

Welsh Assembly Government
Economic Development and Transport Committee
Policy Review of Economic Inactivity within Wales

Neath Port Talbot Young People's Partnership

Within the Neath Port Talbot Young People's Partnership it was decided to formulate a response for the Economic Development and Transport Committee.

The YPP were asked for volunteers to form a working group to find the best way forward. Represented on the working group were The YPP Framework Support Team, Careers Wales West, Neath Port Talbot Council for Voluntary Services, Jobcentreplus, Neath Port Talbot Council's Social Inclusion Officer and the Youth Service.

The group chose to hold a focus group/conference for young people to hear their views, rather than making the assumption that we knew what they would say. The timetable for the day is appended (Appendix 1) we also held a quiz during the day (Appendix 2 – with answers), which focused people's attention.

A total of 27 young people from all over the County Borough, and from differing backgrounds, attended the event, which they told us they thoroughly enjoyed. During the day we held two workshops, "What is out there to help you find work?" and "What stops you finding work?" The feedback from these (Appendix 3) gave rise to the conclusions which follow and the possible policy changes that could help alleviate them.

Also attached (Appendix 4) are two papers produced by Jobcentreplus entitled "Economic Inactivity of 18-25 year olds in Pelenna Ward Neath Port Talbot" and "Jobcentreplus Action Team for Jobs".

Vicky Ellis
Development and Information Officer
Neath Port Talbot YPP
5th March 2004

| <u>Positive Impact – What we need more of</u> |
|--|
| Internet – easily accessible, free at the library but otherwise expensive. |
| Action Team for Jobs, offer financial incentives and cater for individual needs. |
| Colleges – provide you with what you want and treat you like adults. |
| Youth Gateway – Help with CVs and team building. |
| Volunteering – get experience/ try different things, job opportunities at the place where you volunteer. |
| Open Days and Jobsfairs |

| <u>Negative Impact/ Problems we've faced</u> |
|---|
| Low Pay/ Wages Long Hours |
| Bullying |
| Lack of experience |
| Lack of transport |
| Young people get taxed, why pay tax to a government we can't vote for |
| Qualifications |
| Criminal record |
| Drug and Alcohol Abuse |
| Pregnancy |
| Financially not worth it |
| Ethnic Origin |
| Sexuality |
| Exploitation |

Policy Changes that may help

| |
|---|
| • More Modern Apprenticeships and more variety |
| • Less qualifications needed to start a modern apprenticeship, you need 4 GCSE's at present |
| • INCREASE NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE, also impose NMW for 16-17 year olds |
| • More work experience opportunities, only 2 weeks at the moment, would be better if there was the opportunity to do more jobs on work experience |
| • More work trials and placement opportunities |
| • More on the job training |
| • More understanding of drug and Alcohol abuse, perhaps designated employers to take you through the transition period |
| • Help with the transition from school/college to work |
| • Better working environment, more understanding employers, lack of respect for new starters |
| • More available information before taking GCSE options |
| • Longer opening hours for Jobcentres, only open in school time at the moment |
| • Longer appointments at Jobcentre, always feel rushed when signing on – as if they're short staffed |
| • Action Team for Jobs – extend eligible wards |
| • More access to computers and the internet |
| • Better childcare facilities |
| • More general information and support |
| • More team building programmes |
| • Help with driving lessons and license |
| • Transport – free bus passes to work and more buses from rural areas to towns and cities in time to start work |
| • More practical courses in schools, don't just focus on academic courses |
| • Classes for interview techniques |
| • The age that you are classed an adult should be the same for everything <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 14 on transport○ 16 to get married (and sexual consent) and to work and pay taxes○ 18 to be able to claim benefits and vote |

Let's Talk about Work Conference

Monday 16th February 2004 10am - 4pm

Timetable

10:00am Welcome and Introductions - Margaret Lake

10:30am Ice Breaker

11:00am Quiz

11:30am Tea/Coffee

- 11:45am Workshop 1 -
- What is out there to help you find work?
 - What's good about it and why?
 - What do we need more of?
 - Feedback

