Thousand</u>	
	<u>UNEMPLOYED</u>				
		Number	Per Cent	School leavers included in unemployment	Non claimant school leavers
1976	JANUARY	1264.9	5.3	31.4	
	JULY	1384.8	5.8	182.9	
1978	JANUARY	1465.5	6.1	48.6	
	JULY	1470.8	6.1	214.2	
1980	JANUARY	1373.7	5.7	34.6	
	JULY	1736.5	7.2	251.0	
1982	JANUARY	2896.3	12.4	127.3	
	JULY	2852.5	12.2	99.4	196.9

Adapted from Employment Gazette, December 1982, Vol. 92, No 12.

Table 1.2

UNEMPLOYMENT  
REGIONS

	Number Unemployed			Thousand
	All	Male	Female	School leavers included in unemployed
<u>NORTH</u>				
1976	98.0	74.2	23.8	7.2
1978	116.3	83.7	32.6	8.5
1980	140.8	99.9	40.8	9.8
1982 January	214.4	158.1	56.3	11.0
September	229.3	167.1	62.2	19.2

Adapted from Employment Gazette December 1982

In times when unemployment generally is rising, it is young people who suffer disproportionately. This fact was moreso in the late seventies and early eighties, as the post war 'baby boom' children were in the 16 to 19 age group and arriving on the job market. Alongside increasing rises in the youth unemployment figures (see Tables above) came concerns from industrialists that the schools were not turning out young people who were prepared to work, and the young people themselves were variously classed as lazy, incompetent, lacking in working skills and discipline. Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (1982), have drawn attention to the major panic concerning schools and their products.

"The reforms of the 1960's, especially the introduction of progressive methods and of comprehensives, were held responsible for the alleged decline in general standards and basic skills, for a lack of social discipline and the incongruence between the world of school and of work. The themes were broadened next to fears

that 'British society as we have always known it is about to end (Daily Mail, 8 January, 1976), that industry was no longer competitive, delinquency increasing ('the infant muggers' - Daily Mail headline, 3 April 1975) and a lurid American future in sight....." p 212

They argue further that the press acted as agents to turn their reports into facts and then in turn to comment on these facts

"Readers learned, for instance, that 'the brutal truth is that standards have fallen' (Daily Mail, 4 November 1976), that 'literacy in Britain is marching backwards' (Daily Mirror, 7 February 1975) and that a Daily Mirror reporter had not 'the slightest doubt that general educational standards have slipped alarmingly in the past decade or so' (April 1976). By the time the Prime Minister opened the 'Great Debate', the Daily Mirror's front page splash was 'Crisis in the Classroom', while the Daily Mail could introduce its own 'great national debate into what has gone wrong in our schools' (14 October 1976). Once these themes had been repeated so often as to make them self evident, the papers could employ previous reports (from their own papers and others) as evidence for further reports about, for example, the 'mounting backlash against progressive methods' (Daily Mirror, 26 April 1976) or the 'fact' that 'most parents and many teachers believe that children are less literate and numerate than they were twenty years ago'. (Daily Mail 9 July 1976.)" (p212)

Amidst all the press comments and public reaction, the government turned its attentions to implementing policies to be seen to be doing something about this increasing youth employment problem. The Manpower Services Commission (MSC) which had come into being on the 1st January 1974, under the Employment and Training Act of 1973 was soon to grow to the extent of being recognised as one of the major government bodies in society.

#### Manpower Services Commission

The Commission, which is separate from the government, is

accountable to the Secretary of State for Employment. The ten members who make up the committee include representatives of the CBI, TUC, local Authorities and a person with professional educational interests, under the direction of a Chairman. There are three operating divisions of the MSC - the Employment Services Division, Training Services Division and the Special Programmes Divisions, with support divisions, corporate services and Manpower Intelligence and Planning Division. (A merger took place between TSD and SPD at Head Office level during September and October 1982 and at Regional and Area level in early 1983, to form the new "Training Division") The Manpower Services Commission is responsible for all the programmes associated with unemployed youth, as well as the operation of the Community Enterprise Programme<sup>a scheme</sup> for adults who have been unemployed for over six months.

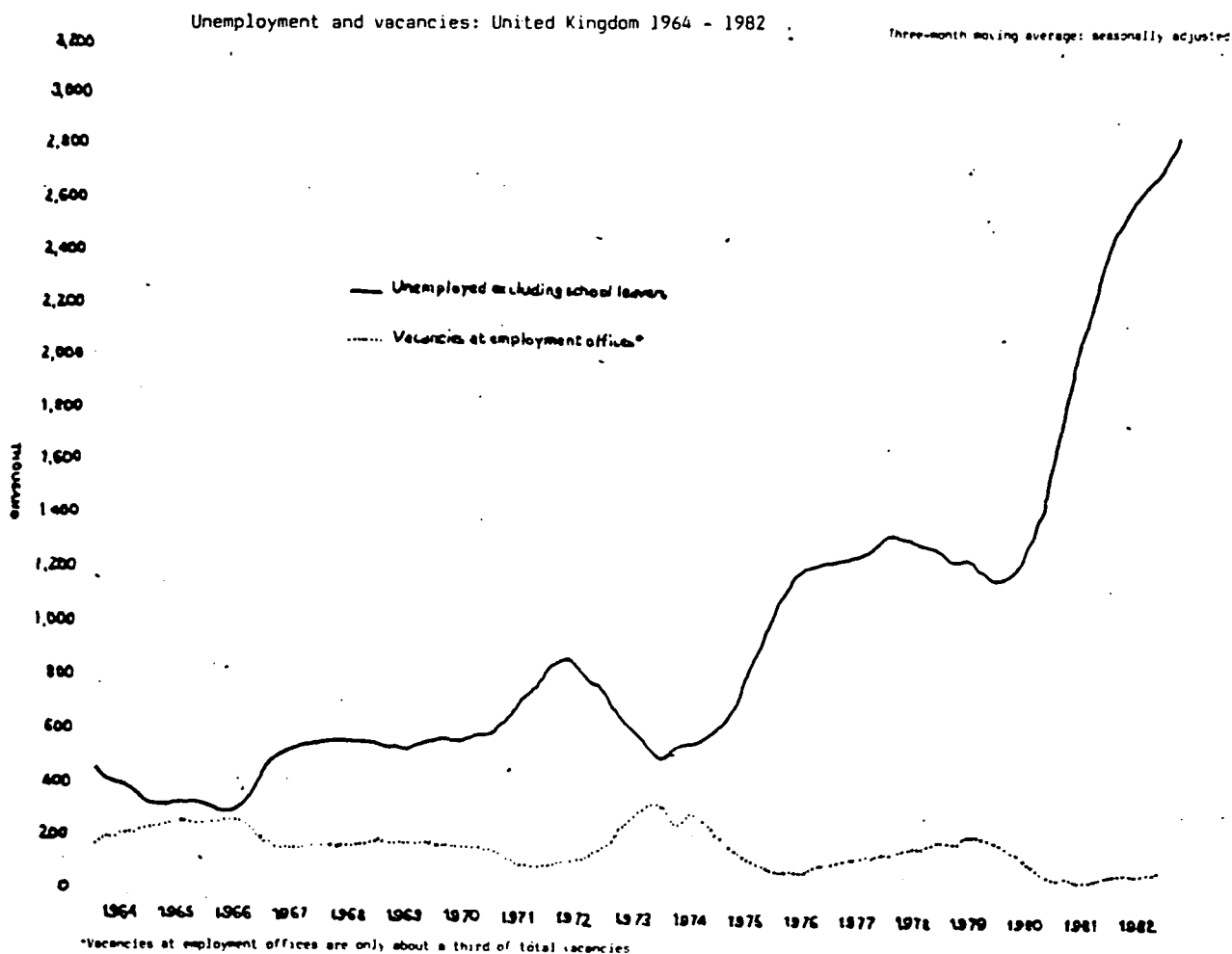


Table 1.3

### JOB CREATION PROGRAMME

The first initiative of the MSC in mounting schemes of temporary employment in the face of rapidly rising unemployment was the JOB CREATION PROGRAMME. This scheme, begun on the 9th October 1975, entailed labour-intensive projects - construction work, environmental improvements, community and social service, research, surveys and productive work in workshops. These were sponsored, in the main, by local authorities and voluntary agencies. The programme ran until the 31st December 1978 (thus continuing into the first year of Special Programmes). Over its life £192 millions was allocated to its operation. The government had asked the Commission to pay particular attention to the needs of unemployed young people aged 16-24 and the over 50's in operating this programme. Regulations governing the scheme, stated they were not to duplicate existing employment and there should be no displacement of other employees as a result of the operation of schemes. At the close of the operation, the MSC announced that approximately 140,000 temporary job opportunities were created and about 200,000 people took part in the scheme. 72% of the entrants to the programme were aged under 25, 21% were aged 25-49 years and 7% were aged 50 years and over. It was estimated that two-thirds of former JCP employees entered full time employment within six months of leaving the programme. At the close of the scheme there was insufficient evidence to assess whether JCP had any beneficial long-term effects on employment creation.

Alongside JCP were two other initiatives: the Work Experience Programme and Government Sponsored Training.

#### Work Experience Programme

In the autumn of 1976 the Work Experience Programme (WEP) was introduced with the idea of gaining the help of employers to give 30,000 young unemployed people the opportunity to learn more about work and to build up their experience. This programme was seen purely as a temporary measure, responding to high levels of youth unemployment.

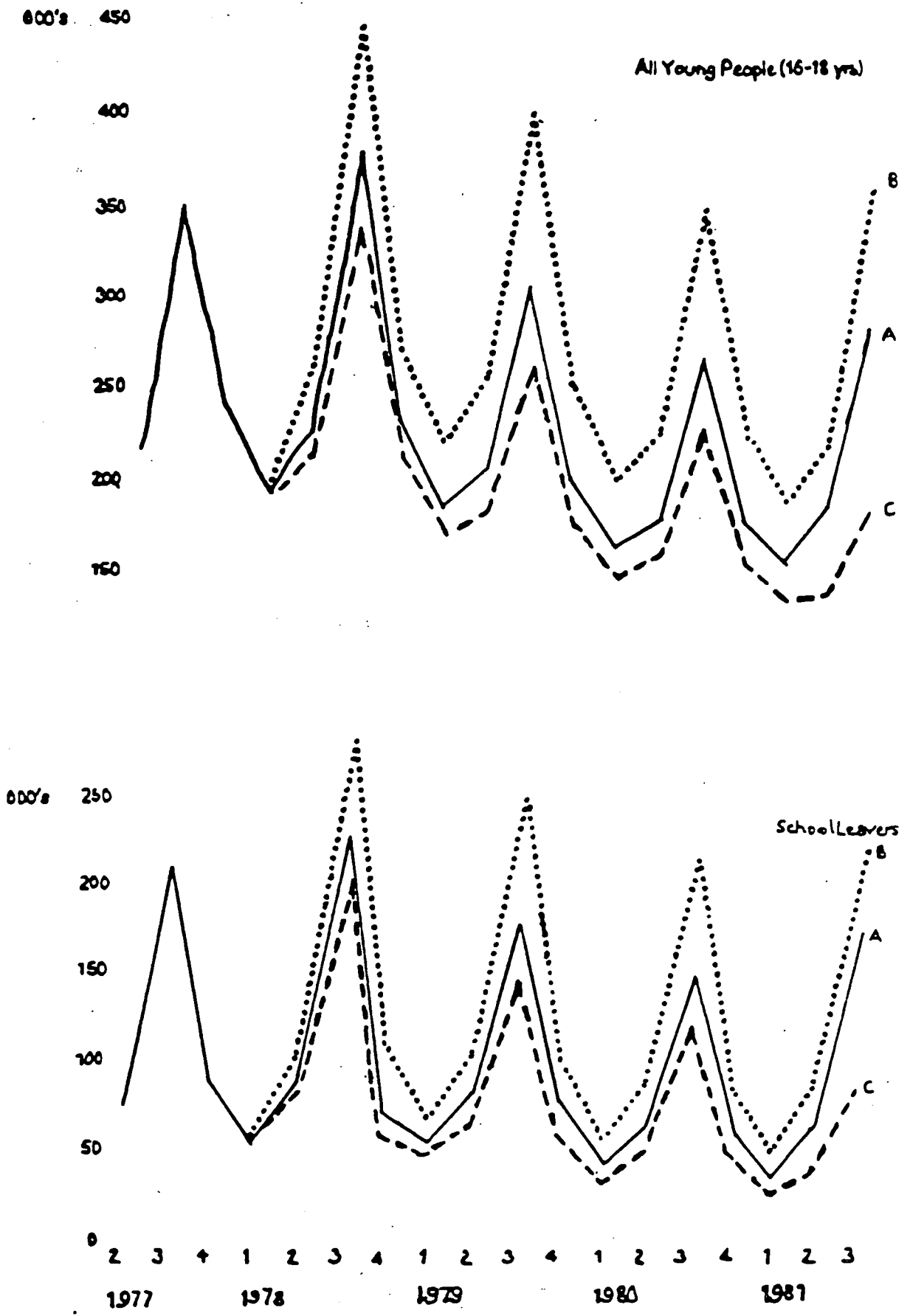
#### Government Sponsored Training

From 1975, under the training Services Agency, the government sponsored training for young people who were experiencing unemployment in greater numbers. There were two major schemes - Occupational Selection and Short Industrial Courses. The former scheme began with a period of assessment (2-3 weeks), followed by some training in the area of interest assessed, together with provision of social and life skills training. The Short Industrial Courses (SIC) lasted 13 weeks and were intended to help young people develop skills in one occupational area to a semi skilled level (e.g. construction trades, painting and decorating, clerical.)

#### Youth Opportunities Programme

With forecasts predicting that the level of unemployment, especially amongst the young would not improve for a number of years, (see Table 1.4) the MSC in its document "Towards a Comprehensive Manpower Policy", October 1976,

Unemployment among Young People:  
Forecast 1977-1981 Quarterly



From MSC (1977) Young People and Work.



(In Table 1.4 projection A assumes that there will be a moderate recovery in the economy which will begin to affect total unemployment in 1978 and that after two years of improved employment prospects a cyclical decline will take place in the early 1980's.

Projection B assumes that total unemployment continues to rise at its present rate until the end of next year before a similar cyclical pattern of recovery occurs.

Projection C assumes that unemployment ceases to rise this year, and the recovery of the economy is sufficiently sustained and rapid to approach full employment in the early 1980's.

Young People and Work (1977)).

set itself the objective of ensuring that "all young people of 16-18 years of age who have no jobs and who are not engaged in further or higher education should have the opportunity of training, of participating in a job creation programme, or of work experience." The practicalities of implementing such a large programme were examined by a working party, under the chairmanship of Sir Geoffrey Holland. The findings of the working party were published in May 1977, under the title of 'Young People and Work'; though more familiarly known as "The Holland Report".

The report, which received government approval on 29th June 1977, proposed a range of new opportunities for young people. The programme which was to come into operation on the 1st April 1978 was to be for a finite period of five years. The first years' target (1st September 1978 to 31st August 1979) was to provide 187,000 young people with opportunities, other than unemployment.

Table 1.5

	1977	1978	1979	1980	1981
School-leavers (thousands)	841	864	881	900	909
School-leavers (Thousands) entering the labour force in:					
April	88.6	90.9	92.8	94.8	95.1
May	149.6	153.6	156.8	160.1	161.7
June	206.0	211.5	215.8	220.4	222.6
July	226.8	232.9	237.6	242.7	245.1
Total	671.0	689.0	703.0	718.0	725.0

MSC (1977) YOUNG PEOPLE AND WORK.

This new programme of opportunities was to be built on the foundations of the job creation, work experience and training courses experience. The urgency of the situation did not allow for time to be spent on new innovative ideas.

The programme was designed taking two principles as the base:

"a. That the new programme must be designed to meet the personal needs of individual unemployed young people as they seek to secure permanent employment; and

b. that the individual elements in the programme and the programme as a whole must not be more financially attractive than being in full-time work or damage the incentive to young people in full-time education to continue their courses."

(MSC, (1977), YOUNG PEOPLE AND WORK. Report of the

Feasibility of a New Programme of Opportunities for Unemployed Young People.)

The programme was to provide two types of opportunities:

A: Courses designed to prepare young people for work.

B: different kinds of work experience.

A: The courses designed to prepare young people for work, would be of three types:-

#### ASSESSMENT or EMPLOYMENT INDUCTION COURSES

These courses, lasting approximately two weeks were modelled on the Occupational Selection Courses. They aimed at helping the individual improve his employability, by assessing the work he could do, and was best suited for, and to improve his social skills.

#### SHORT INDUSTRIAL COURSES

These aimed at introducing young people to a fairly specific (though broad) occupational area, to develop skills for employment at operator of semi-skilled level. They also aimed to motivate young people to work and develop those skills necessary for a working environment. These courses were mounted in Skill Centres, Colleges of Further Education and on Employers' Premises.

#### REMEDIAL or PREPARATORY COURSES

These courses were intended for those who had low literacy and numeracy levels together with those who were handicapped in some other way and needed further education and training before being able to enter the world of work. These courses were seen as the base for a progression onto other schemes.

## B. Work Experience would be of four main types:

### Work Experience on Employers Premises

Built on the previous Work Experience Scheme, these schemes were to provide a 6 month work experience on employers' premises. In the planning stage it was foreseen that this opportunity would lend itself to abuse. In the report (MSC, 1977) it was stated "There is also the possibility that this kind of work experience would come to be regarded by employers as a useful vehicle for assessment and a normal avenue for recruitment. Were this to happen, it might be necessary to review the basis for funding such opportunities." The findings of this research confirm that this fear was realised.

### Project based Work Experience

Project based schemes were to provide a project which involved the performance of "real tasks" in a project for the community (e.g. gardening, restoration work etc.) This would enable work to be completed that would not be so, were it not for the scheme. Supervisors, managers, craftsmen were recruited predominantly from the unemployment register to facilitate the operation of this scheme. The individual young person would not be expected to stay longer than a twelve month period on such a scheme.

### Training Workshops

"The objectives of a training workshop is the provision of training and work experience for a group of young people working together on a number of different tasks under

supervision. The group produce goods and services, but the main purpose is to give young people experience in a variety of skill areas doing a variety of different kinds of work." The maximum stay of a young person on such a scheme would be twelve months.

### Community Service

The community service schemes were to provide opportunities for young people to try a variety of work, associated with helping in the community. There was the expectation that the young people concerned would learn a range of basic skills, especially communication and relationships and would exercise responsibility on these schemes. Schemes were to be sought in nursery schools, hospitals, old age pensioners homes and community centres.

The Work Experience Programme would be divided into four elements:

induction

planned work experience

opportunity for training or further education

counselling

These elements were to be provided in a distinctive form, to appeal to the needs of the young people who were to be involved.

These were the schemes to be offered to the young unemployed. They required for their operation, the

A NEW PROGRAMME OF OPPORTUNITIES  
FOR YOUNG PEOPLE-AN OVERVIEW

TYPE OF OPPORTUNITY	TITLE	OBJECTIVE	DURATION AND TARGETS	LOCATION	PROVIDER	PROGRESSION
A. COURSES TO TRAIN AND PREPARE YOUNG PEOPLE FOR WORK	1. ASSESSMENT AND EMPLOYMENT INDUCTION COURSES	Improve employability by assessing work most suited for and interested in, improving knowledge of world of work and providing basic social skills.	Most 2 weeks A very few (Wider Opportunities Courses) up to 12 weeks	Skillscentres. Colleges of Further Education but primarily employers' establishments.	TSA Local Education Authority Employers.	Some to normal employment. Most to basic skill courses. A few to further education. Some to a work experience opportunity.
	2. SHORT INDUSTRIAL COURSES	Training for a specific though broad occupational area and employment at operator or semi-skilled level.	About 13 weeks Annual throughput 25,000	Skillscentres Colleges of Further Education Employers' establishments	TSA Local Education Authority Employers.	Many to normal employment. Some to further education. Others to a work experience opportunity.
	3. REMEDIAL AND PREPARATORY COURSES	Reach basic levels of literacy and numeracy and basic entry requirements for other opportunities	As long as necessary for individual to achieve objective	Colleges of Further Education Special Schools Industrial and MSC premises Residential training colleges	Primarily Local Education Authority Some role for ESA and TSA	A few to normal employment. Most to other opportunities within Programme.
B. WORK EXPERIENCE	4. EMPLOYERS PREMISES	To give first hand experience of different kinds of work on employers' premises	On average 6 months Annual throughput 80,000	Employers' premises	Employers	Many to normal employment. Others to work preparation course or to further education.
	5. PROJECT-BASED	To give first hand experience of different kinds of work through the medium of projects	Up to 12 months Annual throughput of 15,000		Sponsors of various kinds including local authorities, voluntary organisations etc.	Most to normal employment. Some to further education. Others to work preparation course.
	6. TRAINING WORKSHOP	To give first hand experience of different kinds of work in a work group producing goods or services	Up to 12 months Annual throughput 10,000	Vacant factories and other premises or sites.	Sponsors as in 5 above	Many to normal employment. Some to further education. Others to work preparation course.
	7. COMMUNITY SERVICE	To give first hand experience of different kinds of work through the medium of local community activities	Up to 12 months Annual throughput 15,000	Institutions (schools, hospitals, youth clubs, voluntary organisations) Specific community projects (health education services, to housebound)	Social Services Voluntary organisations	Most to normal employment. Some to further education or work preparation course.
C. COMMUNITY INDUSTRY	8. COMMUNITY INDUSTRY	Provide help for seriously disadvantaged young people and those finding it hard to obtain and hold down jobs	On average 12 months Annual throughput 5,500	Local authority sponsored projects	Community Industry working with local authorities	Most to normal employment Some to work preparation course. A few to further education.
D. INCENTIVE TRAINING GRANTS	9. PREMIUM GRANTS TRAINING AWARDS, ETC	Meet anticipated requirements for manpower at higher skill levels	12 months or more Target 1977/78: 41,500	Employers' establishments, Colleges of Further Education, Industrial Training Board premises.	Industrial Training Boards and industry level bodies outside the Industrial Training Board's sector	All but a very few to normal employment.

involvement of many different agencies; the careers service, the colleges of further education, employers, manpower services officials local authorities, voluntary agencies and of course, the young people themselves. A massive publicity campaign was mounted to give the scheme visibility and to attract young people and employers (who were to become main agents in the scheme, through the work experience on employers premises). Some of the publicity materials, aimed at different audiences are to be found in the appendices.

#### THE OPERATION OF THE SCHEME

The programme aimed to offer the young unemployed (under nineteen years of age) the opportunity of training or work experience. Young people who were eligible could stay in the programme for a period of twelve months. As an exception to this rule, disabled young people could stay in the programme longer. The young person could progress within the scheme, from one type of opportunity to another, for example, from a Short Industrial Course (13 weeks) to a six month Work Experience on Employers Premises scheme. The MSC itself provided few opportunities directly. The vast majority of places were provided by employers (who were then named 'sponsors', (63%), Local Authorities and other public bodies (26%) or voluntary organisations (10%). (MSC (1980))

The young people involved, were to be known as 'trainees'. They were paid a flat rate allowance, by the MSC, through their sponsors. There were no deductions for tax and

insurance; although it was assumed that part of the allowance would be set aside for travelling expenses and meals. The current allowance (March, 1983) is £25. During the life of the programme this has risen in line with increases in social security benefits - £19.50 at the start of the scheme; rising to £20.50 in November 1978; £23.50 in November 1979; to £25 in January 1981. Travel expenses, which were in excess of £4 a week could be reclaimed from the MSC. The young people were also to have holiday and sick pay entitlements.

#### The Area Boards

At a local level, it was the Area Boards which were responsible for approving the applications of potential sponsors, projects and training courses. Area boards being made up of representatives of local trade unions, business and industry, education, local authority and voluntary organisations. Principal Careers Officers had a right of attendance as observers. These Area Boards were supported by the regional and area offices of the Special Programmes Division of the MSC.

#### The MSC Officers

Within the MSC Special Programmes Department itself, a number of technical officers had to be recruited to market the new schemes - a vast marketing job had to be implemented and with some urgency. It was the urgency of this work which was later to cause complications for the scheme. The initial marketing placed emphasis on the benefits to the sponsor by creating a trainee placement;



rather than looking at the needs of the young people to be involved in the scheme. Discussions with link officers revealed that the scheme was often 'sold' in a manner which suggested to employers that they may benefit from using the scheme as a six month extended interview. The sponsor could see what the young person was capable of, whilst subsidised, before they took them into full time employment. This had been one of the major concerns of the feasibility committee in their planning stages of the new programmes. In order to 'sell' the new scheme, to unwilling potential sponsors, officials often used these very concerns as the selling tool. Once the schemes had been approved by the Area Boards, the MSC Link Officer would inform the Careers Service of available 'placements'. From these, the careers personnel would select and inform young people of 'schemes' available to them, and make arrangements for them to attend for interview (though interviews were not the original intention of the scheme, this did become general practice.)

#### Monitoring

Once the scheme was in operation, it was monitored, at intervals, by the MSC technical staff. In the report of the second year of the operation of the Special Programmes, they estimated that these visits took place on average once every four months. During the monitoring check, the officer will see the 'trainee' briefly to check how the scheme was functioning from his point of view, and also see the 'responsible officer', that is the person who

was responsible for the general operation of the scheme on the sponsors behalf. Visits could be more regular if the officer was called in to check on any reported abuse of the scheme or in the case of an accident. The officer could recommend improvements to the scheme and in extreme cases could close the scheme (in reality the latter only rarely occurred as the MSC were anxious to have available as many places as possible to cater for the ever-increasing numbers of young unemployed. There was a tendency for the attitude of 'a bad placement is better than no placement at all' to prevail). During the period 1979/80 it was reported (MSC 1980) that 87,000 monitoring visits were made. In 73,000 cases the schemes were seen to be satisfactory or very satisfactory - in 7,900 cases improvements were required. Therefore one may assume that of the remaining 6,100 were found to be unacceptable. Reports were unavailable for the number of closures.

#### Careers Service

Monitoring also took place by the careers service, of the young people on site. These visits were primarily concerned with the trainees progress on the scheme, and their suitability for further education.

At the end of their period on a Work Experience Scheme the young person would return to the careers office to see if there were further schemes available to them; some of the young people did not stay the duration of their scheme but changed schemes before their time was complete. In these instances it was usually the trainee himself who made the decision to leave their placement due to dislike of the

work or hearing of another type of scheme on which they would rather secure a place.

The increase in workload of the careers service was recognised and they were given scope to increase their staff with the expansion of their unemployment specialists (In 1975, 230 additional unemployment specialists) were recruited and in 1977/78 an additional 90. These posts were wholly funded by direct government grants and those engaged in this work were to be concerned solely with securing training and employment for unemployed young people, thus releasing the careers officers from this work. The careers offices were to continue their advisory work in schools and colleges for which they had statutory obligations. The role of the careers service changed with the advent of YOP. This change is documented in the chapter on the careers service.

#### The Six Week Rule

Young people became eligible for the scheme after being unemployed for a period of six weeks. This guideline was given to ensure that young people themselves had the opportunity to look for work, rather than moving straight into the programme

"... we considered whether there should be a WAITING PERIOD for individual unemployed young people, that is, whether they should be compelled to remain unemployed for a period of say, 4 or 6 weeks before becoming eligible to participate in the programme. The purpose of such a waiting period would be to ensure that young people were not drawn into the programme before they had had a chance to look for a job. A formal waiting period would make the short term unemployed ineligible, thus reducing the possibility that the programme would interfere with the normal

working of the labour market. It might reduce the "drop out" rate and ensure that those participating were motivated to benefit from the programme. Against this, it can be argued that a waiting period is unnecessary and unfair where there is no prospect of a job. In many parts of the country and at many times of the year it is abundantly clear that no jobs are likely to be available for an unemployed young person. Those who deal at first hand with unemployed young people say that it is relatively easy to assess an individual's prospects of getting a job quickly. Moreover, in practice there is likely to be a delay between acceptance for and entry to a programme, which will bring some of the administrative advantages of a waiting period without the rigidity of a formal requirement." MSC, (1977), Young People & Work p.39 Sect. 3.57

This "six week rule" was waived in certain instances, at the discretion of the careers service.

#### The Easter Guarantee

This was an undertaking by the MSC that it would seek to ensure that no young person, aged under 19 who left school in the course year 1977/78 (and continued each year after this time) who remained unemployed by Easter 1979 would be left without the offer of a suitable place on the programme. They would also seek to ensure that a suitable opportunity would be offered by the March of that year to every young person who became unemployed for twelve months. This became known as the Easter undertaking, and this caused considerable pressure for the careers service, as they actively sought to fulfill this commitment on the MSC's behalf.

#### Scale of the Operation

These new "Special Programmes" laid out in the "Holland Report" were initially concerned with QUANTITY - the scale of the operation to be mounted was far greater than

anything than had gone before. The target, was the provision of a maximum of 129,700 places by September 1978. It soon became clear that these numbers needed to be raised each successive year. In the Review of Fourth Year of Special Programmes, October 1982, the increase was noted.

Table 1.7

Entrants to the Youth Opportunities Programme 1978-1982

Year	Entrants	% increase on previous year
1978/79	162,200	-
1979/80	216,400	34%
1980/81	360,000	66%
1981/82	553,000	54%

From these figures we can see that the figure 553,000 young people entering the scheme during 1982 represents an increase of over three times that of the first year of operation of YOP, 1978/79. In the first year of operation of YOP, one in eight young people leaving school entered the scheme, by 1982 the figure was one in two.

This is the wider background to the schemes. It places in context, the eighty young people of this study, who were all involved in Work Experience on Employers' Premises (WEEP). As well as being part of the wider structure of the MSC world, they are situated within the North East,

but not within the popularised decaying areas of the region. These young people are living in the growing New Town of Washington, Tyne and Wear.

2. WASHINGTON NEW TOWN

The birth of a new town at the centre of some of the industrial wastelands of the North East was viewed by many of the parents of the trainees as a golden opportunity to uproot, and move to the New Town in search of better living conditions and the possibilities of secure work. The outward picture was very reassuring - the housing was new, and was winning awards for good design and the concentrated planting of shrubbery took away much of the towns starkness: seven industrial estates were being created and The Galleries looked like the shoppers' paradise. On taking up residence, their dreams of a secure working future did not materialise.

#### Location

Prior to designation as a New Town, Washington was a little heard of village nestled between the large conurbations of Newcastle, Sunderland and Durham, built upon the structures of a declining old mining community. Today, the only remnants of the mining village are the F Pit Museum, the miners cottages and the Welfare Halls. To the young people of this town the mining past is pure history, something that their grandfathers and a few of their fathers may talk about - to the youth, Washington is factories and offices, not heavy industry. Old Washington took on a dramatic new look, and the village itself became lost in the great urban sprawl that is now the New Town. In 1968 the population was 20,000, by November 1980 this had grown to 50,000 (although this figure was far



lower than the population estimate of the time.) By the end of the century the developers estimate the population will increase to 80,000. Washington is unlike so many of the other new towns throughout the country in terms of its location. It is situated in close proximity to other urban areas (it lies six miles south of Newcastle, 6 miles west of Sunderland and nine miles north of Durham.) Changes in local government moved the boundaries of the town, which is now part of the Sunderland Metropolitan District. Despite this fact, many of the older residents do not identify with Sunderland, but refer to "the town", meaning Newcastle.

Large numbers were attracted to Washington by the availability of accommodation (see Appendices 2), the majority from Sunderland 34.3%, followed by Gateshead and South Tyneside, with proportions of 16.3% and 13.0% respectively. Within the years 1970 - 1980, over 80% of those moving into Washington were from the Tyne and Wear area. The percentage of households which had previously lived outside of the Northern Region dropped from 15% in 1978 to 6.5% in 1980, with the South East Region contributing some 30% of the total. The high standard of housing proved very attractive:

"We moved to Washington about three years ago from Sunderland. Me ma wanted to move, she didn't like it where we was, we lived in Barclay Court (depressed area of Sunderland) lived there for eight or nine years, in a flat - me ma wanted a house. She said it was scruffy there and ower rough..."

Ian, aged 17

"We lived in Newcastle, me ma didn't like it, so we moved down to Derby - me dad's family is down there; then she didn't like living down there, and that's when we moved back. Well we all got fed up of Newcastle, and we thought Washington looked a nice area to live..."

Gail, aged 16

"We moved from Blackfell to Oxclose, before that we lived in Boldon Colliery - I was eleven when we moved here. We moved 'cos it was a two bedroomed house and there were five of us and so there were all the kids in one room and me mam and dad in the other, it was like cramped and it was like a flat, it was upstairs."

Michelle, aged 17

### Village Structure

The town is divided into eighteen "villages", with populations around four and a half thousand; each village having its own primary school, shops, pub and village hall. The village - Albany, Glebe, Concord, Blackfell, Lambton, Ayton, Rickleton, Biddick, Barmston, Columbia, Harraton, Washington, Fatfield, Sulgrave, Usworth, Springwell, Donwell and Oxclose are all identified by numbers as well as their village names. Districts 1, 2, 3, etc., cause annoyance to drivers unfamiliar with the area, who may know the name of the village they are trying to find, but not the the number of that village. These villages are themselves distinguished by different types of architecture; encouraging the new inhabitants to identify with a particular village. Community Development Officers were employed by the Development Corporation, each worker responsible for particular villages; it was

these workers who called at the homes of new residents to welcome them and to inform them of the facilities in their area and the town as a whole and to try to introduce them to the various community agencies throughout the town, where they could integrate and so feel part of the town. These officers were also advisers within the local community halls, which were run by management committees, encouraging local participation in the management and involvement in the community hall.

This "village" set up produced many of the positive assets planned into their design but there were also liabilities of the design. In a small number of the villages there were often areas which obtained a 'bad name', and this encompassed the whole village, making it a less desirable place to live. This situation occurred in the village of Sulgrave. Within the village there were a set of flats known as "The Edith Avenue Flats", built by the Sunderland Borough Council, not the development corporation. The area developed a reputation of housing many 'problem families', who had prison records, or were clients of the social and probation services. Many people moved out of the flats and only those people who were 'desperate' for housing would consider moving in to take their places. The area was vandalised and known as 'the rough area' of Washington, and so the reputation, spread and deepened to such an extent that the council decided to take drastic action. The flats were cleared and refurbished, and put on the open market for sale (this process continues). The name "Sulgrave", still produces raised eyebrows, and that

'knowing look', if one says that one lives in that village.

The creation of a village identity may have been useful for many of the adults of the town, but for the young people, it often produced a type of 'tribalism' - many of the villagers took this to its extreme and developed an oppositional nature to other villages. Slogans of the 'Blackfell Boot Boys' and the 'Concord Killers', were among many to be seen. Tales of the villages youth clubs being 'invaded' by other villages became commonplace.

The villages are connected by a network of roads, the majority of motorway standard. This is a town built for the car. Traffic is kept to the periphery of the villages in an effort to make the villages safe places for children to play and reduce traffic noise. These road networks link with the two main roads of the region, the A1M and the A.19, thus connecting Washington to the North East's main traffic routes (an advantage for industrialists). Cars are kept off the streets with adequate car parking space and garage facilities built alongside the new housing and the town centre has car parking for over 2,000 cars, thus aiming to attract customers from outside the Washington area. 58% of families in Washington own cars, according to the 1980 household census.

	Estimated Total Number of Cars	Car Ownership Rate %
1968	2570	33
1970	3330	40
1972	4649	44
1974	6747	52
1976	8588	53
1978	10185	57
1980	11199	58

2.1 Table Illustrating the growth of car ownership since  
1968 in  
Washington WDC (1980) Household Census

The non - car owner has not been neglected in Washington, there are walkways planned within the villages and through them, linking many of the villages with the town centre. There are bus routes through the villages which provide regular services, except in the outlying parts of the town, such as Rickleton, and Springwell.

### Industrial Life

There are nine industrial estates within the New Town and these are spread throughout the town, and tend to be situated near to the main motorway interchanges thus keeping industrial traffic away from the residential areas. The factories range from the small 'nursery' factories which were built to attract businesses in their infancy. As businesses developed they could be offered

larger accommodation, or move to larger purpose built factories.

The designs of the factories were planned to blend in with the local housing - the development corporation boasted in their publicity of spending up to £250 per house on associated landscaping, similar attention being paid to the industrial estates. Washington's industrial scene altered dramatically with the growth of the new town, coal mining being replaced by businesses specialising in electronics, precision engineering, plastics and data processing, together with a vast increases in the service industries.

1. New factories: empty



Many firms were originally attracted to Washington by government incentive grants, Washington falling as it does within a Special Development Area. Yet this in itself brought dramatic consequences when firms closed down, or moved elsewhere when their government grants came to an end. This occurrence became so widespread, as to be commonplace. This factor has been noted in other parts of the region, from the report "Permanent Unemployment", by The Benwell Project, it is noted that

"Perhaps the most alarming feature is that a large proportion of jobs lost have been from firms relatively new to the area; this is a serious problem for the policy makers who have relied for many years on a policy of attracting new 'growth' industries to the region to replace the jobs lost from older traditional industries which were believed to be in irreversible decline."

(p.9)

Also by Townsend, 1982,

".....in the Northern Region the media reports of redundancies and closures are profoundly depressing in their volume, frequency and variety. A moments' reflection suggests an important feature: they include not only old established industries, like all the Regions steelworks, but also a full range of post-war developments.....Washington New Town lost over 2,000 jobs in a single year of recession....."

(p. )

Washington has seen the demise of many of the industrial giants of the town; the multi-national companies of Philips and Dunlop have experienced drastic reductions in staffing - the R.C.A. factory has closed. Northern Echo headlines, March 18, 1981, "Records Giant Spins to a Halt"

"The Giant record company and a rag-trade firm yesterday plunged the job-hungry North East into

deeper gloom. The RCA factory in Washington will go up for sale when production stops on June 12th. It was one of the new town's first major employers when it moved into the area in 1968. During the height of its business the firm employed 360 people. The closure will put 270 people out of work....."

The consequences of such closures, will be seen in this work, through the effects on the lives of some of the families - three of the young people concerned with this study will report that they have been redundant TWICE from firms in Washington - that is before they reach their nineteenth birthday.

## 2. RCA Factory: deserted





One of the growth areas in Washington has been in service industries, a wealth of new office blocks have arisen, the work there being predominantly taken by a female workforce. Many of the new industries in Washington have required a new workforce of women; this has done little to help the men in the area whose work has declined in the heavy industry sector. Compared with 1968, the 1980 figures show that there was a marked increase in the proportion of non-manual groups in the town, especially in that group containing the Professional, Employers and Managers, and a corresponding decrease in the manual groups.

Table 2.2 Professional, Manual and Non-Manual Workers in Washington

S.E.G.	Washington %					Tyne & Wear %
	1968	1972	1976	1978	1980	1978
PROFESSIONAL, EMPLOYERS, MANAGERS	6.8	8.5	9.9	10.5	12.1	10.7
OTHER NON-MANUAL	23.3	27.6	30.3	31.4	26.2	30.2
SKILLED MANUAL	32.2	35.8	31.5	30.7	26.4	29.3
SEMI-SKILLED MANUAL	26.0	19.3	21.3	20.1	24.3	17.9
UNSKILLED MANUAL	10.9	8.5	6.7	7.1	10.7	9.3
OTHER	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	3.0

Source : 1980 Household Census for Washington

As the growth of the service industries primarily attracted the female working population, many of the men sought work outside of the new town. It is estimated that 53% of the working population work outside of the 'New

Town: 25% work in Sunderland, 24.6% in Gateshead and 14.7% in Newcastle.

The development of the engineering and allied industries has been the most marked change in Washington, this being reflected in the figures below.

