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AN ABC OF MENTORS' TALK ABOUT DISAFFECTED YOUTH:
Alternative lifestyles, Benefit dependency or Complete dunces?

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Mentors befriend the young people by getting to know them and trying to understand their world view.

(Employment Support Unit, 2000: 3)

Mentoring takes off

There has been a recent explosion in this country in the use of mentoring, particularly as an intervention with young people officially classified as disaffected or socially excluded. Individual mentoring projects have been heavily promoted and sponsored by a number of government departments, notably the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE), the Department of Health, and the Home Office (Skinner and Fleming, 1999), and the last year has seen the publication of a number of significant evaluation reports of these projects. The DfEE, (now DFES) however, have also taken major steps to embed the concept of mentoring as a central element of some of its most important initiatives since New Labour came to power, with the use of Personal Advisers in the New Deal and the Learning Gateway, and Learning Mentors within *Excellence in Cities*. This process has culminated in the new youth support service, *ConneXions*, billed as a 20,000-strong army of personal mentors for all teenagers. The Sunday Times reported that the previous Education and Employment Secretary, David Blunkett believes that this mentor service will be able to 'boost educational standards, ease social problems and even reduce crime' (Prescott and Black, 2000).

The growth in popularity for mentoring has arisen in the final years of the twentith century within a specific social, economic and political context. In both the US and the UK, it has been seized on by policy-makers, and is almost invariably tied to employment-related goals imposed externally by its institutional settings and funding régimes (Freedman, 1995), as in, for example, a raft of mentoring projects developed under the European Community Youthstart Initiative. Freedman (1995, 1999) argues that the current 'fervour' for mentoring has been promoted by powerful ruling interests in the climate of global competitiveness. Governments need to reduce public spending on welfare, but are also concerned about ensuing urban unrest, as society is increasingly polarised along lines of class, gender and race. Mentoring has become an important aspect of welfare-to-work policies because it resonates with a number of other developments: the moralisation of social exclusion; the rhetoric of 'upskilling' and the threat of a supposed 'underclass'; the attraction of a cheap 'quick fix' to social problems, especially if volunteers can be recruited

to mentor; and because of its facile affinity with the individualistic philosophy of the 'American Dream' and New Labour's 'Third Way'.

This paper draws on evidence from an empirical research project to examine some of the taken-for-granted assumptions about the process of mentoring socially excluded youth. It reviews an aspect of mentoring that is emphasised by many of the existing evaluation reports, that is, mentors' empathy with young people's social and personal situations. However, there are no empirical studies of mentoring in the UK which provide evidence of mentors' 'mindset' (Millwater and Yarrow, 1997) towards disaffected young people. Consequently, evaluation reports fail to question the assumption (and implicit claim) that mentors are able to empathise with their mentees in positive and helpful ways. The research findings presented here offer examples of three types of discourse about disaffected young people that volunteer mentors used. It argues that these mentors operated predominantly within deficit or deviancy models of their mentees' needs. This is not, of course, a new argument in the broader field of youth policy and interventions (see, for example, Jeffs, 1997), but it is one that has barely been investigated in studies of mentoring. In the UK, critiques of current developments in youth mentoring have been restricted to theoretical studies (e.g. Gulam and Zulfiqar, 1998; Piper and Piper, 1999, 2000). This paper aims to bring empirical evidence to bear on the concern of such critiques that mentoring is too often disembedded from its social, political and institutional context. Implications for practice are considered, as well as the need for further research as mentoring expands through new, policy-driven initiatives.

Evaluations emphasise empathy

Given the government's current emphasis on evidence-based practice, their move to 'mainstream' mentoring might be expected to draw on available research. Individual mentoring projects have developed in the UK since 1994, many of them funded by the European Social Fund. As they reach the end of their current funding cycles, a series of evaluative reports are now available (e.g. Employment Support Unit (ESU), 2000; Ford, 1999; Skinner and Fleming, 1999). A striking feature of these reports is the way in which they emphasise not only the skills and knowledge, but also the *attitudes* needed to be an effective mentor when working with disaffected or socially excluded young people. This in itself represents something of a sea-change, a challenge to the competence-based approach which has come to dominate training for helping professionals and volunteers (Issitt, 2000).