12:45pm Lunch

- 1:45pm Workshop 2 -
- What stops you finding work?
 - What problems have you faced?
 - What would help if it were available?
 - Feedback

2:45pm Tea/Coffee

3:00pm Questions, Summary & Feedback

3:30pm Thank you and close

Let's Talk about Work Conference
Data from census 2001

- 1. How many people aged 16 – 25 live in Neath Port Talbot? 13,334
- 2. How many of these are married? 422
- 3. How many have children? 997
- 4. How many are lone parents? 725
- 5. How many have no qualifications? 3,170
- 6. How many are full-time students? 4,370
- 7. How many are working? 7,097
- 8. How many have never worked? 3,530
- 9. How many are jobless? 6,001

Last year in Swansea Bay (West Glamorgan)
Jobcentres:

- 1. How many jobs were advertised? 23,536
- 2. How many sales jobs were advertised? 4,354
- 3. What type of vacancy was advertised most, skilled or unskilled? Unskilled 4,452
- 4. Where else could you look for jobs other than the Jobcentre?

WORKSHOP 1 – FOUR NON BLONDES

- What is out there to help you find work?
- What's good about it and why?
- What do we need more of?

WHAT IS OUT THERE TO HELP YOU FIND WORK/WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT IT AND WHY?

INTERNET

- Easily accessible
- Free at the library
- Expensive (if at home)

CAREER AGENCIES

- They agree to see you
- They make decisions for you, e.g. Careers Wales

JOB CENTRES

- Always intimidating
- A lot of jobs in one place

MEDIA

- Newspapers (local)
- Western Mail – Thursday
- Evening Post – Wednesday
- Have job supplement

TELETEXT

- Easily accessible and available at home. However, not everyone has got it and it can be time consuming.
- It is national and not local

ACTION TEAM

- Variety of schemes
- Give money
- Cater for individual cases
- Not publicised enough

WORD OF MOUTH

- No cost
- Widespread
- But inaccurate

SHOP WINDOWS

- Easy to understand
- Quite limited

ON SITE

- Usually get job immediately
- Short term contracts

WHAT DO WE NEED MORE OF?

- Apprenticeships – better variety and more
- As time gets on there is more equal opportunities for both male and females
- More understanding of what young people want
- More work experience opportunities
- More information – young people friendly
- Magazines, leaflets etc.
- Information about careers, college sixth forms etc.
- Rules of the work place
- Help with culture change from school life to employment

WORKSHOP 2 – FOUR NON BLONDES

- ⌘ What stops you finding work?
- ⌘ What problems have you faced?
- ⌘ What would help if it were available?

WHAT STOPS YOU FINDING WORK/WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE YOU FACED?

- Laziness
- Attitude
- Low pay
- Confidence
- Appearance
- Bullying in work place
- Longer hours
- Lack of experience
- Attitude of others
- Transport
- Qualifications
- Lack of respect for new starters
- Lack of form filling skills
- Ethnic minority groups
- Discrimination on certain job fields
- Lack of disabled facilities
- Young people get taxed
- Older people not taking young people seriously
- Age discrimination

WHAT WOULD HELP IF IT WERE AVAILABLE?

- Better working atmosphere
- Flexible
- Understanding
- Training

WORKSHOP 1 – VALLEY VULTURES

- What is out there to help you find work?
- What's good about it and why?
- What do we need more of?

WHAT IS OUT THERE TO HELP YOU FIND WORK/WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT IT AND WHY?

- Job seekers direct – not helpful
- Careers advisor in schools – never there and tend to force you
- Internet – it is good if you have it
- Newspapers – plenty of option and easy to get
- Television – do not give you enough information
- Colleges – they provided you with what you want and treat you like adults
- Training agency – provide support and information
- Word of mouth – find out a lot from talking
- Friends and family – family tend to push you

WHAT DO WE NEED MORE OF?