Table 2.3

Industrial Distribution of Employees in Employment - 1980

U.K., Northern Region and Washington

INDUSTRY	UNITED KINGDOM		NORTHERN REGION		WASHINGTON	
	MALE %	FEMALE %	MALE %	FEMALE %	MALE %	FEMALE %
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY & FISHING	2.1	1.0	1.8	0.4	-	-
CONSTRUCTION	8.9	1.1	12.2	1.2	6.8	0.3
MINING & QUARRYING & GAS, ELECTRICITY & WATER	4.6	0.9	8.5	1.2	8.7	1.2
DISTRIBUTION	9.5	16.5	7.1	18.8	6.2	23.5
FOOD, DRINK & TOBACCO	3.2	2.9	2.3	2.4	2.3	2.5
COAL, PETROLEUM & CHEMICAL PRODUCTS & METAL MANUFACTURE	5.4	1.8	11.0	2.2	6.0	1.8
ENGINEERING & ALLIED INDUSTRIES	18.6	7.2	19.5	6.9	25.2	13.9
TEXTILE, LEATHER & CLOTHING	2.5	5.2	1.8	5.9	1.3	5.3
OTHER MANUFACTURING	7.2	4.0	5.9	3.2	8.9	3.6
OTHER INDUSTRIES & SERVICES	38.0	59.4	30.2	57.5	34.6	47.8
TOTAL	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
TOTAL NUMBERS	13405*	9365*	729*	494*	12288	8498

\*thousands

Source : 1980 Household Census Washington

In engineering the figures for males being 25.2% and for females 13.9% are much higher than those of national or regional levels; in fact in the case of females the proportion is double the national figures. Similarly, the fact that the shopping facilities in the town serve a wider catchment area than Washington results in a higher proportion of females being employed in distribution. Further breakdown of occupational classifications, together with data on shift work and the females working population can be found in the Appendices.

### Unemployment

Washington, for many families did not produce the security of full-time work that many had hoped for

"We came to Washington looking for work - we used to live in Southwick (Sunderland), we thought the prospects for work would be better here.....There's me dad and me brother-in-law and me that's unemployed; there's only me twin that has a job in our house..."

Paul, aged 16

It is estimated that the full-time working population resident in Washington is 17,546, which if compared with the 1978 figure of 17,963 is only a fall of 400; but when the increase in the population during this time are taken into account these figures illustrate the deterioration in the employment situation in ~~the town~~ a space of <sup>just</sup> two years. Figures below illustrate this marked increase in the proportion of unemployed in the town:-

Table 2.4 Unemployed as a Proportion of Total Population  
1972-80.

	<u>Males %</u>	<u>Females %</u>	<u>Total %</u>
1972 . . . . .	1.9	0.1	2.0
1974 . . . . .	1.6	0.2	1.9
1976 . . . . .	2.7	0.8	3.5
1978 . . . . .	2.8	0.9	3.7
1980 . . . . .	4.2	4.1	8.3

Table 2.5 Unemployment Rate - December 1980.

	<u>Males %</u>	<u>Females %</u>	<u>Total %</u>
Great Britain . . . . .	10.9	6.6	9.2
Northern Region . . . . .	15.4	9.5	13.1
Washington . . . . .	13.8	11.5	12.9

Source : 1980 Household Census, Washington

These figures do not take into account the number of school-leavers engaged in the governments' Youth Opportunities Programme.

It can be argued, that the advent of unemployment in the new town, is a greater shock, than in older, established parts of the region. Many of the trainees parents' had moved to the new town in search of better work prospects

for themselves and their families. The media were expressing concerns that as a region we should keep up with technology. Washington did employ the latest technology and still faced an increasing unemployment queue. New industries came and then seemed to disappear almost overnight.

### The Town Centre - "The Galleries"

"The Galleries, is the main shopping precinct of the town - housing supermarkets, and catering<sup>for</sup> all the major shopping needs. The Town centre itself, whilst offering employment to large numbers of females, provides for other needs within the town. The Health Centre, Library, Police Station, Social Services, Careers Service, Swimming Baths and Squash courts are all located in the town centre, together with one department whose business in this area is on the increase - the Department of Health and Social Security. A small drop-in centre for young people has recently been opened - "Wor Place" - with the aim of removing some young people out of "The Galleries" and into a different environment where they do not cause problems for the security men and shoppers. Adjoining the town Centre is the Princess Anne Park, with its own trim track and nature walks, and this links with the Riverside park where there are plans to develop the waterside with fishing and boats. Other amenities in the town are two golf courses, the waterfowl park and the Biddick Arts Centre - none of which attract large numbers of young people.

### 3. "The Galleries" Shopping Centre



#### Education in the New Town

Each village in Washington has its own primary school, thus ensuring that it is within easy walking distances from all homes in that village, there are in addition two Catholic primary schools in the town. All of the school buildings in the town are new, and even some of these have had recent additions; a fire at Usworth Comprehensive necessitated considerable rebuilding work. There are

five schools for the secondary education sector in the town, one of which is a Roman Catholic Comprehensive. One of the careers officers I spoke to gave his working view of the schools in the New Town:

"St. Robert's R.C School. The school serves a diversity of areas by virtue of its religion. The young people in this school seem, in the main, to be more friendly and outward-going than those at other schools and have more to offer personality wise. The careers staff within the school are very interested in the kids and the kids are often seen with the careers teacher in their break time. I think this has a great deal to do with the religious bias of the school, as this pervades all school life. This is confirmed by my experience in other Catholic schools..." (This careers officer is a Catholic himself)...Oxclose is a new school, been open about three or four years. Its a community school, though its still relatively small in size; this fact probably contributes towards it being a very friendly place. There are lots of informal teaching areas in the school and they work in groups a lot. Careers within the school is bad; the kids appear to have no idea of careers.....Usworth School and Washington School (formerly the grammar), these schools are very similar, they generally have a poor reputation, but have good sixth forms, especially Washington school. This is probably a hangover from its grammar school days. There appears to be a great emphasis on exams and also lots of 'bad' behaviour on the part of the kids. Usworth is not as academic as Washington. Both of these schools recruit from their immediate surroundings, therefore they do not have a good mix - this does not seem to help...."

At the time of this conversation, Biddick school was still in the building stages. The two newest schools, Oxclose and Biddick Schools, (which has not, as yet, its full intake) are designated community schools and they serve the wider educational and recreational needs in their communities, rather than solely schooling of the children. A varied programme of further education is engaged in throughout the schools. Usworth School has links with the

technical College (in Sunderland) and certified courses may be taken on an outreach basis from this school. Usworth school also houses its own swimming pool. All of the schools have up to date equipment and resources, due to their relative newness. There is no technical college in Washington, the nearest colleges are in Sunderland and Gateshead, approximately seven miles away. The distance from Washington is the reason given by many of the young people, for their lack of interest in going to college and the prohibitive transport costs. This may also be part of the wider 'identity' crisis which many people in Washington hold. Although Washington is a small matter of miles distant from other urban centres there have been ~~demonstrations~~ in the town to have a hospital cited in the town itself. Washingtonians often give the impression that they feel ALL amenities should be provided within their own town. There should not be the necessity to travel outside of the town. One may question whether the citing of a technical college in Washington would produce full registers.

#### Youth Provision in the New Town

"I thought, with this being a new town that there would be loads to do, but there's absolutely nothing...."

Michelle, aged 17

In the planning stages of the new town it was envisaged that there would be four large, purpose-built youth clubs to service the various areas of the new town, in effect only one centre was built. This centre, The Oval, comprises two separate buildings - one primarily for the



youth - comprising a reception area, coffee bar, small dance floor, TV and table tennis rooms, a gym and activity rooms. The community centre, which for the large part was carpeted and furnished contained a large dance hall, and a number of lounges, together with a reception and coffee bar area. Two full time workers and a small team of part time staff were employed to manage this centre. The Oval is located in Concord, which is in the Northern part of Washington, in the old, established local authority housing estate. It caters for the local youth, although its numbers fall far short of those eligible to attend. Although, as has been stated in numerous reports, (Albermarle 1960, Andy Wilson-Chalon (1977); Youth Services Development Council (1969); Bone and Ross, 1972) the statutory and voluntary youth services cater for the minority of young people.

The remainder of the new town has a number of youth club sections within the village hall structure. All of the villages which make up Washington have a village Hall - this was intended for the use of all the villagers from the pre-school children and the old age pensioners. The shared provision is managed locally by the village hall management committee, and overseen by the local authority youth and community area officer. In some of these village halls, one or two nights are allocated for the use of teenagers; the local authority provide funds for employing part-time youth leaders, although in reality many of the clubs are run by voluntary leaders. So within the village structure there may be one or two nights of

the week when the young people can attend a youth club in their own area.

Other facilities which are available in the New Town are for most age groups - within the town centre itself there is a swimming baths and squash court facilities and various activity groups are attached to the community school at Oxclose. A number of activity groups - e.g. karate, badminton, football clubs are attached to various schools and halls within the town. Within the glossy town centre itself there was not provision in the original planning for young people. In 1981, the development corporation built a small drop in centre known as - "Work Place" - money was only provided for part-time staffing therefore this centre was often closed during the day, despite the number of young unemployed in the town.

Many of the young people wandered around The Galleries Shopping Centre, especially in the winter, when this centrally heated shopping arcade was preferable to 'hanging around' outside. Many window shopped, whilst others made it their meeting ground for their friends, where they could drop into a coffee bar or a pub. Others made it their playground, and annoyed shop keepers and the town centres' security people. At various times, town centre management policies have resulted in young people being moved on and moved out of The Galleries by the security guards.

In Concord, which was the old town centre of Washington

there is a pool room which is frequented by some young people and an amusement arcade. Many of the young people I have spoken to complained of "nothing to do" and many relate of spending their time just "hanging around" - for many this was in the village centre, or outside the bus station, youth club or fish shop. Although there is vast provision of organised activities, there is less provision in the area for informal meeting grounds. Another alternative is to frequent the pubs. Corrigan (1979), who studied a group of young people 7 miles east of Washington, gave meaning to the "doing nothing" syndrome.

".....it is vital now to understand why the main activity of the boys was "doing nothing". This is undoubtedly the most difficult question to answer as it contains a whole series of problems that, at first, appear to be simply semantic; but in many ways this is the crux of the problem. As has been commented the previous studies seem to have missed this point in attempting to understand the spare time activities of working class youth. Yet in focusing our attention upon the activity of 'doing nothing' or 'just knocking about' we immediately see that experientially for the boys and analytically for us, this is in fact doing something...." (p126)

he goes on to explain the function of these acts

"Doing nothing, then, does not deserve to be neglected as an activity simply because the boys do not articulate the sort of activities it contains. For the main part a great deal of talking seems to go on when 'nothing' is being done." (p127)

We will return to this when we look more closely at how the young people spend their leisure time.

The Development Corporation of the New Town appointed a Youth and Recreation Officer, his role involved him organising sports competitions and galas for the town

together with involvement in local village committee youth structures and training programmes.

An overall assessment of the town's facilities for young people would reveal that there were a wealth of places and activities for the young people to become involved in; many do not want organised activities, possible due to their similarity to their school experience. It would also necessitate considerable travel around the town, which would be costly. The young people themselves, especially the group who form this research, were not interested in the type of provision that they witnessed. The New Town in their view was 'boring' and they sought their enjoyment outside - in Sunderland or Newcastle. At the time of writing Washington did not have a nightclub, or large dance hall, and therefore the 'towns' were entered for this type of provision.

In a situation of high unemployment, the New Town only served to increase the pressures on the young people. They do not have the old family networks to fall back onto which in the past have been valuable sources of job information, contacts, and 'subs'. The old support networks have been removed. There is a higher dependence on other agencies to fulfill such support roles - the young people talk of 'my social worker', 'my careers officer', 'my probation officer' - an ownership of the helping agencies. For many these replace the old family support network. The glossiness of the town centre with its multiplicity of shops breeds dissatisfaction amongst

young people unable to find work, so that many of the things they see, they are unable to even think about buying. The encouragement of the 'village' feeling has resulted in few young people attempting to seek work outside of the town - in fact many have refused jobs in a different part of the New Town on the grounds of prohibitive travel expenses.

There were pressures within their families, as many were made redundant and the family was left with a much lower income. Doctors in the town commented on high rates of stress related diseases in the town; young women with small children being especially at risk. The town in its newness created its own pressures - new housing, creates pressures for new furnishings; isolation at home, breeds desires for an active social life. The pressures all added to one another. In the next chapters, we will look more closely at the young people concerned, look at their family situation, their experience of schooling and transition from school to unemployment, and then onto their work experience. We will look at their wider position in society, their culture and their hopes and aspirations for the future.

3. THE HOLLAND KIDS - The Family

## THE HOLLAND KIDS

The title of this chapter comes from a casual comment of a college lecturer involved in Life Skills training, within the college system. The words were said in a deprecating manner. Although this is not the standpoint I take with the young people who are caught up in the government schemes, it is interesting that in so short a time, these young people have been labelled; unfortunately for many of them, that label is derogatory. One cannot lump all of these young people together and talk about them as a group. There is so much diversity amongst them, they are individuals; but I hope to draw out some general traits from the information, and significant examples. The two years in age which separate some of them has made marked differences in some cases, in others the fact that they had a previous work history prior to a government scheme, has led to a greater maturity, and critical comment.

### Relationships with Parents

To give a brief outline of these families, seventy four lived in rented accommodation, six in private housing. Of the fathers who had work, this was concentrated in the skilled and semi-skilled areas (18, skilled; 12, semi-skilled; 10, unskilled; 1 professional; 3, self-employed.) Loss of a parent through death was part of four young persons lives - two young people has lost their father, and one a mother; one young person had lost both his parents. The size of the families is detailed below:

Table 3.1

Number of children in the family

Number of Households that had	10 children	1
"	"	8 children
"	"	7 children
"	"	6 children
"	"	5 children
"	"	4 children
"	"	3 children
"	"	2 children
"	"	1 child

Sample total: 80 households

Average number of children per household 5.17

The most striking feature of these young peoples' relationships with their parents, was the poor communication which existed in the majority of situations. I am not here adding to the 'generation gap' theorists, (Douvan and Edelson, 1966; Coleman (1974); Wilmott (1966); Friedenberg 1954, 1969) my concern is the apparent lack of involvement and interest in the other person. Many of the young people did not know where their parents worked, what they thought about their work or what that work involved. Similar reports were found in Newsom 1963. This may be due to mechanistic views of work (Parker, (1976)), that is, they invest little personal interest in the work, and therefore do not wish to discuss it at the end of the day.



Many of the young people commented, "He never talks about it (his work), so I suppose it must be alright...". The young person may know the title of the work carried out by a parent, but not its meaning:-

"..she works for the Civil Service....she's a paper keeper, I don't know what that is. She's a representative for the union and she goes away to London a lot"

Anita, aged 17

It was the rare family who spent time together during their leisure, from the total sample there were only three instances of this

"On Saturdays we all get together and play darts. There is a dart board in every house in our family, if there wasn't we wouldn't go there."

Tracy, aged 16

### Fathers

It was in their relationships with their fathers where greater ambivalence and problems were found. It is worth noting that only five young people commented on having bad relationships with their mothers as opposed to twenty three answering the same question concerning their fathers. (Of the three males who reported bad relationships with their mothers, they were living with their fathers after their parents divorced. Of the twenty three young people who said they had bad relationships with their fathers, there were ten males and thirteen females. Young and Wilmott (1973) refer to Bronfenbrenner in their explanation of young people's unsatisfactory relationships with their fathers who explains this fact in

terms of the fathers lack of time for his children. This is not confirmed by this study, where many of the fathers are at home due to unemployment.

"They have too little of the time with their fathers. This is what Bronfenbrenner had in mind when he said from the other side of the Atlantic that 'The difference between England and America in our results is not great, but it is statistically reliable. England is also the only other country in our sample which shows a level of parental involvement lower than our own, with both parents - and especially fathers - sharing less affection, often less companionship and intervening less frequently in the lives of their children."

(p 279-80)

In fact one in three of the group had fathers who did not work, or came from a household where there was no male presence. One-fifth of the participants' fathers were disabled through industrial accidents. Many of them had spent their working lives in the coalfields and had received their injuries there:

"He used to like working on the face, I think, but he had an accident, a coal cutter went for his leg - he was off work for a year. He now limps....He's 39 year old".

Joe, aged 17.

"He's been on the sick for about five years, permanent sick due to an injury to his spine while he was at work. Me dad says that working down the pit is a good job. ....I think he fell down a ladder, I don't know how he did it, I never really asked him."

Colin, aged 16.

"...he is disabled, so he can't work at the moment. He used to be a pitman. He was working with water and he got rheumatism in his legs and he can hardly walk."

Christine, aged 17.

The remainder were factory workers of various types, and sustained their injuries there

"He had an accident about five years ago, now his hand is shaped like a claw; because of the accident he finds it difficult to get a job. He is registered disabled; he's a fitter by trade, and used to be in the RAF when he was younger.....He got £6,000 for the accident in compensation..."

Sandra, aged 17.

"..he was a sheet metal worker and a sheet of aluminium went straight through his hand, that was only about eight weeks after he started that job. He's had two lots of compensation and he's waiting for the final lot. Apparantly a lot of fellas up there have been having accidents similar to that. He is finding it pretty hard to get a job now. He can't get a job until after this November, he's just been discharged from the hospital. He can't move his thumb at all the doctors say that there is nothing now they can do...."

David, aged 17.

"Me father lost his arm in the brickyards, before they were married.."

John, aged 18

One of the fathers had given up work, immediately after his divorce and stayed at home to look after the children, as he had custody of them. Many of the young people reported that their fathers were frustrated and aggressive, due to lack of work, which made their lives boring. This was especially the case when both parents were at home, and therefore they got on one anothers' nerves, seeing so much of one another. They view their fathers' lives as being very mundane:

"the only time he goes out is if there is nothing on the telly, he likes westerns and detectives and things. He's got an allotment and he takes the dog out for a walk, and sleeps in the afternoon..."

Janet, aged 17.

"He likes gardening. He just sits in the house all day as far as I know, sometimes he goes round the shops with me mam. He watches all the sports on the telly."

Michael, aged 16.

In a small number of families girls said that their relationships with their fathers had improved when their father had taken a more active role in the household since they had been made redundant or had suffered from an industrial accident. The girls whose relationships were poor with their fathers, tended to be founded on their fathers poor relationship with their mothers (ill treatment, arguments and problems with alcohol.)

Many of the males in the sample reported a poor relationship with their fathers and for many of these they could not understand the reason for this:

"We hardly ever say anything to each other, I don't know if he's got something against us. If I do ought it always seems wrong in his eyes, ought that I do, he'd not agree with it. Cannot ever remember getting on with him - when I was younger he used to take us bird watching, when I was 12 or 13..."

Michael, aged 17.

"I can't talk to them, they never take any notice of anything they're huffy and always think they're right....its' easier to talk to me mother, she pretends she knows what we're going on about. Yet he hardly ever talks to us. They were strict until I was 16.....when I had an ear pierced he went mad. I've had a tattoo done on me upper arm, he doesn't know about that yet - he'll go spare when he finds out..."

Brian, aged 17.

A couple of the males had very strong feelings against their fathers, again similar to the girls, mainly because of the way they had treated their mothers. These young lads had taken on the predominant male role in their household, Michael was one such boy

"When we were living in Sunderland, well me dad and mam seperated, me mam used to take him back and he used to go off again, but me mam got sick of him. There was a lot of arguments because he was bad with the drink, he was an alcoholic - well he was in the army and in the

house you used to still think he was in the army, he used to think he was sergeant-major and we were his troop. He was very strict - say you had to be in at a certain time, or someone came to call on us and anything went wrong, he'd have a court martial - well he used to get us all into one room and interrogate us. He was coming and going for about three years and then they seperated and then after a while me mam divorced him. That was about two years ago. Well me mam was quiet about it, didn't really show her feelings about it. She's a lot happier now. I feel quite angry about it - I'd like to get me hands on his neck and strangle him, because he used to treat us bad cos he was violent against me mam and against us.....He never used to stick a job, and when he was working he used to expect us to run around after him, and if we didn't, to spite us he would pack in his job."

Michael, aged 16.

### Mothers

The mothers of the trainees split almost evenly into three groups; 49 are in paid employment, (24 working full time, 25 part time), the remaining 29 are housewives. Two mothers are dead. Of those working full-time, ten were skilled, twelve semi-skilled and 2 skilled. Their occupations were concentrated in the manufacturing and service industries. Many were in occupations which did not take advantage of their previous training. Many of these women had grown up families and therefore were more able to work outside of the home. The young people themselves reported that their mothers' worked mainly to 'get out of the house'. Six of the women were the main wage earners' in their families.

"She's worked mainly in cafeterias, clothing factories and has done spot welding....She enjoys her work now on the buildings, clearing out houses for new purchasers. She doesn't need to work, but she enjoys working, she wants to get out of the house."

John, aged 18.

"She's been a cook for the past eight to ten

years.....she works from 11 a.m. till 3 p.m. She enjoys working, she wouldn't like to be sitting in the house with him (her father) all the time. She never goes out cos he'll not let her; he kicks up a fuss if she wants to."

Christine, aged 18.

Some of the women had not returned to the work for which they were previously trained and there was an air of resentment that they had not continued in their chosen profession:

"When she left school, she did typing and worked in an office.....she's worked in a bakery, packing buns. She works in a factory now, she doesn't like it, but she'll have to live with it. She's packing pyjamas and pressing and all that - mens underwear and things.."

Diane, aged 16.

"Me mam trained as a hairdresser, she went to college for two years. She could have taken over the shop that she worked in if it hadn't been for me dad. When she married him she gave up hairdressing and she never went out to work until I was 10. Then she worked in a sausage factory.....now she works as a cleaner full-time - thats, 8 a.m. until 11 a.m. and 4 p.m. until 7 p.m."

Alison, aged 16.

The only profession where the mother returned to her original work after a break of having her children was nursing.

"Me ma, when she lived in Oxford, went to college there and she did nursing. She passed the exams for nursing and then she moved to Essex and did nursing there and she moved up here and did nursing at the Queen Elizabeth. Then she got a job as a mentally handicapped nurse and was there for about 5 year and she liked it. Then she got a job as an assistant officer in charge of an old people's home in Sunderland. And just in August this year she got a senior position at the Woodlands (an old age pensioners home.)"

Dawn, aged 16.

It was the girls who considered their mothers had a significant influence on how they dressed, the work they

sought and advised on the company they kept. (See Sharpe, 1978). The extent to which advice was taken was highly dependant on the type of relationship they had with their mother:

"She's alright, but we never talk or nothing, really all she is, is the person who makes me teas and washes me clothes. She would like me to work in an office. We had a bit of an argument when I started working down at the riding school cos she didn't want to think of us outside in the cold and wet and getting mucky. She's always tried to get us into a skirt (something which Pauleen does not possess)-laughs. She doesn't want us to get a motorbike, but she says that there's not much point in stopping us, as I'll be 18 shortly anyway. She likes us to be in at a certain time on a night, If I'm not in by 11.30 then she goes a bit spare."

Pauleen, aged 17.

"Me mam wants me to go to college, to do nursing, cos that's what me mam is a nurse.....I get on OK with her, but we don't see eye to eye all the time: some of the clothes I wear and boyfriends. She tells me to be careful..."

Janice, aged 16

"I get on alright with me mam. She is very young in her attitudes, think because she works with a lot of young girls, she's very broad-minded. Like her attitudes to boyfriends and that. She is very easy going and I can bring anyone to the house. Me mam loves her job, she works in Fenwicks.....Me mam is ambitious, but I think I'm a quieter nature than what me mam is. She's managed to bring me up by herself; I think I got more things than others got.....About once every two month I go out with me mam for a meal or something.....on a Sunday I sometimes do the garden with me mam and keep her happy. Me mam influences me a lot really, we're much alike, we've the same sense of humour, we like the same type of clothes, the same type of people.....She's a good judge of character I copy off her, especially when she lets us borrow her clothes. I hope to be like her when I'm her age..."

Debra, aged 16

"She wants me to be a swimming instructor but

I don't fancy it really. She wants us to work with children, but I haven't enough qualifications. There is one thing that she wouldn't like us to do and that's to work in a factory or a bakery. (Both jobs her mother has done.)

Diane, aged 16

In many cases the mothers' had aspirations for their girls which were greater than the girls had for themselves; the girls saw marriage and the family as being their ideal, and they viewed work as a short-term measure ~~before~~ marriage. Many of the girls expected to be married by 19 or 20 and they did not think of their lives beyond this age. As a result there was little to be gained from trying to secure examination passes or to think of a career. Sarsby (1972) found similar patterns in her work:-

"..The survey showed the emphasis marriage has in the lives of girls who are academically, culturally and economically at a disadvantage, and the chasm which exists between their psychological preparedness and the minimal emotional maturity of the boys in their class and age-group - who, however, intend to marry not much later than the girls."

They saw work and marriage in conflict; one cannot do both - again this is a puzzling phenomenon when two out of three of their mothers work full-time. The connection was not made between their mothers lives and their own. In relating the story of their own lives, the constant theme was that their mothers returned to work for periods in between children. Their mothers occupied many different jobs, many of which they disliked; they did not want their daughters employed in the same way. Is this because at 16 and 17 years old, thinking five or ten years ahead seems like an eternity? Or due to the philosophy of "live for



today, and let tomorrow worry about itself?" Is it because the world of marriage and babies look on the surface (which is the limit to which it is examined by these young people who view it through rose tinted spectacles of their reading material of 'Jackie', 'My Guy', and 'Honey') to be more attractive than the boring existence of the work which they have tasted in their work experience?

The example given by Sarsby (1972) of the girls' ideal partner could have been taken directly from one of the girls' magazines:

"..The secondary modern girl, on the other hand, was looking generally for an honest, reliable, moderately good - looking, sexually experienced male, who would be faithful, provide a regular income and sexual satisfaction and be kind and understanding.....His intelligence was only fairly important..."

This theme will be returned to when we examine in more detail the culture of these young people.

### Divorce

Although the incidence of divorce in this sample was lower than the national average, one in four families having been affected by divorce; of the remainder, a further 1 in 8 reported that their parents were very unhappy together, and were considering divorce. Of those who had been divorced the main causes given were violence and the effects of alcohol. In all case, the females brought the action against their husbands.

"They're not very happy, he beats her up a lot.....With the trouble at work, when we comes home, he takes it out on me ma and me - he's very violent. He's always galavanting off with other women. He's always been violent, me ma's left him three times, the third time me ma took us with her when she left, we stayed in Sunderland. Me mam went back and it started all over again....When he's finished with me ma, he's start on us..."

Michelle, aged 17

"Me mother and father is always arguing and she's thinking about getting a seperation. What makes it worse is that shes been thinking about it for a couple of year now, she's always going to the solicitors. Its not so bad on me and our Kev, its the young uns that get the most of it like. Me mother says he's got to go to court in a couple of weeks and he's not too happy about that. He gets drunk when he gans out like. Me mother cannot stand it when he comes in drunk. It doesn't really effect us cos we can look after ourselves like..."

Paul, aged 16

"When we lived down Jarrow I was about eight years old and the first thing that I remember of me mam and dad fighting was when I used to sleep with me ma, and me dad started hitting me mams head on the floor, then me older sister came and took me into her bed. Then about a year after that we moved to Washington, cos me mam and dad had been divorced then, and we lived with another man."

Anita, aged 16

"Remember me dad used to fight a lot and there always used to be trouble in the house, well there still is. He has always drunk a lot; I've never gotten on with him, none of the family have....He's been in trouble since I was three, drink started it....He's not working and he'll not find a job; every job he's had, he's been sacked for drinking....."

Diane, aged 16

Again, here, it is surprising that the incidence of divorce and poor relationships between their parents had not markedly affected the young people's view marriage. The prevailing philosophy being, "It won't happen to me." One young girl is of particular note, Sharon, at sixteen,

had witnessed her mother experience two broken marriages which had had histories of violence. At the time we spoke, her mother had married for the third time, and Sharon herself stated that this marriage would not last very long, as there were already violent arguments and scenes in the household. Sharon had taken on a mothering role early in her life when her mother had been unable to cope; two of her brothers were in the care of the local authority, and a third in a special school. Therefore Sharon's experience of marriage through her life with her mother had been far from positive. On completion of the research, I met up with Sharon in a local Wimpey bar where she had a temporary part-time job as a waitress, she was now almost eighteen. In a casual manner she told me she was to be married on the Thursday of that week. Her husband to be was unemployed and they were moving in with his parents. Are we about to see a repeat of her mothers' life experience?

### Tragedy

Another striking factor which arose during the research was the large number of tragedies which had occurred in the lives of this small sample - a total of 11 had suffered some severe tragedy in their family life. This was in addition to the incidence of divorce, and problems related to drink and violence. If we take all of these together, many of the young people in this sample had already seen and been influenced by some of the crueller aspects of life, before they set out on their own. Their own life

chances must be viewed with these factors taken into consideration.

"She (his mother) was about 38 when she died.....I was 13. I think I've got over most of it now.....she was in hospital for months. I didn't know what was wrong with her, me dad kept saying that she was going to get better. But as soon as she was taken into hospital, me dad was told that there was no hope for her and that she would just deteriorate.....I don't think I got over it until I was about sixteen and a half, I mean it went on for years. I think I'm over it now, I can talk about it. I didn't know loosing a mam could effect you that much; it really affected me. I didn't tell me dad, but I used to have nightmares about that phone call, it was the sleepless nights and I think that affected my school life....."

Stephen, aged 17

"We moved because me brother was killed there, just across the road from where we lived. He was killed on the main road, he was three days from being fives years old....."

Ian, aged 16

"He (Dad) used to play rugby and he had a heart attack on the pitch.....At first things were bad and me mam never thought she would be able to cope...At first I used to cry on a night time and that. I stayed off school for two months to help me mam, the teachers were great. There were a load of people from the papers who came, one time there were four reporters came at once, me nan chased them all away, I remember argueing with one of them especially, as he was trying to force his way in."

Ian, aged 16

"Me father died when I was five and me mother when I was twelve since then I've moved around a bit and lived with me brothers and sisters at different times."

Andy, aged 18

"Susan, she left school when she was 16, she was in and out of hospital because of her eye. She had an accident when she was five and she lost her eye.."

Michelle. aged 17

And in one family there were a number of tragedies happening one after the other

"My earliest memory is my sister dying when I was about five years old. Me mam was bathing the baby in the sink and she suddenly rememered

something she wanted at the shop, and she left the baby in the bath. There was some water splashing around and I remember running upstairs to tell my dad. When me mam came back from the shop I remember my dad giving my mam a good thrashing, because the baby had died in the bath. I didn't realise what had happened, I kept asking them where Alison had gone, by the time I was old enough to understand it was awful.....Me mam and dad divorced a few years after that and we lived with me mam at first. I had a twin brother and he was mad on bikes, she said our Neil couldn't have a bike, that it would be over her dead body - it was her fault really what happened. Me dad really wanted us to have a bike. One of the lads had a bike so we used to borrow it, we did it so often that we forgot about it being illegal like. we forgot about the police. Well the bike needed petrol one night and Neil said that he would go for it, then he said that he would not leave me alone with his girlfriend, so I went with him. We went to a couple of garages and they were closed. Then as we were coming into Washington we had an accident - I don't know what happened, I remember waking up in the middle of the road and wondering what had happened. I asked about our Neil and they told me he was alright. I kept passing out all the time with the pain. When I got to the hospital I remember the nurses turning away when they looked at me - my eye was in a bit of a mess. The nurses said that my mam and dad were there, I thought there must be something wrong for the two of them to be there together. I could hear me dad yelling at someone and then they told me dad had gone. They kept asking me about stomach pains and they forgot about my arm. Then they took me to Ryhope hospital, as they thought that I had internal bleeding. In the ambulance was me and me mam and John, me mam's boyfriend - this was great. I'd never seen him before. Me mam was crying her eyes out, must have been about our Neil, but I didn't know about that at the time. When I got to the hospital me dad was there and he had an awful look about him, as though he'd seen a ghost. The doctors ran all sorts of funny tests on me - I had three or four broken ribs, but there was nothing wrong with me stomach. Just as me mam and dad went out I asked about our Neil and they said that he had gone to another hospital. My arm had gotten worse by this time, it had been crushed I had an operation to put a metal plate into it - I had that taken out a couple of weeks ago. I remember me mam and dad coming in to see me together, I thought there must be something wrong here. Then they told me about Neil, that he was dead....."

Kevan, aged 17

The realities of life were obviously very clear to these young people. This may account for their fatalistic attitude to life.

#### Unemployment in the Family

A further factor which affected the lives of many of these young people were the number of other members of their families who were unemployed. In one in four families, the young person is not the only family member who is unemployed, but this figure does not show the true facts, because in some households there are 3, 4, and five members unemployed.

Table 3.2

#### Numbers in each household registered as unemployed

Out of a total of 80 households, the number of people unemployed:-

In 42 of the households only 1 member (the trainee) is unemployed

In 26 of the households	2 members are unemployed
In 8 of the households	3 members are unemployed
In 2 of the households	4 members are unemployed
In 2 of the households	5 members are unemployed

4. Collecting the dole - young and old alike.



"My mam and dad are both unemployed, have been for the last three months, they were sacked from their last job as steward and stewardess of a local club. Don't know what type of thing they are looking for now. Me older brother, he's been unemployed for the past six months, and then there's me. When I didn't have a government scheme they (parents) used to say I was idle, but I seem to get on better with them now I'm employed."

Bill, aged 17

"My dad is unemployed, he gets invalidity benefit, he's bad with his nerves, and used to have agrophobia. I can't remember my dad ever going to work, he's always been on benefit for as long as I can remember. My mam doesn't work, she has to stay at home to look after my dad in case he hurts himself....Our Anne's husband is unemployed at the moment, he's had a number of jobs.....Our John, he's 20, he's mentally handicapped, he'll never have work, he's in a hospital all the time. Then there's me, I was unemployed for six weeks before I got the government scheme. Our Susan is next, she left school in May and is still looking for a job....."

Rita, aged 17

"He used to be a miner, he's on the sick now, cos he had an accident down the pit, he nearly chopped his foot off. He's been off about five year. He's suffering from angina and he's blind in one eye and nearly blind in the other. He's got to have a serious operation to have his gall stones removed on Monday. He has these fits as well and the doctor says they are epileptic, but we're not sure what they are....Me mam's on sticks now and she has to go in a wheelchair when she goes out, she goes to physiotherapy three times a week but that does not seem to be helping her very much. She used to work as a cleaner, but now she's permanently disabled and she can't work. I don't think she has worked for the past four years, she's 43 years old.....Susan, me sister, she's nineteen, she has been in care since she was seven.....she did live at a hostel, but she signed herself out, cos shes 19. Other people must have put her up to the idea as she has got the mind of a twelve year old. She'll never be able to work with her being mentally backward. Then there's Philip, he's seventeen, he used to go to a special school. He had a government scheme, now his six month course is up, he's left home.....He's in trouble with the police. I'm the next one down,.....and I've got



a government scheme."

Wendy, aged 16

Of those unemployed in these households, eight had been caused by redundancy; this had effected the women in the households as much as the men.

"she works, well she used to work at a place called MEM and they kept going out on strike and that and then she got made redundant.....we are going to Spain for our holidays on her redundancy money...."

Hazel, aged 17

"Mam was recently made redundant, two weeks ago, she'd been there nearly eight years - she's put all her redundancy money into the bank. She worked on Quality Control at Philips, she used to do all different jobs....."

Maureen, aged 17

"Me dad used to work down the pit, he was there until we were about twelve. He hated it, but he got what he wanted out of it. He then went to work for the Co-op in a factory, he was made redundant from there. He got thirteen and a quarter thousand pounds redundancy money....."

Kevan, aged 17 .

If we look at the figure for those who are unemployed in the households amongst the males we note that there are households where there is no male presence (three through death of their father), there are nine fathers on permanent sick, as a result of industrial accidents, seven who are unskilled and one who is skilled and eight who have been made redundant. All of the young people in the group were unemployed, though not part of the unemployment statistics. During the course of this research, many of the younger children of these families were met, as they too entered "the government schemes" due to their unemployment.

THE HOLLAND KIDS : Experience of schooling

Experience of Schooling

These young people's view of schooling cannot be viewed in isolation. It is important to recognise the families they come from, with especial reference to the numbers in their families unemployed and to consider how this effects their view of the world once they have left school. At the time that I spoke to the young people all had been left school for a minimum of two months, whereas others had had two years away from school. Therefore the views given will have a reflective bias in them.

Of the group, all but two attended the local comprehensive schools in Washington; the two former, having attended ESN schools. Many of the group had not had a continuous period at the comprehensive, due to moving into the new town at different stages in their lives. Although the majority of the young people reported liking school in the early years; there is a marked change when they enter the fourth, and more especially the fifth year. This has been noted by other writers (Corrigan, 1979). With each year the school leaving age has been raised; the problems start a year earlier. Some writers have attributed the stress associated with the school to work transition as being the cause for disruption at this time (Carter 1962; Wall, 1968)

"Skiving off" or "playing the nick"

It was in the fifth year that truanting became common

practice for some of the young people (33/80 of the trainees reported truancy in the 5th year.) This generally was staying away from particular lessons or teachers, rather than staying away from school totally. If there was the intention to stay away completely this was more common as a group, rather than an individual activity. For an interpretation of "Why Do Kids Play Truant?", see Corrigan, 1979. Arguments are developing that the raising of the school leaving age have not been operational in fact, Colin Ball (1979) stated that 67% of pupils leave school at the minimum school leaving age and that 52% effectively become permanent truants in their last year.

Reports of 'Institutionalised Truancy' were headlines in the Times Education Supplement, 24.10.80, when they reported "Lax attitudes to 5th Form Truancy Affects Everyone"

"Teachers who let 5th form pupils stay at home the moment public examinations are finished must take the blame for truancy lower down in school, a government funded research project has found. The research, as yet unpublished, on disaffected pupils will point out that the common practice of schools openly condoning and often encouraging pupils not to attend classes in the summer once exams are over disenchant younger children who feel they are not geared to exams. This can cause younger children to stay away. Ms Daphne Johnson of the Brunel University educational studies unit carried out the research for the Department of Education and Science. "For quite a long time there has been institutionalised truancy." Schools are geared to having a lot of pupils absent."

School was "a good laugh"

When the young people talk in positive terms about their school days they are often referring more to the social aspect that school brought them, rather than the academic environment. For many of them, on leaving school, they also left behind many of their school friends and their informal social network which had been so much a part of their lives for the last number of years. They were moving into a phase where they would have to make their own friends and the usual channel for this - the workplace had been denied to them.

"I liked school, apart from the lessons. We used to have good laughs; it was crap in lessons. They taught you things that you didn't need to know, such as geography and history. They should have been teaching us things that would help in life - what it will be like to work, teaching you about engineering and things like that. Liked playing the nick when I was at school - stopped playing the nick in the fifth year, cos the teachers slackened off and there wasn't any need to, cos they didn't take that much notice of you..."

Michael, aged 17

"It was a good laugh (school) we used to see who could get the cane the most. It only hurt for a few seconds, there wasn't much they could do to you. We used to ignore the teachers. You got fun out of going to school, we used to get into loads of trouble.....It was good being in trouble, all the teachers could do was expell you. It was cos we were thick heads that we carried on...."

Colin, aged 16

"It was great at school, you got on great with the teachers and you had some good friends. I never had many days off school I loved it, but in the last year I started to get fed up and wanted to leave and get a job, with the exams coming up. When I was in the last year, I started to joke on

with all my friends. Then me and me best friend split up and then when all the exams came I didn't really revise much, and I didn't really care. Now that I've left school I regret that I didn't study harder."

Gail, aged 17

Corrigan, (1979) argues that the young people seeing school as 'a laff' and who enjoyed 'carrying on' in the classroom, were dealing in a specific way with authority; this was the way they chose to handle it. Classroom misbehaviour has been studied because of the links it is seen to have with poor achievement within the school. Hargreaves and Lacey (1967, 1970), introduced the notion of 'counter culture' into this argument, in their relationship between the working class and the secondary school. The evidence of this research would tend to support the argument advanced by Corrigan (1979); many of the young people spoke with obvious delight of the manner in which they were able to unsettle their teachers, and discussed triumphs of 'destroying the young ones'. This 'carrying on' syndrome is often carried into work.