Empathy, a non-judgmental stance and the avoidance of authoritarianism are presented as essential attitudes for mentors. This is central to the view promoted by Youthstart mentoring projects, as well as others which similarly aimed to enhance socially excluded young people's access to the labour market:

> *Mentors befriend the young people by getting to know them and trying to*
> *understand their world view...Mentors come from all walks of life. A mentor*
> *can be anyone who empathises and provides non-judgmental and non-directive*
> *support...Mentors also need to have a non-judgmental attitude.*
> (ESU, 2000: 3; see also Skinner and Fleming, 1999)

Elswhere, key concepts from person-centred counselling theory (Egan, 1975; Rogers, 1951) are used to describe the qualities necessary for mentors: 'Empathy: [the] ability to enter the client's frame of reference...Warmth, regard, acceptance of the client... non-judgmental approach' (Ford, 1999: 74). Mentoring schemes using volunteer, rather than professional mentors recommend the use of volunteers from young people's own communities, or peer mentors, to ensure such empathy informs mentoring relationships (ESU, 2000; Forbes, 2000).

Evaluation reports also claim that one of the benefits created by mentoring is that mentors develop increased understanding of young people, and of the conditions of social exclusion. There is an assumption that mentoring will not only create 'filter-down' benefits such as self-confidence and higher aspirations for socially excluded young people, but also that it will create tolerance and a sense of social solidarity among the mentors.

What do we think we're doing?

What evidence is there, however, that these processes are taking place? How capable are mentors – volunteers or professionals – of genuinely entering into the frame of reference of disaffected young people? To what extent does mentoring engender greater tolerance and understanding of the situation of socially excluded young people, and of the ways in which they construe the world? Although a vast quantity of literature on mentoring has appeared over the last two decades, it does little to answer these questions. Most of it consists in anecdotal accounts, rather that any serious attempt to research the actual process of mentoring, and most of it starts from a biased assumption that mentoring has to be a good thing (Merriam, 1983; Piper and Piper, 2000). The more serious studies tend to be 'before and after' psychological questionnaires which tell us little about intermediate processes. Evaluation reports, which currently dominate the UK literature on youth mentoring, may be influenced by conformative pressures to demonstrate positive outcomes to funding bodies (Stronach and Morris, 1994.)

Social constructivism offers a different approach to understanding mentoring rela-tionships, situating them within the multi-layered contexts in which they are formed (Fachin Lucas, 2001; Millwater and Yarrow, 1997). Such an approach suggests that the wider beliefs of participants, particularly of mentors, are central to the process and outcomes of mentoring. The discourses mentors use are not simply individual

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representations, but are instances of wider discursive, material and *social* practices. As such, they may represent the internalisation by individuals of covert power and hegemonic ideology, inscribed in particular socio-historical contexts (cf. Foucault, 1977/1991; Marston, 2000). In this light, the research sought to investigate not only participants' understanding of mentoring, but also the meanings they brought to 'disaffection', on the premise that this might well reveal influences on the process of mentoring itself (cf. Watts, 1999).

The research, conducted as a three-year doctoral project, focused on case studies within a programme anonymised as 'New Beginnings'. New Beginnings was a European-funded vocational preparation and work experience scheme run by a local Training and Enterprise Council (TEC) for 16-19 year olds identified as 'disaffected'. The scheme has since become part of the Learning Gateway. One element of the programme was to offer the young people the option of having a mentor for an hour a week at the TEC headquarters. The mentors were volunteer undergraduates from the local university campus, who had all undergone a training course of four days – fairly substantial compared with many other similar programmes (ESU, 2000; Skinner and Fleming, 1999).