- Careers advisors
- Internet
- Jobcentres – make the opening times greater
- Television – different adverts advertising different jobs
- Training agencies – make them closer to where people live

WORKSHOP 2 -**VALLEY VULTURES**

- & What stops you finding work?
- & What problems have you faced?
- & What would help if it were available?

WHAT STOPS YOU FINDING WORK?

- Ability and qualifications
- Childcare
- Confidence
- Criminal record
- Transport
- Drug and alcohol abuse
- Other commitments
- Appearance
- Experience
- Cost

WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE YOU FACED?

- Pregnancy
- Full time education
- Transport
- Criminal record
- Finance

WHAT WOULD HELP IF IT WERE AVAILABLE?

- Childcare
- Transport
- Confidence
- Finance
- Information
- Problems you have faced
- Training and support

WORKSHOP 1 – ENTUSIASTIC YOUTHS

- What is out there to help you find work?
- What's good about it and why?
- What do we need more of?

WHAT IS OUT THERE TO HELP YOU FIND WORK/WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT IT AND WHY?

INTERNET

- Lots of choice
- Easy access
- Reliable

NEWSPAPER

- Local jobs
- Easy access
- Low cost

JOBCENTRE

- Free phone access
- More careers advisors would be beneficial

WORD OF MOUTH

- More personal and reliable means

GATEWAY TO WORK

- Helps with CV's
- Team building

WHAT DO WE NEED MORE OF?

- Apprenticeships
- Basic skills (training)
- Help finding work
- More team building programs

WORKSHOP 2 - ENTUSIASTIC YOUTHS

- ⌘ What stops you finding work?
- ⌘ What problems have you faced?
- ⌘ What would help if it were available?

WHAT STOPS YOU FINDING WORK/WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE YOU FACED?

- Transport and location
- Finances
- Experience
- Confidence
- Options
- Age
- Criminal record
- Ethnic origin
- Disability
- Motivation
- Sexuality
- Personal appearance
- Personality/attitude
- Wage
- Unwelcoming atmosphere
- Exploitation

WHAT WOULD HELP IF IT WERE AVAILABLE?

- Help with driving license/lessons
- Free bus pass, where to obtain information
- Customer friendly staff
- Longer appointments
- Citizens advice/union
- Placement opportunities

WORKSHOP 1 – **TWO DIZZY BLONDES AND THE REST**

- What is out there to help you find work?
- What's good about it and why?
- What do we need more of?

WHAT IS OUT THERE TO HELP YOU FIND WORK/WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT IT AND WHY?

JOBCENTRE

| GOOD | BAD |
|---|--|
| One place with a good selection of jobs | Too many jobs and you have to have experience and qualifications |
| No appointment needed | Some jobs are out of the area and too far to travel |
| They have their own website | |
| They find you work | If you live in the wrong area they cannot help |

CAREERS

| GOOD | BAD |
|--|-----------------------------|
| Give you advice on making decisions | Do not tell you what to do! |
| Advice on courses | Can confuse you |
| Can refer you to jobs/training | |
| Send you vacancies in the post | |
| Help you with CV's, interview preparation | |
| Give you support - your own personal advisor | |

AGENCIES

| GOOD | BAD |
|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Find you work | Not always where we live |
| Convenient – you can phone | Only temporary |

INTERNET

| GOOD | BAD |
|----------------------------|---|
| Information about jobs | Sometimes hard to find 'site' for information |
| Helps with decision making | Information not always updated |
| Shows vacancies | Do not always get responses after you have applied for jobs |
| Can access CV programmes | |

NEWSPAPERS

| GOOD | BAD |
|-------------------------|--|
| Cheap | Some adverts on Wednesday and Saturday |
| Lots of jobs advertised | Not always the jobs you want |
| | Not enough information about the job to help you decide if you want to apply |

VOLUNTEERING

| GOOD | BAD |
|---|---|
| Get experience | Don't get paid |
| Try different things to help you decide what you may want to do | You only get to do the boring bits of the job |
| Can still job hunt when you are volunteering | You could feel guilty if you leave to start paid work |
| A job could come up and you could apply because you are there | |

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

| GOOD | BAD |
|------------------------------|--|
| Support you | Sometimes you can't have a job if someone from your family already works for the company |
| Give you ideas | Can be unfair if you don't have contacts |
| They can be used as contacts | You can be pushed into doing something you don't want to do |

WHAT DO WE NEED MORE OF?