"(Talking first about school) It was a daft laugh when I was there we used to carry on all the time man. And er we used to have a good laugh, it was the main meeting place for everybody, school. We used to take the water out of all the teachers, we never used to listen or nowt like.....(then talking about his work experience placement) it's just a daft laugh, I get on well with all the lads....."

Paul, aged 17

Teachers - "they're not really interested in us"

Resentment was expressed by some of the trainees, all of

whom were male about the manner in which they were treated at school, many feeling that they were talked down to and given insufficient time and attention. They interpreted this to mean "they're not really interested in us."

The "us" they referred to was the non-examination or C.S.E class, as opposed to those taking O'levels.

"Think the teachers are poor, they lack interest in the kids and the subject, well the CSE teachers do. There wasn't much discipline at school, and we didn't get any careers advice. They didn't encourage you to work when you were at school in fact you felt daft if you worked. I played the nick sometimes from school, never got caught....."

Michael, aged 18

"The school is so big, you don't get much attention.."

John, aged 18

The views expressed, were not implying that they did not want to work, but rather that the teachers themselves had lost interest in teaching them. That the teachers stood for authority is expressed very clearly by the three lads below.

"You were treated like a kid and half of them that teach you aren't much older than you are - I like to think for myself not be taught things..."

Andy, aged 18

"I didn't get on with the teachers, they really think that they're your parents sometimes. But your parents wouldn't raise a stick at you, now would they? Some of the teachers use sticks, others use straps - not that it hurts much, its just the thought of them using them. In the first year I got sick of "YOU do this and YOU do that, when I tell you to GO boy, then GO' Who do they think they are? I said that I didn't agree with it and I got a whack across the face....well that was the start of it....."

Frank, aged 17

"I went to school, cos you have to gan, not because you wanted to or cos you enjoyed it: it was like a sentence 'I hereby sentence you to five years at Usworth comprehensive.' I hated authority they try to make out that they're better than you are, you're told to do things, but there is no explanation as to why."

John, aged 18

The three lads talking above were very articulate concerning their position whilst at school and voiced some very sound arguments, and yet these were three lads who had experienced mammoth problems within the school system - because they questioned it. Frank and Andy were both threatened with being expelled and Frank was suspended for some time.

All of the lads within the group situation on the Life Skills course were eager to learn, once their initial hostility on thinking that they were being told to return to a school situation was overcome. In fact Frank was one group member who used to come into the centre on his day off to see if he could help with any of the groups; he proved to be a willing and creative 'teacher' in his own right. The traditional school system had failed these lads, and they had been viewed as failures within - a terrific waste of potential, which had just not been tapped.

#### Cheated by the school system

Some of the participants had felt that they were 'put down' in the classroom and made to feel silly, because they were slower than the rest of their group in learning, and they had been left behind and not given the consideration they felt was due to them. They harboured a



resentment that the school system had cheated them:

"School was not very good. They don't teach you - they just give you some questions and just don't tell you what its all about and that.....They made you feel crap. They gave you loads of work to do, and then if you weren't finished in the time you were supposed to stay behind. Would have liked to have done all sorts of things at school....."

Kevin, aged 16

There is a strong note of teacher's disinterest from Kevin, that they handed out work in an effort to keep a class quiet, rather than an effort to help the class to learn. Kevin's conception of 'teaching' is obviously different from his teachers' from this quote. This too was shared by others;

"You couldn't get nothing learnt. We used to get English with the Deputy Head, he was never there though, and he never used to tell us when he wasn't coming in..."

Sharon, aged 17

"Went to Usworth school, didn't like it, just didn't like the teachers, they just keep telling ye te de this and de that - I just ended up getting the cane. Wasn't good at woodwork and metalwork and he kept getting on at me. I was slow at tech drawing. I got fed up so I just played the nick from his lessons, and then it got to full days....."

Michael, aged 16

These are the young people who were effected by ROSLA, and yet as previously mentioned in effect their extra year of schooling has not been realised. Many of the young people internalised the teachers disinterest in them and consequently lost what commitment they had to the school. Although many of the participants took CSE's, the young people themselves did not see these to be of any use

unless they were able to gain Grade 1's in the subject they took. In many instances C.S.E's are not viewed as qualifications -

"oh, they're just CSE's, and they're no use cos they're not grade 1's..." The advent of the exams legitimised their staying away from school.

"...once the exams came I kept away all together..."

"I wouldn't have stayed on at school, I got out as soon as I could, especially when I had the chance to leave without taking any exams I just left, I couldn't stand any more of it....."

Julie, aged 16

The extent to which CSE's are seen by the trainees as unimportant is reflected in the numbers of young people who do not know their results. Many had not gone to the school to collect the information on results or their certificates.

"haven't gotten the results yet....."

(Alison left school over a year ago)

Alison, aged 17

"I don't know which exams I got, I've never had time to go for the results..."

Kevin, aged 16

"Did all CSE's, think I passed everything except English, got a Grade 3 for Maths, and all the rest were Grade 4's. Haven't been down for them at school for the certificate, I'm always at work."

Paul, aged 16

"Me mates left school at Easter, but I stayed on until June to take CSE's, I still haven't got the results. I got a job when I left and didn't have time to go down to collect them, think I probably

passed Tech. Drawing....Its, been too long since I left to go and see if I've got any qualifications...."

John, aged 18

### Careers Education in Schools

Within the four comprehensives studied (the fifth did not have a fifth form entry at this point) there were varied degrees of interest on careers education or vocational guidance. This ranged from, a passing interest at one extreme, to a desire to incorporate the subject into the curriculum at all levels. One general view of careers education which came across strongly from the teachers was their view that this was a subject area for the early school - leaver to study and not for the academic pupils. A well established path is seen to be there for the academic pupils who will simply move through the school and onto colleges. A further prevalent remark on careers from all the schools was that there was "too little and it was too late".

### Careers Teachers

All the careers teachers spoken to had a background in industry, having come into the teaching profession later than usual, or they were teaching the practical subjects within the schools. They voiced concerns that the teachers involved with the academic pupils were disinterested in careers. Many of the programmes for careers education lacked imagination and were simply

repeats of programmes which had been going on for years; this may be a reflection of the general level of apathy which surrounds the subject area in general. The visitors to the school had not diversified at all, they remained the same input, as that which I had received fourteen years ago - 'the forces show', the nursing profession etc. There was no reflection of the change of the structure of many areas of work and developments which young people may be encouraged to enter - the world of micro-chip technology, computers. This is not saying that those teachers who were involved with careers teaching were themselves uncaring in their work; rather, that they struggled against great odds to provide an adequate service. Careers education is merely skimming the surface and is more of a cosmetic job in the schools - the time allocated being brief, the teachers responsible receiving little further training in this specialised field and the funds allocated to this area of work being minimal.

The teachers responsible for careers education in the schools are allocated this as an additional responsibility, many without financial rewards. This extra responsibility being seen as a way to work up the ladder of promotion. Therefore the teacher allocated to this work has this as an adjunct to his prime teaching responsibility. There is little time to develop the careers work. This patchiness of the service was observed in the Youthaid (1979) study.

"Some of the schools had made more progress than others towards a structured programme, and all said that 'this year' was to be an improvement on last and that next year would be better than this year. Careers activities do not however, generally have sufficient status to resist

timetable pressures and where there is a clash in examinable subjects, careers teaching becomes an 'option' which is generally the 'first to go'.....Many careers teachers were teachers of other subjects, devoting a minority of their time to what they perceived as a secondary activity, and some of them even 'stole' careers lessons for their specialist subject. We feel that it is important that to gain expertise in the field and obtain a good knowledge of the local labour market, the post should be a full time one".  
(p. 59)

In one of the schools the head of careers education had two and a half hours teaching time allocated to careers on his timetable and his budget was £50 a year - this being for the total range from 11 to 16 years of age, and this had to include his use of paper. This was not an exceptional case, but more of the rule. All of the careers teachers thought that the post of careers teacher should be a full time post, with the person being able to devote their time to this area to produce a good and relevant scheme for the pupils. Despite this, there were examples of good practice, Washington school emphasised personal development in their new programme. They saw 'careers education' as being wider than the term implied and therefore they preferred to call it vocational guidance. A package of material had been collected and produced by the school but the package unfortunately was not available for the young people in the school. The costs were prohibitive, therefore the extent to which this material could be used were minimal. The booklet was more of a show piece than an actual working document.

#### Training the careers teacher

The careers teachers themselves were in the privileged

bracket if they had secured further training to equip them for their role. This seems to be a common fact throughout the country. In the report, "Breaking Through", (1980), by the Centre for Applied Research in Education they state.

"None of the three careers services have any significant budgets for in-service training. In-service for careers teachers has a comparatively low profile. This fits in with the national scene - careers training does not constitute a very substantial percentage of expenditure at either national or local authority level...."

This appears to be a serious anomaly. This particular area of work needs to be geared to change. To be able to respond to changes in the wider society, to be aware of new training programmes being made available for those leaving school and to changes in the general work structure. Closeted in the school system for five days a week does not enable the careers teacher to develop awareness in these areas. Newsom, (1963) had drawn attention to the needs of the teachers to enable them to carry out their role effectively.

"A major problem is how to ensure that the teachers themselves, apart from having the right contacts and the necessary sources of information, really understand the work situation as their pupils will meet it. Late entrants to the teaching profession who have themselves done other jobs will have a useful contribution to make here, but these will always be a minority of teachers. Our pupils, especially, present a difficulty. Where the older, and abler pupils are going onto careers involving higher education and training, at least the initial stages on the road will not be unlike what the teachers have known themselves. It is more difficult for the teacher to become familiar with the commercial and industrial situation as it will be encountered by the young school leaver...."

(p2.37)

The Young People's view of careers education in schools

The fact that careers education has not, as yet firmly established itself as part of the school curriculum is reflected in the comments from the young people at the receiving end. A majority of their comments were bound up with lack of commitment or time on the part of many of the teachers involved in this work. It is fair to say at this point that much of this is not the fault of the individual teachers, as they are bound by a lack of time and resources to carry out their role effectively. But still a pervasive attitude remains that there was a lack of importance given to this area of work....

"We got a careers lesson about once every three weeks, for about three quarters of an hour. It was nowt really, the teacher was never there, he was always in and out every five minutes. I can't remember any of it - it was useless...."

Ian, aged 16

"There was a careers master at school, but he really didn't have time, cos he had other classes to take. I used to work in the careers class at school so I could pick up information I wanted while I was there...."

Christine, aged 17

"We got careers advice in the third year, but we got a teacher who didn't know what she was supposed to do with us in this lesson, so we just sat and talked all the time."

Maureen, aged 16

For many of the young people the theory and the practice as they found it on leaving school did not tie up too closely.

"Wasn't very much use the careers advice we got

at schools. Well they didn't explain the proper parts about interviews and that, they just cut it short."

Michael, aged 16

The careers teachers had complained of how careers education in schools was seen as low status, it is only for the lower abilities, those who will not be taking examinations. The low status accorded to the work is absorbed by many of the young people. Some complain that they are all receiving the same information on occupational choice whether they are interested or not.

"They got all the groups together when they had talks and you had to go whether you were interested or not - didn't take much notice cos I wasn't interested in the army and navy and things like that."

The careers teachers themselves said that many of their colleagues welcomed these careers talks, as they could take their classes to the main hall and leave them to the speaker. The young people are often very aware that this is happening and feel resentful at having to attend something which they see as unimportant or of no interest to them. It is interesting that a high proportion of the young people spoke of the careers sessions as if the teacher always had something else to do, or were unconcerned about the lesson.

#### Methods of careers teaching

The method of teaching employed in many of these careers sessions were very passive; the young people sat and watched a film or a television programme or there was a



guest speaker. Many spoke of seeing a film, but could not remember the general area of the content. The content of most careers films has been called into question (Willis, 1977) as reinforcing sexist attitudes, and the naturalism of social divisions together with the inevitability of certain kinds of work.

"Perhaps the clearest example here is that of role differentiation between the sexes in careers films. There is no obvious discrimination, and sex role typing is never the subject of comment in these films. If anything, the explicit emphasis is developing more towards equality between the sexes, but the visual images and implied assumptions remain sexually divisive and are picked up by the sexism of 'the lads'.

In a cake factory we see only girls working and the voice-over tells us as we watch the girl icing the cake, 'Yes, she really is doing it that quickly, the film isn't speeded up'. Women are always doing intricate and fiddly things. Their only relation to more heroic occupations is one of fear and concern for their manfolk. In a film on trawling the young seaman is shown leaving an anxious and uncertain mother waving on the doorstep of her own proper domain, the home. She disappears back into the house when he is out of sight apparently to wait and brood there until his return. In contrast to this obvious display of feeling the male captain of the trawler is portrayed as a remote and powerful figure 'who cannot afford to show emotion'. His attention is on the size of the catch - not on the pastoral care of his crewmen." (p161 - 162)

There were no indications from the young people interviewed that they were seeking anything other than traditional male/female occupations. There is an argument that this area of work requires different methods to assist the pupils to learn for themselves and to develop their decision-making skills. (Newsom 1963; Baldwin and Wells, 1979; Hopson and Hough, 1973).

Young People leaving school and being unemployed

As the situation of leaving school and securing work was the exception rather than the norm, careers teachers were asked if they prepared young people for this situation. Their general response being this was a very negative attitude and that one should educate children to anticipate work on leaving school. One could question whether the schools are neglecting their duties by forgetting what is happening in the world outside of the school. For many of the young people leaving school and meeting unemployment directly, this comes as a cruel shock.

"Unemployed is affecting everyone, it's something that just can't be helped now. I've accepted it. They never really talked about unemployment at school. We used to get Vocational Guidance at school; we had to write letters and were told about how to go about an interview, but we never got told anything about unemployment and where to go when you left school. They never told you about the Youth Opportunities Scheme. Don't think they really prepare you for life outside of school....."

Norma, aged 17

So on leaving school many of the young people are only aware of the schemes which are available to them through their informal networks, as both the careers teachers and the careers officers who attended the schools said that they did not openly talk about the schemes available, in case this distracted the young people from actively seeking work themselves. They argued that if they felt that all they had to do was to leave school and move onto a scheme then their motivation to seek full time

employment would decrease. So for the majority of the young people leaving school at this time, they joined a world which offered them no full time work and a confusing picture of what was available to them. This attitude is mirrored in a course which I attended a year earlier than this research, where a film was shown on the Youth Opportunities Programme, to publicise the new scheme - it was considered by the L.E.A to be "too attractive" to show in the schools.

(At the close of the research this situation has altered markedly. With one in two school leavers joining government schemes and the advent of "The New Training Initiative" with its "Youth Training Programme" aimed at all young people who have left school between the ages of 16-19 years - the schools are now promoting the information. Careers officers talk more openly of the schemes and representatives from schemes are asked to talk to potential school-leavers about their offerings.)

#### Final Year at School

We may question whether this final year of schooling really benefited these young people. For too many of them, the year, dwindled into a matter of weeks, as they opted out of full time schooling, and 'put in an appearance' at intervals. It was the Newsom Report (1963), which gave an airing to the notion of 'relevant education', arguing that the extra compulsory school year, should be one that was 'different' and not just 'more of the same'. Holly, (1971), was disappointed that this

committee left out the humanist perspective and concentrated on the needs of 'society's controlling interests'.

....The whole pressure of the wider society has been supportive of such a narrowly practical view of education. Bodies issuing reports on education, particularly the Minister of Education's Central Advisory Council, have stressed the economic aspects in all the main recommendations.....The humanist conception of education as personal development and fulfillment and the full realisation of human potential has not been a central concern. Even under the Chairmanship of Sir John Newsom, when the remit was a consideration of the needs of the 'average or below average' pupil, what actually emerged was a view of 'need' as associated with the requirements of society - or rather society's controlling with interests." (p 91)

What also was not taken into account by Newsom was the paucity of resources to be made available for this additional year and the unwieldy and immovable stances of so many of our schools.

"Social inventions are notoriously slow in becoming adopted by social institutions. It has been estimated that it has taken thirty five years for the average educational innovation to be used in half the schools. Someone once said it is easier to move a graveyard than to change curriculum."

(Conger, 1972)

Many have contributed to this debate on 'relevant education' (Department of Education and Science, (1977); Industrial Training Research Unit (1979); Hopson and Scally (1981)) and so it continues. For those young people leaving school, some of their reflections on their final school year, point to a lack of relevance and their feeling of being ill-equipped to enter the wider world.

"Most things that you do you don't need; maths and english are important though. Can't see why you have to do some subjects. There should be limits to how far you go with some subjects - what do I need Pythagorus for? It should be up to us to make the decisions what subjects we take. Think I've learnt more since I left school.....schools should prepare you more for life.."

Bryan, aged 17

"They gave you some forms about trade unions, but I didn't think you could join one if you were on work experience. They should have told us all about that at school. They didn't get you ready for work and show you how the job is run and how to look for a job and about unions and things you come into contact with at work - they never told you that....."

Sharon, aged 17

I asked them what they would have liked to have learnt in their final year at school that they would consider helpful:

"It would have been a good idea to come to a place like this (Life Skills Centre). Think we should have had something like this when we were at school. We didn't get stuff like this at school - it is nothing like they said it would be when you leave school. It would be better if you came here when you just left school; you get pushed all over and you don't know any better. Coming here when we first left school, we would try harder to get jobs cos we would know better what an employer wanted from us."

Debra, aged 16

".....they never told you about what the careers office did and how to get a job, and nothing about the job centres. They used to tell you about work, but not about what it was like to be on the dole. I used to think it would be great to be on the dole, not having to go to work, not having to get up in the morning, but they never told you just how depressed people could get."

Pauleen, aged 17

The actual leaving of school, came upon some young people that quickly that they were suprised it was happening, the reality came too soon:

"I think it came quick, I didn't realise that I was actually leaving"

Elizabeth, aged 17

It could be argued that the skills which these young people are ill-prepared for cannot be learnt in the traditional classroom situation; they need to be experienced. The school system has travelled a little way along these lines to provide work experience for a week for some young people while they are still at school. This joint effort of the schools and the careers service, in co-operation with employers, places some of the young people with an employer for a week. They gain a 'taste' of the world of work. Not all young people have this opportunity. The disruptive young person is unlikely to be considered. Thus whilst many of the class are away on work experience, others take the opportunity of an extra weeks holiday. Were the numbers of days in this final year calculated that the ROSLA pupil was in school, they would fall far short of the normal academic year. One lad felt that the total system of work experience whilst at school was too haphazard and in no way an answer to the problem of this final year

"School prepares you in no way for life outside school. Only one in every class had the opportunity to do work experience while at school and that's just free labour for an employer for a week. You are not prepared for work - tax, insurance, etc., you eventually pick it up, in a haphazard way.....

John, aged 18.

Other reports have had similar findings; Johnson and Bachman (1976) found that only 18% of school pupils found that they were unable to develop skills and utilise their talents at school, compared with some 80% of employees in most occupations. The Schools Council, 1968, found that

in their study, over half the school leavers had found more than half their subjects 'boring' and 'useless', but that 80% of 20 year olds who had left school at 15, liked their jobs, their employers and found their work interesting. In Raven's work (1977) the findings were that one third of the pupils interviewed said that they sometimes or always hated school.

These findings have implications for the way we proceed with this final year of schooling. Is it different to the other ten years of schooling; are the young people treated differently, as young adults, about to enter a wider world than that of school. Should schools be preparing young people for work, or should they be concentrating more on the personal development of these young people?

#### The Shock of no work

Many of the young people took the short measure of getting out of school at Easter and not taking exams - more because of leaving school early than taking the exams. Their hopes of finding work on leaving school were very soon shattered.

"They (the teachers) gave you the impression that you would get a job, but it wasn't like that. I felt let down, going looking for a job, I thought it would be easy to get a job when I left school, thought it would be straight from school to work. You think sometimes that because you haven't got any exams that you can walk into a job in a shop - but the jobs are not there."

Sharon, aged 16

"Work is different from what I expected it to be; I thought that with leaving school at Easter before all the summer leavers that I would get a job easy like, but it wasn't like that...."

Paul, aged 16

Others, began to realise that there school life had been very easy to what they were to meet in the working world - to some it came as quite a shock:

"Don't think that school really prepared you for the outside world, it was too comfortable. I found it quite a strain when I went out into the big world, I didn't realise that life, in general was so hard. It was a hard shift putting in between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. I used to work for an extra hour to get into the bosses good books. Its the same where I'm at now, working in an office, I still feel tired when I come in from work."

Michael, aged 17

"When I left school I found it wasn't too nice outside, couldn't really get a job, there wasn't really anything to get, cos I didn't know what I wanted to do. At school it all seemed so easy, you were so secure with your friends, but when you were by yourself you saw things in a different light, When you were at school you always knew what was going to happen the next day.....but when you got outside you found you were unprepared.

Keith, aged 18

For one young girl, (one of the "young ones") it was the wider social world on leaving school that she was exposed to which came as somewhat of a shock:

"Work experience is good, its' certainly been an experience for me. It shows you how different people are, they are a real mixed bunch, The amount that hasn't got a mam or dad amazes me - I've never heard of anything like it before I started to work there (she's talking about one-parent families) I'm amazed at how some people talk about their mam and dad and about their aunts and uncles that aren't so nice; mine are kind and gentle and I like my mam and dad - they just take you in no bother like....."

Alison, aged 16

The harsh realities soon set in. The disillusion began





for many; the unpredictability of their situation and of being on ones own, brought pressures to these young people. Only one in eight had considered that they would be unemployed on leaving school.

### Apprenticeships

The acquisition of an apprenticeship continues as part of working class aspirations. The fact that these aspirations are unrealistic in an area where heavy industry, and the craft-based labour economy are in decline has not filtered through to "the lads" and their parents. Apprenticeships are stated in the masculine, as few girls have opportunities for apprenticeships, in Davies' (1975) study of over 200,000 school leavers, he found that 39.5% of the boys were offered apprenticeships; the percentage for the girls was 7.5%. Of this group almost three-quarters went into hairdressing, a profession which has come under much criticism for using its apprentice system as a source of cheap labour.

Fifteen of the males in this group had expected to secure an apprenticeship. Many had been encouraged by their fathers'; an apprenticeship being viewed as 'a way forward', as a means of securing a good future.

"They (parents) wanted me to get a job where I was happy, an apprentice like. I applied to be an apprentice fitter, I was told they had had 1,500 lads applying for 200 jobs at the NCB....."

Lesley, aged 17

"He just wanted us to get an apprenticeship - anywhere - so long as it was an apprenticeship....."

Kevin, aged 17

"Before I left I'd written away to four or five places, mostly for apprenticeships - in engineering, a joiner and a bricklayer. Four O'levels to be a bricklayer. It's a bit stupid that like, as long as you can do the work....."

David, aged 17

"Me mam and dad wanted us to get a trade, like me dad, he's a skilled fitter; they said once you've got a trade you can get a job almost anywhere..."

Michael, aged 17

(Michael's father has been unemployed for some time.....)

Further support of this overriding concern with apprenticeships was noted in a Youthaid Study (1979):-

".....it is the cultural values of that craft-based labour economy (rather than the partially restricted new economy of relatively de-skilled light industry) which continues to dominate social perceptions and aspirations.

This is clearly demonstrated by the dominance of the declining apprenticeship system in the vocational aspirations of male school leavers and their parents 64 percent of boys in the Newcastle sample said they wanted an apprenticeship in response to the question "What did you want to do after leaving school?" compared with 43% in the London sample, and only 28% in the rural sample.

Yet only 32% of Newcastle boys obtained apprenticeships - half the number who had the aspiration. While in Berwick on Tweed more boys obtained apprenticeships than had explicitly aspired to one. All this reflects the social traditions of an area whose economy was formerly dependant on craft-based industry.

Parents have transmitted to their children the view that if you 'get a trade' it will last a lifetime - i.e. that the acquisition of one set of traditionally taught and certificated skills will be adequate for an entire working lifetime. This, in the light of changes in technological and manpower requirements is clearly no longer the case. That 64% of Newcastle lads believe it to be the case, poses serious questions for parents as well."

(4.9)

Throughout the research period, the young lads I have been working with have constantly talked of apprenticeships and their desire to secure one. Within the hierarchy of manual work, the skilled man is at the apex; with the retraction of the old industries, coal, shipbuilding, steel, etc., especially in the North East, the number of apprenticeships in the area has fallen drastically, but the demand for apprenticeships has apparently increased. Personnel officers in industry report that they have never had such a choice of young people for apprenticeships - they have often over 200 to interview for only twelve jobs; they say that in many instances that there is nothing to choose between the young people. This issue was discussed with the local senior careers officers and they informed me that a very high percentage of young people on their books are only interested in apprenticeships. There are very many who have not a hope of securing one on the basis of their qualifications, let alone the availability. With some of the young people they report that their aspirations take a long time to dispense with, despite the fact that many are severely disappointed. Why is there the time gap between acknowledgement of the fact that there are less apprenticeships and that industry is changing in different directions and the aspirations of many young people. There is also an age gap here. Many of the young people seeking to secure apprenticeships do not have fathers who had a trade. It appears that the aspirations of the parents have been projected onto the young people themselves; plus there is a general confusion about other

areas of work which may be available to them. The careers officers had no answers to these problems. With the choice which employers now have in this field, it is often the most capable in academic terms of success who appear to be securing these posts; one of the officers argued that it should be the colleges who recruit for apprenticeships, as it is they who could gauge whether the person would be capable of completing the college course which they would be required to attend. In many cases, apprenticeships, is a case of rhetoric - if you ask many of the young people what an apprenticeship is, they are non-plused! They know the end product, but are unclear of the process.

#### Parental Influence

Other than in the area related to apprenticeships, parental influence does not appear to figure too strongly in their attitude to their young peoples' schooling or their future job prospects, except in the minority of cases:

"Me dad has not really pushed me into thinking about a job in particular, except he says he does not want me to work in a factory. He just wants me to do what I want to do."

Michael, aged 17

"Parents weren't bothered what I did when I left school. We didn't discuss it."

Julie, aged 16

In a couple of instances where parents had expressed a preference for what their offspring should do, this was rejected by the young people themselves:

"My parents are strict. Their attitude to the unemployed are that they're all jobs and they think the national service would be a good idea. They would like me to go into the forces but I'm not too keen. I'd like to work for meself as a fitter."

Stuart, aged 17

"Me dad'd love us to get a 'git' steady job and all. I don't want a steady job. I hate office work. I would prefer to like me job and get low pay. You're doing it everyday of your life so you may as well like it. When I got a job in the DHSS he liked it; then when I got terminated cos I couldn't do me work he took a fit!"

Hazel, aged 17

To use Willis' (1977) argument, the lack of real discussion by the parents and the vagueness of job choice among the young people themselves should be viewed from a different plane than the discussion of comprehensive job choices. Willis' argues,

"... 'the lads' are not choosing careers or particular jobs, they are committing themselves to a future of generalised labour. Most work - or the 'grafting' they accept they will face - is equilibrated by the overwhelming need for instant money, the assumption that all work is unpleasant and that what really matters is the potential particular work situations hold for self and particularly masculine expression, diversions and 'laffs; as learnt creatively in the counter-school culture. These things are quite separate from the intrinsic nature of any task."  
(p 99-100)

5. A new experience: waiting in the queue to sign on



The initial state of being unemployed did not hit hard in the early stages; it had similarities to the school holidays. This was especially so, when many of their friends were also unemployed. It was with the expansion of this 'enforced leisure', that the hard facts were realised.

"I was on the dole for six months when I left school, the first two months were OK as none of me friends had jobs and we just used to wander around and do what we wanted, then all me friends got jobs and I was just left sitting in the house all day....."

Pauleen, aged 17

"It was great when I was on the dole, our Alan was on the dole as well. We just lazed about, stayed in bed mostly; mam kept saying I was bone idle. Mam said I was just like our Alan, he'd been on the dole over a year.... Somedays we would get the bullworker out and exercise together. We used to get up around 2 p.m., I just to get a bath and wash me hair every day and do the housework - I used to get our Alan to do some. Used to go out every night, discos and things. Our John used to give us money when I was on the dole - he's spent loads on me our John..."

Julie, aged 16

"When I left school I didn't bother looking for a job at first, I wanted a rest. And Anne was on the dole then and I started to go around with her, we'd just wander around and that. Then we decided to go to college for three days so that we could still claim our dole. We did typing on a Thursday, but I stopped going....."

Janet, aged 17

For some of the young people the new found freedom and the joy of being left school and without work was short-lived, they began to get bored with all their free time and were unable to occupy themselves.

"I was bored out of me mind. I didn't used to get up until about one o'clock and then it was too late to do ought, and so I'd watch the telly, or wander around to see if I could see anyone. Me mates were not on the dole at the same time - just the ones who lived right in Washington (He lived on the outskirts).."

Michael, aged 16

Others experienced parental pressure when they were on the dole, and feelings of letting others down, and of other people not thinking too highly of them.

"I was on the dole from September to January, before I got the work experience place. They seem to look down on you a bit when you've got no work, when you are on the dole....."

Kevan, aged 17

"I wanted to help me mother out, cos she's helped me out for 18 year and I had to pay her back somehow so I didn't want to go on the dole.....I was feeling a bit depressed about the whole situation"

Martin, aged 18

"..with leaving school and being on the dole, she (mother) used to say "I can't keep you because you're a big lad and you eat a lot and I can't afford to keep you.."

Michael, aged 17

These pressures were lessened in those families where other members were unemployed. In this situation they knew of the difficulties of securing work, and some may have become negative in their attitudes to securing employment.

"When I was first on the dole I really didn't have time for things, had to keep going up to the dole and social security and things. I used to stop in and watch telly, it was alright I suppose. Me mam and dad were not really bothered as they said that there were no jobs....."

Rita, aged 17

(Five members of Rita's family are unemployed.)

### Black Economy

Five of the young people in the sample exploited the 'black economy' to assist their low incomes:

"I went back on the dole and made a bit of money on the side. Kept in with the milkman, went all over with him, so I never got bored."

"I worked for me dad, except the day that I signed on; I still had to give me mother £11 board a week, so I had to work for me dad while I was on the dole...."

"I used to work as a trolley boy on a night, and used to earn quite a lot of money..."

"I still got me dole when I was working on the milk - I used to give all me dole to me mam, and I used to keep what I got off the milk..."



"We used to have disco's in the garage that we have ..... made about £6 a night ....."

All the cases above were males; the females who were on the dole seemed to adapt easier to unemployment in that they were given household chores to do, especially where their mothers were in full time employment, and some subsidised their dole with baby-sitting money.

For many of the young people, their experience of school was less than positive, and as a result many had wanted to leave school at their earliest convenience. Yet the world outside of the school was not going to offer them a greater, more rewarding experience. For too many, the world outside of school became a harsh reality, and one which many found difficulty in coming to terms with.

ENTRY TO (UN) EMPLOYMENT

## Entry into (un) employment

We have looked at the young people in their families and as they are about to leave school; in this chapter we shall move on to their experiences on leaving school. As all of the young people concerned were trainees on work experience on employers' premises, (WEEP) we shall concentrate on that aspect. This element of the Youth Opportunities Programme will be examined from the official point of view, alongside that of the trainees themselves and the sponsors who make the placement provision.

### 6. The Hopefuls: looking for a job



The 'fortunate' few

Of the group of young people, twenty-eight had some experience of full-time work; a number had secured work on leaving school, others had taken full-time work after completing their work experience. All of the twenty-eight were now employed and involved in a government scheme. Many of the firms they worked for had experienced financial cutbacks. They reduced their staff accordingly; the young people were the first to go, on the 'last in, first out' principle. At sixteen, these young people experienced their first redundancy. The movement out of full time employment and onto a government scheme constituted a reduction in 'wages'; this was an additional problem for them. Some explain the work history.

"It was a double glazing company I worked for.....The people were great there, they were really friendly. I was in the office typing, and making a new filing system out for them and on the switchboard and I was in charge of the kettle!.....The business started going bad though and they started losing a lot of jobs through the steel strike and people started to loose a lot of contracts, cos they couldn't get the windows made on time. We used to have to deal with a lot of angry people.....I was only there for six months and then I was made redundant.....I got two weeks wages as compensation....."

Linda, aged 17

(Linda then went to a firm of architects as an office worker on a WEEP scheme; at the end of her six months was employed full time by the firm. Linda was made redundant from this job after 4 months).

"After five months on a government scheme in a boutique I got a job in an office as a telephone receptionist. That was full-time job for a frozen food factory and it involved selling over the telephone and taking orders, I enjoyed what I

was doing. I was there for eight months and then they had to pay us off....."

Elizabeth, aged 17

"After I left school I was on the dole for a couple of weeks and then I got a job on a building site. The foreman of the site was staying at our house for bed and breakfast.....I was there about six months. I was paid off from there when the job started coming to an end. I was paid off on the Friday and I started another job on the Monday. I trained as an electronic assembler.....was there for eight months and than I was paid off, the factory shut down. It was the end of their two year lease, after that they have to start to pay for the lease themselves, rather than getting it free, for setting up in Washington.....Then I was on the dole from September to January and I got this work experience in this caravan place....."

Kevan, aged 17

These young people were learning early in their lives the meaning of recession, and the unstable nature of the northern economy. The incidence of closures (documented elsewhere) became almost commonplace; although they were obviously concerned about their loss of work, they did not talk of 'devastation' or even 'surprise' at the closure or cut backs in the firms where they worked. These were the 'fortunate few', they had experience 'real' work. The remaining 52 went 'on the dole'.

Once these young people had been unemployed the notion of 'careers' or what type of work they would like to do disappeared. (Ball, (1979) argues that this is a misnomer anyway for these early school leavers). Their familiar comment was

" I'm not really bothered what I do now - you can't really choose what you want to do - you get what's given."

Michael, aged 16

The "us" and "them" theme re-appears in Michaels' comment. All they were concerned about was securing work which would take them 'off the dole'. Whilst unemployed the

young people had to register with the careers' service and it was here they came into contact with the Youth Opportunities Programme. With the arrival of this new scheme, the careers officers changed their roles, and turned into placement officers for the MSC. It was the careers service alone who 'selected' young people for potential entry to schemes. At the start of this research with the schemes being in their infancy the young people were entering WEEP with little conception of what it would involve. Those young people interviewed towards the end of the research had learnt from the accumulated knowledge of those young people before them. Parents and peers, were, in the initial stages not in a position to offer knowledgeable advice concerning the schemes. Many parents initially approved of the schemes, viewing them as an entry point to employment. They recommended their youngster to 'stick in, and they might keep you on..' this notion of 'being kept on' did not prevail.

WORK EXPERIENCE ON EMPLOYERS PREMISES - an official view

"Under YOP, Work Experience on Employers' Premises must provide young people with experience of a variety of different types of work and not just a single job, and the young people must be properly supervised and should be able to attend further education courses. The opportunities must not serve as a replacement for normal recruitment of employees."

(MSC, 1979) p.19

"We would expect most of the young people taking part in work experience on employers' premises to find a normal job at the end of the scheme or before. However, some might move on to training or further education courses and it would be important for this to happen without a break wherever possible."

(MSC, 1977) p.36

The WEEP schemes were of a finite period of 26 weeks. In

the contract signed by the sponsor, he undertook to provide a scheme with the following elements:

- i. induction
- ii. planned work experience
- iii. an opportunity for training and for further education
- iv. counselling - in a distinctive form designed to appeal to and help young people with different needs.

An illustration of ii is seen below, taken from, Review of the first year of Special Programmes, 1979

SPECIFICATION FOR A WORK EXPERIENCE ON EMPLOYERS'

PREMISES SCHEME

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Week 1       | To acquire basic knowledge of Company methods of time-keeping, payment and safety procedures. Familiarisation with Company Departments and introduction to key personnel and responsible officer. |
| Week 2 - 3   | Introduction to Motor Vehicles. Knowledge of layout, purpose and function of principal components, system of private cars, small goods vehicles.  |
| Week 4 - 5   | a. Mechanics Tools, use, care and safety, including selection of hand tools which form basis of mechanics tool kit.<br>b. Care, use and safety of general workshop equipment.                     |
| Week 6 - 12  | a. Servicing - use of lubricants and fluids<br>b. Servicing - brakes and tyres<br>c. MOT - requirements   |
| Week 13 - 19 | Vehicle Electrical Systems.   |
| Week 20 - 24 | a. Legal requirements for driving and towing vehicles.<br>b. Recovery of damaged and defective vehicles   |
| Week 25      | Valeting and cleaning vehicles  |
| Week 26      | Consolidation of experience.  |

This research focuses solely on the provision of the above element of the Youth Opportunities Programme. WEEP is the largest element of YOP, and the cheapest. The only expenditure is the allowance paid to the young person - any administrative costs incurred by the 'sponsor' being viewed as his contribution to the operation of the scheme. WEEP was the largest element of YOP from its inception, and continues as the largest growth area: - in 1979/80 it accounted for two-thirds of total entrants in that year to YOP - 140,000 young people; (MSC 1980) it was the element to expand most in 1980/81, it expanded by 74% (MSC, 1981). WEEP was relatively easy to establish once the initial marketing was undertaken, the foundations being laid with WEP. It was also the element of the Youth Opportunities Programme most open to abuse.

Reflection on the WEEP scheme after a period of operation has produced some generalisations concerning its operation:

"...tendency for this element to cater for the more able YOP trainees." (MSC, 1979. p19)

this was confirmed by a further study by Coventry Youth Opportunities Unit Research Report, 1980.

".....the criteria employers used when selecting young people for WEEP, differed little from selection criteria they used when appointing permanent staff.....the effect of this selection procedure is to 'cream off' the more able young person from the unemployed.....in comparison to other YOP measures, WEEP is the most selective....." (p 14)

It was the scheme most open to abuse:



"The survey also gave some information on the complex issue of possible substitution of YOP trainees for workers. Employers' answers implied that some trainees may have been taking the place of people who would otherwise have formed part of the permanent staff, and further research will be done to check on this..... (MSC, 1979, p17)

such abuse became part of local and national media coverage. The BBC Television programme, 'Nationwide', devoted as it is to exposing unfair practices, exposed one particular WEEP scheme being operated by the national company Trident. Their argument was that Trident were operating a deliberate policy of making some of their full-time staff redundant whilst at the same time applying for placements for WEEP schemes. Trident obviously refuted such claims. (2 March 1981)

The training element, notably off the job training element emphasised by Holland (MSC, 1977), was remarkable by its absence. The figure of 13% receiving off the job training (MSC, 1979), obviously pointed to deficiencies in this area of the scheme.

These issues will be looked at in greater detail through the experiences of those young people involved in the schemes.

#### THE TRAINEES EXPERIENCE OF WEEP

The picture of Work Experience on Employer's Premises, as viewed by the 'trainees' is somewhat different from that documented in official papers.

"Training Allowance"

The initial concern of all the young people whom I talked to concerning their schemes was the money paid to them. Although this is known as an 'allowance' for training in official circles, this concept was never mentioned by the trainees. They viewed the money they were paid at the end of the week as their 'pay' and therefore made comparisons with others working for the same employer. The terms "trainee" and "sponsor" were not internalised by the young people - as far as they were concerned they were working, doing the same work as many other employees for an employer. This fact is important in understanding the young people's view of the schemes. If they viewed the scheme as a training ground, they may have been more able to accept the fact that their money was a training allowance. The training element was not emphasised to the extent that the young people internalised it. This difference in interpretation caused many problems for the young people's experience of the schemes.

"£23.50 is scandalous for full-time job....."

"Work experience is daft, because you're doing the same work as the full time staff, but you're not getting paid half what they are. Think we should get around £30.....anyone can pack shelves."

(Michael, aged 17)

".....I think we should have an increase - at least £30. Well like most of the people say here - they wouldn't get anyone else to do the work for that amount of money - not even a single man.."

(Dave, aged 17)

"It's just a rip off, I bet everyone has said that. I mean how is anyone supposed to manage on £23.50. When you think that you work a 40 hour week and they come out with £67 in our factory....."

(Denise, aged 17)

For those trainees who had already experienced full-time work, their entry to schemes becomes a matter of financial concern to them. The two views expressed below are from lads who are now 18 years of age and just entering the Youth Opportunities Work Experience on Employers Premises Scheme. John had held a number of jobs on a building site; with the general recession in the building trade he had found it impossible to secure further full time work. He and his parents had been used to him bringing in a large pay packet each week and therefore the training allowance he received was somewhat of a come down for him. John had his own car, for which he is now unable to continue the payments.