The data generation was conducted in 1999 and 2000, mainly through semi-structured individual interviews of 60 to 90 minutes with 9 pairs of mentors and young people in established mentoring relationships, as well as with New Beginnings staff and managers, and with professionals referring young people to the programme. None of the research participants were from an ethnic minority group. Inevitably, within its remit this paper focuses only on the mentors (although for detailed insights into the young people's perspectives in this research, see Colley, 2000; for a detailed analysis of relevant policy and political context, see Colley and Hodkinson, 2001). One point needs to be made, however, about the mentees in these case studies. These were not 'deeply alienated' young people (as in Williamson and Middlemiss' (1999) typology of disaffected youth). Despite real difficulties in their lives, they had engaged with the New Beginnings programme, had chosen to accept the help of a mentor, and had been able to establish relationships on some level. This is important to bear in mind when considering what their mentors had to say about them.

In analysing the mentors' views on disaffection, and their perceptions of the disaffected young people they were mentoring, the research adopted the tripartite framework suggested by a number of authors (Mann, 1994; Silver, 1994; Watts, 1999). Watts (1999) argued that there are 3 ways of interpreting social exclusion or disaffection. It can be seen as *deviance*, according to a moral interpretation which sees a threat to society from an underclass which has deviant values and behaviour; it can be seen as *deficit*, according to a structural interpretation, which sees the disaffected as

victims of disadvantage; or it can be seen as a form of *diversity* or cultural adaptation, involving rational choices of alternative lifestyles for survival in the face of economic and social inequalities. Some of the data from interviews with the mentors at New Beginnings illustrate their interpretations of disaffection and reveal patterns in their talk about it.

Alternative lifestyles: disaffection as diversity

Vic was a mature student in the third year of an Applied Social Sciences degree, mentoring Dave, a young care leaver who was homeless and had a record of petty offending. Vic was one of the minority of mentors interviewed who seemed to view disaffection as a complex and problematic issue. Vic explicitly rejected official uses and definitions of disaffection, seeing them as authoritarian. He objected to the use of the term 'disaffected' as a form of labelling:

> *The interpretation I came across was basically disaffected youths are people who don't fit in to the mainstream of youth culture, which is a very broad definition...I don't actually like that definition. I wasn't happy with it. I mean, what is normal? And what is mainstream youth like? In times of high unemployment and areas of high unemployment, mainstream youth is disaffected youth! I didn't like the term...I've got a feeling that what people are actually talking about is that they're going against authority, basically, or authority's views on what is right. The moral issue is 'This is what they should be doing, and they're not.' And that does irk me a little bit. I don't think we should set ourselves up to say what people should be doing. I think certainly advise and perhaps, you know, point to alternative lifestyles. But people at the end of the day, even young people, should be in a position to choose, and if they choose that it's something different then why should we condemn them?*

There is an explicit rejection here of dominant social or cultural norms, and a refusal to judge young people by such norms. Vic accepted difference on that level - different choices that young people make. But he challenged the normative way in which he felt the language used at New Beginnings imposed difference:

> *'Mentee' – it just doesn't sound nice...If I was described as a mentee, it's not a nice word, is it?...Straight away, we're separating ourselves, mentor and mentee, you know, teacher and pupil or whatever.*

What seemed to be important for Vic was not an *elimination* of difference between himself and the young people being mentored, but a *recognition* of difference through the process of empathy. Such recognition refuses to construct the mentor's own perspective as normative, and treats the young people's views and experiences as alternative, rather than as inferior.

Benefit dependency: shifting from deficit to deviance

Jane, another mature student of Applied Social Sciences, had some recent background in Rogerian counselling. Having practised as a volunteer counsellor in a self-help group for several years, and completed a Certificate in Counselling, person-centred theories and concepts were prominent in her explanations of mentoring. She was matched with Annette, a 17-year-old young woman who was pregnant, and who was doing very well in her work experience placement as an administrator at the New Beginnings programme itself. Given the centrality of concerns for empathy, acceptance and non-judgmental attitudes that we have already noted in counselling theory and practice, it is interesting to see how this colours her view of disaffection:

> *I think it multiplies, doesn't it? If you're in school and you're a social outcast in a way, because you're either in care or you've got problems at home in one way or another, or you've committed a minor offence, you get in a certain bracket, and I think that can just escalate, and problems can get bigger and bigger and that becomes you. And for a lot of them also, in the families that they come from, it's the norm to do what they're doing and to have these problems, so they don't see them as problems, it's just their way of life...it's so different than perhaps the life you or me would lead.*