- More information about how to get support
- More opportunities
- Employers to give you the benefit of the doubt
- How can we get a job if we can't get experience
- Give you a trial

WORKSHOP 2 - TWO DIZZY BLONDES AND THE REST

- ⌘ What stops you finding work?
- ⌘ What problems have you faced?
- ⌘ What would help if it were available?

WHAT STOPS YOU FINDING WORK/WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE YOU FACED?

- Hair colour
- Clothes
- Appearance
- Confidence
- Bad language
- Criminal record
- Drugs/alcohol problem
- Bad references
- No experience
- Transport
- Location
- Motivation
- Qualifications
- Low pay
- Long hours
- Don't want to work
- Attitude towards others
- Low training allowance
- Don't know what to do
- Personal problems
- Care issues
- Childcare
- Family connections
- Stereotyping

WHAT WOULD HELP IF IT WERE AVAILABLE?

- Understanding employers
- Open days/job fairs
- Better opportunities
- Different types of jobs/training
- Evening classes

- Volunteering in all areas
- Set yourself small goals
- Opportunity in all areas
- More minimum wage
- Better transport and disabled facilities

WORKSHOP 1 – BRITON FERRY POWER RANGERS

- What is out there to help you find work?
- What's good about it and why?
- What do we need more of?

WHAT IS OUT THERE TO HELP YOU FIND WORK/WHAT IS GOOD ABOUT IT AND WHY?

CAREERS ADVISERS

| GOOD | BAD |
|-------------|------------------|
| Available | Not all the time |
| Support | Biased |
| | Put you off jobs |

ACTION TEAMS FOR JOBS

| GOOD | BAD |
|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Provide transport | No advertising |
| Take to interviews | Don't know what is available |
| Grants for clothes | |

JOBCENTRE

| GOOD | BAD |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Know where it is | Open during school and college times |
| Interactive computers | Travel and cost |
| | Might not know how to use them |
| | Sometimes crowded |

LOCAL NEWSPAPERS

| GOOD | BAD |
|-------------|---|
| Cheap | Mostly look for professional people Some people can not read |
| | Do not advertise enough and not enough information given |

YOUTH GATEWAY

| GOOD | BAD |
|-------------|---|
| Cost | May not have access to a pc |
| Choice | Cost |
| | Need skill and knowledge on how to use a pc |

FAMILY AND FRIENDS

| GOOD | BAD |
|----------------------|---------------------------|
| A lot of information | May not always be correct |
| Always available | Biased |

LEAFLETS AND SHOP ADVERTISEMENTS

| GOOD | BAD |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Up to date information | Might be a con |

WHAT DO WE NEED MORE OF?

- More advice in school, which is unbiased and accurate
- Places to go for advise
- More access to jobcentres
- More advertising
- More transport

- More access to pc and internet
- On-going support
- More access to modern apprenticeships with less qualifications
- More access in schools to practical taught courses.

WORKSHOP 2 - BRITON FERRY POWER RANGERS

- ⌘ What stops you finding work?
- ⌘ What problems have you faced?
- ⌘ What would help if it were available?

WHAT STOPS YOU FINDING WORK/WHAT PROBLEMS HAVE YOU FACED?

- Lack of confidence
- Job centers are open during school times so we can't get there
- Transport
- Parents – they don't think it is the right job for you
- Time to look
- Lack of education
- Affects household benefits
- Wages – should be equal
- Pay tax to a government we can not vote for
- Criminal record could lead to mistrust
- Finance
- No qualifications
- Pregnancy

WHAT WOULD HELP IF IT WERE AVAILABLE?