"It's OK if you're 16; £23.50 is not too bad for a 16 year old, but as 18 its terrible.....I got £18 on the dole, so I'm worse off now I'm on works experience - its costs me £5 for dinners. Me mother classes us as working while I'm on the government scheme and therefore wants her board....."

(John, aged 18)

"It's better than the dole, though you're working for £5 a week. You're not bored, not sitting in the house all day, you're meeting new people. I don't agree with 18 year olds getting £23.50. It depresses you when you've had a full-time job and then they put you on one of these schemes..."

(Andy, aged 18)

One could argue that as a 'training allowance' the sum allowed is favourable - those young people remaining at

school for an extra year, receive no allowances (other than family allowance paid to their parents). Yet the fact remains that these young people do not view themselves as in training - they are occupying very similar work roles to employees who are paid twice their allowance. This concern over 'allowance' is further complicated by the operation of the Community Industry scheme which runs alongside YOP where the young people are paid the rate for unskilled manual labour (See Appendix). The Careers Office have difficulty explaining this difference when a young person is moved from a C.I. scheme onto a YOP.

The type of work that the trainees were asked to do within their scheme failed to improve their ideas of training:-

"....they had me cleaning toilets, sweeping floors - all the dirty jobs...." John worked in a tyre replacement garage.

(John, aged 18)

"You get everything pushed onto you, you are made to do all the running around after them like; like the girl in the office, I've got to post her letters for her, I can't see why she can't do it herself."

(Debra, aged 18)

"It's a bit like slavery - only getting half the pay of other workers. Don't think its fair the way they treat you. They must have thought I was superman the amount of work they were giving me."

(Ian, aged 17)

"The works' experience do the skivvy work - think this is because its a government scheme. When the warehouse lad isn't in we do his job. Some of the boxes are quite heavy. We clear cardboard and sweep floors and all that. If you're doing a job and one of the part-timers want something upstairs then we have to go and get it and leave what we are doing, rather than get on the wrong side of them...."

(Paula works in a small supermarket.)

(Paula, aged 16)

### Transition School to Scheme

Some of the trainees who had only recently left school considered their placement as helpful in making the adjustment from school to work.

"Work Experience is alright, its a good scheme. It tries to get you prepared for a full time job, it tries to get you into a routine - to get up in the morning. You've got to look smart and tidy and it generally gives you a start to get a job. It lets you know what it is like to work full time, although its for six months. At the end of the six month you can get a certificate to show an employer that you've worked on a scheme if you've worked good enough they will give you one that is alright.....I think I've got more chance of getting a job because I've showed that I'm willing to work....."

(Michael, aged 17)

"...it tells you a bit about working relationships and things like how supervisors treat you and how you're expected to behave - it gives you experience to help you work"

(Alison, aged 16)

A careers officer illustrated his view that the schemes helped with this transitional phase for some young people:-

"In the past we have had young people who have had set ideas on the type of work they wanted to do. Having secured these, they found after a few weeks they wanted to change their job, as they had the alternatives of staying in a job that they disliked and searching for other employment at the same time or of giving up their work and loosing six weeks unemployment benefit. On the government schemes, the young people are able to change schemes and their allowances are unaffected; thus there is the opportunity of sampling many different types of work."

### More than one scheme

The trainees may have changed their schemes to sample different types of work, (though WEEP schemes were

predominantly retail and clerical), but it became clear that there were other reasons. In "The Psychological Benefits of YOP", (1981) parallels are drawn between the nature<sup>of</sup> unskilled work and YOPs.

"Most people distinguish between a YOP and real work in terms of the monetary rewards and security that are absent from YOPs. Yet the real jobs occupied by unqualified, unskilled young people are mainly marked by low wages and high turnover..." (p495)

Eight of the trainees experienced problems with settling into work and developed an early history of rapid turnover.

One young lad had worked full-time and had problems, this was repeated when he went onto work experience schemes:

"My first job was in a dairy but I got the sack from that cos the boss said I wouldn't make the grade, that was after seven weeks. I went on the dole for three weeks and then I went for a job at the Royal County Hotel, I wanted a wine waiter's or a porter's job. The only thing they had available was a trainee waiter, so I took that as it was getting near Christmas and I needed the money. I took a Saturday off and I got the sack. I went back on the dole for four weeks and then I saw an ad for a fibreglass boat firm for £20 per week plus bonus - I got this, then I had trouble cos I had now been paid properly. Me mam threatened to take the man to a tribunal. I then got a job on a farm, I was still collecting my dole, I needed to be on the dole for six weeks before they would give me a work experience scheme. The farmer had the scheme set up and I took that. I quite enjoy it, but I think I'm being put on....I've written seven letters for apprentice fitters jobs....I'm going to see the careers officer this afternoon"

Stuart, aged 17

"I got a job at Lack Johnsons sewing factory ...the boss used to get at us. I had this job sewing flies and that and I started to get really depressed and I used to go home every night and cry. Then I went for a job as a data processor

and I did me tests and that like. I had to wait for six months. Then I went onto computers and I had to work at Longbenton. I hated it cos you had to wear these great big earphones, you had to type out things that were said through the tape. Then after about six weeks I went to the Child Benefit office in Washington and then I got sent to the boss cos they said I had not done too good, then I started hating it. At the end of me four month I got terminated, cos they said I was not sticking in at my job and I get terminated, I spent my time looking out of the window."

Hazel, aged 17

"I got a job as soon as I left school at Prontos. I was there about three weeks and I left and went on the dole, I didn't get on with the foreman, he was always getting on at us, so I telt him where to go. I was on the dole for a month and then I went to Woolco on a scheme for six month; I really enjoyed working at Woolco, the lasses there were alright....I was on the dole again for four month and then I got a full time job at Lack Johnsons. I was there for six weeks and then I got the sack cos I wasn't quick enough on the machines. I didn't really like it, but I suppose it was a job; didn't get on with any of the lasses who worked there, suppose its cos they bragged all the time about clothes and where they went on a night time, it got on my nerves cos I couldn't afford half of what they had. They used to go work all dressed up and that. I left there and went on the dole for six months this time. I got a part-time job at the flying club where me dad worked.....I'm on another government scheme now."

Michelle, aged 17

It is difficult to find any single cause for their high turnover. Trainees did say that they became bored with a job after a few weeks, when they had 'learnt the ropes' - once they felt that they were part of the system, they did not want to belong any longer and wanted a change of scenery. Within the WEEP schemes, lack of training and mounting scepticism as the numbers being 'kept on' dwindled could have been other contributors.

Being 'kept on'

"Its a bit of a con really, this bit about being kept on - I've seen how many work experience pass through here while I've been here."

(Keith, aged 16)

The initiators of the scheme had hoped that, employers', having seen the work capacity of a trainee for six months would employ him at the end of his scheme; although this was not a condition for the placement. In the first two years of operation of the scheme, it was the numbers who had moved into full-time employment, which were used as the indicators of success of the scheme.

"...A survey of those who joined YOP in September and October 1978 showed that some 7 out of 10 of those leaving schemes were in employment a few months later...(further in the same paragraph the figure drops).....A survey of those who joined in January 1979 showed a rate of placement in employment for those leaving YOP schemes to be 6 out of 10..."

(MSC, 1980)

When the numbers dropped further, discussion centred on the training component of the schemes and their quality. Whilst there was some possibility of being 'kept on', the trainees motivation was high, they wanted to do well in their work, and hoped that their sponsor would give them a full-time job. This, in itself created a series of pressures for the young people.

"You can't afford to say anything either when you're on a government scheme, as you hope that they will keep you on at the end of the six months....."

(Jackie, aged 16)

You feel under pressure to prove yourself on work experience and are frightened of doing anything wrong in case this spoils your chance of being



kept on..."

(Paul, aged 16)

"Work experience is free labour for six months, they work you to get the best out of you, but then they dump you in the dustbin."

(Stuart, aged 17)

"Work experience is useful if it helps you to get a job....It is disheartening when you know that there is no chance of being kept on."

(Michael, aged 18)

Many of these pressures work in favour of the sponsors - it makes the trainees as a workforce, very reticent. This masks the anger that they feel. They feel a strong sense of injustice, that the scales are loaded against them. The trainees express views that sponsors occupy strong positions and that more should be expected of sponsors in the operation of the work experience on employers premises scheme.

"Feel the firm should pay part of your wages and then that would make them realise that you're working for them, make you into a proper employee...."

"Work Experience is a good idea in theory, but in practise I think it is being used wrong. By this I mean I think employers are using it as a form of cheap labour, and there are some cases where this has been proven. Although until someone thinks of a better idea I'll go along with it."

(Ian, aged 17)

"They should just allow shops a certain number of training schemes - why theres quite a few shops who just take them on and do the six months and then replace them with a new lot - that isn't doing anyone any good, apart from the employers who don't have to pay them....."

(Denise, aged 17)

In some of the schemes, the prospects of being 'taken on' was used as an incentive by supervisors and managers for trainees to work harder. This can only be reasonable in those situations where there is the likelihood that this will be realised - in too many instances it was not.

The notion of 'being kept on', was certainly a problem for the work experience on employers' premises schemes; in this it stood alone amongst the schemes. Within the training workshops, community service and project-based schemes, there were no opportunities of being employed full-time, therefore this concern did not arise. This preoccupation amongst trainees for being 'kept on' may have been another reason why a number of trainees sought to change from one scheme to another; in search of a placement where there was a possibility of being 'kept on'.

One firm in Washington had a policy of employing all of the young people that they had on work experience. This particular scheme had six placements available; training was part of their programme and trainees reported regular training sessions and they were all encouraged to attend life and social skills. This firm had a high turnover of staff on their normal establishment. Reasons for this being the outlying area of the location and a three shift system being operated. Therefore the six month scheme enabled the personnel manager to socialise the young people into the work routine of this operation, without employing them. As the personnel officer explained:

"...The six month weep scheme enables this firm to have better selection procedure - not only do we get an extended trial (this is normally a month, in the case of those we employ, although in fact it turns out to be three weeks because of the one week's notice clause) to judge how the person works. We are also socialising them into the firms work procedure, thus maximising the benefit if these young people are kept on."

Although, there is a policy of offering full-time work to all their WEEP trainees, this of course does not happen where trainees prove unsuitable. When I visited the firm I saw several young people who had been on schemes, now working there full-time.

### Exploitation

"A senior MSC official had admitted publically that 20,000 YOP places (one in five of the total) might be replacing permanent jobs and said: "We want specific cases and evidence brought to our attention. Where this happens we will act swiftly to investigate, and if necessary close a scheme. In a programme of this kind we require honesty from employers - and vigilance from trade unions."

(Ball, 1981,p305)

As the schemes came of age and knowledge of its workings were passed on from one young person to another, there came a growing rhetoric of exploitation.

We do the same work as the others in the firm, but they get twice as much (money) as us"

"The boss doesn't really care, all they do is get one lot of us in and we work for them for nothing for six months and then they get rid of us and get another lot..."

Two years into the research and the rhetoric is ever-present. The trainees were angry and frustrated; in a situation they felt powerless to act upon. Their way of rationalising their continued involvement in the scheme, was to consider the alternatives:

"I'd rather be working than on the dole, even though its work experience - because you are occupied..."

(Ian aged 17)

"It's cheap labour, but the money is better than the dole money plus you're getting experience..."

(Norma, aged 17)

"I like work experience better than being on the dole, I suppose it just keeps you off the streets, I suppose I'd be demented I'd be vandalising the place if I were still on the dole..."

(Hazel, aged 17)

"...when me government scheme finished, I wished I was back on one, cos I used to think that if I was at work then I would not be spending me money all day and I would have something to do and have something left at the end of the week. Me mam is just glad that I got a job and I was not under her feet all day.

(Ian, aged 16)

Trainees often discussed problems with their placements while on day-release or when in contact with the careers service. Some of their concerns may have been genuinely that their sponsor was unaware of the full workings of the scheme themselves. Trainees complained of being 'docked' pay when they had been for an interview for a job. Large numbers were told that their day-release for life and social skills training was their 'day off'. Letters asking sponsors to release trainees for off-the-job training were ignored and the young person themselves were often unaware that this training was available. Some sponsors asked trainees to work 'overtime', although this was against the rules of the operation of the scheme. Discussion of this with an MSC official revealed a 'blind eye' policy; the underlying idea being, that if there was overtime available, the sponsor would be more likely to need the trainee and therefore may 'keep him on'.

WEEP - a positive note

Yet, not all of the evidence is negative. The work rotation element of the scheme was seen as a very positive element of the programme.

"As long as I'm not standing about I enjoy it, I like plenty to do. It gives you a better chance to find other jobs, it gives you some experience - with all the different departments it gives you the chance to say you've worked on different things. Since I've been here its changed me outlook, like I say theres always something to do...and once you've worked on the shopfloor you can work in the warehouse as well...."

(Dave, aged 17)

Others have welcomed the time the scheme has given them to adjust to work - though it may be questioned if this would be any different with full-time employment.

"You get to know what you want to do cos you have different choices. It should be longer than 6 months, think it should be for a year, cos you don't get enough chance to think whether you're going to do this or not. Think a year will be better."

(Diane, aged 16)

"Work experience is worth it -- think it helps a lot of people including myself, to make up their own minds what they are going to do. I think most of it depends upon you as a person, if you really work at it, because I mean if you have something to do you may as well get on with it."

(Martin, aged 18)

"This is my first work experience, I think its a good thing because it gives you the chance to look for a job, while you are still training. It also varies what you'd like to do, I mean that you could specialise in secretarial work, like reception or typing, but this gives you an insight into what the jobs are like....."

(Christine, aged 18)

The sponsors interview the young people who they are to

give placements to - several young people being sent for one placement. One trainee expressed her resentment of this

"I went for an interview for a work experience and he said that there were fourteen others going to be interviewed for the place - 'it was stupid - after the interview he said 'You needn't think that you've got the job, cos there are all of the others to see, he was dead shirty like' It wasn't as if it was a proper job like!"

(Rita, aged 17)

In fact a double screening process takes place before the trainee begins her work experience with the employer; the careers office having made the original 'selection'! Yet some employers relaxed their normal recruitment policy and took trainees of lesser ability than their usual intake - herein often lies a success story, as many of these young people, previously denied opportunities to prove themselves, do just that when the opportunity does arrive. One young lad who had been classified as ESN and had attended a special school had two work experience placements. The first one in a warehouse and the second in a hypermarket where he was able to develop his skills within the warehouse and had the opportunity of being kept on full time. The young lads attitude had changed markedly as had his self-image, which was now very positive.

For another young lad, he had a progression during his WEEP placements where his job aspirations improved. His initial placements was in the warehouse of a trade store, he moved onto a 6 month clerical scheme with the Inland Revenue. It was here that he decided on the basis of his

experience, that he would like to continue in clerical work. He moved to a third scheme in a solicitors' office. At the last meeting with Ian, he told me he was waiting to hear of his date to join the army - in their administration sector. The success story does not hold for the majority of the trainees.

### Looking for 'Proper Work'

Some of the trainees were concerned about the low status attached to them, as a result of "being on a government scheme" and were negative on taking on further placements - all of these were boys.

"I'll definately not go on another work experience.....Well its the money, you are doing the same work as someone else who is getting twice as much as you. They make you feel six inches tall the way they talk to you sometimes, like they're higher class cos they're permanent. I'd rather be unemployed than take another of these things....."

(Bill, aged 17)

(Bill was later dismissed from his work experience as he began to put into practise his theory that if was said only half the wage then he would only do half the amount of work as the full-time staff.)

"Don't want to go on another work experience - we do all the work, while the others do all the gabbing. Other members of staff think, Oh, he's just a work experience' - they don't care.....there's nowt that you can do about it - kick Maggie Thatcher out, you know how stupid she is, shutting down Consett Steel Works."

(Paul, aged 17)

"People say to you, 'Are You Working?' and when you say, "yes", they ask you where. When you say its a government scheme, they say they just don't want to know, they say its a waste of time."

(Ian, aged 17)

The differences in response to unemployment of males and females was noted by Pahl (1978)

"It seemed that the girls were characteristically different from the boys in some respects. They faced the same problems, to be sure, but these were more wide-ranging than simply the concern about employment which dominated the boys' lives.....(261)

.....More boys than girls were cynical and sceptical about the problems of life. No girl was as bitter as some of the lads who resented being 'married to the system'....."(262)

The schemes themselves appear to hinder some young people securing full-time employment. As part of the scheme entitlement, the young person is allowed time off from the sponsor to seek full-time employment or to attend the careers office. Many of the young people on the schemes did not exercise these rights. Many of them thought that if they were constantly taking time away from work that they will not be seen as a good potential employee. Some comment their sponsors say they should go to the careers office after work; whilst in some other instances this was a convenient excuse by the trainee not to take responsibility for their own futures.

"Since starting on work experience I haven't gone down to the careers office much, I don't get the time. By the time I'm finished work I'm shattered. My hours are 8.30 - 5.30, five days a week and occasionally on Saturdays."

(Sharon, aged 17)

"Haven't looked for a job while I've been on work experience - I looked for jobs last year - I wrote 60 letters, and like at the minute there is all of the school leavers and so there is less chance of getting a job. I'm just hoping that I get kept on here....."

(Paul, aged 16)

"I go over to the careers about once a month on a Thursday when they're open late to see if there are any full-time jobs. Tried for a job at a factory on one of the industrial estates, the



careers office sent me for it, it was something to do with appliance repairs - don't know why they sent me....."

(Ian, aged 17)

The young people remained very unsure of what their next stage would be on completion of their schemes.

"I've been for many full-time jobs, but because I was on a work experience they didn't want to know.....because I was already working and many of the others had been on a course....."

(Christine, aged 18)

"The only time that I've been able to go to the job centre is on a Monday (Day off work), and there's never any jobs in. I'm willing to work, as I've showed by sticking this six month thing through - cos some people would say, well its not worth it for £23.50 for a weeks work, and they wouldn't bother."

(Michael, aged 16)

#### Sponsors' views on WEEP

The information from sponsors was collected from two sources. Interviews were obtained with a number of sponsors who had placements for six to twenty trainees on their premises - these were the larger employers, Makro, Savacentre, Inland Revenue, Woolco, etc. They gave me their time, as a researcher looking into the operation of the government schemes. Numerous other contacts were made with other sponsors, predominantly the one and two placement scheme, over the telephone. These contacts were made in my capacity as Head Tutor of YMCA Training Resources Centre, many of the conversations being initiated by the sponsor in relation to the trainee release for life and social skills training. The life and social skills element will be looked at separately, as it merits examination in its own right.

To some employers, the WEEP scheme seemed a godsend it had possibilities of reducing their employment bills in return for 'sponsorship' of a young person. Ball, (1979) argues that the schemes were built on the 'pot of gold' principle. "The MSC says: 'We've got £200 million a year to spend, and we want to provide opportunities for about 250,000 young people per year; we propose to do this through a system of sponsorship" (p. 95). Two of the employers I spoke to were frank about this, and expressed views that many employers were 'laughing up their sleeves' at being able to gain another member of the workforce for free. There were a considerable number of short-sighted employers who saw the operation of the scheme in this way. Others considered that they were giving a scheme which had a considerable training element - this tended to be the larger sponsors, who had a greater staff, and therefore were able to spend time on supervision and training of the trainees.

### Supernumary

The MSC rules for sponsorship are that the trainee must be supernumary to the employers' establishment - that is, they must not be replacing other full time staff. This was an obvious concern of the trade unions, (though it is the weaker unions who represent the retail workers, where the majority of WEEP placements are secured). For some time the government departments refused to provide placements themselves, as NALGO were concerned about their members' interests. CPSA (Civil and Public Service

Association) also withheld their support from the programme, (CBI, 1979.) As previously discussed there was concern in the schemes' regional planning stages regarding substitution MSC, 1977, which continued in subsequent reports (MSC, 1979, 1980, 1981, 1982.) The problem of substitution never really <sup>was</sup> stopped. The reason being that MSC, and the careers service were following expansionist policies, they had targets to meet. The two concerns were not complementary. Ball, 1979 discusses this factor:

"Sponsors, with their own interests in mind, apply for money to run a scheme providing opportunities for the young unemployed to gain experience and learn. The application is considered and approved by people who are not experienced in the problems of the disadvantaged young, and who have their own interests to consider. They are also under political pressure to deliver numbers and to reduce the dole queues. In consequence they do not ask the prospective sponsor too many awkward questions about motivation for establishing schemes, nor do they set too many awkward conditions for granting the funding." (p 97)

It is also argued, Ball, 1979, that the employer can use the WEEP schemes to pay for his recruitment policies:

"Are some employers using 'work experience' as a way of paying for recruitment policies and practices which they would have operated anyway? This seems to happen in some cases. And that goes beyond self-interest and becomes unscrupulous. But, can it be stopped, and how? If there are more stringent rules governing the work experience opportunities, then fewer firms will offer them. If an army of inspectors goes round to check on practices, then the money will be spent on new bureaucracies rather than the problem itself - young people without work." (p56)

The fact that trainees are not surplus to establishment is clearly revealed by some of the firms, in relation to

providing the opportunity for day-release for trainees. We previously noted the low figures for this area of the programme, and its operation is revealed in these statement by the trainees:

"I won't be able to come to the course next week, cos' they're short of staff, and I'll have to cover for the girl who's on holiday." (Amanda, aged 16, works in a small painting and decorating firm.)

"There was too much work on, and they couldn't spare me" (David, aged 17, had missed two weeks of his day-release, he worked with a building firm.)

"One girl has left, and they've not replaced her yet. It's a busy time of the year....." (Fiona, aged 16, worked at a riding stables, and had been missing two weeks on her day-release.)

One firm telephoned the careers office and asked them to stop giving out application forms for their work place as they had decided to recruit directly through WEEP, after having had a 'six month' trial. So, the scheme was working in favour of some sponsors, who saw the scheme as an ideal recruiting tool, in that they could have the young person for six months, without the commitment to paying them or to having to guarantee employment at the end of the six months. Another was using the WEEP placement as a training period which was subsidised, so that when they had to start paying the young person themselves, they would already been trained for the work:

"I was hoping to train her up like, train her from being young for a full-time job."

"I need 6 months to get these kids to mature and develop and adopt the right attitudes."

Employers' views of the trainees

This area of discussion returned us to the argument of the 'Great Debate' and the inadequacy of school as a preparation for work. Concerns were expressed of parents' lack of interest in their offspring and the young people's lack of real interest in work.

"I was initially shocked at the attitude of many young people I interviewed. They had a tendency to apathy. They gave no real indication that they really wanted the job; they had not considered why they really wanted to work for the firm; they just wanted a job, any job. Many were totally unprepared for work, for its routine and its discipline. I feel that a number were simply sent to us for an interview without really being interested in the work. It's probably that pressure is being put on the careers service to place these young people. When I see these young people, I'm interested in their hobbies and their appearance. Obviously one cannot be completely objective about someone who has a crown tattooed on his forehead, or a ring through his ear, no matter what sort of person he was. So many of them lacked any real spark in life...."

Personnel manager

It is obvious from the above comment that this man saw the young people as employees, rather than trainees, and interpreted their attitudes as 'apathy' and 'lacked any real spark in life' - he failed to question what had produced these attitudes in these young people. The study, 'Unqualified, Untrained and Unemployed' 1972 ... noted that employers looked ... for personality, alertness and other personal qualities, rather than paper qualifications when recruiting for unskilled jobs. These features were stressed over and over again by the sponsors.

One personnel manager was particularly vociferous in her views on young people she was interviewing for placements in a warehouse scheme:

".....They are ill-prepared for work - its routine of time, authority, mode of dress and attitude to work. They are poor in the three R's. They ask too many questions rather than just getting on with the work; and some of them look vacant they don't seem to have all their chairs in order....."

Again there are expressions that point to the young person being viewed as an employee, rather than a young person in training. From these young people who are entering unskilled work she desires an unquestioning attitude, yet this has been stressed as a quality which needs developing in young people. Hopson and Scally, (1981) demonstrated ways in which teachers could develop different methods of teaching in order to develop young people's problem-solving skills. This particular sponsor viewed the recruiting of 'suitable' young people as traumatic, teachers were to blame for this.

"It's the teachers that's the problem. They go to school dressed in jeans, therefore you can't expect the young people to have any dress sense, they too wear clothing that is unsuitable for work. They encourage young people to question everything, this isn't compatible with the working environment. In the past if a teacher said  $2 + 2 = 5$  we would believe them - today the kids question too much. The careers teachers are a liability, they dish out leaflets, willy nilly, yet they have no knowledge themselves of what it means to work in the majority of jobs that the kids are going into. They don't know what its like to be a dustman - they make the kids unrealistic about work. Teachers are only concerned about status. You hear them saying, 'Five of my class have gone on to university to study law' - you don't hear them talking about the majority who will be doing everyday work. They don't seem to have the ability to cope and

relate to this type of young people."

Of course, it is always the negative examples of their experience of young people which come to mind for the sponsor, rather than those young people who have settled into the work and are carrying on a good job of work.

### Training

The training element of WEEP, although explicit in the literature, did not form a significant part of actual programmes of work experience. The name work experience, had meant giving young people the opportunity to experience a real work situation. Alongside this was the accompanying lack of real training provision. The 'sitting by Nelly' philosophy was all too common. The lack of training provision for young people had been recognised at an earlier date, with the UVP programme ('Unified Vocational Preparation') which sought to provide additional training for young people who were in paid employment. The employers were assisted with this provision with subsidies. In the initial outline of this scheme comments were made on the absence of any systematic preparation for work for many young people. The problem being recognised as 'being attributable to the separate development of education and training' DES, 1976. The continued argument of education versus training will be examined in the chapter on Life and Social Skills training. Training for the majority of the sponsors meant simply 'getting on with the job.' Another of the problems of releasing trainees for further education was the fact

that this element had not been given consideration when the sponsors had submitted their schemes, and therefore had not been planned as an integral part of their programme of experience for the trainee.

There was one notable example of good-quality training in the schemes in Washington - this was a clerical scheme. The scheme with the Inland Revenue was notable in the first instance in that in their induction of the trainees to the scheme they emphasised that they would NOT be taken on. Many of the trainees would not have the entry requirements of the clerical assistants job; but this was another way of emphasising that this was a training programme and not simply filling a job. Each of the trainees had a responsible officer to whom they could refer and continuous reviewing of the trainee whilst with the scheme was employed. The 'responsible officer' was interviewed and he had a strong personal belief in further education - this was obviously passed on to the trainees who were encouraged to take up opportunities as they arose. Many of the trainees on the Inland Revenue courses has at least one day-release, a smaller number were released for two days - one day to attend the local college of further education for clerical training and a further day for life and social skills training. This was remarkable in that many of the other sponsors were disinterested in further education; often when release was mentioned to a sponsor, his first question was not concerning the content of the course and the benefits of attendance for the trainee; rather whether the course was



compulsory or not. One girls' attitude on work experience changed markedly when she moved for a scheme in a boutique to that at the Inland Revenue:

"Before I started the work experience at the Inland Revenue I didn't feel it was much good. For me, at the Inland Revenue, it's good, I think I am getting good training."

(Elizabeth, aged 17)

The emphasis on training, obvious on this scheme is possibly attributable to the background of the people concerned. The usual practice within the civil service being to encourage day-release. It is part of their normal employment practice and therefore was extended to the trainees. Another factor in the high rate of day-release amongst Inland Revenue trainees could be attributable to their initial selection procedures. In the words of the 'responsible officer', "the kids that we get on WEEP are brighter than average".

#### Concerns of the sponsor

One of the concerns of the sponsor, especially the small employer was the amount of their time that was taken up with visits as a result of their having a work experience placement. Each work experience placement was monitored by an officer from the MSC, to check on its working in case of abuse and to see how the young person was progressing. A second visit would be made by the careers service by one of their employment officers; this visitor was concerned solely with the young persons experience of the scheme. Other contacts and visitors may be tutors of

courses available for the young people to attend on day-release. Telephone calls may have been made by the careers service to ask the young person to attend an interview. Also the clerks of the MSC may have telephoned with queries concerning the payment of training allowances to the young people or the manner in which the firms had made their returns to that office. Therefore, there were constantly different members of different agencies calling to see the young people or the sponsor concerning the scheme. For the employer, this was seen as very time consuming and therefore, especially in the one man business, seen as too time consuming to make the placement worthwhile. With the large sponsor, they may have had different officers on their premises each week, as they call to see different trainees. It was obvious from personal experience of calling on sponsors, that they were confused about which agencies the different officials represented; this caused confusion for the trainees also. One sponsor was particularly eloquent on this:

"People are always saying how lucky I am to be getting so many young people free of charge (he has seventeen young people in his 5 shops) I tell them that that is not the case. I've got to train them. I've also got to spend considerable time talking to people like yourself on the telephone or to entertain others who care to just call in. I'm sick to death of it, if things don't improve I'll withdraw from the scheme....I've got two young people in my Fencehouses branch - I could afford to employ one older person full time. I don't do it as I feel a commitment to help the young unemployed..."  
(Two years later, his placements were still open and he continued to have two young people working in the Fencehouses store.)

Undoubtedly these constant visits must have proved cumbersome for sponsors, yet with the large organisations

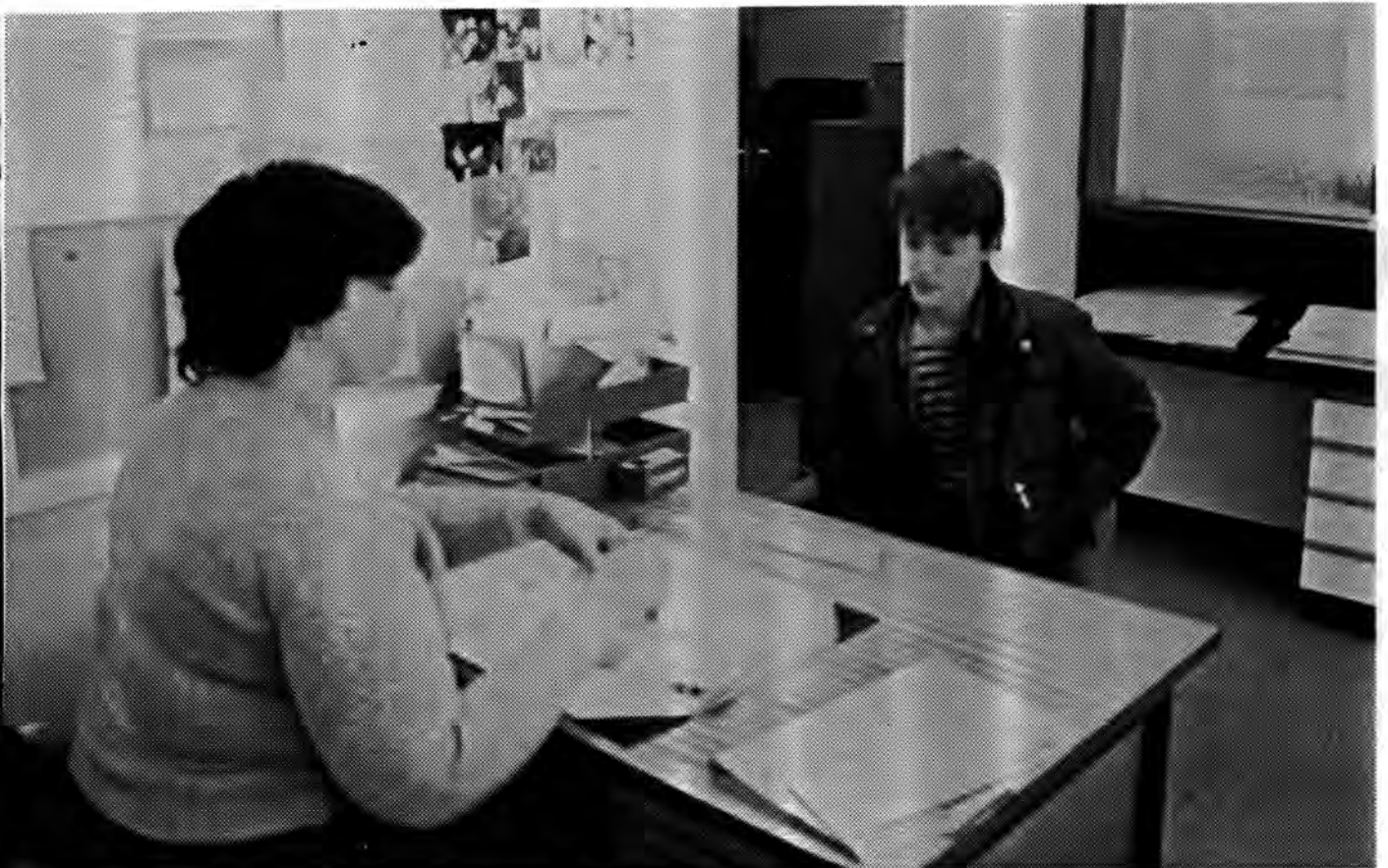
they were meant to have one 'responsible' officer to oversee the young people, as their part in their commitment to the scheme. It was the careers service who had a considerable role and concern in the monitoring of the young people while on placement. To understand their part in the network of agencies involved with these unemployed young people, we will now give attention to this agency.

The Careers Service

"I don't think a twenty-minute interview on how to spend the rest of your life was enough"

Michael, aged 17

7. The Careers Interview



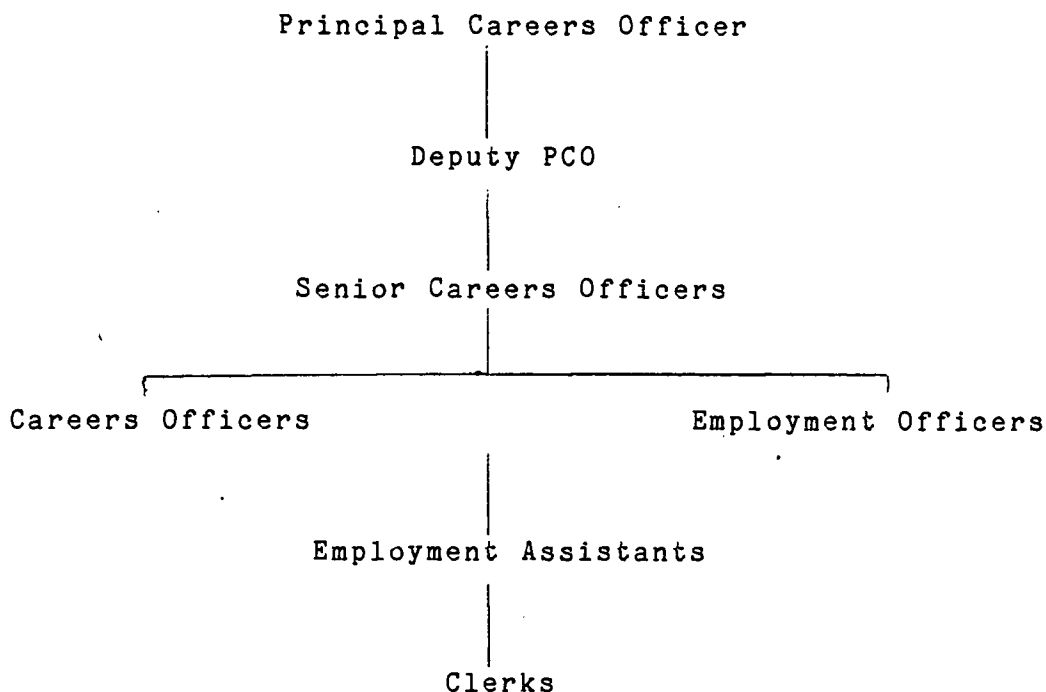
### The Careers Service

The Employment and Training Act of 1973, turned the Youth Employment Service (born of the Employment and Training Act of 1948) into the Careers Service as we know it today. While the provision of careers education in schools is discretionary, the provisions of this act made it a statutory duty of all education authorities to provide a careers service for all those who attend educational establishments (other than universities) and to provide guidance and to help them find jobs. There are nationally prescribed objectives, standards and levels of staff, laid down and monitored by the Department of Employment Careers Service Branch. Although there is a statutory duty to provide a service for all those who attend educational establishments, there is no obligation to ensure that the service has access to educational establishments. It is at the discretion of the head teacher whether the careers service is allowed to function within schools. Although none of the schools in this study were unco-operative, there is a school on the periphery of Washington who would prefer to keep the careers service out completely. This education service is provided alongside the employment service offered by the Employment Services Division of the MSC, more popularly known as Jobcentres. Young people are eligible to use both services, but must be registered at the careers office; nationally some 97% of all school leavers register with the careers service. In Washington there is a local agreement between the careers office and the jobcentre, that the latter will refer all young people

under the age of 19 to the careers office, thus reducing duplication of the service.

### Composition of the Service

The structure of the service is detailed below



To explain briefly the roles of these personnel; the Principal Careers Officer is responsible for the overall operation and administration of the careers service in the borough. The Senior officers may be of two types; they may be area officers, responsible for a team of careers officers, or specialist officers, for example, specialising in higher education or unemployment. The careers officers are the people who handle the case work with the young people. They go into schools in the fifth year and interview all young people and offer counselling

and careers advice. The careers officers may also be involved with the reviews of the young people on the YOP scheme. The Employment Officers are the same grade as the careers officers though not trained as such. These officers are usually recruited from an industrial background. They liaise with industry and carry out the reviews of young people on the YOP schemes. Employment Assistants were recruited solely to assist with the careers involvement with YOP. They are semi-professional adults, over 21. They have direct contact with the trainees and arrange placements for them on the various schemes. The clerical staff provide administrative support for all the grades. The information contained in this chapter, contains the comments of three senior careers officers, six careers officers and three employment officers and two employment assistants, together with various clerical staff.

### Training the Careers Staff

#### (i) Careers Officers

Of the officers I spoke to there was a 50/50 split between those who had come into the service immediately after university and the one year Diploma course in Vocational Guidance, and those who had had a varied work history working their way through night classes then to the full-time one year course which qualified them as Careers Officers. Within careers education in school there were many criticisms of the careers' service recruitment of

people who had not themselves experienced the world of work. This concern has been expressed from other quarters (Newsom, 1963).

The one year course in Vocational Guidance is the usual qualification of the careers officer. It was somewhat of a shock to find that many officers received little or no further training. One officer who had been promoted to senior received no further training for this post. Training that may be gained is purely incidental. This seeming lack of commitment to personal training in the careers service is a rather curious phenomenon. One would consider this an area of work which would require an ongoing, constant commitment, especially in the face of the many changes in the industrial and technological development of the new measures to deal with the unemployed. This situation was noted earlier, in discussion of careers teachers, who again lack training. The employment officer often joins the service direct from industry where they may have had a background in training. Other than induction, they do not receive further training. It is the employment assistants who deserve special attention. It is the Employment Assistant who is the king pin in the careers services operation of the Youth Opportunities Programme - these posts have doubled in number since the start of the programme. Yet these people receive only a two week induction training for the work. This training predominately concerns office procedure, practice and policy. The majority of their training being of the 'sitting by Nelly' variety. It is



these people who have daily contact with the young unemployed and who the trainees mistakenly believe are careers officers. From its own training record, the careers service does not inspire confidence that these people are uniquely placed to handle the mounting problems of the unemployed. There is an argument that the fully-qualified youth worker is in a much better position with a stronger knowledge base of young people and counselling training to fulfill this role appropriately.

#### Operation of the Service

The greater part of the careers' officers work is within schools, where they have a statutory duty to see young people before they leave school.. It may be argued that this is too late an intervention to be really helpful. Yet again a case of 'too little and too late'.

"We interview all young people before they leave school for 25 minutes. If the young person is totally unrealistic about their career prospects, or confused, then they are asked to have a second interview. Some of the young people have three or four interviews with the careers officer, but that is the exception, rather than the rule. During this first interview we take notes regarding appearance, knowledge of the work they are seeking, communication skills - also we may give out appropriate application forms for work in the area."