She begins by citing aspects that could be seen as deficits, where the young person is constructed as the victim of disadvantage, even mitigating the deviance of criminality by referring to 'a minor offence'. She then tries to demonstrate empathy and acceptance by referring to alternative norms of families who don't see these issues as problems. She ends, however, by making the distinction between these families and 'the life you or me would lead'. A little further into her explanation, we see a deepening struggle with these concepts:

> *I mean, some of the things they talk about, you know! 'My sister had a baby and my granddad brought it up'. But that's normal! 'Sister didn't want it, so my granddad had it, my dad married so-and-so, had a baby, they didn't want it, so my sister had that one', and it's all so intermingled and...But it's normal, you know, it's what they accept, and you can sit there and think 'Oh! What?!', but the more they talk, the more it's how life is for them.*

The avowal of 'what is normal' for the disaffected, of 'how life is for them' attempts to be non-judgmental, but it seems to fail in the very way that it is distanced from and contrasted with Jane's own perception of dominant social norms, revealed in the shocked exclamation that she thinks, but cannot visibly reveal, in front of the young person. This raises the difficulty of achieving not only empathy, but also of achieving congruence (the extent to which the helper's words accurately reflect their thoughts and feelings, and therefore convey trustworthiness to the client), one

of the other central 'core conditions' in the Rogerian framework (Rogers, 1951). Still further into the interview, however, a different view emerged in response to a question about the long-term prospects facing young people at New Beginnings:

> *It seems to be, the more I talk to them I didn't realise how much, but it's 'Oh, I'll decorate the baby's bedroom when this cheque comes'... 'My boyfriend's gone on the sick, so when he gets his big cheque, we'll do this'... The boyfriend is off work...22 and a 17-year-old, fully healthy people, but they've no intention of doing anything, and not an education to get them where they want to go...It's this cheque, that cheque, social, income support, but it's the only thing they know, and to me...like you said, what's the future? Who can make such a difference to make them change? Who can make such a big impact to say 'That is not the way you're going to go for the rest of your life'?*

Here, benefit dependency, unwillingness to do paid work, lack of regard for education, and teenage pregnancy as a means to increase welfare payments are presented as instances of deviance. Jane finds herself unable to apply to disaffected youth Rogerian beliefs about the capacity for human transformation. Her comments about illegitimacy and 'healthy people with no intention of doing anything' recall those of Charles Murray: 'the definitive proof that an underclass has arrived is that large numbers of young, healthy, low-income males choose not to take jobs' (Murray, 1990: 17). The task posed is to alter these deviant values and behaviours, but Jane seemed to have a pessimistic view that disaffected young people may not in fact be susceptible to such helping interventions. Jane's interview reveals a pattern that is common in several of the mentors' accounts. Initial definitions of disaffection, particularly in relation to the individual young person, seemed to fall within the mode of 'deficit', but as the interviews progressed, their discourse shifted towards a more explicit discourse of deviance. Let us see how two other mentors took this somewhat further than Jane did.

Complete dunces: fear of the underclass

Aileen and Emily were two young student teachers who asked to be interviewed together. Aileen had been working with Heather, who had been abandoned by her parents at an early age, and adopted and brought up by her grandparents. Heather had attended a special school for children with moderate learning difficulties, and had made a positive choice in Year 11 to enter the New Beginnings programme, where she had quickly settled into a long-term work experience placement, working towards NVQ Level 1 in Retail. Emily had been mentoring Leanne, who had been in care, self-harmed on a regular basis, had been unable to sustain her work experience placement, and had just had to move to a distant part of the country when she left care.