- Bus passes to work
- Training (options need to be wider)
- Modern apprenticeships only those with four GCSE's can apply!
What about the rest of us?
- God accurate careers
- Information before options
- Work experience – more weeks and more range of jobs
- Filling in forms
- Better transport – there are no buses up the valleys in time to start work
- Same age to be classed as an adult. Now you are an adult at 14 years for transport, 16 years for benefits/voting, 18 years for full pay/working.

- Should be all one age
- Classes to improve confidence for interviews

Economic Inactivity of 18-25 year olds in Pelenna Ward Neath Port Talbot

Selected results of a recent Communities First questionnaire in Pelenna: Approximately 40% of residents completed the questionnaire.

The most relevant evidence relating to economic inactivity was that 36.7% of residents have no formal qualifications. 49% are in favour of small business developments in Pelenna and 71% agreed the need for a youth provision in Pelenna.

Only 32% have internet access at home and there is no childcare provision or after school clubs in Pelenna. So the 'Breakfast in Schools' scheme will enable parents to take their children to school earlier and, hence, start work earlier.

Transport is an issue for people who live in this area. Port Talbot and Swansea are very difficult to get to. Pelenna is a significantly more remote place to live than places with better transport links, internet access and childcare facilities. If these factors could be addressed, and access to other areas with greater job opportunities was made easier (and more identifiable), the people of Pelenna would have increased options. These options would go some way to counteract the common culture of apathy amongst the 18-25 year old group in Pelenna.

If Jobcentreplus were able to employ Communities First Liaison Officers to work full time, concentrating on one area with specific needs at a time, perhaps more positive action would result.

Most businesses in Pelenna are small business, e.g. roofers, builders. There are rumours that there is a black labour market in this area, as young people feel they can earn a living without declaring their work. There is no proof of how widespread this is in actual fact.

If this is really an issue, as well as the suggestions raised above, educating young people (and employers) that there is a more beneficial alternative available to them, may go some way to legitimise economic activity in this area, e.g. various incentives making people better off in work; in-work training provision to give people qualifications; employer grants to subsidise training etc.

Perhaps a 'softly, softly' fraud drive, where offenders and employers are given warnings and informed of the alternatives, would have a more positive effect than prosecutions.

Jobcentreplus Action Team for Jobs

Jobcentreplus Action Team for Jobs in Neath Port Talbot has a full time secondee from Careers Wales West. He deals with any queries from this client group. He has experience and knowledge of Modern Apprenticeships and other training in the area. He also refers clients to Youth Gateway and Careers Wales West for further advice and guidance.

Another secondee is a Youth Worker from the Prince's Trust who deals primarily with this age group. She runs a surgery from Clarewood, a Youth hostel run by the Foyer organisation, every two weeks and helps clients look for training and employment. She offers jobsearch, completion of CV's / application forms and other useful advice and support.

Action Team for Jobs also attends the YMCA in Taibach Port Talbot which houses 13 young men at a time. An Action Team adviser visits weekly and offers the same service as above and sometimes more, e.g. confidence building, interview techniques, telephone skills. This has been happening for over a year and a good relationship with both staff and clients has been built. They have found that regular contact from the same adviser gains trust. The adviser deals with all types of benefit recipients, Incapacity Benefit, Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance, also those not claiming any benefit.

Comments from the client group show that they find it difficult to use the Jobpoints (automated systems to find vacancies opportunities) in the Jobcentreplus offices and often get frustrated when they can't find what they want. Job Seeker Direct (a telephone call centre advising about available vacancy opportunities) is also felt to be a barrier, until the clients build up their confidence, speaking to someone over the telephone is another hurdle.

They prefer to call and see Action Team for Jobs in one of their outreach offices rather than visit a Jobcentreplus office. The

Jobseeker feels there is more time to offer them and it is more informal, they also feel more at ease when dealing with personal matters. Financial assistance has been a big help to this group of clients. Without it many of them would not have returned to work or taken up training opportunities.