(Careers Officer)

Parents are invited to accompany their child to this interview. Details of numbers and sex of parents attending with their children are kept by the careers service. Only one general observation was commented upon by the officer:-

In the case of girls it was generally only the mother who accompanies their daughter to the interview; in the case of boys, both parents normally attend. When the young person leaves school, it will be the records made at this interview which will be referred to when attempting to find appropriate work for the young person.

As the careers officers have a statutory duty to visit young people in schools, this takes up the majority of their time and is obviously their priority. The careers officers' normal caseload was 280; although at the time of interview one of the officers had a caseload of 400, whilst a post was waiting to be filled. While the situation remains of the careers officers working with such high numbers and the lack of staff increases at officer level, there are certainly constraints on their time available for the vast armies of the unemployed young people on their books.

It is the Employment Assistant who has face to face contact with the young people involved or potentially to be involved on the schemes; they submit the young people for placements, and generally if a young person calls into the office, it is the Employment Assistant who they will talk to. It is rather anomalous that those young people who are obviously in the greater need of help and guidance, being unemployed, are not seen very often by the specialists. The Employment Assistants have little or no training in the counselling field and are accorded no real status within the service. The work of the Employment

Assistant is seen as a sideways step. Promotion prospects are poor for the people who are parked here; and their low wage ensuring that these posts are filled predominantly by females.

As full time vacancies or schemes come to the careers office attention, the clerical staff will 'tab' the registers; that is, they will work through the register, pulling out names of young people whose first choice on their record card fits that of the vacancy. They are not permitted to send the young person for anything other than the recommendation made by the Careers Officer. A number of these young people will then be called into the office, given information of the vacancy from the employment assistant or other member of the clerical staff and an interview time and date are arranged for them. At any time the young person may request to see a careers officer, and ask for their work choice on their records to be changed, or to have a further discussion and help and advice from the officer. Young people are generally unaware of this procedure. Due to the large numbers that the careers service deal with, it is often not possible for the young person to be followed through from school to the work situation seeing the same careers officer. Therefore the person who sees the young person often does not know their careers background and has to go through all this material again. The young person's attitude as a result are expressions of, 'they don't care about you down there' (the careers office).

Having secured a 'placement', the young person is visited by the Employment Officer at the beginning and end of their scheme. He will assess their continued suitability for the work in placement and may inform the young person of further education opportunities that are available to them. He will also speak to the 'responsible' officer concerning the progress of the trainee on the scheme. If the young person requires further guidance, the employment officer will refer the young person back to the careers officer. The careers officers' have the first priority of these reviews with the young people, but in practice it is predominantly the employment officer who carry these out, due to lack of time by the careers officers.

#### 'Selection' for different schemes

The careers service is the agency which informs young people of schemes available through YOP. I had observed how the various different elements of YOP appeared to cater for different types of young people. In order to determine how this came into being, I questioned the careers officers concerning their selection procedures for the different schemes. The results led me to the belief that different schemes under YOP have duplicated the school streaming system. Young people are being streamed in various avenues of YOP by the assessments of the careers service. Although at senior level this situation was refuted with some vigour, the situation as one sees it, and also how it is reiterated in various government reports, confirms this fact.

One can for instance see a difference in the young people recruited for a WEEP scheme and those recruited for a training workshop. The careers officers I spoke to said that the 'selection' of young people for schemes tended to be an unconscious process, but on reflection they were able to identify various qualities in the young people being allocated to different schemes.

We will look at the different elements in YOP in turn:-

Project-based work experience. Many of the young people selected for these schemes were considered to be 'immature' and 'unable to accept the rules and regulations' of employment in the traditional sense. Project-based work was seen to provide these young people with the necessary introduction to the work environment over a period of time. Young people with criminal records, who were often not eligible for WEEP schemes, were often selected for project-based work. There was also the element of self-selection to be considered; some young people wanted to be on the same scheme as their friends and therefore asked for particular schemes at the careers office. The careers officer commented that they preferred to 'select', rather than the young person suggest their own placements.

#### WEEP

The young people selected for WEEP tended to be the 'cream' of the unemployed. These young people are considered to be the most prepared to enter a real work

situation. The system of selection by the careers followed by an interview by the sponsor ensures that it is the most acceptable young people who secure these placements. This is confirmed also by the number of WEEP placements which remain unfilled, as sponsors seek the best that is available, rather than the young person with the greatest need. (Ball, 1979). The careers officers commented that they had to deal with the employers for full time vacancies and therefore were aware of their requirements and the type of people who they prefer to work in their stores. They expressed concern regarding appropriate selection for these companies. They could lose their credibility. Therefore this element of the programme is not as open as one may believe at first sight. One sponsor voiced his dissatisfaction of the service provided by the careers service:

"..I'm not too happy with the people the careers office are sending me these days. I don't mind taking on some that are considered 'unemployable' because after six months many of them make the grade. But my 'success' rate isn't too high when that's all they send me..."

(Supermarket sponsor)

A study of a Marks and Spencer WEEP scheme told of their selection procedure:

Trainees go through the same recruitment procedure adopted for all staff, whether permanent, temporary seasonal, part time or whatever. There's an interview, an application form to complete, and then a second interview, which is more of a chat to confirm that we have made the right choice." (Actions, 1980) p.8

Williamson and Coffin's study (1981), Are Schemes Working?, had similar concerns regarding selection:-

"The range of opportunities offered to an unemployed young person depends primarily on the information supplied by the careers service. We have found that few young people had had a chance to choose between schemes. It seemed that careers officers needed to control selection for the schemes in order to maintain good relationships with the staff. Equally, shortage of places also meant that there was often little choice. Schemes were frequently critical of the careers officers' referrals, and so the officers attempted to establish an idea of what kind of trainee each scheme preferred." (p 9)

The careers service appear to have a number of different masters to serve in attempting to carry out their role in guiding and counselling young people. Is it the needs of the young people which are their paramount concern when referring to different schemes - or is it those of the sponsor or the MSC?

#### Training Workshops

These again are used for young people who are assessed as requiring a sheltered work environment. Many young people who had discipline problems and a history of problems with the police were on these schemes. In the training workshops it is predominantly males who occupy placements.

#### Community Service

As many of the community service schemes are able to give more concentrated attention to the trainees, many trainees who have "problems" are placed on these schemes - emotional, social or family problems. In contrast to the Training Workshops, the larger percentage in the community service schemes were girls. The boys on the schemes were

seen to be specific types - the 'sensitive' character, the quiet type of boy who may only have a small number of friends, or who is a loner.

An example was given by a careers officer to illustrate the type of young person often selected for this type of scheme

"C. had a nervous breakdown and was undergoing treatment with a psychiatrist. The psychiatrist stated that in no way would she be able to cope with work. At the age of 16 C. was pensioned off. I interviewed her and then she seemed to disappear for a time - at the next interview she had certainly deteriorated - extremely withdrawn. Despite the psychiatrist's diagnosis she was put on a community service scheme and, although initially extremely nervous, was soon seen to be developing and coping well and getting more out of life. She even picked up her hobby of dancing and began to achieve a high standard at this. She is now at the point of employability.

The community involvement which the young people gain on these schemes is seen as especially useful for this type of 'problem' young person. They are often working with people less fortunate than themselves - the old, the infirm, or handicapped, and in this way it was considered by the careers officer that they forget their own problems in the service of others.

Other young people recommended for this type of scheme are those awaiting places on pre-nursing courses and nursery nurse courses. By joining a community service scheme they can gain valuable experience before taking up their college place.

These differences became apparent when working with different groups of trainees from the various schemes.



The most obvious contrast was the marked difference in ability levels of the groups; the WEEP's were of a higher ability level. Trainees from training workshops and project-based schemes offered suffered with literacy and numeracy problems. In styles of dress the WEEP trainees tended to be more conventional, and therefore more acceptable to sponsors. Amongst the other three groups were to be found the extremes of latest fashion - whether it be punk or skinhead. The number of trainees with criminal records differed sharply - the WEEP trainees being in the minority.

Despite the fact that senior careers' officers were emphatic that different selection procedures were not in operation, the research findings were in conflict with their statements.

#### Careers Officers View on YOP

The general attitude was a welcoming of the various schemes under the Youth Opportunities scheme. At last that they were able to offer the young people something other than unemployment. On talking to many of the careers officers, notably the seniors, there appeared to be a policy rhetoric in play when they talked about their view of YOP. A sense of being given a policy view, rather than the individual's true view of the scheme, was experienced.

It was said that YOP had 'redressed the balance', it had

put a stop to the circular argument that you can't get experience unless you have a job. There was a sense that having broken this vicious circle, young people would be more able to compete with adults for jobs.

"YOP has also helped to improve the image of young people in general - over a number of years young people have had a bad press - they are layabouts, do not want to work, are lazy, cannot read and write, etc., etc., - the schemes have helped to project a new image of young people as being interested in working and of being good employees. An increasing number of employers are now stating that they have underestimated young people in the past."

There were other positive views concerning the gains of the young people:-

"It has many advantages for the kids, for example, for many young people there is a lot of pressure in starting their first job, the YOP schemes ease this pressure a little. The programme which many of the schemes cover go over a wide area of work, probably more than they would have experienced if they had gone straight into full time employment; due to this wide range of experience they are better able to judge what is most suitable to them as individuals. If the kid does not settle at the type of scheme they are given, then they are able to leave and try something else; they would not be able to do this if the work was full-time as they would get their dole money stopped."

The 'temporary' nature of the schemes was seen as an area of concern for the careers officers.

"Problems that have arisen tend to be in the young people themselves not seeing the schemes as temporary measures - the kids themselves are coming into the office asking to be placed on particular schemes - they are even aware of the progression of the schemes. They may ask that they are first placed on a SIC for clerical work and then placed on Springboard with day-release in certain subjects! The system is beginning to be institutionalised and the kids are beginning to know the systems.....There is also the danger that many young people are protected from the harsh realities for a time by the schemes, they are cushioned - in some of the schemes they are really mothered..."

They also considered that the scheme could be inflexible. A varied work experience programme was required of sponsors - some officers' argued that this was often not in the best interest of the trainee.

"A number of young people are unable to cope with the wide range of things which they are expected to cover in some of the programmes, but would be more contented remaining on one section of work - the MSC are a little inflexible here and not catering for the needs of individuals."

The careers service were well aware of abuses in the scheme by employers, but considered it was MSC's responsibility to intervene in these instances

"Employers are using the scheme as a six month interview; because of the large numbers of young people on work experience, they can stop recruiting for employment and instead take on YOP's. One firm telephoned the office and requested that we cease the practice of giving out application forms to school-leavers, as they were going to recruit through YOP! There is obviously an anomaly here - a firm is receiving six months free labour in a situation where there is a "permanent" post available. The fact that they were doing this also means that they were possibly not receiving the best entrants."

Despite knowledge of the abuses they expressed feelings of powerlessness:

"Some employees in firms see YOP kids as skivvies and use them as such. We can't identify all the things that are going on in a firm, and there are obviously abuses, some of which we would have difficulty in controlling even if we did know about them."

They, like the trainees, also expressed concerns that young people involved in WEEP schemes would be less able to seek full-time work, because of lack of time. At the start of the research, when young people involved in WEEP were actually being asked to miss a day at their scheme in order to attend for a full-time interview the careers offices viewed this favourably -

"when they have young people on their premises

they often do not want to let them go, and often will create work where previously they did not have a post, so as not to lose the young person - even if its only because they'll miss him making the tea....."

As the unemployment situation worsened, and few trainees were being sent for full-time work, this situation did not apply, and with more trainees becoming available, the sponsor was able to substitute one trainee for another as the six month period came to an end.

The careers offices considered that YOP was here to stay. This in itself would necessitate alterations in the careers service - one officer saw it thus:

"I don't think that the careers service will exist in the not too distant future; especially not in its present form. The YOP side will probably be coordinated by a community organisation; the placements for full-time employment will take place through the Job Centres and careers guidance as such will be attached to the schools, the careers officer being based in the schools as part of the school staff. This is probably a good idea, as the careers officer will then have more contact with the kids and will be in easy reach for them to come and talk about their future when they need to....."

#### Relations with the MSC

The advent of YOP necessitated the careers service and the MSC having to maintain a continuous dialogue. The MSC link officers set up the placements for young people and they expected the careers office to fill these available places. This was an area of conflict, as the two agencies work with different objectives. The careers service is concerned with placing young people in 'appropriate' work situations, as near as possible to the young person's interests. The MSC are concerned about numbers; having

secured placements for young people, there is the expectation that they will be filled. Although both services had to constantly produce sets of figures, of the numbers of young people on 'the books', those who were unplaced and the numbers of schemes which were left unfilled; it is the MSC that have numbers as their greater concern. The MSC officials, as officers of the Department of Employment were concerned to fulfill the promises of their government departments. On joining a YOP scheme an unemployed young person was removed from the unemployment figures for the country; currently over half a million young people are involved in the various government schemes.

The link officer was primarily concerned with the number of placements he could secure; the careers officer with the type of placements.

Often the type of placements which the MSC set up, were not the type which the careers officers saw as meeting the needs of their clients:-

"On our books we have a number of young people who are interested in hairdressing. Schemes from the MSC in hairdressing have been few and far between - many were not approved because they were too narrow an experience for approval. This is stupid, as most girls spend three or four years doing an apprenticeship in hairdressing, so I can't understand how it can be seen as too narrow. One placement has been approved, a dual placement in a hairdressing salon with a boutique. Despite the fact that we have a number of young people on our books for this type of work that placement has been given to a young lad from Sunderland, who obviously knew the manager of the shop."

"There is some disparity of opinion between ourselves and the MSC, they have a number of

placements on YOP which they expect to be filled with those on the unemployment register regardless of "whether or not this is the type of work which the young person desires; whereas we work from what the young person requires, more than the dictates of the MSC."

There were obvious conflicts here. The MSC official, having secured a placement with a sponsor, expected that placement to be filled. When this failed to happen, the official became concerned that the sponsor would withdraw from the scheme. It also placed the MSC official in an embarrassing position with the sponsor. The careers service for their part, wished to maintain a modicum of their 'raison d'etre,' and attempted to match young people with placements. Otherwise they were merely placement agents for the MSC. The careers service have fought to maintain ideas of their professionalism by insisting that they and they alone should 'select' and 'refer' young people to sponsors and by suggesting that MSC should consult them first before approving placements, to see if the demand required it. One can only speculate as to the maintenance of their current role with the advent of a comprehensive youth training programme and whether careers officers, as we know them, will be placed within the schools.

#### Scheme = Job

The institutionalisation of YOP becomes apparent when the words 'job' and 'scheme' are interchangeable in common language. This has happened already. This was common practice in the careers office, the reason for this is clear. The careers service handle dwindling numbers of

full-time vacancies, these having been replaced in the main by schemes, therefore it is easier to talk of everything they handle as jobs. Young people reported that they had been sent for 'a job', only to find out it was a 'scheme' when they arrived for the interview. When I pointed this out to one of the officers, the reply was 'same difference'. The one factor which reminds young people that they are on a scheme is the time factor.

### Young People's Views of the Careers Service

Many of the views expressed by the young people concerning the careers service were coloured by the nature of their current work experience placement and their attitude in general to the Youth Opportunities Programme. Their primary view of the careers service stemmed from their contact with the careers teacher at school. (Ball, 1979). One lad of eighteen who had entered the Youth Opportunities Programme after a period of two years full time work in the building trade felt that the careers service gave a very idealistic picture of work and missed out the 'down to earth' realities of the working situation:-

"They don't tell you about the real nature of work, about the other side of work, the not too pleasant side, for example, sweeping the floors, making cups of tea. All the publicity material that they give you is very glossy; when I went into the army they never told me I'd spend ages cleaning boots. You are not told the real process of work, there is no explanation of what the work really involves, you are just told the nice part of it. The Careers Officers do not prepare you for the fact that there may be fifty or sixty other lads also going after the same job

- they don't stress the importance of this. This is especially important if you've just left school - they've told you about the glamorous jobs - airforce, army and nursing; they should show you the dirty parts of these jobs, otherwise it is disheartening and unrealistic."

John, aged 18

### "Down the Careers"

"There is a belief among some young people that to get a job you need only go 'down the careers'. The Careers Officer is a kind of dope-peddler - you can only get it from him. This shows how clearly ill-prepared these particular young people are for the work aspect of the outside world. It is, admittedly, a positive and hopeful view of the careers service that they are starting out with. But, for young people used to the dependent, caring - professional world of school, the Careers Service is bound to look and feel familiar.

The realisation dawns that the Careers Office is not a magic open-sesame to work and the emerging adult, forced out of the chrysalis by this post-school period of rude awakening, finds that he is once more a victim, at the mercy of yet another professional service...." (Ball, 1979) (p.79).

Once the realisation dawns that the Careers Service are not going to provide them with a job, their attitudes change.

"The careers officers can't do anything, well I mean, what can they tell you. They tell you the same thing, that there's no jobs ....."

Ian, aged 17

"When we had careers lessons at school I didn't used to go, didn't think I needed them - and I think I've been proved right. The careers office hasn't helped me, all the jobs I found, I found by myself."

Stuart, aged 17

Some of the young people resented having to attend the careers office, feeling that this was juvenile, many of them equating the careers service with the school service and therefore not for them, now that they have left school.

"The careers officers are a complete waste of



time, its like being back at school....."

John, aged 18

The layout of the careers' offices did not help to break down these barriers. Many of the careers offices were unwelcoming places - regimented rows of hard chairs, little privacy for discussion and a waiting room atmosphere akin to the dentists. The hurried atmosphere, and the numbers of people coming and going do not engender views of a personal service. The careers service has sought to maintain its 'client-based' service, rather than offering a self-service, and more relaxed layout, as in the jobcentres. The structure of the service does not allow for young people to just pop along to the careers office' when they feel the need. The service could not cope with a small number of young people doing this. Thus a system of appointments operates. When the young people are unemployed, after leaving school or inbetween placements, they are asked to attend the careers office once a month to check on the availability of work. Many young people spoke of the futility of this visit - 'they only tell you they've got nothing in....then you feel stupid'

Not all young people viewed the service negatively:

"Now they are doing everything for you, they look for a job, make an interview time for you - all you have to do is to get up, get dressed and go along. They arrange a time for you at the careers office before the interview to make sure that you are really interested in the job you are going after.....theres not much point in sending you for a job you're not really interested in. It's good that they take your views into consideration."

Ian, aged 17

"The careers office are keeping an eye out for us. I go in there quite a lot and ask them if they've got any jobs in. They are nice people in there, they know how you feel if you haven't got a job. They help in any way they can to find you a job."

Gail, aged 17

It may be of relevance that both these young people had a number of O'levels.

There are lots of anxieties apparent in the careers service at present. In conducting this research, I found opposition from a senior in interviewing his staff, he said he would have preferred to have 'selected' those people I spoke to. Although he admitted that the practical situation was often somewhat removed from the theory and the ideal situation, he did stress that he would prefer the policy line to be presented. Those people interviewed were very concerned that they would not be identified and that the material would be confidential. These anxieties obviously prevented some people from expressing fully their view of the situation. There was hesitancy in answering too many questions - studied replies were often given. These responses are not so surprising during a period of rapid change.

Together with being responsible for 'selection' for different types of schemes, the careers service also 'selected' for that element of further education, seen as suitable for WEEP trainees and known as Life and Social Skills.

## L I F E   A N D   S O C I A L   S K I L L S

Official View of Life and Social Skills

In the report 'Young People and Work', (1977), one of the four elements making up the new scheme of opportunities for young unemployed people, was the opportunity to attend further education. This entailed the traditional work-related courses, together with courses which came to be known as 'Life and Social Skills'. The MSC, outlined their meaning of Life and Social Skills, in the document, 'Instructional Guide to Life and Social Skills', (1977).

"Many people lack some of the day-to-day skills which most of us take for granted. Life Skills refers to all those bits of information and know-how and decision-making which we need in order to get by in Life....." (p1.)

In this document, they set out their proposed content of a Life and Social Skills course and give suggestions of methods the tutor may use to fulfil the objectives of the sessions. The guide concentrated its attention on the job area of Life and Social Skills:

"In the context of Life Skills training, securing a job is a vital aspect, and one which needs to be given maximum consideration by the tutor."  
(11)

The underlying idea behind the document is that young people are unemployed because they lack Life and Social Skills, therefore training in this area will produce young people who were employable. Terms such as 'lack', 'difficulties', and 'problems', recur throughout the document. It emphasised young people's incorrect attitudes for entry to unemployment, these needed adjusting. The areas where it was seen that training was

needed were communication skills, areas of securing and maintaining employment and developing competencies of coping with adult life...

"Group discussion. This is the main method for attitude formation, particularly where trainees' attitudes may make them unsuited for employment...." (p.1)

"One of the aims in Life Skills training will be to adjust trainees to normal working conditions...." (p.10)

"Care should be taken in both the choice of words and how they are expressed in order to stimulate the required response." (p 13)

All the content of the guide relates to employment issues and the necessity for young people to be suited for employment. It stresses, the fact that many young people lack these skills - therefore it is the young people's fault that they do not have work. It was written before the numbers of unemployed youth had risen to the proportions of one in two school leavers joining the youth opportunities programme. If this document were to be written today, the emphasis would undoubtedly need to be of different tone and emphasis. There has been considerable criticism of the emphasis on young peoples' lack of skills contributing to their unemployed status. (Ball, 1979; Davies, 1979; Youth in Society, 1980, 1981)

"Theoreticians tell us that youth unemployment is a structural socio-economic problem. There are not enough jobs to go round, and there are likely to be less in the future.....They are not primarily a consequence of the inadequacies of young people. Yet, despite a growing acceptance that the youth unemployment problem is a question of demand, our practice continues to concentrate upon effecting change at the supply end of the equation. If only school leavers had more qualifications, improved their social skills and changed their attitudes, there would be no

problem....." (Youth in Society, 1980)

".....Why should the unemployed state of some of these young people be taken as in itself sufficient evidence of their need for a 'training' in social and life skills? Does this unemployment really stem merely from personal traits which need to be adjusted or eradicated by such training - from illiteracy or innumeracy, or from laziness, or unpunctuality, or an ability to use the telephone or clock-in at work?..."

(Davies, 1979, p 5)

The 'Instructional Guide to Social and Life Skills' is the only document produced by the MSC to guide those involved in such courses with the operation of their work.

Significant research and developments have taken place in other agencies (Further Education Curriculum Review and Development Unit, 1980; Hopson and Scally, 1980, 1981, 1982). The tutors of the Life and Social Skills courses, due to lack of direction, developed their own ideas of content and methods of work with the trainees. The tutors themselves, also learned a great deal from the trainees themselves (Into Work, 1981), especially concerning the operation of different types of schemes. The curriculum advocated in 'The Instructional Guide to Social and Life Skills', is to be found in the Appendices. The document stated that the methods of learning should include group discussion, projects, role-playing, counselling and exercises. Yet, their description of these methods were all very teacher-centred. (FEU, June 78, April 78, 1980)

Despite the fact that documents prior to this had emphasised that work with the 16-19 year old group should be, as far as possible, different from their school experience and trainee-centred, this guide continued to be teacher-centred. The description of activities were

markedly teacher-directed:-

"At certain points in the discussion, the leader should be able to gather related contributions, paraphrase their content and summarise. It is suggested that such summaries be charted. This will help the leader in making the final summary, in which he/she should draw the summaries into a coherent whole." (p 8)

"It follows then that the trainer should be skilled in the technique of interviewing, to be able to conduct such exercises and counsel the trainee on his/her performance." (p 13)

"The Instructors Role. It is hoped that the foregoing will provide some food for thought as to how the instructor can create a climate in which work motivation will take place. The extent to which this takes place will depend on how well the instructor:  
 Determines the trainee's abilities and potential, with due regard to his interests.  
 Ensures that the trainee is aware of and suited to the environmental conditions surrounding a job.  
 Instils in the trainee the intrinsic rewards that a job can offer." (p 15)

All of the comments above emphasise the teachers' prominence in the learning situation. The learners are inactive and passive - qualities of many school teaching situations. This is followed throughout the guide with emphasis on 'curriculum' and the seven - session day.

#### Operation of Life and Social Skills

Within the WEEP schemes it was Life and Social Skills courses which were available as further education release - either on a day or week release basis. The MSC bought the services of different agencies to supply life and social skills training. It is interesting that the colleges of further education were recruited to provide these courses, despite criticism that the similarities with school would not be an attraction to the trainees on

YOP, many of whom had rejected their school experiences. Initially colleges were unwilling to participate in a scheme which provided for a group of young people below their normal educational recruitment standards and requiring different courses than those established. The MSC 'pot of gold', soon convinced them to decide otherwise. With the decrease in apprentices attending colleges for courses, together with falling rolls in general and educational cuts, the MSC money for the delivery of new courses could not be rejected. This money came to support many of their other courses; as the number of MSC courses grew, and monies were directed away from life skills courses. Into Work Ltd (1981) researched four colleges of further education on Tyneside, regarding their Life and Social Skills provision. This research demonstrated the lack of resources allocated to the courses, despite the large sums being paid by MSC for their provision.

"College staff experienced difficulty in obtaining administrative help, clerical aid often being located in a separate college building or block of the college....The three colleges we visited also had either limited space, or no space at all..... Gateshead Technical College and the CAT also discussed problems over finance. The staff at Gateshead Technical College had experienced some problems with the local education authority in obtaining finance for more staff and better facilities. The staff at the CAT were puzzled by the apparent lack of money to re-furbish their building and provide equipment.... Administrative and financial complications were thought by members of staff, to have repercussions on the students and on the teaching of the courses." p7

"Many of the college instructors were puzzled about the apparent lack of money available to buy materials, equipment etc. It was commonly said that the MSC funds were being paid into general college funds rather than being kept separately



for the use of YOP related courses."

p23

Part-time lecturers were recruited to deliver this work, which was seen as low status by college staff and a side-ways step into obscurity. In many cases the courses were taken on board by the colleges more by the attraction of the income than a desire to provide worthwhile training for the young people concerned. This is another of the 'vested interests' that Ball (1979) discusses in "Fit for Work?". The colleges of further education being one of the agencies to actually benefit from the large scale unemployment of young people.

The MSC had recognised that they may need different providers of Life and Social Skills and youth work agencies were approached to deliver the courses in a more informal environment than the colleges. Some of these Life and Social Skills courses have received a good press (Stanley Youth Centre, in Into Work, 1981). The young people in this research were all involved in Life and Social Skills courses provided by the YMCA in an informal setting in Washington. Such informal settings were not part of the mainstream of provision; it can be argued that political pressure prevented the MSC from releasing too many of their funds outside of the traditional education sector.

Within the WEEP schemes it was the colleges and a few external providers who delivered the Life and Social Skills content in the programmes. Within the other types of YOP schemes the Life and Social Skills were expected to

be built into the programme and delivered by the staff employed by the sponsoring agency.

Content of Life and Social Skills

To attempt to give a description of the content of different Life and Social Skills courses would be unwieldy. It has been recognised (FEU, 1980) that in Britain there are considerable differences in the approach and content of Life and Social Skills courses. They summarised this with their seven point model.

	ACTING	KNOWING	FEELING
PRODUCT	Deficiency		
	Competency		
		Information-based	
	←	←	Socialisation
PROCESS	Experiential →		
		Reflective →	
		←	Counselling

Seven "models" of SLS Development

With few directions forthcoming, providers gave their own emphases to their course content. The content evolved, rather than was prescribed.

Life and Social Skills has a history of some twenty years. It was Winthrop Adkins who first developed the concepts of life skills training and who considered that he coined the name. He was a psychologist working on a YMCA research programme for disadvantaged black adolescents and adults working in New York. He developed a very structured learning programme based on employment skills, which came to be used fairly widely in the USA. Developing from this came the Canadian version of Life Skills training. Again this programme was developed to be used for disadvantaged adults (its more recent developments, YWCA 1981, 1982 have concentrated on a more positive Life Skills training for all levels of the population - not only the disadvantaged.) The Canadian, Saskatchewan courses, defines Life Skills thus:

"Life skills, precisely defined, means problem-solving behaviours appropriately and responsibly used in the management of personal affairs."

Developments continue in Canada in this field; the work has become less problem-centred and more concentrated on personal development of the individual. The Canadian Life Skills approach recognises that there are five areas of life skills - self, job, family, community and leisure.

With the advent of numerous courses being held on life and social skills, various resource books were produced to

assist the tutors on this new learning scheme; this in itself became a growth area. Life and social skills has been the course which the MSC has favoured and therefore this market has been responded to. Amongst the tutors involved with the courses there was seen to be an urgent need to meet with other social and life skills tutors, for support and exchange of materials (Into Work, 1981). As there was no manual or totally prescribed course content, tutors involved in the courses decided themselves on the course content. Therefore it is possible to visit a number of different life and social skills courses throughout the country and find them doing very different work. This in one sense may be productive, in that it may produce innovative ideas, and the needs of the trainees may be met more by the individualised programmes. What was missing was a set of clearly defined objectives for the courses. It is the lack of these which caused difficulties for tutors, trainees, sponsors and all those involved with life and social skills.

Course content which is most often associated with life and social skills is similar to that described in the Into Work study.

"Overall instruction consisted of self-assessments, job applications, letter writing, telephone calls, form filling exercises, job hunting methods, manner of dress, the legal system, civil rights, the police and consumer rights." (p14)

#### Life and Social Skills at the YMCA

All the young people in this work attended life and social

skills courses at the YMCA Training Resources Centre in Washington. They attended on a day-release basis over a period of fifteen weeks. This course programme was influenced by the Canadian Life Skills model of Life Skills training; that is, it was structured, and concentrated on the five areas of life skills training, rather than simply on those areas relating to job. This emphasis was chosen by myself as Head Tutor of the Resource Centre. Having spent six weeks training on the Canadian Life Skills course in Toronto, and having evaluated this method, I considered it the most appropriate for use with the trainees. The emphasis of the course being on the positive assets which people possessed, rather than on the negative and what they lacked. From working with the trainees over a number of years, this personal development approach appeared more appropriate to the needs of these young people in Washington, rather than the problem-centred approach propounded by the MSC document. Set in the wider context of these young peoples lives, the course concerned itself with wider issues than solely that of job and securing a job - this latter area, being purely one fifth of the course. The emphasis we placed on the courses were not that they would help the young people secure a job - it was decided very early that this would be merely conning the young person; the emphasis was that they may be able to develop their confidence for all areas of their lives, improve their relationship skills and fulfil and judge their own potential.

There was an informal setting in the building. Training rooms were carpeted and furnished with easy chairs. Everyone in the centre was referred to by their first name and smoking was allowed. Tea and coffee making facilities were available. The centre accommodated two groups of trainees a day. Each group consisted of ten to twelve trainees who were together for the fifteen weeks. They also had one tutor for the seven hour day and for the duration of the course. Methods employed at the centre were structured group experiences, role-play, video, projects, discussions, counselling, group work, visits. The Training Resource Centre existed to provide life and social skills training for the young people in Washington; the nearest college being seven miles away. No other activities took part in the centre - it was purely a life and social skills training centre, rather than a typical YMCA type building. Tutors were trained in groupwork, and worked with this basic philosophy, rather than a teaching model. All of the comments of the young people, are taken from those attending these courses.

In understanding the comments of the trainees a number of factors need to be taken into account. The trainees related to me primarily, as their life and social skill tutor, and although, during the interviews we had for this research I asked them to give their honest answers concerning the training they were receiving at the YMCA, they may have felt, because of our relationship, and friendship, that they should give positive replies. The trainees who discuss their life and social skill training

are those who have chosen to attend the life and social skills course after the induction. There has been a selection process here - after being contacted regarding the course, about eighty per cent turn up for the interview. Of this eighty per cent, three out of ten decide they do not want to attend the course, others 'drop out' of the course, before its close. Therefore the comments of the young people are only from those who had decided they wanted to stay on a life and social skills course. The views of those who did not turn up for the induction or who decided not to stay or left the course early, are not included in this research.

The young people attending these courses were contacted through their sponsors. The names of the young people available to attend life and social skills courses were identified by the careers service, who then notified the YMCA. The YMCA then contacted the sponsor of a scheme, requesting them to release the young person, to attend an induction session for the course. This induction of approximately one hour, gave the trainee time to ask questions and to have the nature of the course explained to him. In the sponsors' contract with the MSC, he had signed to allow the young person to attend courses. There was no compulsion on the young person to attend the course; but the sponsor had to release the trainee, if suitable training was available. It was the tutors' role to convince the young person of the worthwhile nature of the course. The careers officers and sponsors were often unsupportive of the young people attending the life and

social skills courses; we will return to this matter later, in greater detail.

### Young People's View of life and social skills

The first concern of all the young people when they attended the induction was - 'Is it just going to be like being back at school?' As the majority of the young people in this study had negative views of their schooling they were obviously suspicious of being asked to attend a course. They had little idea of the content of a life and social skills course:

"When I was told about the course I went mad. I rang the careers and asked why I had to attend the course, I thought it was bloody stupid, it would be just like going to school..."

(John, aged 18)

"At first when I was told to come here I wondered what it would be like, I wondered if I would know anybody and what the tutor would be like. It was different from what I expected it would be; I just thought it would be like school, being treated like little children which we were not...."

(Janice, aged 17)

....I was surprised when we were on first name terms, I thought it would be like school....."

(Dawn, aged 16)

"Me boss told me to come to this place, I thought it would be a load of crap, thought I wouldn't like it. Thought it was going to be somebody bossing you around all the time, At college everyone was like bosses, always shouting at you, they all had it in for me. This course is different - we're all working together, we have fun and get along....."

(Michael, aged 17)

They had very clear ideas concerning what they did not want from a life and social skills course.



The methods employed on the courses often caused problems for the trainees. They were encouraged to think for themselves, work out problems in small groups, be less tutor-dependent and to express their own thoughts. The participative and experiential learning techniques, were, in the main, very new to the young people. They had to be introduced in an encouraging manner as many of the trainees lacked confidence to participate. Yet, having worked through their initial concerns about the methods used, many of the trainees were suprised at how they actually enjoyed learning.

"You're like one of us - we can have a bit of a laugh - but we get the work done, we know how far to go. I often think about the things we've done when I get home, seems as if it makes sense then, and I know why we were doing the things. I enjoy it best learning things for myself, this is the best thing about it. For me another good thing is that you get to know other people better, you get to know people better here in a day than you do at work in a week. Suppose I'm interested in learning about myself and I am here. Suppose the difference between here and school is that I'm enjoying learning."

(Andy, aged 18)

"I enjoyed the activities day and most of the games we have played, they seem to make things much clearer. The games make you think a bit more and let you know that you are not always right all the time, they attempt to change your attitudes. The way we worked in a group was such a transformation - quiet a shock really - usually the more talkative ones take over. Games put pressure on you and make you more interested and you get more involved."

(Michael, aged 18)

"What I didn't like on the first week was that you had to introduce yourself to everybody, where you came from and your name and all that. At first I just thought she was nebbly (the tutor), trying to pry into our personal lives. And then it was OK and I didn't really bother."

(Ian, aged 17)

The enjoyment that many expressed concerning the courses may be attributed as much to the peer group support that

they received whilst on the courses, rather than simply the course material. These young people, having left school had often lost contact with many of their peers. Schools often had large catchment areas and the young people came into them from the different villages, and therefore they often developed a wide circle of friends from different parts of the town. Once they left school many did not come into contact with previous friends. The courses in life and social skills, only drawing their membership from Washington, resurrected many of these old friendships and helped to develop new ones. When the young people were 'on the dole', they were often cut off from the rest of society, they were separated and isolated from one another. It was this isolation which was most frequently mentioned by the trainees for their boredom and depression, when they had no work. The unemployed by their very nature are isolated from one another, they are divided by the fact that they all compete for the same few vacancies. One study of young people coping with unemployment (Breakwell, Harrison, Propper, 1982) point to the psychological effects of the YOP schemes. Despite all the faults with the scheme, it does serve to bring the young people into the wider community and this in itself can have benefits, and reduce their isolation.

"...They realise that YOP schemes are unlikely to make much difference to their chance of getting a real long-term job. They are being exploited by employers as cheap labour. But our research showed that, nonetheless, they do prefer a YOP to no job. YOP's we found can have important psychological effects - a better feeling of well-being and increased self-esteem....."

(p 494)

"To some extent, YOP is like medicine. You do not need to like it for it to do you good."

(p 495)

The young people gained considerable support from their own peers; all of the young people were in identical situations - they were all on government schemes on work experience on employers' premises. They often found more information on the operation of the youth opportunities scheme and different types of scheme, from their life and social skills course, and its informal network, rather than from the careers service.

"It was good on the first day, that's when I made up my mind to come all of the time - why its just the people that went there, its just that I got on with them. If I hadn't gotten on with them I wouldn't have come...."

(Paul, aged 17)

"I met some new friends which I still talk to.....I look forward to seeing me friends here, cos I used to go to school with Jeanette and I never used to get to see her when I left, and we catch up on each others' gossip."

(Janice, aged 16)

This support and sense of identity within the group who worked on different WEEP schemes was viewed as a great threat by one sponsor. He asked whether "Can you guarantee that my girls won't be tainted by what the others talk about. They'll compare the different firms, and I don't want that." It is interesting to look at the employers' fears regarding the trainees attending courses. From the employers there was often the rhetoric that these young people are useless - they lack time-keeping skill, are not able to respond appropriately to authority, do not wear the correct clothing for a work environment. These

were the main areas the employer would be happy for a course to concentrate its attention and improve upon. Within the wider context of the training that was provided in Washington, many of the employers did not want to know. They had ideas of training in a particularly narrow way - they did not want trainees who would question, who thought for themselves, and who were aware of their rights. That the course may engender these skills was a threat to some of the sponsors, consequently, they were not too happy to release trainees for the courses. It appears that sponsors want trainees, but only on their terms. The common identity which is fostered on the courses, where groups of trainees come together regularly and will incidentally discuss their different placements, is seen as a threat to many. Some sponsors went to considerable lengths to keep trainees away from these training sessions - although many of these instances were reported and investigated by the MSC, there were no known cases where the sponsors had their schemes closed, resulting from the investigation. The most insidious incidents here, were situations where sponsors suggested that trainees who attended courses were less likely to be considered for full-time work - under such pressure, many trainees obviously stayed away from courses.

The isolation that many of the WEEP trainees were placed in is similar to the lack of organisation in terms of union membership of shop workers in general. The WEEP scheme is different from others in YOP, in that large groups of trainees are not altogether on one scheme - in

training workshops, for example there may be forty or fifty trainees, working with a small team of supervisors. In WEEP, the trainees are in the minority. The first strike amongst YOP trainees occurred in Stanley in June, 1981, in a Training Workshop. The dispute concerned the removal of a minibus which had picked up the trainees from isolated areas. Taking the bus away effectively meant that some trainees would be paying £15 of their allowance each week on bus fares in order to attend the schemes. Such a situation as this could never happen within a WEEP situation. They do not share such a common identity, (outside of their Life Skills course) as they are so split up.

The experience of their different placements, often gave the young people wider knowledge of the opportunities available within the Youth Opportunities Programme. It also exposed some of the bad practices of sponsors. Work experience on employers premises, brought the young people in contact with a typical workforce, in some instances they were the only work experience placement on site, and therefore had little contact with others on similar schemes. It was when they came together as a similar group, that they were able to learn more about the operation of the programme in some depth and they explored some of their views concerning the schemes, with those with similar experiences. These experiences were similar to those witnessed in local colleges (Into Work, 1981)

"Young people had often not realised that the specific part of YOP that they were involved in

was in fact a programme of opportunities, until they had entered the life and social skills courses." (p 6)

"The young people generally, enjoyed life and social skills courses, both from a social point of view since they had the opportunity to mix with one another, and from a status aspect since most young people said they enjoyed being treated as an adult, or at least, not as a school child."  
(p 5)

From the Into Work, study of course content and methods, and from the YMCA practice there was a belief that Life and Social Skills should provide a programme of learning opportunities, whereas the official model of Life and Social Skills is primarily a control model. Those working with the trainees adapted programme to suit the needs of the trainees with whom they were working. For many tutors it was realised in a short space of time that a control model was inappropriate for the trainees. It was apparent that it was the lack of vacancies which prevented these young people from securing work - in a full employment situation, few of the young people in this group would have had difficulty of securing some form of full time employment. Therefore the model for life and social skills often turned from the official control model, to a personal development model.