In the early part of the interview, their discussion of the young people and of disaffection was again predominantly around issues of deficit, with some reference to deviance. They cited problems such as poverty, family difficulties, academic failure, emotional and psychological problems, and learning difficulties on the one hand. On the other, there were occasional references to laziness, criminality, disruptive behaviour, and teenage pregnancy. Interestingly, given their own desire to become educators, and their belief in the value of positive educational experiences in preventing disaffection, Aileen and Emily offered a very pessimistic view of the possibility of young people exiting from this deficit state. They expressed the notion, as Jane did, that disaffection consists in some kind of permanently arrested development, not susceptible to interventions:

> *[The government] are saying about tackling social exclusion...It's too late. These people, they've experienced so much exclusion throughout...they don't stand a chance.* (Aileen)

At times they compared their mentees' lack of development with their own progress:

> *I've done most of my developing at university, when you start to realise who you are...they've never ever had the chance to do that, so when they become adults, their developmental stage is still very young, and so when they have kids themselves, their kids are not going to get the chance to develop either through any experiences.* (Emily)

Both of these themes – the intractability of the problem and the contrast of the self with 'these people', situating young people firmly as marginal and abnormal - are recognisable in most of the other mentors' accounts. However, about half way through the interview, the following exchange took place:

Emily: *Really it's a fundamental problem in society. But you need to retrain families in how to act, I think, and give parents training and vet them as whether they're suitable to have kids. I think they may have to resort to that.* (Laughs)

HC: *But even if you could churn out perfect people, are there jobs there for them - are there going to be jobs for everyone even if everybody's qualified?*

Aileen: (To Emily, earnestly) *You were saying about having children. All the sex education is very important. But the people that are actually going to listen are the well-educated people like me and Emily. I mean, people that we have been to school with have probably got about 5 kids by now. And they're going to be turning out like their mothers, like these people that were disaffected in school. Whereas because of sex education, we're well educated, so we know we're not going to have 6 children. We're probably*

> *going to bring maybe 2 or 3 hopefully normal* (Emily laughs) *sort of people into the world, tuned in with society sort of children. Whereas it's the opposite, surely the government want to try and persuade us to have the 6 or 7 children* (Emily laughs) *that do stand a chance.*

Emily: *Yeah.*

Aileen: And not do the sex education. But not let all the disaffected pupils have children. See what I mean? [...] They're the type of people we don't want to be having kids, because they're going to be bringing complete dunces into the world, which I know is an awful thing to say. But it's true. We don't want them having kids!

Thus, a eugenic 'final solution' is posed to protect society from being swamped by deviants, once again reminiscent of Charles Murray's warnings of the catastrophic threat to society posed by single mothers supposedly breeding large numbers of unintelligent children. There is a sense of fear and intimidation in relation to disaffected youth, and the solutions posed are both controlling and punitive. It is hard to see how empathy and non-judgmental acceptance could enter a relationship with someone who holds such beliefs. Emily was relieved that her relationship had been ended by Leanne's move to a new area. For Aileen, the relationship with Heather became unsustainable, and she brought it to a sudden end. No social solidarity seemed to have been engendered.

Outcomes

The government sees mentoring as having a key role to play in achieving specified educational or employment outcomes through initiatives such as New Deal, Education Action Zones and Excellence in Cities. Yet research has consistently provided little evidence of such outcomes from mentoring for the most disadvantaged (Golden and Sims, 1997; Jeffs and Spence, 2000; Skinner and Fleming, 1999). In this light, it is worth briefly recounting the outcomes for mentees in this study. Vic's mentee Dave continued to experience a chaotic lifestyle due to homelessness, and was recorded as eventually 'disappearing' from New Beginnings. Vic had provided him with information about college courses, and hoped that Dave might take up one of those opportunities. However, the rules of New Beginnings meant that they had no way of keeping in touch with each other. Jane's mentee Annette left New Beginnings to have her baby, and the following year appeared to be a very happy and competent young mother. Having been placed in care herself, she wished to be with her daughter full-time during her early years, and had no plans to look for work until the child started school. Unfortunately, Annette would probably register as a failure and as a continuing problem within the framework outlined in, for example, *Bridging The Gap* (Social Exclusion Unit, 1999). Heather achieved her NVQ

Level 1 at the shop where she worked, gained employed status as a youth trainee, and was progressing to Level 2 when the shop closed and made her redundant. She was unable to get another retail job, and was contemplating alternative work in care for the elderly. It was difficult for her to access support and training, however, since she had passed her eighteenth birthday. Heather longed to see Aileen again, and treasured a scrapbook they had begun to make together but never finished. Mentoring seemed to have repeated her earlier experiences of abandonment and loss.