Life and Social Skills was new terminology for the young people themselves; they were having to decide for themselves what this new course was all about, and why they were involved with the course.

"I find it difficult to explain..."

(Elizabeth, aged 17)

"I knew someone who was on the course before me. I didn't understand it when they used to go on about it...."

(Norma, 17 years old)

"I know meself what it is; I understand what we are doing, and that its not just a lot of fun. But it is hard to put over to people to explain to them. I don't think that it is right for everyone, them that are not just that type of person - shy like - maybe it does do them some good, even though they don't like it. Like shy people, people who don't mix very well, people who are not even interested in working. It wasn't really like a course where you just sat down and had to learn, it was just like friendly and you got out of it what you put into it. Well what I usually say about the course is that it is training you for life. I think that a lot of people think that you should be coming here soley to get a job, you learn a lot more about the outside world, a lot of things I didn't know about, like marrying, buying a house, how you go about banking and all different things...."

(Elizabeth, aged 17 years)

The trainees began to work out their own interpretations of the course for them - how it fitted their needs. They questioned what made this course different from others they had attended. Within the training group they found that they were able to test some of their ideas and often were surprised when they received the support of other group members. Here the peer group is working as a positive force for the young people involved.

"When you are able to talk in a group about your problems is the best thing, and then the rest of the group help you with your problem and visa versa. That helps because it is better than just keeping it to yourself or you might just worry about them more, but when you get them out in the open they seem to disappear. Problems that I have are about me family background, it feels rather mixed up - but when you find out that other people have similar problems you don't feel as if you're the only one. I've talked about me dad having a drink problem and then one of the lasses told us that her mother has a problem with drink and it seemed to upset her, so I just felt easier after that. And also people at work who

have problems which I don't have, it makes us feel life can't be that bad if people have problems which you don't..."

(Michael, aged 16)

"Getting to know about yourself and others and making decisions as a group is what its all about. When others tell you their point of view it makes you wonder about your own and then you are more able to compromise...."

(Janet, aged 17)

### It's a skive

Some of the young people reported that their initial incentive to attend the life and social skills course, was to 'skive' from work, a break in the routine. It was noticeable that these feelings tended to occur after the young person had been in their placement between six weeks and a month. On speaking to young people immediately on joining their placement they were very eager to please the sponsor, and to be involved in the work in their placement. After a number of weeks, they had often become disenchanted with the work they were doing. The harsh realities of work - of getting up early on a morning and working late on an evening were then realised - the course came as a break.

"When I had to come here I thought, well a day off work. I didn't like it at first, well stupid little things every Friday. But after a bit I started to like it. Suppose it was because it was a rest from work like. I like it, but I suppose one of the reasons is because I hate work".

(Hazel, aged 17)

"One of the things I liked about it was not having to get up at 7.30 a.m. on Wednesdays. Its been hellish coming here like, its been like a day off work, in fact it has been."

(Paul, aged 17)



"When I was first told about the course, I thought, oh good, it'll be a skive. I go to college on a Wednesday and Life and Social Skills on a Monday...."

(Michael, aged 17)

"I love Thursdays (the day of her course) I think its because I'm so used to being with older people, that Thursday is like a break."

(Norma, aged 17)

One of the trainees who had initially approached the course as a 'good skive' was able to reflect on the support which the course gave to her:

"When I was first told, I just thought it was going to be a day off work. But after me first ten weeks had finished, I didn't want to leave because I think that when you are working on a government scheme you don't get treat very well by the people you are working for and you can come here through the week and you can tell your problems to the others and they will listen, and you listen to theirs. And it stops you getting depressed. I know how to work me money a bit better now as a result of the course, I can get on better with people. When you listen to other people's situations, it helps you stop thinking about the £23.50 bit"

(Denise, aged 17)

Many of the trainees coming onto the life and social skills courses had 'drifted in'; they had not found out information concerning the courses content, few had asked any questions concerning their course, either from their sponsor or from the careers office.

"When they said I had to go on a day-release I wasn't all that bothered, I just thought it was part of the whole thing like. I didn't know what it was about, so I just thought I'd come along and find out. I didn't ask anyone about it, never really thought about it...."

(David, aged 17)

It was initially, largely the attitude of the sponsor to the day-release which decided whether the trainee attended

the life skills course.

Sponsors attitudes to Life and Social Skills

The attitudes of the sponsors, swept the whole attitudinal range from very positive, to highly negative. Many of the tutors involved in courses had a marketing role to perform in 'educating' sponsors of the need for life and social skills training for trainees. On the negative side, there was often to be found a sponsor who was abusing the scheme; he was unprepared to release the trainee to attend the course, because he 'needed' the trainee - he was short staffed. Many sponsors were negative in that they did not pass on the information concerning the course to the trainees concerned - in such cases the trainees themselves had no choice in whether they attended the courses or not. Some sponsors were aware of their contract obligations with MSC and therefore gave tacit approval for the trainees to attend the course - but they did not actively encourage them.

"me boss just telt us to come to this place

(Michael, aged 17)

"Was on works experience for about four month when the supervisor told me about the Life and Social Skills course. Only got a weeks warning, she gave me a photocopy of the letter and details about the course. They didn't seem too bothered about me coming at the firm.....I thought it would be good from looking at what was on that bit of paper that I got...."

(Maureen aged 17)

Continuing with those disinterested in the courses were sponsors whose argument was "they should have learnt all

that stuff in schools - what are they doing with them in schools these days". A variation of this was the sponsor who saw Life and Social Skills as a remedial course, and who therefore responded "The lad that I have is bright, he doesn't need any of the stuff they'll be teaching him on those courses; he knows it all. He'd be wasting his time." If this view of the courses being viewed as remedial was communicated to the trainees, they themselves would not wish to be labelled as such by attending them. The extent to which the active discouragement of attending life and social skills courses cannot be proved; so much of the persuasion against attending courses was very subtle.

Often the negative sponsor would attempt to discourage the trainee by taunting him with the sensitive area - 'Oh, you're going back to playschool are you....'

"The boss always says 'Oh you're going for a skive tomorrow.'"

(Ian, aged 16)

"The head of the payroll department felt that it was a waste of time if you were just sitting there talking all of the time, I used to argue with him. He said it was just another way of skiving from work - I said it wasn't. He said that I didn't have to go if I didn't want to, but I decided I wanted to go.."

(Diane, aged 17)

For those trainees who encountered difficulties with their sponsor in resisting the course, they had difficult decisions to make - whether to exercise their rights and attend the course and risk upsetting the sponsor or not to bother at all. For some of the trainees, the fact that the sponsor may not be overtly keen for them to attend the

course was an easy option, as many of the trainees fearing a return to school used all excuses possible to get out of attending a course. Some trainees were aware that the opportunities for them "being kept on" by the sponsor were slim, if not impossible. These young people often take the view that as they are entitled to attend the course, they may as well exercise this right as it is a day away from work. The trainees themselves did not comment on the course as helping them to secure further employment or question the benefits they may receive from the course (although, to the latter part of the course they were interested in obtaining their certificate of attendance for the course.) - their over-riding concern is to miss a day at work. These trainees had not internalised training as of personal and work-related benefit to them. They were primarily concerned with the 'here and now' situation, a day off work is more important than what the course may help them achieve. This situation has its parallels with school where pupils will run messages and perform tasks for teachers which remove them from the routine of the classroom.

There were sponsors who were positive about the courses being offered to the young people, these were often in the larger companies where they themselves had a training department and had a company policy which emphasised staff training.

"Personnel told me about the Life and Social Skills course, she was more interested in it that I was to start with.....I was enthusiastic about coming."

I was to start with.....I was enthusiastic about coming."

(Alison, aged 16)

It was also within these firms, that the 'responsible officer' attempted to support the young person to sample the course; giving them positive encouragement.

"For a couple of weeks I thought I'd not go and then the woman at work said that you may as well go once and try it and see how you feel, and then if you don't like it then don't go...."

This was followed through by other companies - the Inland Revenue scheme was notable; the young people had discussions on the work that they had done on the day-release.

"At work, well me boss especially is interested, he's always asking what we are doing, they seem to take quiet a lot of interest in the Inland Revenue what is going on here. Well I just told them all the different things that we did each week; like when we went to court, they asked what happened there. I think they don't really understand what we are trying to do...."

(Elizabeth, aged 17)

"Me boss asked us a few questions about the course; he said as long as you enjoy yourself and learn something, you may as well go. He said it was a pity it was only for the ten weeks and not for the whole six months and that's what I thought as well."

(Diane, aged 17)

Where this happened there was more of an integration of the day-release and the work experience. It was in these instances that one could say that the young people were receiving worthwhile training. The sponsors were encouraging the young people to learn from their experience by reflecting on the work that they were doing both inside and outside the company and taking the time to

discuss this with the young person.

### Training

This issue of sponsors being prepared to release trainees for life and social skills training raises questions on the area of training itself. If so many sponsors, as the trainees report, view life and social skills day-release as 'a skive', or 'just a day off work', they are often expressing general negativity towards training in general. The young people who are involved in WEEP were not an expense to the sponsor; all of the trainees allowance is paid for by the MSC. Despite this, the sponsor is negative concerning day-release. This may draw our attention to how training is viewed. If we are to expect in the future to see a work force which continually receives training and retraining, it is unlikely that the employer will be in favour of paying for this training himself, when in a situation like WEEP, he is unwilling often to release trainees, for training, when he is neither contributing to their wage, or to their training. If we were to ask the sponsor to pay for release for further education himself, we would have far less trainees on day-release than ever before.

### The Careers' Service View of Life and Social Skills

In the initial stages of contact with the careers service their views of life and social skills courses were overtly negative. Over a period of two years many of the

officers' views of the courses changed markedly. Yet it cannot go unremarked that the senior officer concerned with the young people of this study was highly negative concerning the provision of these courses.

The careers officers were very unclear about the reasoning and meaning of Life and Social Skills. To the majority the courses were remedial, and simply another phase for the old literacy and numeracy classes:-

"we send those young people who need special help, who have not done very well in the school system..."

Others viewed them as providing help for those with personality disorders:-

"We select the needy, those lacking in personality, have anti-work attitudes and are anti-hierarchy. We identify them through the review process - we identify the quiet and the reserved types...."

So the Life and Social Skills courses for many of the officers were the treatment for all disorders. A very definite remedial model had been internalised by these officers. Few of them felt that all young people could benefit from a Life and Social Skills course and therefore they considered that it was their duty to 'select' those young people who were most likely to benefit from this type of training. I asked what their criteria would be for this selection and was unable to obtain a precise reply, the content being that it was largely an intuitive process.

Although 'counselling and guidance' is one of the four

elements which are supposed to comprise any YOP scheme, this element tends to be the most neglected on the WEEP placements and the Life and Social Skills course could be the appropriate place where this element is fulfilled.

It was the employment officers role, in visiting the young person on placement to decide whether to refer that young person for Social and Life skills training. Whether this took place depended largely on the officers interpretation of the meaning of life and social skills and his overall impression of the courses. Over a period of time officers did become acquainted with the courses, by responding to invites to be a participant on a course for a day, to experience it themselves.

Again the careers officers took the view that it was their role to 'refer' young people for this form of training - that this was not the role of any other agency. Life and Social Skills was not the only course on offer to those young people on WEEP, although it was the one which gained the wider audience. Some work-specific courses were available within the colleges, which some young people obtained day-release to attend. Where these were available, the offices preferred to refer the young people to the work-related courses.

If the young people themselves were confused by this new course, which they may have had different attitudes from sponsors and careers officers alike, then their parents were often more confused. The YOP courses themselves were



new, and many parents felt ill-equipped to advise their young people on different courses of action. The parents' advice tended to be based on their own experiences in full-time employment, which were not always so relevant in the unemployment field. Although many of their parents were non-committal regarding the courses, of those who did take an interest they tended to express views that if they were on a training course, that that in itself should produce some good.

"Me mam and dad ask about it, they seem to like the idea. When I'm talking about it they listen, they don't just start reading the paper and things like that."

(Norma, aged 17)

"Me mam asks a lot about what we do on the course. I never told them about the film on family planning and VD - I wouldn't tell her, there would be no point - you find out yourself really."....Suppose they're a bit strict really.....Me mam is a bit wary of the course - she calls it 'the playbarn', she doesn't understand what we're doing even though I tell her every week. Me mam met 'mouse' and 'Wally' (a punk and a coloured lad who were in Alisons group) and she wondered who I was mixing with on these courses...!"

(Alison, aged 16)

Considerable ambiguity still remains on the nature of Life and Social Skills; it is even named differently, with the emphasis being placed on one or other areas. The area is known variously as, 'Life and Social Skills', 'Social and Life Skills', 'Life Skills'. All complain of its name, in an effort to disguise their difficulty in defining it. The course would be variously described, were one to ask tutors, careers officers, sponsors alike - it would be a rare case if common definitions were arrived at. The subject in some areas is accorded a very narrow

view (as in The Instructional Guide to Social and Life Skills, with its emphasis on work), may be viewed as primarily remedial, and concerned with attitude change. At the other extreme, there are Life and Social Skills courses, which are concerned with the wider operation of the individual and are concerned with 'education for life', which is seen as ongoing and developmental. Therefore in comparing any Life and Social Skills course, it is imperative that the methodological base is clearly understood and the objectives are thoroughly outlined. Many Life and Social Skills courses, may read similarly on paper; they have to have approval from the MSC to gain funding. In practice they may be significantly different courses. The practice of the YMCA Training Resource Centre attempted to situate the courses on the developmental end of the learning scale, emphasising experiential learning; this largely stemmed from the departments previous history of developmental groupwork with adolescents in industry, where it had twenty years experience. It may be significant, that on completing this research, the Training Resource Centre which was set up to provide solely the Life and Social Skills provision for the Work Experience on Employers Premises programme is now due to close. The advent of the Youth Training Scheme (YTS) will integrate the Life and Social skills training course within the overall year programme of the scheme. Sponsors will ensure that they have the content which they require.

Within the 'normal' school and work training environment,

that which is to be learned is strongly controlled - by the teachers, and by the employers. There is a certain body of knowledge which it is considered must be learned. If one contrasts this with the wider Life and Social Skills model which stresses the learners involvement in his own learning, which encourages him to decide his own areas of need, one can then understand the ambiguity and mistrust which abounds when life and social skills are broached.

The stress on the remedial nature of life and social skills is yet another reinforcement of the personal pathology view of unemployment. Tutors have had to abandon such remedial courses, on realising the inappropriateness of these for many of the trainees. As the number of young people grew on the schemes, so too did the numbers of young people who had several 'O' level passes, and were certainly not remedial material. Whilst the blame was placed on the young people, the sponsors could secure young people on their terms, once this was exposed it was a different story. A different scheme was introduced. It is interesting to note that employers have had over one hundred years of state education, and they only now recognise that it is failing. Yet, despite this, they still continue to see training in a very narrow view, and fail to take into account the needs of the young people themselves.

T H E O T H E R W O R L D

The Other World

We have looked at the young people within their families, and through their experiences of school and their entry into the government schemes; in this chapter we will see the young people outside the context of their scheme, and in the wider society, in their leisure time.

Of the sample there were 37 males and 43 females; this also reflects the fact that there were a higher proportion of girls on work experience on employers' premises than other schemes due to the type of work being offered - mainly shop and office work. Of the eighty, their ages were as follows:

Table 8.1 Ages of the Trainees.

	<u>Males</u>	<u>Females</u>	<u>Total</u>
Age 16	9	12	21
Age 17	23	27	50
Age 18	9	3	9
			----
			80
			----

One cannot talk of this group of young people as one group. There were many differences whereby we can loosely distinguish sub-groups. From the group of eighty young people, there appeared to be three sub-groups: the 'young ones', the 'in-betweens' and the 'sophisticated ones'.

These sub-groups classification were a combination of my own interpretations, as I viewed and worked with them in different groups and as I understood the young people's own interpretations. The young people themselves were very aware of the differences between members in the groups they formed - smaller sub-groups were formed within the tutorial life and social skills group. The groups mentioned are not definitive; they are described loosely to illustrate that there were many differences between the young people of the sample - that they were not all one type.

#### "THE YOUNG ONES"

It was the physical appearance of "the young ones" which was often the determining factor. These young people looked very young for their age; often being short in stature and still wearing the remains of their school uniform (which the other groups had obviously discarded at the first opportunity). They often wore national health spectacles and showed little interest in current fashions or trends. The out of work activities for the boys tended to be 'hanging around the streets with me mates', or riding their bicycles 'doing wheelies', or watching the television - these young lads had no time for girls. The girls in this group were more likely to spend their time babysitting, helping their mothers in the home and knitting - again, not spending much time away from the home environment and usually not 'involved' with any males. Too many of the 'young ones' were ill-prepared for

the world of work. On leaving school they had little idea of what they were moving into; entering unemployment and schemes were a problem for them. A passive acceptance of situations was very prevalent in this group. These young people were immature at sixteen and seventeen, and were simply buffeted from pillar to post, without having any control of their situations. They were passive actors in their own life play - they retained the young child mentality of acting because they had been told to; they did not question.

One of the "young ones" commented on the day-release element of his work experience placement.

".....I just come. I didn't na where it was, even though I lives up the road like. I was just told to come, so I come.....I like to come....."  
Keith, aged 16

Keith was typical of many of the "young ones" - he reacted to the dictates of others, he did not consider questioning. The classic situation of 'them' and 'us' was ever present. Michael talked about his ambition to go the the local technical college.

"I'd like to go on day-release, to college or something....I haven't had the chance. I just haven't been fortunate enough. (I asked him if he had talked this over with a careers officer).....OH no, THEY just tell you what to do, they don't let you tell THEM what you want to do. They would say, "No, you're too thick", I've got the impression that they wouldn't think that I was suitable for that.....I would stick in and that if I went....."

Michael, aged 17

A similar situation prevailed in their work experience

placement where they were often given others' work to do. Although they were aware that they were "being put on", they did not question it, they simply completed the task.

They were unaware of choices available to them and often ill-equipped to know the questions to ask to secure appropriate information - many took information from others, less informed and acted upon this, rather than seeking out the answers for themselves. Is this passive youngster the result of eleven years passive schooling?

Paul, at sixteen was one of the 'young ones', a slim boy with a very child like face, ruddy complexion and large black national health spectacles. He always had a cheery smile, took few things seriously and was difficult to control in the life and social skills group as he played the comedian. When other members of his group ('the sophisticated ones') spend their lunch breaks in the pub, Paul was found riding his bicycle round and round the car park, experimenting with 'wheelies' and generally 'having a laugh'. He described his time outside of his work placement as follows:

".....there's nowt to do up ours.....stay in the house, watch the telly most nights.....play football, well I kick a ball around in the park, don't play for a team or ought like that. Gan to the match sometimes. Don't gan to discos, the youth club up ours is crap, went there when I was about eleven, I've never been back since. All me mates who gan say its crap - its summat te de I suppose.....Support Sunderland. Gan fishing when I gan on me holidays - gan down to South Shields with me brother....."

Paul, aged 16



8. "Nothing to do...."



One of the female 'young ones' was Rita, although 17 years old she looked fourteen. Rita had waist length brown hair which she kept from her face, pinning it back carelessly with two hair grips. Unlike many girls of her age she wore no makeup, one could not imagine her owning any. Her child-like appearance was emphasised by her clothing, tomboyish, very traditional, - shapeless garments, jeans which were three years behind in style and coats that others in the group would disown. She was a very quiet member of the group and appeared lazy, in that she was very comfortable in sitting back and allowing other group members to do all the work. She had a cheerful personality and usually a smile on her face. The surprise came when Rita talked. Her very 'rough and ready' accent, appeared rather out of place with her child like appearance.

"I used to gan out a lot; me mates drink and smoke, but I don't, they keep saying to me 'Gan on, have a drink', but I don't want to so I just ignore them for a time. I seem to spend a lot of my time writing letters (Rita is one of a large family, many of whom live in other parts of the country, mainly in the forces, and are older than herself) I get on me mam's nerves cos I always have me records on, no matter what I'm doing...."

Rita, aged 17

The 'young ones' were often also distinguishable from the others as they were non-smokers and non-drinkers. In many instances they would not gain entry to a pub, purely from their appearance. Smoking and drinking were two of the symbols which the 'sophisticated ones' associated with conferring adult status and recognition.

"THE SOPHISTICATED ONES"

A large concentration of girls made up this group, together with those males who could appropriately be called 'the lads' (See Willis, 1977) This group contrasts sharply with the 'young ones' by their appearance; they were outwardly very mature for their years. The girls' appearance especially belied their true age - skilful applications of make-up, current fashions and latest hairstyles combined to produce an effect which would enable all to gain entry to a pub or social club without a second glance. The girls' attitudes to the males in the group was generally disparaging, moreso to the 'young ones', who they classed as babies, and often were not given the consideration of being spoken to. The 'sophisticated lads' were tolerated and sometimes playfully befriended, but solely as a friend, rarely as a potential boyfriend. These girls sought out older males for their boyfriends, many four or five years older than themselves. This in itself contributed to and maintained their image. These males often introduced them to a wider world than they had known before:-

"On a Thursday night we play pool, he's (boyfriend) trying to teach me, then on a Friday we go out with friends; we sometimes go to the Roker Hotel, we even went to the Holiday Inn one night. We get around a bit....We go to quite a few parties too, either football, rugby or snooker party socials. I've never been out so much in all me life since I met Stephen...."

Linda, aged 17

The sophisticated girls spent their weekends in discos

connected to bars and in nightclubs. Their general attitude was 'enjoy life whilst you can'; there was a sense of urgency here, as if there was a limited time for this 'enjoyment phase', that it came in short measures and had to be grasped whilst they had the opportunity. Marriage, an avowed goal for many, was viewed as putting an end to their 'good time'. Denise was a member of this 'sophisticated' crowd, and in her own way a leader; the young ones, looked on rather incredulously

"I give me mam £5 board, that leaves me with £18.50. I usually buy myself something every weekend, then the rest I'll keep for meself to go out and for me cigarettes. On a Friday night I go to The Havelock (pub) and then at 9 O'clock I go to the Riverside (social club); then I usually stay at me friends flat for the night. (Denise's 'best friend' is 24 years old.) Saturday I go to the Galleries (the shopping centre in Washington) with Norma. Saturday night - well - it depends; if I get asked out for a date on Friday night, then I go out with him on a Saturday. Sunday night I go to the Cross Keys (pub) with me mam (Denises father is dead). Monday I usually go to the Riverside, Tuesday night I stop in, Wednesday night I go to the Usworth Club, cos there's a disco on. Thursday is usually the Stella Maris (another pub) or if not, Barmston Club. I haven't got a steady boyfriend, I just date, cos I'm the sort that can't keep a relationship, I just like new faces and new places.....I'm ambitious, I like men, I don't like to be bored, I like to be with fun people. I don't like staying in. I love cars, well everybody does. Seems to be all the lads I get have cars....."

Denise, aged 17

### 'The Lads'

If, for these girls the symbols of their maturity and entry into the adult world was drinking shorts, dressing in the latest fashions and spending as much time out of the house as possible; for 'the lads' their symbols were

the amount of beer they consumed, their ability to drive and have access to a car, and the exhibition of tattoos. It was 'the lads', who exhibited tattoos, none of the other boys in the group considered this form of display. As by law one is supposed to be eighteen years of age to consent to tattooing, many of 'the lads' see their display of tattoos as being confirmation that they have reached the age of eighteen, thus giving them valid access to pubs. They too, like the girls, wish to change their appearance in order to look older. In fact one of the lads, described his tattooing in a similar manner

"....it's a bit like a lass having makeup on - lads often don't say anything about lasses wearing makeup, and that is changing their appearance; therefore they should not comment if we want tattoos....."

Darren, aged 17

They often could not say why they had the tattoos worked, - yet they did give the impression that they did not wish to be the odd one out when their 'mates' had theirs worked. Going to a tattooist was not a solitary act - it was a group affair.

"To tell you the truth, I was crapping myself when I went to have them done....."

Andy, aged 18

".....yeh, it hurts, but you try not to move a muscle, cos the other lads might laugh at you.."

Ed, aged 17

On two separate occasions one of 'the lads', just happened to be passing' and called into the centre to see their tutors, soon after having their tattoos worked, sleeves

rolled up, exhibiting a bloody wound. The impressions they had on their arms for life were mainly those of skulls and eagles.

Some of 'the lads' had previous dealings with the police, mainly for traffic offences - taking a vehicle without the owners consent, driving without a license, driving without insurance. There was almost a fascination for motor vehicles, which lead 'the lads' into dangerous situations, which they failed to consider:

"...I would like to be a rally driver, win a world championship!...I had planned to do a car maintenance course at school, but then I changed schools. I drive a tractor at work, its<sup>e</sup> great like; that's why I don't mind going to work, cos I love driving the tractor. I've got five endorsements on my license...The first car I took I got let off for, cos I denied it in court. Then I took a bakers van and ended up being chased by the police and got involved in an accident. The baker didn't want to press charges as he said it would not be good for business to have his name in the paper. Stole a Ford Escort, while this case was pending, I wanted to go and see me mates in Newton Aycliffe, this got me into another police chase and an accident with another two cars. I was git scared this time, cos the police interrogated me and beat me up, saying I was not safe to be let loose.....ran away from home, before the case came up,so then put me in a community home for assessment. Everyone thought that I should go into a detention centre, yet I got a deferred sentence, with a three year supervision order with the social services, and five endorsements. My social worker is now trying to get this taken away so I can apply for me license....."

One of 'the lads' problems with cars stemmed from a combination of his fascination for cars, with problems he had relating to drink. This young lad, though eighteen could be classed as a heavy drinker, (five or six pints a day) and his problems with the police always hinged on

this joint combination.

'I've got so many offences related to drinking and driving that I probably never get my license back....'

A year after the interview with this young lad, I was saddened to read a newspaper article where his early history was repeating itself.

".....was appearing for several motoring offences. He had earlier admitted driving whilst disqualified, no insurance, fraudulent use of an excise license. He was fined £55 and banned from driving for a year."

The young people who can be distinguished from both the "young ones" and the "sophisticated ones" I refer to as the "in-betweens".

#### "The In-betweens"

For the large part these were the "lookers on", they were moving out of the 'young ones' stage and looking to "the sophisticated ones" to show them the way. They were experimenting uneasily with drink and tobacco and, attempting to adopt fashions which the 'sophisticated ones' modelled. It was a transitional stage. Also amongst this group were those who could be termed 'the nice boy and girl next door' type - nothing particularly remarkable about these young people, they don't go to any extremes, tended to have reasonable relationships with their parents, and were pleasant young people. Christine may be seen as one of these latter type

"On a Monday night I go to Guides, cos I'm a guider, like me sister. Well, I take the guides and usually help with their badges and things like that. Tuesday night I usually go out with me sister and her boyfriend, Richard; usually go to a disco or a pub. Wednesday night I sit and do me stamp collection, which has to be brilliant cos I'm doing it for me Duke of Edinburgh award. Thursday I go to Rangers, its an older version of the Guides; they're on a level with the Adventure Scouts.....at the moment we're doing map-reading exposure and expedition training for D of E. Fridays I do me stamp collection again. Saturdays and Sundays I'm usually out hiking or playing badminton. I go with me sister, our Ann has a car....."

Christine, aged 18

Christine was one of the well-motivated young people who had stayed on at school into the sixth year, had taken secretarial examinations, but was still unable to secure full-time work. Her life was full and busy, this in itself distinguished her from 'the young ones'. Of the group, only five young people would fall into this category. The remainder of the 'in-betweens' could be regarded as followers, rather than initiators - they waited for the 'sophisticated' ones to ask them to join them and felt privileged if they are able to go along with them. They listened attentively to the 'sophisticated' ones, often being shocked, yet excited by some of their stories. The latter appeared to have greater freedom concerning the hours they were allowed to be away from their homes and were able to stay at all night parties. The in-betweens were not sure that they wanted to take on the 'sophisticated ones' world in totality, but they did take examples from them, and looked to them for direction. In group exercises, the 'in-betweens' were more influenced by peer pressure and supported the arguments of the 'sophisticated ones', rarely making their ideas known



before they had learned their models' views. The 'in between's' like the 'young ones' often lacked confidence in themselves and had low self-esteem.

"...when this work experience finishes, well I'm going to find out about being a hairdresser, going to college or something. But I'm terrified in case I fail, in case I find it hard. That's the main thing that stopped us from going to college. I've just got it set in me head that I will fail....."

Debra, aged 18

Within different training groups, these differences became very apparent and were often a source of argument and tension within groups. In attempting to have different group members working with one another difficulties were encountered with the 'sophisticated ones', more especially the girls. Within their own separate groups they were secure, but if one attempted to pair, for example, one of the 'sophisticated girls' with one of 'the young' boys there was undoubtedly friction - stemming from the sophisticated ones. The girls in these instances felt threatened, it was beneath their dignity to work with one of the 'young ones'. Sandra exhibited such traits to the extreme - placed in a group with three of 'the young ones', all male, she opted out of the work that they were doing, sat back, gave no help, but maintained a negative commentary for the duration of the exercise - there was almost contempt in her attitude. Amongst themselves, with a maximum two year age difference, these young people were well aware of where they felt they 'belonged'. We cannot lump them altogether as a uniform group; there were marked differences amongst them.

## Money

All of the young people shared one common factor, being on a work experience on employers' premises scheme gave them an allowance of £23.50. The manner in which this money was dispersed revealed some of this 'other world' to us. On talking about money their first comment always related to the amount of money they gave their mothers (never their fathers) for board, that is, money for their food and a bed. Households differed in their interpretation of "board" - some of the young people had a good deal from their board money - their mothers buying their clothes, paying for their holidays, together with all their food and often giving out daily allowances for lunches; in other households it meant merely food and a bed. Some of the young people complained of not earning 'a proper wage' being merely on a government scheme, and argued they should not pay full board. John took this matter very seriously, as he had previously been employed full-time and earning 'good money' before he came onto the government scheme.

"....I was better off on the dole, got £18. It's ok for someone who has just left school.....I'm worse off on works experience; costs me about £5 for me dinners, and me mother classes us as working whilst I'm on a scheme and so I have to give her board.....we have rows at home about money....."

John, aged 18

Board money varied from £11 a week, (the maximum reported) to nothing, although the general amount was £5/6 a week. To some, the giving of board money to their parents was

merely a gesture, as they received it all back as the week progressed. Many received a great deal more in handouts than they had given in the first place, Borrowing against 'next week's pay' was a common occurrence. Those in the 'in between' group were the most conscientious concerning money and often worried about the amounts they gave to their parents.

"I would like to help out more, money wise in the house. My parents say that they're brought me up, so now its my turn to put some money into the house - they put a bit of pressure on me like. This bothers me cos what I'd like to do is to take some qualifications and go to college, but if I do that I will not be able to support myself and my mother would still want her board. Don't know what I'm going to do....."

Michael, aged 17

The next most striking feature of their use of money was the amount they paid out to cover debts. Legally a person is not eligible for credit until they are eighteen years of age, yet many of the young people, especially the girls, worked around this by having their parents sign for accounts with department stores and by ordering through mail order catalogues. One girl I spoke to paid £13 of her £23.50 to a catalogue company - this represented £130 worth of credit. This method of buying was commonplace; it was the method by which many of the "sophisticated girls" obtained wardrobes of clothes that were fashionable, by spreading the cost. The 'buy now, pay later' philosophy has been internalised to a considerable extent.

"I owe loads of money out in debts and things - I've got an account at Top Shop and that.....I

owe me dad about £40 now, cos I paid some of it back - I owe the catalogue for something.....two pairs of shoes about £30.....I owe £13 for this watch, I lost the other one and I spent the insurance on something else, so I got this one out of the catalogue. I owe Top Shop £160.....before I had to pay it all separately, I was paying me Top Shop £10 a month and me catalogue £3.50 and me dad, well I was supposed to be paying him £8, but I was only giving him £5....that was alright when I didn't have to pay me Top Shop. Now I give him £10 every week, and he says he'll put a bit aside for me Top Shop and he will pay me debts for us like. I don't pay any board cos' of the money I give me dad....."

Janet, aged 18

The borrowing of money, for many was just part of everyday life

"Out of me £23.50, I give £11 to me mam for board, and I need £5 for me dinners - the rest goes on what I owe out - usually what I've borrowed the week before....."

Paula, aged 16

The ease with which they were able to obtain credit, especially through main order catalogues disguised for many, the true price they were paying;

"I've got it (a motorbike) in the garage, its a CZ125 - its costing £190 - £40 deposit and £3 a week after that....I don't know for how many weeks, I've never had a look....."

Pauleen, aged 17

The girls appeared to rely more on the catalogues than the boys, although many of the boys did have accounts with mail order firms - these were usually for larger items such as stereo players, rather than clothes. This could be due to the fact that a proportion of the boys were able to secure other funds by helping their fathers or doing other jobs outside of their work experience in order to

gain a little extra money each week - amongst these jobs for the lads were window cleaning and gardening and one lad helped in his fathers business. The girls' main source of additional income stemmed from baby sitting for neighbours - though these tended to be the 'in between' girls; the 'sophisticated' group were too busy enjoying themselves to have time to babysit. Also many parents appeared to be easier on the boys in terms of money and helped them out during the week with extra funds - the girls were expected to look after their money to a much greater extent.

9. "Just looking...."



It was the in-between group, and to a great extent, the 'young ones' who were the savers - some of the young people saved between £5 and £10 each week towards holidays and some of the boys were saving for motor cycles. Some had savings accounts with the post office and the building societies. None of the young people in the group had a bank account; they said they did not have sufficient money to be able to operate an account - their knowledge of bank accounts and cheque books was in the main very minimal. They were totally unaware of services which the banks were able to offer them and considered the banks to be 'not for the likes of us' - again, the recurrence of this theme of 'them' and 'us'.

Many talked about wasting their money, they were not quite sure of where it was spent - many of the 'young ones' still reported spending much of it on 'ket' - sweets. For 'the sophisticated ones' a sizeable proportion of their income was spent on cigarettes, and in some cases on beer.

"....the rest goes on cigarettes, it was £5 a week, but its' about £3 or £3.50. I couldn't afford it, plus I'm trying to save up for me bike....."

Pauleen, aged 17

"I buy 200 cigarettes on a Friday when I get my pay...I bring out about 50p a day for breaks and that. The rest I just waste....."(Cigarettes costing her about £8/9 a week)

Michelle, aged 17

For one girl, the attachment of a boyfriend proved helpful with her finances -

"....I give 50p to me brother, I give £8 to me

mam, £1 for me catalogue and £10 in the bank for me holidays, and the money I have left I spend on meself....Well, I'm courting you see, so I don't need to spend that much money....."

Hazel, aged 17

The common assertion was, "£23.50 is not enough". For the "sophisticated" group this proved particularly so. Their 'up-to-date' fashions were expensive, as were their 'hairdos' (£10-15 a time, to have hairstyles altered and different colours and perms applied). This expense was prior to finding a location to flaunt their new image.

For the young ones £23.50 seemed like wealth. Similar conflicts were noted by Willis (1977) with 'the lads'; although these lads were still at school it was the evenings and the weekends which were in the forefronts of their minds:-

"The pressure to go out at night, to go to a commercial dance rather than a youth club, to go to pubs rather than to stop in, to buy modern clothes, smoke and take girls out - all these things which were felt to constitute "what life is really about: - put enormous financial pressures on the lads....." p37-38

The amount of disposable income which these young people, had obviously influenced their leisure pursuits. For the young ones and the 'in-betweens' the youth club substituted for the club or pub and disco of the 'sophisticated; group - the costs were lower. Yet the 'sophisticated group', especially the girls, would not consider the youth club disco, this would be 'beneath' them, it would not offer the same sense of excitement and interest that the pub or club disco would offer - drinking

with older men. Some of the 'sophisticated' lads would attend the youth club disco's to pick up girls, but this would be after they had had a drinking spell in the local. For the lads, their age group of potential girlfriends would frequent the discos, being a couple of years younger than themselves. There was not the same sense of interest or excitement in the youth club as the adult clubs was able to offer, Willis argues that for 'the lads' in his study:-

"Even though they are relatively expensive and not so very different from what is supplied at a tenth of the cost at the Youth Club, commercial dances are the preferred leisure pursuit of 'the lads'. This is basically because there is an edge of danger and competition in the atmosphere and social relations not present in the Youth Club....."

(ibid.pp36)

This was confirmed in this group of young people - notably the sophisticated ones. The 'sophisticated' group considered 'staying in' the house on an evening as a problem; the life style they were etching out for themselves required them to be out each evening; this distinguished them from the 'young ones. Their social structure was very clear to these young people - they were the 'in' crowd, and had to be seen as such. For the 'young ones' and the 'in-betweens', the youth club provided an inexpensive place to go on an evening where they had the opportunity to socialise with their peers and escape their families. For many of the girls, the world of the youth club and its discos were her social world:

"I spend my spare time going to discos, the



pictures and youth clubs. I go to Glebe youth club every Monday night, but lately they've been having discos for heavy rock fans and I don't like it. I go to Glebe disco on a Wednesday and I reckon its about the best disco in Washington.....I go to the Village disco on a Thursday. At the Glebe I sometimes have a game of pool, or just sit and talk.....been going to discos for years, well about three years now, cos I don't like going to pubs, I don't know why, I think its boring sitting in a pub, unless there's a disco on..."

Norma, aged 17

For the 'loners' in the 'in-between' and 'young ones' groups, where they were concentrated, a large part of their free time appeared to be spent in local amusement arcades, feeding the slot machines. For some of these young people, predominantly boys, this proved very expensive:-

"...go to the amusement arcade three or four times a week - I just take £1 a night; if I took all me money I'd be tempted to put it all in. I took £8 in one day, I was supposed to be buying a jumper and the shop was shut, so I went in with my normal £1 and then I began feeding the rest of it in. £8 last me about an hour. Felt a bit stupid after that for wasting it - me mam was mad, don't blame her really like."

David, aged 17

"...go to the amusements and spend my money, its summat to do, summat exciting, you get mad when you loose your money, but its good when you win - divvant na how to explain it like..."

Kevin, aged 17

A comparable activity for some of the girls was playing bingo - a prize bingo was situated in the same amusement arcade, together with other bingo sessions held in local community centres. Despite the fact that legally, these girls were under-age for playing bingo, for many it was part of their regular leisure programme:-

"...on a Wednesday I go to the bingo like, down the Village; we try to win our fortunes, me, Gill, Helen and Tracy sometimes, and a load of the lads.....(I asked her how she was able to play, being under-age).....I suppose as long as they are getting the money they are not bothered.....I've won twice..."

Norma, aged 17

One of the major leisure time activities of the 'in-betweens' and the 'young ones' was watching television, possibly because this group spend a greater amount of time within the home:-

"From a Monday to a Thursday I sit and watch the telly, on a Friday I go to me brothers to babysit for him and watch the telly there, or I go to the Arcade (amusements arcade) and spend my money. Watch sport on a Saturday or go to the Amusements....like I said I can't sit and talk, its a bit of a problem I have I suppose. But I'd like to meet people and travel; its boring seeing the same old things and doing the same old things...."

Kevin, aged 17

Kevin was hoping to join the army in search of adventure. This group of young people were able to relate a whole evenings programmes in detail the following day and many of the programmes were discussed the day after. One often has the feeling that some of the worlds that were portrayed on the television were more real to them than their own, a sort of vicarious living through the programmes. On taking some of these young people to a residential centre for a weekend many were devastated to find that there was no television, in the same way that the 'sophisticated' ones were annoyed that there was no bar and disco; these leisure time pursuits were certainly well rooted.

The range of activities in which the young people take part is limited. Although Washington, as a New Town, offers a wealth of leisure time activities, many within the schools these were not patronised by the young people, despite their complaints that there was 'nothing to do in Washington'. School is equated with being a child; on leaving, the 'sophisticated' group make their removal visually complete, by dressing in a manner which would never have been allowed in school - multiple ear-piercings and coloured hair, together with their up-to-the-minute fashions ensure that they are distinguishable from their past school friends. These ties being severed, they did not return to the school environment - even voluntarily, and for their own enjoyment.

#### Sexual Activity

One form of leisure activity that it is often assumed young people are indulging in to ever greater extent is sexual activity; the facts belie the popular mythology. The level of sexual activity amongst this group was concentrated in the 'sophisticated ones' - these young people, in the main, were seventeen and eighteen years of age. Looking back fifteen years, the characteristics of these young people are similar to those reported in studies in 1965. Michael Schofield's study of "The Sexual Behaviour of Young People", found that the incidence of experienced young people (that is, young people who had had intercourse with one or more partners - the E type)

were related to the amount of time they spent within their homes, the quality of their relationship with their parents and the amount of time they spent with their peers, and their experience of schooling. Amongst the sophisticated group, as documented earlier, we had young people who disliked being in the house and who spent the majority of their time with their peers in local pubs and clubs. Schofield saw a strong correlation between E sexual behaviour and spending time away from home, not having strict parental control concerning their time keeping on an evening and holidays without their parents and bad relationships with their parents. He also found that teenagers who disliked school were much more likely to be sexually experienced; the experienced boy and girl at school he found to have more problems, had lost interest in school and wanted to leave as soon as possible. These factors are common in the 'sophisticated' group, which can be equated with Schofield's experienced (E) group.

"They're not really strict - I used to go nightclubbing all the time coming in at two o'clock and they never said anything. I always tell them like if I'm going out..."

"I'm never in, me mam goes mad, she says this place is like a hotel - she's told me to get out and live with me friends cos I see more of them than I do of her..."

"I didn't like the first or second year (at school), cos I was one of the littlest in the school, and everyone used to pick on us and all that, but in the third year then it was better cos then I started to grow. Eh, do you want to know all the private parts.....I think it was in the fourth year, I went to this party and I was ganning with this lass, and er, ya na, I went upstairs and all that, and that's where I lost me cork upstairs. They call her Lynn and she was a

bit of a slut, I'd been ganning out with her about two month...After that I was ganning out with this lass called Jane, she was another bit of a slut, I was a bit stotting then like, drunk like. Went upstairs and the same thing happened again; what I didn't na was that Frank had left the phone off the hook and he said that he could hear everything that was ganning on like - I feel crap about that like. Wasn't prepared, not taking precautions and that - the first lass wasn't on the pill or out, I didn't na about the second one....."

The sophisticated group had more opportunity to indulge in sexual activity, they were away from home for longer periods of time, and able to stay out all night, frequented pubs and were less subject to parental influence. Despite this the level of sexual knowledge was not markedly different to that reported by Schofield. Amongst the 'young ones' especially, their sexual knowledge base was limited. Approximately half of the total group had had some form of sex education at school, although all reported that it was unhelpful, due to its presentation and was not taken too seriously. There were only isolated examples of young persons who said that they could talk to their parents concerning sex; the overwhelming majority said that their parents would be the last people whom they would talk to if they had questions or concerns regarding sex. Their sex information from their parents was limited to comments such as "You just be careful what you're doing", - the rest was left to chance.

The popular press proposed such views as the 'younger generation know it all, they can teach us a thing or two'. In my time of working with these young people over a number of years, I have not found this to be true. Their

knowledge of contraception and sexually transmitted diseases was minimal - this initially comes as something of a shock after one has been subjected to the popular media's prognostications on "permissive youth". We may be a society that has information available, but as yet it has not reached these young people. Many of the old wives' tales I learned in my school playground days were still as prevalent - the reality, still unexposed: - "you can't become pregnant the first time", "it's safe to have sex if the girl is having her period", "you can catch VD from a toilet seat". The pill and the sheath were the only contraceptives known of by many of these young people; they were often unaware of the other devices, and therefore did not know how to obtain them or how to use them.

Sexist stereotypes existed within the peer group. Girls who were sexually active were considered to be 'a slut' or 'a good lay' who should be treated without respect; whereas the sexually active male was given great praise and status and was the envy of his friends as 'the stud'. This double-standard often became an obstacle to discussion as individuals felt threatened - they dared not ask too many questions for fear of being laughed at by their peers "You didn't know THAT - you baby" or for fear of put-downs, "Oh, we all know what you get up to". Within the smaller groups and in the one to one situation these young people shared more of their real concerns and questions regarding sexual behaviour.

For many of the girls, they did not believe in enquiring about contraceptives until it was too late, believing that contemplating their use was too pre-meditated. The idea of romantic love was ever-present - therefore in some cases the first sexual encounter that a girl had was the one that made her pregnant, rather than having had a prolonged sexual history. The majority of the males had an irresponsible attitude to contraception - "well, if they're willing to sleep with me they (the girls) should take the precautions and look after themselves". The idea that they could accompany the girl to the Family Planning Clinic was totally taboo - they had not even contemplated it. For the girls, attending a Family Planning Clinic brought different complications; in many instances they were unaware that an unmarried person had the right to attend a family planning clinic, that the contraceptives obtained were free and the service was confidential. A further concern was that they would be recognised by others who attended the clinic. For the girls who did obtain contraceptives these were mainly through their doctor, although here again there was considerable concern that the doctor would inform their parents. There was a marked lack of communication with parents regarding sexual activity and knowledge - the area appeared to be generally taboo.

Knowledge concerning V.D. was minimal in the extreme, myths abounded in this area, and far exceeded those relating to contraception. With the ever increasing incidence of sexually related diseases this fact must be a

great concern. Information related to sexually transmitted diseases do not appear to be filtering through to these young people. Their knowledge of information and services related to sexually transmitted diseases were to be found in public toilets which merely gave the local hospitals which dealt with such cases. The subject itself was not out in the open. We may question a society which gives limited information on these matters whilst at the same time exercising moral panics over today's youth - we can point to an irresponsible adult society which neglects to inform its young.

There were instances where even a knowledge base proved unhelpful to some of the young people. One young lad was very interested in the day session on personal relationships which included half a day discussing contraception and sexually transmitted diseases. After the session, his evaluation of the day was

"Yes, I enjoyed the session, think I learned quite a lot, but it's no use to me.....I'm a Catholic and we don't believe in all those things (different forms of contraceptives).....never been to Church for ages, my mother still thinks I go, but I skive off, and say I've been.....Don't know if I really believe in it (his religion).....If the girl wants to use something then it's up to her, but I'll not..."

Here religion is used as a reason for not using contraceptives, in other instances it is ideas of romantic love. For the majority there was an overriding embarrassment, almost a sense in which they believed that this was something that they should not be doing and using aids to prevent the consequences only diminished the



excitement of doing something wrong. All of the young people in the groups knew of someone who was a pregnant schoolgirl, or others who had had abortions. In one group one of the girls spoke vividly of her experience of having a child whilst she was still at school

"When I first found out I was pregnant it was awful, having to tell them at home - I didn't tell them for ages, it was too late to do anything about it. Got funny looks from people and lots of people at school wouldn't talk to me; even people who had been me best friends they just ignored me and that.....used to get right depressed.....Then when she was born it was different, everyone was really nice and used to stop me in the street to look at her in the pram and they'd all smile and say nice things.....then it was OK..."

For many of the young girls the idea of having a baby - the physical presence of a baby rather than the time leading up to it, was seen in very positive terms. This is yet another symbol which conferred adult status on the young person; a status which was preferable to that of the limbo land of the Youth Opportunities Programme. The peer group once again came into strong focus when discussing sexual relationships. If the young people could not talk to their parents about their sexual concerns they turned to their peers, who were themselves often ill-informed, therefore myths abounded and were reproduced. Yet, this peer group often proved a very significant support for the young people, more especially for the girls, who appeared to carry the great responsibility for the consequences of the sexual act - the need for contraceptives, abortions or the birth of a baby. In sessions talking about relationships, the girls asked the most questions and

tried to secure answers to many of their obvious concerns and it was mainly the girls who remained at the end of a session to ask for further help and information. One young lad returned at the end of his course to ask for information on VD for 'a friend of mine'. Since completing work with these young people the grapevine has brought several stories of births and marriages, not always linked. The girls are more likely to obtain information concerning contraception from the various girls and womens magazines which they read as a regular part of their weekly diet; with the males, their information was concerned more with sexual aids and deviations rather than practical matters.

In general, from this small group, it can only be said that the idea of a widely permissive sexual society of young people is not supported; the sexually experienced young people form the 'sophisticated group', where their time spent away from the home, less influence from their parents, the frequenting of pubs and clubs and the drinking of alcohol can all be related to their increased availability for sexual experience.

#### Effects of the Women's Movement on the Ideas of Girls

Similar to the popular rhetoric of increased sexual liberation we are increasingly hearing in the media of the influence of the women's movement on the behaviour of girls. It is interesting to view this area from this predominantly working class section of young girls, as

previous studies of adolescent youth have concentrated totally on the male population. Popular press have turned their attention away from the 'Teeny Boozer' theme and onto the 'Women's Liberation driving women to drink' and similarly 'Women's Liberation brings an increase in female crime! The area that came to particular attention in this work was the effect of the women's movement on the girl's ideas regarding marriage. If one is to believe much of the popular press on the matter, ~~current~~ views would be that with the advent of social and sexual equality, women are becoming more independent, less feminine, uninterested in marriage and its trappings and are losing interest in having children. The argument is stretched further to women taking 'men's jobs' and thus becoming part of the unemployment theories in the '80's - more women are working than ever before and therefore there are less jobs for men - this rigid sexually biased argument would be laughable were it not voiced so often. Yet, how far this change has reached the consciousness of young women in the eighties is questionable.

There was a vast divide between the girls' ideas and their practice; what had been internalised by these young girls was the rhetoric of liberation, but not its practice. It was common to hear girls say, 'I'm not going to get married young, I'm going to enjoy myself', which if accepted at face value, gives over the impression that they are a new breed of women, influenced by the teachings of the women's liberation movement. It is only on closer investigation of the meaning of these phrases for the

girls that we discover the true nature of their meaning. Marriage is still ever-present - it was the isolated girl who voiced that she did not intend to marry; marriage for so many of these girls was their highlight. It was the pinnacle of their achievement, which their daily activities were leading up to. Their style of dress, the fact that the sophisticated girls '...would not be seen dead without my makeup' are contributors to their image making, which is stylised to the extent that it is meant to attract the males' attention. The importance of dress for the girls can be witnessed on the occasions when they have been taken out of the training centre on visits; it is the girls who dress for the occasion. The greater visibility of the girls shows the amount of time and attention they pay to their dress and general appearance. Their constant 'check ups' in the 'ladies' testify to the importance of this dressing ritual. They also dress for their peers to illustrate their position within the group hierarchy - several young people attended their first group session thinking that they were returning to work after induction and arrived dressed for work. The picture altered on the afternoon as all went home and re-dressed, to suit the group of which they have become a member - their discomfort in their work clothes in this peer group environment was obvious.

Statistics inform us that the age at which young people are marrying is decreasing and despite the rhetoric to the reverse, these young people will, in the main fit in to the younger statistics. On asking what is meant by

marrying later the answer is invariably - "well when I'm twenty one or twenty two" - at sixteen and seventeen years of age, to be twenty-one or twenty two is to be an AGE!

"Really what I want is just to settle down, to get married, a family and a steady job. Want to get married when I'm about 20 or 22, I don't want to be too old. I don't think I'd marry if I was about thirty or summat, think I'd be too old then. Want a husband with plenty of money (laughs)...kind, not bad tempered...I'd like children, want three..."

Diane, aged 17

For the majority of the girls, their boyfriends were several years older than themselves, and ready to 'settle down', and have a home of their own; this in itself, brought many girls into early marriages.

"He's 23 and he's a rep. from Autosport...He's very confident. I like him because he treats us nice, he's kind, not only to me, but to my friends, and I think that is important...Been going out with him for three months. Me mam wasn't keen on him being seven years older. But she talked to him on the phone, and once she had met him she thought it was OK".

Debra, aged 16

"I am courting a boy named Kevin, who is twenty three years old, and who has really a nice personality.....I have been going out with him for three years. My brother was not too pleased at first, he called Kevin outside and said, what does a 21 year old man want with a 14 year old girl..."

Jackie, aged 17

It is mainly the boys, who tend generally to be married later than the girls, who talk of marriage in their mid-twenties:

"...I want to get married and I hope to have a house of my own in Washington. Want to get married when I'm about twenty five or twenty six,

me mam says I should not get married too early.....I don't think I could last seven year with the same girl.....

and his talk does not reveal any desire for the 'new woman' which has been heralded by the press

"...I don't want to marry a girl with lots of money, I don't want her to support me, I don't want to marry one who thinks that she's the boss either. It'll be equal I suppose.....one that could bring up kids, I'd like just two kids. If we were really hard up I wouldn't mind her going out to work, but if I was on the dole and she got a job and I had to stay in, then I wouldn't like that, because it would be like her supporting me. It would be like her being the man and me being the woman. I think it would be alright like if I was working and she was working, well, until we had kids. I don't agree with a woman going out to work and another woman coming in and looking after the kids. It would be alright when they got to the comp., but not for the first few years....."

Ian, aged 17

The ideas of the liberation of females has certainly not stirred Ian's consciousness, strict segregation of male and female roles remained - one may also question his understanding of equality!

Popular mythology would lead us to believe that these girls, who are now sixteen and seventeen would be planning to work at careers, marry later, delay families, have smaller families and together with a high percentage of them occupying 'living in' status with boyfriends. In this working class group of young girls this was not the case. Possibly this is a predominantly middle class phenomenon which is almost ritualised by the college/university phase of their lives, a relatively independent phase between leaving school and setting up

ones' own home. An easier transition than these young people who leave school one day as children and expect to take on adult status on walking out of the school gates; their transition is harder and they require other outward signs - drink, styles of dress to legitimise their transition and to gain its recognition.

### Marriage through 'rose-tinted spectacles'

For this group of girls the idea of marriage was very idealistic - a nice home (preferably their own), a car, two children and an attractive husband. There was little comparison with their parents' marriage; for the majority of their mothers' the pattern has been to get married and to work full time, to bring up a family, whilst working part-time in numerous unskilled jobs and then to return to full time work when the family have grown older. It was only those young people who had older parents (late fifties and sixties) whose mothers had always been at home since having their children. The girls' in this group, like those described by Sharpe, 1976, seemed to believe that marriage would necessitate them giving up work completely or only working part time. All considered that they would not work before their children went to school. Very few expressed strong feelings concerning returning to work, or continuing working when they had a family. There was a substitution of work for the family - a different working environment.

These girls failed to make comparisons with their mothers'

lives, which were far from being simply retiring from the full time labour market on having children. Their parents' often poor relationships, did not have any lessons to be learnt from, in the girls' eyes - their situation would be different. Even in instances, where there were problems in their relationships with their fiancées', the girls did not appear to see these as problems which would be taken into the married state.

"...I've been engaged for three months, before that I saw John for six months.....Things seem to be going wrong now. John was all nice before and he wouldn't have hurt you for the world. Now he's thoughtless..... Probably be married by the time I'm 19 and a half and have two kids by the time I'm 22 and I'll be no further forward.....He's very aggressive and when we started seeing each other if he couldn't get his own way he'd clout us, now he doesn't bother. He's spoilt and he likes his own way too much. On the night of the engagement he clouted us and got very aggressive, then we got back together after a month".

Julie, aged 17

### Engaged

All of the negative symptoms which many witness in their homes (unhappy relationships, separations, divorce, problems with drinking) are all swept under the carpet. Marriage still holds a great attraction for these girls. Their overriding concern and interest is to secure an engagement ring, as their first stage in securing marriage. Eight of the forty-three girls in this group were engaged, none of the boys. There did not appear to be a great deal of outward enthusiasm attached to the engagement; the ring itself was all important, and the girls displayed these at all times, it was an obvious



status symbol. They were no longer amongst the young ones. The engagement ring bestowed adult status on the wearer and created interest and discussion amongst peers. For a brief period, the engaged girl was a 'star', the envy of her friends. If we look at these girls lives, we may find some clue concerning their desire to be married. As all of the girls were unable to secure full-time work, they had the choice of 'the dole', or a series of work experience placements, which brought considerable uncertainty and an unknown future. In such circumstances, the view of being married and settling for the certainty of an almost clearly defined set of circumstances - which they saw as leaving work and bringing up a family for a number of years - may seem more attractive.

One could argue that the engaged state gave legitimacy to sexual activity for these girls - they were in another transitional state, preparing themselves for marriage. This in itself gave a sense of permanency to the relationship, making sexual intercourse more 'natural' and 'normal' behaviour for these girls, it was the engaged girls who were able to talk more confidently and unapologetically about their sexual life. Many of the girls wanted to become pregnant, one of the girls had a two year old daughter, and at the time of writing there were three suspected pregnancies. Is the uncertainty of ever securing employment and the knowledge that much of the work which these girls would secure would be less than stimulating and interesting, a reason for their desire for an early marital state? Some of the mothers' advise their

daughters against an early marriage, yet this is unheeded:

"Me mam was 26 year old when she got married. Get on alright with me mam. She tells me not to get married until I'm thirty, she thinks theres plenty of things to do without lads, plenty of time for that. She just tells me to stick in and learn as much as I can....."

Maureen, aged 16

It is the engaged state that is all important, not the quality of the relationship; this is evident by the manner in which many of the girls describe their engagement. It is without any real enthusiasm.

"I've just gotten engaged.....I got engaged on Saturday night, there's nothing to tell really. Been courting nearly nine month, and he's twenty-four. There's nothing much to tell about him, I never really ask him, I'm not going to ask him questions about himself....."

Michelle, aged 17

For some of the girls, the enthusiasm that they may have had was very short-lived with engagements ended as quickly as they were made:

"I went back (to Malta) at Christmas for three weeks, that was just because I was going to get engaged.....Me dad spent hundreds of pounds on me and me boyfriend just to go over and get engaged, even when me new boyfriend comes into the house he treats him great, he's got a good sense of humour.....When I got engaged me mam was really happy cos she knew he was good for us, but now its broke up she's happy, cos, em, we came to a decision that it just wouldn't work and she's happy that its finished now....."

Gail, aged 17

"I was engaged before Christmas...I broke it off about a week after we came back from Ewart (an outdoor pursuits centre).....Knew him for about six or seven month before we got engaged. I broke it off - I wasn't allowed to talk to lads, to me friends, and I had to be up his (house) for

a certain time, and if I wasn't then there'd be war on, he ruled over us. He was 20 and I'm 16".

Anne, aged 16

In a situation of high unemployment the prospect of getting married can appear very attractive - it may provide the variety, excitement, status and a different work arena - the home. For many of the young people they viewed it as a way of removing themselves from their parental homes - few contemplated or attempted to move to a flat with friends and live their independent life for a time before they got married; they would simply move from their parental home to their married home. The independence associated with marriage was a great attraction to many of the young people who felt constrained both at home and at school and who wanted to try out their own particular style of life.

This world of engagements, marriage and setting up homes and families is predominantly female talk, the males in the group tended to have attitudes of 'I've got plenty of time to start thinking about that'. Yet the effect that males had on females is remarkable; obviously when the girls began to take an interest in males, the time they have for other areas of their lives is diminished. Their time is spent 'making up', dressing and shopping for the latest clothes, and considerable time is spent with their friends discussing their latest boyfriend. But there were other effects on their use of time - work aspirations are often lowered:

"When I was at school I wanted to be a joiner and work on a building site, like me dad or be a car mechanic. I've always wanted a family, but there is plenty of time yet. Me ambitions have changed since I met Stephen. At one time I wanted a career, but I'm not too bothered now. I think I'm more for a married life. I'm not too sure about having both, I'll have to wait and see. I think that these days both have to work to get money in the bank. Well, like Stephen's job might not last long like, working in the shipyards; but if I had a kid then I'd stop working until the kids started to go to school and then I would probably go out part-time. But I think a wife should be in when her husband and kids come home"

Linda, aged 18

"I was taking organ lessons for four years and they wanted me to continue and maybe teach it.....when I met my boyfriend I didn't want to practise anymore, so I was wasting me dad's money, cos I wanted to go out all the time with my boyfriend, so I packed my lessons in..."

Debra, aged 17

Other girls talked of the effect that boyfriends had on their school work, their drinking and smoking habits and how they often gave up a favourite hobby in preference for their boyfriend

"In the comprehensive I was brilliant in the first and second year and then I lost interest, that was when I was starting to get interested in punk and in boys. When I started to get into punk music I didn't revise for all me exams and I played truant for the whole week"

Hazel, aged 17

"When I started going out with me lad I started to go into pubs then, that was last year (aged 15) - not an alcoholic yet..."

Anne, aged 16

"I buy 200 cigarettes a week.....I smoke more than I used to; when I'm with him (fiancee) I can smoke about 40 in a night..."

Michelle, aged 17

"...Like going to discos, like dancing, used to go to dancing lessons, old time dancing which I enjoyed, but I packed that in when I met David".

Debra, aged 17

For one young girl, her concern over securing a reliable mate almost cost her life. Sharon, was engaged to a boy when she was sixteen after a number of relationships which she related as being painful. Her family background was very unstable, her mother having been married three times, and her fourth marriage being on the rocks. Sharon was looking for a loving relationship for herself to escape the problems within her family.

"After me engagement broke up, I met this other lad at work, Duncan; fell head over heels in love with him, then he let me down. This was the end for me, I'd had enough, it was more than I could take. I was tired of being used.....I took an overdose when he didn't turn up (cider and antibiotics).....was rushed to hospital after I told my friends mother....."

Sharon, aged 17

#### Male Attitudes to Females

For many of the males in the group, girls did not really interest them, this was the case with all of the 'young ones' and for the majority of the 'in-betweens'. For those who were actively interested in girlfriends, their interest was not as whole-hearted as that of the girls. The boys talked more of 'not getting tied down' and 'having a good time'. For the males their friendships with 'their mates' were more important than that of females - these could be had at any time. Some of 'the lads' related their upsetting experiences with girls:

"I'm not bothered about women, I'm having a rest in between like. Well, I've had quite a few since I started going out with lasses like. I just don't get stuck on the same one like.....Its just that when I get serious about a lass she'd

say it was best if we didn't see each other again. So instead of them doing it to me, I do it to them. Cos I've found out that when you treat a lass nice they treat you like dirt..."

Michael, aged 17

"The trouble with girls is feeling tied down...I'd been courting for two years, that's a long time you know, stayed in with her for five nights a week and went out with the lads for two. She even complained about this, said I preferred me beer to her. I got sick of feeling tied down, so we finished. Now I go out with the lads all the time.....The majority of girls try to tie you down, they don't let you do anything wrong. If you're with your lass you can't talk to another lass, like someone you knew at school.....I'll probably get married, by the time I'm 22, unless I have to before then.....Almost had to get engaged at the weekend cos I had to, then I found out it was OK, so I didn't bother"

Andy, aged 18

The 'settling down' interest amongst the boys was at a distance and not part of their everyday conversation like it had been with the girls. Their lives still revolved around their 'mates' - many of their pursuits involved all male company - Friday night and lunchtime drinking sessions in the pub or club, going to the football matches, playing football on a Sunday morning. Many of the lads were mockingly teased by others in their group if they approached the stage of 'going steady'. The peer group pressure assured that few of 'the lads' did so, as it incurred so much ribbing from the rest of their mates. More especially, they would not go out with girls on 'the lads night out', which was a Friday. The peer group itself was a powerful influence on their behaviour. To many of the lads, the attachment of a girlfriend meant they had less money to spend on themselves. Girlfriends cost money (there was still some vestage of the male pride in being able to take a girl out - "no girl of mine pays

for her night out") although this itself was decreasing somewhat as they had less money to spend than their employed friends. Therefore many of the lads had to choose between going out with the lads for a drink and to the match and attempting to save for a bike or a stereo and going out with girls; many chose the former.

### The Future

One is struck by the short term views that these young people had; they did not look too closely at the future, when they did it was almost as a fantasy -

"Well I'd like to be a famous actress and live in Hollywood....."

"It'd be great to be a footballer and play for England"

Their predominant philosophy is 'enjoy life now, while you can'; there was an urgency on squeezing out every drop of enjoyment in as short a space as possible, as though tomorrow would be taken away from them. Their current period of life - aged sixteen to nineteen years of age was seen as a brief enjoyment span. They viewed the future beyond this, as requiring responsibility and bringing increased pressures and seriousness; for many there was a yearning to maintain their carefree youth. On talking about this attitude one is unable to gain from them just why they feel that their enjoyment phase is going to be so short lived, and why they are unable to prolong it. Do they not have any control over their own lives; the usual response was a laugh, and comment of "No". In their

current state of unemployment, they felt in a limbo land where they are neither child, nor adult - they had left school and yet had not fully entered the adult world of work, being merely 'on a scheme'. This phrase brought negative connotations, 'it is not a proper job', it did not bring the rewards of a 'proper wage', and had low status because of its lack of permanence, they could not settle into their adult role with ease. For many, the end of their schemes meant a return to the dole queue. This in itself probably contributed to their fatalistic attitude to life. On asking the question, "What do you think you will be doing in five years time, the answers were invariably negative:-

"...they might drop the bomb by then, I divvant want to be dead, but if it happens, it happens, you cannot stop it and you cannot hide from it. I'll not get married, I na that; they get on me nerves after a couple of weeks ...I divvant na why, I just get sick of them. I like them (laughs)...probably never find the right one...cos by the time I get married they'll all be snapped up. I'm not getting married until I'm about 35..."

Michael, aged 17

"...you can't really choose what you want to do now.... you get what't given..."

Michael, aged 16

"I haven't thought what I'm going to do with my life. I hate to think about that. I just live from one day to the next to the next.....If I got into the RAF, then there will be three years you never know, I might even move to different countries. They might learn us a trade. I've got no ideas what I want to do. There might be better prospects after three years, the recession might have gone away by then. Don't want to get married, but I suppose I will..."

Hazel, aged 17

"Five years time?...I couldn't say, wait until the time comes..."

Debra, aged 17



"I hope I'm not git miserable, nowt like that. Don't know what I want, everything I say I want, I'll never get man. Great big house, loads of cars.....and like if I do become a mechanic like, I won't be making git loads of money like, there's no point in planning it, if you've got no money..."

Paul, aged 17

There were constant references to others controlling their lives, no one personified, but a clear reference to outside influences restricting their realisation of ambitions, or there being any point in having ambitions. The 'other World' of these young people, appears to offer them a brief pleasure span, of youthful exuberance. They themselves view it as brief. Their fatalistic attitudes can be understood, when one views their lives in context. These young people are very realistic, they can have their dreams, but they are aware of the likely outcome of their lives. These findings confirm those found earlier by Pahl, (1978) in his initial work, Living without a job: how school leavers see the future. He also

"...found the general level of awareness and introspection impressive and alarming. I had to keep reminding myself that these were sixteen year old lads, writing of their wasted lives....." p 260

## CONCLUSION

As with all research, this piece of work is history before it has reached publication. Data collection was completed prior to the summer riots of '81, and the subsequent Scarman report (1981). The Youth Opportunities Scheme itself was entering a major period of change, where concern over the quality of provision of training, prompted the report, The New Training Initiative. This was to herald a replacement scheme for young people, of a years' duration, to become known as the Youth Training Scheme (YTS). This research gives some of the history leading up to these developments.

Alongside growing unemployment, especially among young people in the late seventies and early eighties, there were accompanying cries from employers about the unsuitability of young people who entered employment. Attacks through the media laid the blame at the schools' door - they were not providing young people with the correct attitudes and approach to work that the employers' needed. This research exposes some of that rhetoric when examining employers' responses to the Work Experience on Employers' Premises scheme. Here, employers were able to secure a number of trainees, paid for directly by the state, to gain experience on employers' premises. A number of the employers (sponsors), failed to fulfil their part of the contract, which was to provide training for the young people. A process of substitution came into play; staff shortages being filled by WEEP trainees,

vacancies for full-time work staff remaining unfilled and the trainees being used as free labour. This abuse had been anticipated in the Holland Report (1977), which preceeded the scheme - yet, when the abuse became a reality, a blind eye was turned, in order to maintain the numbers of young people on the schemes. These young people did not therefore figure in the unemployed statistics, so disguising the true numbers of the unemployment register. Employers, who were concerned about the products of the schools, often refused trainees access to further education. In the second year of the operation of the schemes there were only a mere 12% of those engaged in WEEP schemes who were involved with further education. This in itself points to some of the priorities of the employers.

A new form of training also arose with the Youth Opportunities Programme, which came to be known as Life and Social Skills. To the MSC, this was a form of remedial training which was to adjust young people to being more suitable and compliant workers. Tutors who had to write courses, soon had to change the content from the bias on the workplace, and to meet more of the needs of the trainees. As a result there was little real consensus of the nature of the content of Life and Social skills training. What developed throughout the country was a very hotchpotch affair, which was often rather unthoughtout, and merely a rapid response to a requirement of the new scheme. This confusion did not further enthusiasm or interest in the employers who were to

release the trainees, or the trainees who were to attend the courses.

One of the differences between this and previous studies is that here we are not talking of a decaying old community, but of the growth of a New Town; a town which has been viewed by many adults as providing good housing and a new working environment. Although the former was realised, this in itself brought financial pressures to families who suffered from unemployment. The New Town brought similar problems associated with unemployment, as the old communities, but in different ways. Government Incentive Grants enticed companies to site their businesses in Washington, but had not taken into account that many of these same companies would leave when the grants ceased. One can argue that a worker in the New Town approaches unemployment as a harsher reality than those in the old decaying communities, where unemployment for many is a fact of life.

In the families of the young people, unemployment is often a factor in more than one of its members lives. This could account for young people's acceptance of unemployment - to many of them it does not come as a shock, it is rather an anticipated state of affairs. Within their families it is in the unskilled and semi-skilled areas where unemployment is felt to a greater extent. Washington's industries offered employment to the female population, with the result that many of the major wage earners in the homes of many of the young people, are

their mothers. This fact, does not appear to have influenced the work aspirations of the girls of this study. The girls' held very stereotyped views that their roles in life were as wives and mothers, and at an early age they were preparing for this state. Marriage and motherhood being, for many of the girls, a more exciting and fulfilling alternative to life 'on the dole' or life on 'a government scheme'. An astonishing finding of the research was the number of tragedies experienced within their families. For such a small study there was a disproportionate number of deaths and accidents within their families. The initial confusion I experienced over the young people's fatalistic attitudes soon became clear when they were viewed within the content of their experience within their families, and then in their different experiences of school and work.

Within the schools the difficulties of accepting the final year of school were apparent. Here again, we are not talking of old decaying schools, lacking in facilities, but schools with bright new buildings, housing the latest technology. Despite this there was a marked deterioration of interest in schooling from the young people involved. The curriculum failed to involve the young people. This final year of school often diminished into a matter of weeks as the young people stayed away from school, failed to return after the examinations and generally failed to give any real commitment to this final year at school. Several years on from ROSLA, we can question the extent to which schools have adapted their curriculum to make this

additional year of schooling meaningful to the young people involved. Similarly the careers education which they received was irrelevant.

Under-financed, understaffed and lacking time on the timetable, there was little that careers teachers could do (despite their enthusiasm) to provide more than lip-service to the idea of careers education within schools.

The careers service itself was seen to be under considerable pressure. Unfortunately named, the service has now to work hand in hand with a new partner, the MSC. They took on a different responsibility, that of placing young people on government schemes, rather than finding full-time employment, or careers for the young people. The careers of the young people in this study, are 'careers' in YOP - a move, not necessarily a progression, from one government scheme to another. Such changes obviously brought uncertainty to the service, who were in fear of being simply phased out, redundant. With one in two young people currently leaving school entering government schemes, and few gaining full - time employment, one may question the role of the careers service, when it has become little more than a placement agency for the MSC. The general lack of training within the careers service itself, for its own staff, is a serious anomaly, in an agency supposedly committed to education and training. The careers service, in its effort to maintain some semblance of control of its workings, took on the role of 'selection' for different

government schemes. This selection introduced a form of streaming, similar to that experienced in many schools. Young people were streamed in different types of schemes - the more able and presentable young people entering the Work Experience on Employers' Premises, whilst those who were less able, or disruptive, were more likely to have a sheltered scheme, such as a training workshop.

This research, coming when the new Youth Training Scheme is about to be launched highlights some of the inadequacies of its predecessor, the Young Opportunities Programme. It raises many questions, regarding final years of schooling, the operation and philosophy of these schemes, and the general <sup>state of</sup> limbo ~~in~~ in which many of our young people are placed. It challenges the kind of future we are developing for those young people, when they themselves say

"Future - what future - we don't have a future....."

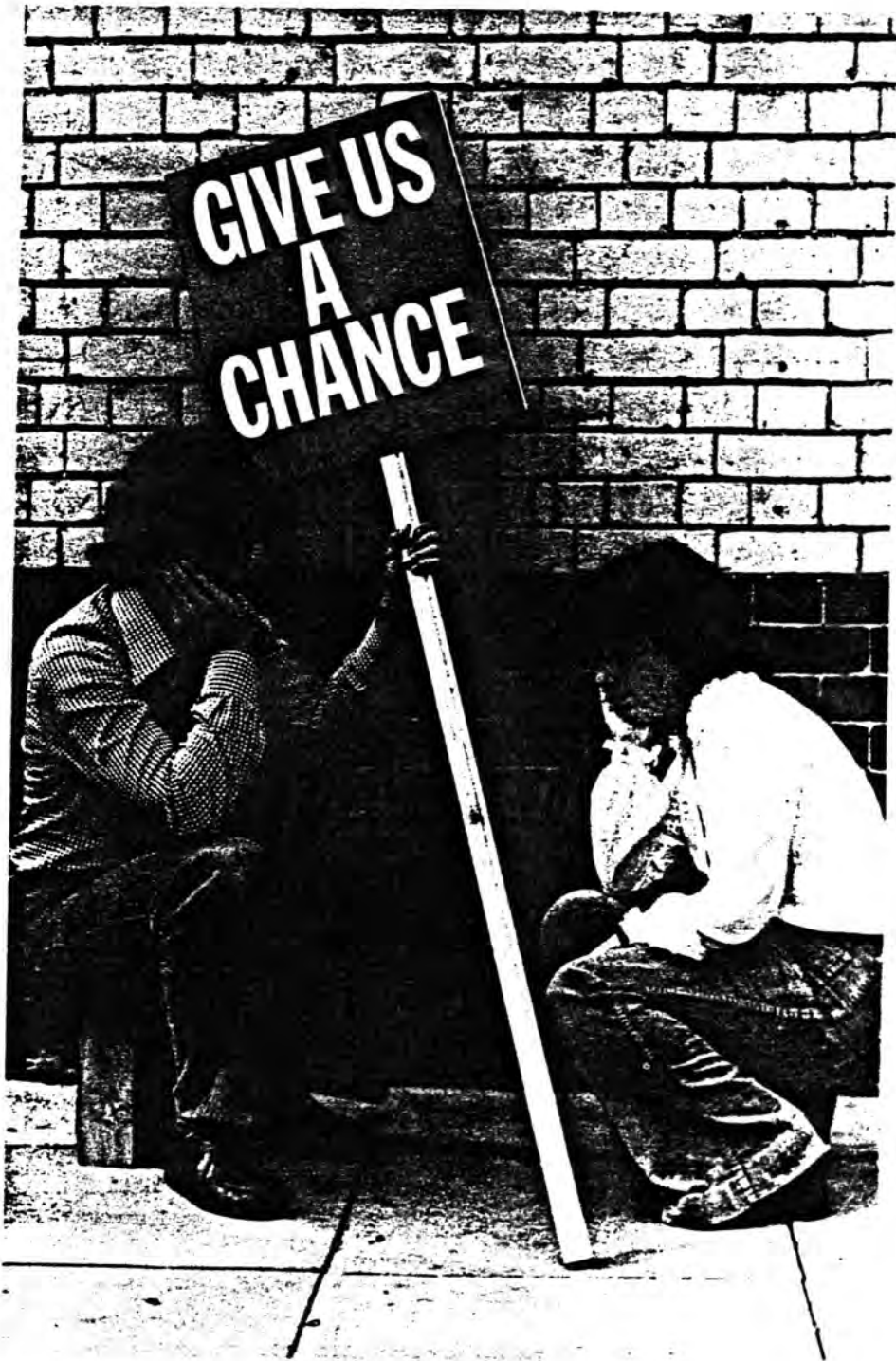
John, aged 18





Appendices

1. Publicity materials aimed at attaching young people and employers to Y.O.P.



2

**A chance would be  
a fine thing**

Publicity to attract young people to the schemes.

*without a job... I can't get a job without experience... but I can't get experience without a job...*


**Vicious isn't it?**

To get into a lot of jobs you need qualifications or experience. If you don't have either you're trapped. That's why we've set up the Youth Opportunities Programme. It's your chance to break out and into a job.


**YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMME**



**There's one thing worse than being unemployed at sixteen.**



**That's still being unemployed at seventeen.**



Leaving school at 16? Without qualifications, getting a job can be difficult. If you're still stuck a couple of months after you've left school, talk to your Careers Office about the Youth Opportunities Programme.

**YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMME**

**If you're a teenager looking for a job,**

**THE YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAMME**



**help yourself.**

An appeal from

Lionel Murray TUC

General Secretary

The young have a right to say "Give us a chance" and the rest of us have a duty to do our best to see that they get it. So I hope that every trade unionist who has a chance to help in the Youth Opportunities Programme of the Manpower Services Commission will do so - eagerly.

Unemployment is damaging to the self-respect of anybody who suffers it. It is bound to be even more harmful when the victims are young people who have heard the school door shut behind them for the last time and then find every door to a job, let alone a career, closed to them.

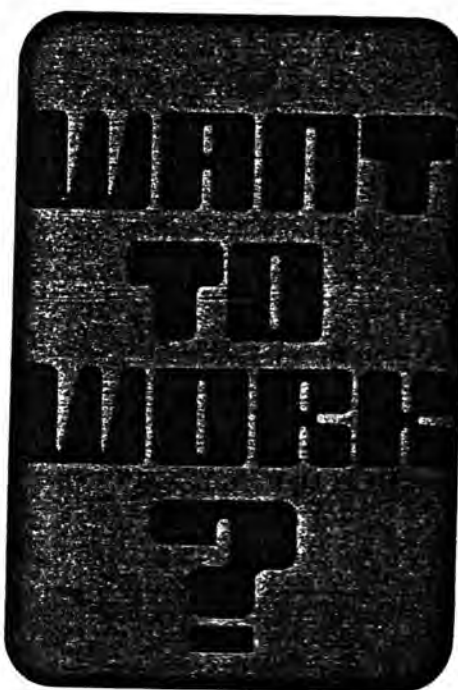
The MSC programme gives them an opening, an opportunity to prepare constructively for work and to gain experience of work. The TUC, who have helped to draft and develop this programme, hope that managements, with trade union help, will make these opportunities available to lots of boys and girls. One look at the youth unemployment figures shows how many are looking for rescue from the frustration of idleness.

There may well be more to this scheme than the immediate benefit. Even when the nation was close to full employment, most young people had to make do without vocational training and further education when they started work. This was a handicap to them and to the nation. If in the MSC programme some new forms of vocational preparation are piloted, we should be able to learn some lessons which will be of long-term value.

The Youth Opportunities Programme is not a substitute for the measures the TUC wants to make many more jobs available to the unemployed of every age in every part of Britain. But it can do a great deal of good where there is a strong need for good to be done.

It is getting the encouragement of the trade union Movement - and not from the sidelines: trade union representatives up and down the country are working on the Programme's Area Boards with representatives of other organisations, and with the MSC, to ensure that the Programme succeeds. But help is needed from many quarters - from firms, and local authorities and voluntary groups up and down the country. We all have a chance to play a part in our own organisation in giving the young their chance. I hope you will do so.

This leaflet tells trade unionists what the Youth Opportunities Programme is, how it works and what trade unionists can do to help make it a success.

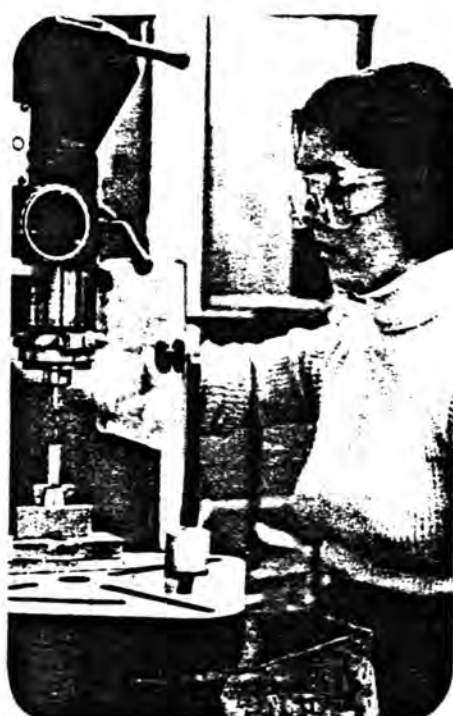


# YOUR CHANCE TO WORK

If you are out of work the Youth Opportunities Programme can give you a chance to try all sorts of different and exciting jobs. It can help you find out about employers

and about working conditions. You will make new friends, develop fresh interests and get practical 'on-the-job' training, and that's not all . . . You'll also get a

chance to go on learning. Part-time study can improve your chances of a regular job. There is a wide variety of courses and you'll also have the support of a personal tutor . . .



# 3 A BETTER START!

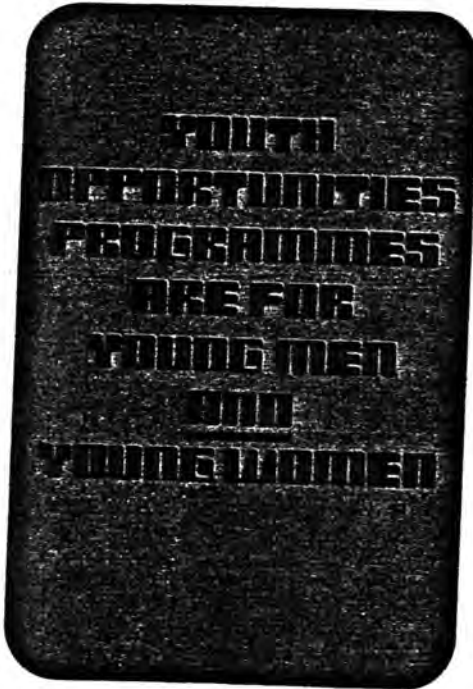
and you get paid too!  
If you are between 16  
and 19 and have  
been unemployed  
for six weeks find  
out about YOUR  
new chance with  
Youth Opportunities  
programme by going to:

Your Local Careers Office:

Your Local Job Centre or  
Employment Services Agency:

Photos: Liz Milner







YOUTH  
UNEMPLOYMENT  
UP  
120%

THEIR FUTURE IS BRITAIN'S FUTURE.  
DARE WE JEOPARDIZE IT?

Few people in Britain today would deny that unemployment is one of the great problems of the seventies. The social and economic effects of unemployment are easy enough to identify, and a particularly disturbing feature over the past few years has been the sharp increase in the proportion of young people without jobs.

# WE'RE GIVING YOU THE CHA

## THE FACTS

Unemployment amongst young people has risen in each of the last 5 years. Between 1972 and 1977 it rose 3 times as fast as total unemployment. In October 1977, when all those who were going into full time further education or training in industry, had done so, there were still 98,600 school-leavers unemployed compared to 69,600 2 years previously. The average length of unemployment for boys under 18 was 12 weeks in 1977, twice what it was in 1972. And girls have suffered even more. Last autumn there were parts of the country where as many as one in three young people was without a job.

# ANCE TO GIVE THEM A FUTURE.

## THE SOCIAL CONSEQUENCES

The figures make depressing enough reading in themselves. What they fail to reveal is the misery that surrounds every individual case. The feeling of being useless and unwanted. The increasing bitterness that results from interview after fruitless interview.

Of course, all this applies to any unemployed person of whatever age. But for young people at the beginning of their working life, the blow falls particularly hard.

At a time when the overall level of unemployment is high, young people with no experience of the working environment are having to compete for jobs with experienced adults.

Without experience or a skill, they don't have a chance.

## WHAT NEXT?

In 1977, 671,000 young people left full time education to look for their first job. That number will rise each year till 1981. It will stay high till 1986.

If present trends are allowed to continue unchecked, there will be an ever-increasing number of young people who feel alienated and embittered.

This is not a happy prospect, either for young people or for the country. Something has to be done.

That 'something' is what this booklet is all about.

# YOUTH OPPORTUNITIES A PRACTICAL SCHEME TO HELP UNEMPLOYED

The Youth Opportunities Programme is a new long term scheme, set up by the Manpower Services Commission, to prepare young people for work.

With the help of many other organisations – including the TUC and the CBI – the programme has been built around the best elements of existing schemes, such as Work Experience and Job Creation, together with new ideas into a co-ordinated package which will meet a wide range of needs.

## A BRIDGE TO THE WORLD OF WORK

A problem central to the plight of all unemployed young people is their unfamiliarity with the basic requirements and disciplines of work, and their lack of a work-related skill. Yet these are precisely what they must have if they are to stand a chance of getting a job.

The new programme aims to help them by providing a bridge from the world of school to the world of work. And it gives those who've made a poor start a second chance. There will be opportunities for all young people unemployed for 6 weeks or more.

## WE NEED YOUR HELP

Without your help, there will not be enough opportunities of the right kinds in your area.

The sons and daughters of people living near you won't have a chance. How would you feel if they were your own?

Everyone can play a part – small or large firms, local authorities, voluntary organisations, private individuals.

The programmes are flexible enough to suit your organisation and to meet the needs of young people in your area. They are easy and practical to set up and run; advice and help is available at any stage from the MSC.

## WE FOOT THE BILL

The MSC will pay a flat rate allowance to the young people whilst they are in the programme. In addition, the MSC will contribute to all kinds of overheads – renting and refurbishing premises, equipment, materials –

# TIES PROGRAMME OYED YOUNG PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES

and supervision. The only thing they can't do is pay for the outright purchase of land or buildings.

## THE PROGRAMME

Clearly, one person's needs and difficulties are different from another's, and so are their abilities. The Youth Opportunities Programme has been designed to accommodate a wide range of needs. It will be possible for young people to move from one part of the scheme to another or to leave any part of the course at any time if offered a permanent job.

Within the programme there are two kinds of opportunity. First, there are courses designed to *prepare young people for work* by helping them decide which job they are best suited for and providing training in a range of skills from the most basic to semi skilled operator levels.

And secondly, *different kinds of work experience* to give a young person practical and relevant experience of the working environment.

The number of unemployed young people varies from place to place and the programme provides your

local community with funds to help them in ways that make sense for the individual area. It's run by a local Area Board whose members represent employers, trade unions, local authorities, the education service and voluntary organisations. There are also full time MSC staff to help and advise.

## WITH YOUR HELP WE CAN TAKE ACTION

The Manpower Services Commission cannot solve the problem of youth unemployment alone; but with your help we can make a start.

We will pay the young people, and, in many cases, contribute to other expenses. What we need is your time, your knowledge and your experience.

In almost every sphere of activity there is scope for involvement. By taking part you will be helping young people in your community and helping to develop the future workforce.

# EVERYONE CAN PLAY A PART

While there are no hard and fast rules, the chart shows at a glance which parts of the scheme are most

likely to apply to a different type of organisation.

	INDUSTRY & COMMERCE	NATIONALISED INDUSTRY	LOCAL AUTHORITY	VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS	FOR DETAILS SEE PAGE
1. Preparation for Work (a) Assessment and Induction Courses	✓	✓	✓		7
(b) Short Industrial Courses	✓	✓	✓		7
2. Work Experience (a) Work Experience on employers' premises	✓	✓	✓		9
(b) Training Workshops	✓	✓	✓	✓	9
(c) Projects	✓	✓	✓	✓	10
(d) Community Service			✓	✓	11

# WORK PREPARATION COURSES

## ASSESSMENT AND INDUCTION COURSES

These courses are designed for groups of young people particularly those who have little or no experience of work, few educational qualifications, and are unsure of the type of work they want to do.

Each course lasts about 2 weeks. It aims to help young people make the right choice of job, to improve their awareness of the requirements of working life. Young people are encouraged to appreciate the importance of communication skills, basic literacy and numeracy in the working environment, and to improve those skills. Finally, the course aims to increase self-confidence in interview and employment situations.

If you would like to be involved, you will be asked to select someone to manage the course. After a free MSC training programme (essential for even the most experienced training officers to gain a proper understanding of the aims and operation of the course), your firm's manager develops his or her own version of the course in conjunction with the MSC.

## SHORT INDUSTRIAL COURSES

On Short Industrial Courses, young people are introduced to fairly specific areas of employment. They develop skills qualifying them for jobs at semi-skilled or operator level and learn the demands of adult working life.

These courses, usually lasting for 13 weeks, are particularly valuable to employers, as well as young people, since they are directly related to the employment situation in the immediate locality. They can cover all types of employment for example, engineering, construction, catering, clothing, distribution, vehicle servicing, office skills and more besides.

Courses can be mounted in any kind of training or further educational establishment and many private employers, Colleges of Further Education and Skill-centres already provide them. But we need more – especially in areas of high unemployment.

Here again, employers who run a course on their own premises receive an agreed fee.



# DIFFERENT TYPES OF

Work Experience is one of the most satisfactory ways of providing an unemployed young person with a realistic introduction to the requirements, disciplines and satisfactions of working life. From practical experience of a variety of different jobs, he or she can discover the type of work that suits him or her best.

1. Induction For young people to benefit from work experience they will need to know what work experience is aiming to achieve, what they will be doing, attendance requirements, the supervision and support to be provided and safety procedures.

2. Planned Work Experience The wider the range of work the youngsters are given to do, the better. But enough time must be spent in each work area for them to become familiar with what is involved, and make a realistic assessment of their own interests and capabilities. Your local MSC Area office will give you any guidance you may need in devising programmes. In some cases it may be best for several local firms or organisations to get together and run a group scheme.

3. Training of Further Education Day or half-day release for further education must be a part of the scheme but the MSC will meet the cost. It may be possible to provide social and life skills training on the premises for some organisations, but again in case of difficulty the local MSC Area Office will be pleased to help.

4. Personal Counselling and Support Arrangements will be made for counsellors from the Careers Service or the Employment Service Agency (ESA) to provide practical help.

Four different kinds of work experience will be funded under the programme. They are:

- work experience on employers' premises;
- training workshops;
- work experience projects;
- community services opportunities.

# WORK EXPERIENCE

## Work experience on employers' premises

To start a Work Experience scheme on your premises, the MSC will help you plan the programme and agree details such as the number of young people who will be receiving work experience with you at any one time, the length of the scheme, the MSC's liabilities for accident or injury, and arrangements for transferring any young people found to be unsuitable.

Schemes must not disrupt your normal recruitment and training programmes.

You should also nominate an experienced person (e.g. a training officer, supervisor or shop steward) to plan, supervise and administer the scheme.

No pressure is put on any employer to offer the young people a job at the end of the scheme but he is, of course, free to do so.

## Training workshops

Here, the object is to provide a period of introductory operative or other basic training or work experience for groups of young people.

Training workshops can be sponsored by any organisation: local authorities, other public bodies (but not Government departments), private employers or responsible voluntary bodies. Vacant factory premises can often be used.

Among the activities which have been carried out in workshops are the renovation of furniture, simple wood-work, painting and decorating, elementary training in construction work, renovation and alteration of clothing, elementary metal work, introduction to machine tools, assembly work, land cultivation, packing, pottery and ceramics.

The scope is practically unlimited. But bear in mind that whatever the Training Workshop does should be labour intensive, have local trade union support, and should not put businesses or jobs in normal employment at risk.

The MSC will contribute to the setting up, wages and running costs of the workshop, taking income from sales into account, on the basis of an agreed figure per occupied trainee place. The annual account and balance sheets must be independently audited.

Adult staff to run the workshops will be employed direct by the sponsor but the cost will be met by the MSC. These people must themselves be registered as unemployed at the time of their recruitment, thus helping the local unemployment problem further.

# DIFFERENT TYPES OF

## Work experience projects

Another proven method for helping young people acquire skills and knowledge is a project.

Here, the local community can often benefit as much as the young people themselves.

The aim is to set up a project through which the young people will be given an introduction to the world of work, a chance to acquire basic skills training and the opportunity to benefit from life and social skills training (on or off the premises, depending on available facilities) and further education.

Anyone can sponsor a project and groups of young people may be large or small. The type of work carried out could include activities such as park clearance, the establishment of play areas or building a community swimming pool. There are plenty of indoor possibilities too.

As with the Training Workshops, a number of adult employees may need to be recruited and these should be drawn from among the unemployed.

Financial assistance towards running the project will be available from the MSC.

# WORK EXPERIENCE

## Community service opportunities

Community service schemes aim to provide work experience for young people in ways that will enhance and supplement the services provided for communities and individuals by the various existing statutory services and voluntary organisations. Schemes might include auxiliary work in children's nurseries, old people's homes, hospitals for the mentally handicapped, helping in youth clubs, play groups and adventure playgrounds, helping in English language classes for immigrants, helping the police give road safety instructions to children and providing entertainment services for long stay residents in homes and hospitals. In some cases where the organisation or institution concerned is small – only one opportunity may be offered.

The aim is to place each young person in the kind of opportunity which best suits his or her needs, talents and interests. Each opportunity should enable a young person to try various different types of work, and each should offer the chance to exercise responsibility and to acquire a range of basic skills, especially in relating to people and communicating with them.

A scheme providing a range of opportunities within a local area may often best be developed by a group of local organisations including local statutory departments (the Area Health Authority, Social Services Department, Probation and Aftercare Service, Education Department), voluntary organisations, including those concerned with young people, the Careers Services and trade union interests.

# SOME BASIC QUESTIONS ANSWERED

**How much will it cost?**

In cash terms, the cost to you will be low. It will, of course, depend on the type of opportunity you provide. For running a training course you would be paid a negotiated fee. If, on the other hand, you were to organise a training workshop, Community Service opportunity or a project, you would receive a contribution towards the running costs.

**Who pays the young people?**

A flat rate allowance is paid to the young people weekly. You will be asked to make the payments (the MSC will reimburse you on a monthly basis), but there are no tax returns or national insurance contributions to worry about.

**Who selects the young people?**

You yourself choose the young people for your scheme from candidates submitted by the Employment Service Agency or Careers Service.

**Do I have to offer the young people a job?**

You are *not* their employer while they are in the Programme. You may wish later to offer jobs to some of the young people who have been taking part; and you are free to do so. There is, however, no obligation whatever for you to take them on. And the Youth Opportunities Programme does not guarantee them a job. **Is there a lot of paperwork?**

No. Forms have been kept to an absolute minimum and are very easy to fill up quickly. You will be asked to keep a simple progress report on each young person to help him or her find a job at the end of the course. **Where do the trade unions stand?**

The Youth Opportunities Programme has the official backing of the TUC and the Scottish and Welsh TUCs. Wherever it is appropriate local trade unions should be kept fully informed of your plans and should be consulted when you are drawing them up.

# MSC AREA OFFICES

LOCATION	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	LOCATION	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE	LOCATION	ADDRESS	TELEPHONE
Birmingham	Alpha Tower, Suffolk Street, Queensway, Birmingham B1 1TT	Birmingham 021-632 4451	High Wycombe	Dralda House, Crendon Street, High Wycombe, HP13 6LE	High Wycombe (0494) 41518	Nottingham	3rd Floor, Victoria House, 76 Milton Street, Nottingham NG1 3RE.	Nottingham (0602) 45716
Bristol	5th Floor, The Pithay, Bristol BS1 2NQ.	Bristol (0272) 291071	Horsham	Exchange House, Worthing Road, Horsham RH12 1SQ.	Horsham (0403) 50342	Preston	5th Floor, Unicentre, Lords Walk, Preston PR1 1QG.	Probable date of opening 30th October.
Cardiff	4th Floor, Phase One Building, Ty Glas, Llanishen, Cardiff, CF4 5PJ.	Cardiff (0222) 753271	Hull	Government Buildings, Spring Bank, Hull HU3 1LR.	Hull (0482) 226491	Sheffield	The Jobcentre, Firth Park Road, Firth Park, Sheffield S5 6QY.	Sheffield (0742) 611331
Carlisle	1 Victoria Place, Carlisle CA1 1HG.	Carlisle (0228) 39411	Inverness	24 Bank Street, Inverness IV1 1TX.	Inverness (0463) 39361	Southampton	Queen's Park House, 2/8 Queen's Terrace, Southampton SQ1 1BP.	Southampton (0703) 34041
Coventry	6th Floor, Bankfield House, 163 New Union Street, Coventry CV1 2QQ.	Coventry (0203) 56561	Ipswich	Haven House, 17 Lower Brook Street, Ipswich IP4 1EA.	Ipswich (0473) 212388	Sunderland	38 Market Square, Sunderland, SR1 3LP.	Sunderland (0783) 43316
Dumfries	139 Irish Street, Dumfries DG1 2NU.	Dumfries (0387) 5161	Leeds	Pennine House, Russell Street, Leeds LS1 5RN.	Leeds (0532) 41417	Swansea	2nd Floor, Orchard House, Orchard Street, Swansea SA1 5AP.	Swansea (0792) 460355
Dundee	5 Whitehall Crescent, Dundee DD1 4AR.	Dundee (0382) 22575/6	Liverpool	2nd Floor, 27 Leece Street, Liverpool L1 2TS.	Liverpool 051-708 7357	Wolverhampton	Ground Floor, Albany House, Chapel Ash, Wolverhampton WV3 0UG.	Wolverhampton 0902 28979/ 28074/26869/ 26927
Edinburgh	Meldrum House, 15 Drumsheugh Gardens, Edinburgh EH3 7QG.	Edinburgh 031-225 1313	London	Hanway House, 27 Red Lion Square, London WC1 4NF.	London 01-405 8454	Wrexham	1st Floor, Crown Buildings, 31 Chester Street, Wrexham LL13 8BH.	Wrexham (0978) 51731
Exeter	Central Station Chambers, Queen Street, Exeter EX4 2RZ.	Exeter (0392) 38711	Manchester	First Floor, Alexandra House, 14/22 The Parsonage, Manchester M3 2JA.	Manchester 061-833 0413/ 0581	York	3rd Floor, Stonebow House, Stonebow, York YO1 2NP.	York (0904) 38877
Glasgow	450 Sauchiehall Street, Glasgow G2 3JX.	Glasgow 041-331 2751	Middlesbrough	9th Floor, Corporation House, 73 Albert Road, Middlesbrough, TS1 2RU.	Middlesbrough (0642) 241144			

Appendices

2. Washington New Town.

EMPLOYMENT STATUS - HEAD OF HOUSEHOLD

Employment Status	L.A. & Pre-designation		W.D.C. Development for Rent		Post Designation Sale/Private		Whole Town																	
	TOTAL		TOTAL		TOTAL		TOTAL																	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female																
No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%															
Full-time Employment	2443	43.3	124	2.2	2567	45.5	4992	67.3	242	3.3	5234	70.6	3230	87.7	74	2.0	3304	89.7	10665	63.7	440	2.6	11105	66.3
Part-time Employment	69	1.2	69	1.2	138	2.4	32	0.4	97	1.3	129	1.7	8	0.2	-	-	8	0.2	109	0.7	166	1.0	275	1.6
Unemployed	607	10.8	97	1.7	704	12.5	856	11.5	97	1.3	953	12.9	102	2.8	18	0.5	120	3.3	1565	9.3	212	1.3	1777	10.6
Retired	1049	18.6	690	12.2	1739	30.8	468	6.3	291	3.9	759	10.2	130	3.5	65	1.8	195	5.3	1647	9.8	1046	6.2	2693	16.1
Full-time Education	28	0.5	-	-	28	0.5	16	0.2	-	-	16	0.2	19	0.5	-	-	19	0.5	63	0.4	-	-	63	0.4
Non-employed	207	3.7	248	4.4	455	8.1	129	1.7	178	2.4	307	4.1	28	0.8	9	0.2	37	1.0	364	2.2	435	2.6	799	4.8
Part-time Education	14	0.2	-	-	14	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	14	0.1	-	-	14	0.1
Not available	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	0.2	-	-	17	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	17	0.1	-	-	17	0.1
TOTAL	4417	78.2	1228	21.8	5645	100.0	6510	87.8	905	12.2	7415	100.0	3517	95.5	166	4.5	3683	100.0	14444	86.3	2299	13.7	16743	100.0



Socio-Economic Grouping - All Household MembersWhole Town

Socio Economic Groups	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
EMPLOYERS & MANAGERS EMPLOYING 25+	621	1.2	85	0.2	706	1.4
EMPLOYERS & MANAGERS EMPLOYING < 25	453	0.9	99	0.2	552	1.1
SELF-EMPLOYED - PROFESSIONAL	69	0.1	9	0.1	78	0.2
PROFESSIONAL - EMPLOYEES	1247	2.5	787	1.6	2034	4.0
INTERMEDIATE - NON MANUAL	1255	2.5	1458	2.9	2713	5.4
JUNIOR - NON MANUAL	774	1.5	3813	7.5	4587	9.1
PERSONAL SERVICE WORKERS	328	0.6	2527	5.0	2855	5.6
FOREMEN ETC - MANUAL	452	0.9	136	0.3	588	1.2
SKILLED MANUAL	6057	12.0	279	0.6	6338	12.5
SEMI-SKILLED MANUAL	2592	5.1	1330	2.6	3922	7.8
UNSKILLED MANUAL	1309	2.6	1684	3.3	2993	5.9
OWN ACCOUNT - OTHER THAN PROFESSIONALS	321	0.6	129	0.3	450	0.9
FARMERS - EMPLOYERS & MANAGERS	-	-	-	-	-	-
FARMERS - OWN ACCOUNT WORKERS	-	-	-	-	-	-
AGRICULTURAL WORKERS	14	0.1	-	-	14	0.1
ARMED FORCES	70	0.1	-	-	70	0.1
NOT ADEQUATELY DESCRIBED	474	0.9	175	0.3	649	1.3
NURSERY SCHOOL	41	0.1	19	0.1	60	0.1
INFANTS SCHOOL	1564	3.1	1415	2.8	2979	5.9
JUNIOR SCHOOL	2225	4.4	1885	3.7	4110	8.1
TECHNICAL/GRAMMAR	-	-	9	0.1	9	0.1
PRIVATE PRIMARY	-	-	9	0.1	9	0.1
SPECIAL SCHOOLS	30	0.1	32	0.1	62	0.1
PRIVATE SECONDARY	33	0.1	49	0.1	82	0.2
COMPREHENSIVE	2300	4.6	2092	4.1	4392	8.7
TECHNICAL COLLEGE	60	0.1	33	0.1	93	0.2
TEACHER TRAINING	-	-	16	0.1	16	0.1
UNIVERSITY/POLYTECH	126	0.2	53	0.1	179	0.4
NON EMPLOYED & OTHERS	2772	5.5	7232	14.3	10004	19.8
TOTALS	25189	49.8	25357	50.2	50546	100.0

<u>OCCUPATION OF ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS</u>		<u>Whole Town</u>				
OCCUPATION	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
FARMERS ETC.	46	0.1	-	-	46	0.1
MINERS & QUARRYMEN	549	1.0	-	-	549	1.0
GAS, COKE & CHEMICAL WORKERS	19	0.1	32	0.1	51	0.1
GLASS & CERAMICS	79	0.2	46	0.1	125	0.2
FURNACE, FORGE, FOUNDRY ROLLER MILLS	79	0.2	44	0.1	123	0.2
ELECTRIC & ELECTRONIC	806	1.6	551	1.1	1357	2.7
ENGINEERING WORKERS	2669	5.3	200	0.4	2869	5.7
WOODWORKERS	159	0.3	-	-	159	0.3
LEATHERWORKERS	-	-	-	-	-	-
TEXTILE WORKERS	16	0.1	-	-	16	0.1
CLOTHING	36	0.1	392	0.8	428	0.8
FOOD, DRINK & TOBACCO	143	0.3	129	0.3	272	0.5
PRINTING & PAPER WORKERS	202	0.4	115	0.2	317	0.6
WORKERS IN OTHER PRODUCTS	419	0.8	41	0.1	460	0.9
CONSTRUCTION WORKERS	438	0.9	9	-	447	0.9
PAINTERS & DECORATORS	207	0.4	-	-	207	0.4
DRIVERS OF STATIONARY ENGINES	135	0.3	13	-	148	0.3
LABOURERS (N.E.C.)	320	0.6	88	0.2	408	0.8
TRANSPORT & COMMUNICATION WORKERS	1386	2.7	114	0.2	1500	3.0
WAREHOUSEMEN & STOREMEN	396	0.8	125	0.2	521	1.0
CLERICAL WORKERS	670	1.3	2077	4.1	2747	5.4
SALES WORKERS	516	1.0	1594	3.2	2110	4.2
SERVICE SPORT & RECREATION	591	1.2	1807	3.6	2398	4.7
ADMINISTRATORS & MANAGERS	915	1.8	139	0.3	1054	2.1
PROFESSIONAL & TECHNICAL	1431	2.8	1081	2.1	2512	5.0
ARMED FORCES	70	0.1	-	-	70	0.1
INADEQUATELY DESCRIBED	85	0.2	72	0.1	157	0.3
HOUSEWIFE	-	-	5582	11.0	5582	11.0
SCHOOL CHILDREN/UNDER SCHOOL AGE/STUDENTS	8597	17.0	7717	15.3	16314	32.3
RECENT SCHOOL LEAVERS NOT YET EMPLOYED	63	0.1	68	0.1	131	0.3
OTHERS INC. RETIRED	4147	8.2	3321	6.6	7468	14.8
TOTAL	25189	49.8	25437	50.2	50546	100.0

STANDARD INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION - ALL HOUSEHOLD MEMBERS						Whole Town
INDUSTRIAL CLASSIFICATION	MALES		FEMALES		TOTAL	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING	-	-	-	-	-	-
MINING QUARRYING	933	1.8	57	0.1	990	2.0
FOOD DRINK TOBACCO	284	0.6	212	0.4	496	1.0
COAL PETROLEUM PROD	73	0.1	-	-	73	0.1
CHEMICALS & ALLIED INDUSTRIES	245	0.5	118	0.2	363	0.7
METAL MANUFACTURER	413	0.8	38	0.1	451	0.9
MECHANICAL ENGINEERING	1209	2.4	194	0.4	1403	2.8
INSTRUMENT ENGINEERING	273	0.5	290	0.6	563	1.1
ELECTRICAL ENGINEERING	1108	2.2	641	1.3	1749	3.5
SHIPBUILDING AND MARINE ENGINEERING	332	0.7	-	-	332	0.7
VEHICLES	80	0.2	29	0.1	109	0.2
METAL GOODS N.E.S.	101	0.2	38	0.1	139	0.3
TEXTILES	66	0.1	22	0.1	88	0.2
LEATHER, LEATHER GOODS, FUR	-	-	-	-	-	-
CLOTHING, FOOTWEAR	98	0.2	424	0.8	522	1.0
BRICKS, POTTERY, GLASS, CEMENT ETC.	241	0.5	61	0.1	302	0.6
TIMBER, FURNITURE ETC.	141	0.3	-	-	141	0.3
PAPER, PRINTING, PUBLISHING	209	0.4	189	0.4	398	0.8
OTHER MANUFACTURING INDUSTRIES	501	1.0	57	0.1	558	1.1
CONSTRUCTION	833	1.6	28	0.1	861	1.7
GAS, ELECTRICITY, WATER	131	0.3	41	0.1	172	0.3
TRANSPORT COMMUNICATIONS	1415	2.0	182	0.4	1597	3.2
DISTRIBUTIVE TRADES	764	1.5	1993	3.9	2757	5.5
INSURANCE, BANKING, FINANCE ETC.	134	0.3	162	0.3	296	0.6
PROFESSIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC SERVICES	849	1.7	1518	3.0	2367	4.7
MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES	639	1.3	1053	2.1	1692	3.3
PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION DEFENCE	1216	2.4	1151	2.3	2367	4.7
NON EMPLOYED/FULL TIME EDUCATION UNDER SCHOOL AGE/RETIRED	12792	25.3	16710	33.1	29492	58.3
NOT AVAILABLE	109	0.2	149	0.3	258	0.5
TOTAL	25189	49.8	24357	50.2	50546	100.0

OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF THE WORKING POPULATION - WHOLE TOWN  
1972 - 1980

OCCUPATION	1972			1974			1976			1978			1980		
	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot	M	F	Tot
Engineering Worker	21.1	10.5	17.2	22.9	7.7	17.0	23.4	7.6	17.0	24.2	6.5	16.9	21.6	2.3	13.6
Clerical Worker	6.7	28.1	14.4	5.9	27.1	14.1	6.0	30.5	15.9	8.3	27.4	16.2	5.4	23.9	13.0
Service Sport & Recreation	3.9	24.5	11.3	4.4	20.6	10.7	5.1	21.8	12.0	3.6	21.5	10.9	4.8	20.8	11.4
Professional & Technical	11.3	7.2	9.8	12.4	13.4	12.8	11.9	11.1	11.6	11.5	13.7	12.4	11.6	12.4	11.9
Sales Workers	5.1	14.7	8.6	6.0	14.7	9.4	5.7	12.3	8.4	5.2	14.0	8.8	4.2	18.4	10.0
Other Labourers	8.6	0.4	5.7	6.2	0.4	4.0	5.5	0.5	3.5	4.1	0.7	2.7	2.6	1.0	1.9
Transport/Communication	6.6	2.2	5.0	7.0	1.2	4.8	8.9	1.6	5.9	7.1	1.0	4.6	11.2	1.3	7.1
Electric/Electronic	5.1	3.9	4.7	5.6	5.7	5.6	6.0	3.1	4.8	7.4	3.8	5.9	6.5	6.4	6.4
Mining/Quarrying	7.3	-	4.6	3.8	-	2.3	3.1	-	1.9	4.2	-	2.5	4.4	-	2.6
Construction Workers	4.0	-	2.6	4.2	-	2.6	3.2	-	1.9	4.0	-	2.4	3.5	0.1	2.1
Administrators/Managers	3.4	0.1	2.2	2.7	0.2	2.7	1.6	0.1	1.0	2.3	0.1	1.4	7.4	1.6	5.0
Textile/Clothing Workers	0.4	2.8	1.3	0.7	3.2	1.7	0.8	3.9	1.7	0.2	5.0	2.1	0.4	4.5	2.1
Other Workers	16.6	5.5	12.6	18.2	5.7	13.3	18.7	7.3	14.5	17.8	6.3	13.0	16.5	7.1	12.6
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Total Workers	7909	4482	12391	9476	6041	15517	11118	7547	18665	12723	8850	21573	12382	8669	21051

Whether Wife Working

Whether Working	L.A. & Pre- Designation		W.D.C. Devel- opment Rent		Post-desig- nation Sale/ Private		Whole Town	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No.	%
Yes	1753	55.0	2810	48.6	1872	56.8	6435	52.5
No	1435	45.0	2956	51.1	1425	43.2	5816	47.4
Insufficient Information	-	-	16	0.3	-	-	16	0.1
TOTALS	3188	100.0	5782	100.0	3297	100.0	12267	100.0

Main Reason for Wife Working

Reason	L.A. & Pre- Designation		W.D.C. Devel- opment Rent		Post-Design- ation/Sale Private		Whole Town	
	No	%	No	%	No	%	No	%
Husband out of work/unable to work	55	3.1	32	1.1	-	-	87	1.4
Needs money to help with household bills (other than 1)	1215	69.4	2407	85.7	1342	71.7	4964	77.2
Job available near at hand	83	4.7	-	-	19	1.0	102	1.6
Wants to be independant	41	2.3	32	1.1	167	8.9	240	3.7
Wants to use training	83	4.7	65	2.3	130	6.9	278	4.3
Likes Company	97	5.6	113	4.0	74	4.0	284	4.4
Not enough to do at home, bored	97	5.6	129	4.6	93	5.0	319	4.9
Most of friends working	-	-	16	0.6	19	1.0	35	0.5
Other	55	3.1	-	-	28	1.5	83	1.3
Insufficient Information	27	1.5	16	0.6	-	-	43	0.7
TOTALS	1753	100.0	2810	100.0	1872	100.0	6435	100.0

Experience of Shift Work

	MALE		FEMALE		TOTAL	
	NO	%	NO	%	NO	%
L.A. & Pre- designation	1739	24.7	345	4.9	2084	29.6
W.D.C. Development Rent	3312	47.0	517	7.3	3829	54.3
Post-designation Sale	898	12.7	241	3.4	1139	16.1
Totals	5949	84.4	1103	15.6	7052	100.0

## Appendices

Entry to (un)employment

COMMUNITY INDUSTRY

The Community Industry Scheme was set up in 1972 to cater for the needs of personally and socially disadvantaged young people. The scheme is run under the auspices of the National Association of Youth Clubs and is funded through a government grant from the Department of Employment; the grant being administered by the MSC SPD. The overall management of the scheme is delegated to a Management Board consisting of representatives from the CBI, TUC, NAYC, and MSC. Community Industry has a central office in London and 56 Area Offices in areas of high unemployment and inner city areas (1981 Dec.) The Local Authorities in these areas provide premises, equipment and transport while the sponsors provide the materials for the projects.

Community Industry while not part of YOP, shares similar objectives. Young disadvantaged people are recruited (aged 16 and 17) for CI, for a maximum of twelve months. One of the differences between CI and YOP are that the CI young people are treated as employees and receive the wages which reflect the market rate for unskilled manual workers. The gross weekly wage paid to young people, effective from July 1979 were: £28.60 for 16 year olds, £31.80 for 17 year olds and £36.40 for those aged 18 and over.

A typical CI project would involve young people working in teams of eight to ten, and supervised by an adult member of staff who is often a tradesman. The range of the work



undertaken is similar to that of the Project Based Work Experience (PBWE), construction, painting and decorating, landscaping and other environmental work. They also have workshops which may include woodwork, metalwork, printing, laundering and sewing. The goods produced in the CI workshops are not sold commercially, but are distributed by sponsors to such as charities and voluntary bodies. One of the regulations regarding CI schemes is that they must all be of benefit to the community and should involve work which would not have otherwise been done. Sponsors include a variety of organisations, such as local authorities, charities, religious groups, community associations and schools.

In the original plans for 1979/80 there was to be an increase from 5,500 places to 7,000 filled places, but a reduction in the grant in June 1979 curtailed this expansion, and the figure was revised to 6,000. The target of 6,000 was achieved by December 1979 and this overall level of provision has been maintained since then. The number of places available in one area may fluctuate because some of the bases operate on a minimum and maximum complement, and the overall allocation of places is coordinated nationally on a monthly basis. The overall complement is distributed approximately as follows:-

Scotland	1,450 places
Wales	650 places
Northern	950 places
North West	800 places
Yorks & Humberside	900 places
Midlands	550 places
South West	150 places
London	450 places
South East	100 places

In order to set up a new CI unit, approval needs to be secured from the local authority, the CI central office and the MSC. When an office is set up it is the Area Manager and the Project Officer who seek project work and placements from local sponsors.

During the period April 1979 and March 1980, 8,865 young people entered the scheme. Of these, 69% were boys and 31% were girls. 53% of all entrants were 16 years of age and 47% were 17 years or over. Some, 54% had been unemployed for over 3 months and of these 16% had been unemployed for over 6 months and 6% over twelve months. So, still just under fifty per cent of their total intake were school leavers. In the same period, 43% of those leaving CI went straight into employment.

At the end of 1979/80 the adult staff employed by CI numbered 1,030, the majority working in the Area Units. Of these, 740 were employed as 'scheme consultants' who supervise the young people, and 25 staff work in the Central Office in London.

In March 1980 a committee was set up under the Chairmanship of Lord Melchett, the Chairman of CI to review the role of CI in the light of the prospect of continuing high levels of unemployment of recent developments in provisions for unemployed young people. The committee was made up of representatives of CI, NAYC, and MSC. The Working Party reported in April 1981.

## MSC (1977) "Instructional Guide to Social and Life Skills"

## SUGGESTED CURRICULUM OF TRAINING IN SOCIAL/LIFE SKILLS

The following represents, very broadly, the curriculum to be followed during social/life skills training, and assumes a typical day of seven sessions, each contributing towards a particular objective. Thus the course can extend to any period of time, the range and depth of content being determined by the time scale.

OBJECTIVE	ELEMENTS	CONTENT	SUGGESTED METHODS
To determine the continuing needs of course members		The first session each day should be devoted to a discussion on the work/training progress of course members and the problems they have encountered. Solutions to such problems may be found within the group, by individual counselling, or in subsequent sessions.	
To develop ability to communicate	(a) Letter writing.	Typical layout. Practical exercises.	Established by discussion. Practice letter writing - real or role-playing.
	(b) Use of telephone.	Receiving calls. Making calls. Taking messages.	Discussion and role-playing.
	(c) Conversation.	Problems in communication. Resisting provocation. Making friends.	Discussion of typical problems and actual experiences.
	(d) Customer relationships.	Addressing customers. Waiting or serving. Personal hygiene. Appearance and manner.	Discussion and role-playing.
	(e) Relationships at work.	Lines of communication. Taking orders.	Discussion and role-playing.
To develop ability to cope with adult life	(a) Practical problems.	eg Use of directories. Reading meters. Wiring a fuse. Fitting electrical plugs. Changing seal in cistern.	Individual or group projects, with discussions on related knowledge.

OBJECTIVE	ELEMENTS	CONTENT	SUGGESTED METHODS
		Changing tap washer. Map reading. etc.	
	(b) Knowledge.	eg Obtaining information. Finding accommodation. Handling money. The work of a wide range of public and private bodies - unions, employment & training services, Local Authority, etc.	Discussions and group projects. Guest speakers, with question and answer sessions.
To develop knowledge of local facilities	(a) Interests and hobbies.	Sports and athletics. Collecting - stamps, etc. Model making. Ballroom dancing. Further education. etc.	General discussions on: How to start, An idea of cost, Time involvement, etc.
	(b) Clubs.	Details of clubs in the locality.	General discussions on: Activities. How to join. An idea of cost.
To develop the ability to cope with calculations associated with various jobs.	The type and depth of calculations required will depend on the needs of the trainee and the work he/she is doing.		Set projects of a practical nature.
To develop job seeking ability	(a) Where to look.	Range and use of media available.	Discussion and project work.
	(b) What to look for.	Analysis of requirements in different occupations. Job Descriptions. Personnel specifications.	Discussion and project work.

OBJECTIVE	ELEMENTS	CONTENT	SUGGESTED METHODS
	(c) How to apply.	By letter. By telephone. Completion of application forms.	Discussion and practice in answering ads.
	(d) Preparation for interview.	Knowledge of firms. How to get there. Punctuality. Appearance. Certificates.	Discussion and syndicate work.
	(e) The interview situation.	Expression. Answering questions. Attitudes.	Discussion and role-playing.
To develop ability to retain employment	(a) Safety at work.	Attitude to and need for safety. Safety Sampling. Accident reporting.	Discussion and input by Safety Official. Project work.
	(b) Timekeeping and attendance.	Personal disciplines and responsibilities.	Discussion.
	(c) Acceptance of authority.	Problems of interaction.	Discussion - problems and experiences.
	(d) Good housekeeping.	Advantages. Its relation to safety and efficiency.	Discussion and project work.
	(e) Quality of work.	What it means. Responsibility to the employer.	Discussion and project work.
	(f) Job satisfaction.	What it means. Causes of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Its importance to the individual.	Discussion and project work.

Note: The foregoing is intended as a guide to the Life Skills tutor, who will need to develop project material.

Whilst the guide gives some ideas and topics for discussion and project work, the tutor will need to be alive to the needs of individuals and show flexibility in dealing with such needs.

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