These were the individual, short-term outcomes for a few of the mentees at New Beginnings. Others were sacked from the scheme for behavioural or attendance problems or 'laziness'. Some drifted through it without ever establishing a successful work placement, and simply exited onto unemployment benefit at the age of 18. One young man with special needs completed his NVQ Level 1 in Catering and was employed part-time by the firm where he had been placed. This paper aims, however, to consider also the claims noted in its introduction, that outcomes for mentoring might include a growth in social solidarity through mentors' empathy for socially excluded youth.

Denying the Other

In a way, Aileen's 'final solution' is a form of denial – denial of the right to existence for the socially excluded. There were many occasions in the interviews when mentors denied young people's voice, experience and identity, constructing them as the 'Other'. Young people were frequently referred to, in a reifying manner, as 'these people', 'that sort', 'my one'. As well as denying them valid identities in this way, their voices were often portrayed as untrustworthy:

> *I suppose I was shocked, but I always try not to be too shocked, because a lot of the time it's just used to try and make you shocked.* (Jane)

> *She can, I think, tell a few porkies [i.e. lies] when she wants to as well, and a lot of the things she says I take with a pinch of salt.* (Sian)

> *It was quite difficult at first to have to sit and listen and filter out the rubbish.* (Patricia)

These examples belie the assumption that mentors listen to young people in an empathetic and non-judgmental way. While we can acknowledge the inevitable accuracy of some mentors' statements that the young people only tell 'their side of the story', their accounts imply more than this, namely that other adult versions of events are the 'real version'. Being non-judgmental becomes reduced to *not reacting visibly* in a judgmental way. There is no sense of 'acceptance' or 'unconditional positive regard' in the Rogerian sense (Rogers, 1951).

There is also a denial by some mentors of the validity of young people's experiences:

I mean, my girl, she doesn't go out, she doesn't do anything. I say: 'Are you going out this week?' 'No! I'm going to bingo with my nan.' And that'll be it...And is she ever going to get back in with society, so she starts to experience some kind of inclusion? (Aileen)

The young person clearly does go out, does do something, is included – but it does not *count*, and her personhood is negated. How could person-centred empathy and acceptance possibly be undertaken, if the mentor does not believe that the Other is truly a person?

The influence of dominant discourse
In considering the way in which some mentors at New Beginnings constructed socially excluded youth as the dangerous Other, this researcher also runs the danger of constructing the mentors in turn as Other, pointing the finger at their inability to empathise with their mentees (James Avis, personal communication, 17 May 2000). All of the mentors volunteered to take part in the programme because of genuine desires to help young people less advantaged than themselves, and all but one intended to enter careers with a similar purpose. They were not ideologically fascist, wickedly uncaring, or stupidly incapable of imagining another person's perspective. So where did their ideas come from?

We have a long tradition in this country of seeing young people (whether disaffected or otherwise) as 'a mere locus of lacks' (Cohen, 1986: 54), by their very nature *dis*qualified. Cohen also notes a parallel tradition of moral panic about young people that has persisted throughout the economic good times and the bad. These are embedded in the dominant discourse that shapes common sense views of such issues. It is very difficult for the wider population, particularly for the middle classes who often furnish volunteers for mentoring projects, to avoid this official, hegemonic discourse, which pervades the written and spoken texts that surround us, and therefore pervades our beliefs and actions (Burton and Carlen, 1979; Morgan, 1999). Meanings are mobilised in order to maintain existing power relations and transmit ideology that serves the interests of dominant groupings (Anderson, 1989), and the arena of mentoring disaffected youth is not exempt from this effect.

A prime example of such dominant discourse can be seen in the media reporting of the trial of Tony Martin, who shot 16-year-old Fred Barras as he burgled Martin's house. The *Sunday Times* seized upon the opportunity to invite Charles Murray back to Britain, and to proselytise his views on the threat to 'civilised society' from the 'unsocialised' at the margins (Sunday Times, 2000a). In the same edition, columnist Melanie Phillips warned of the danger that New Labour's social exclusion agenda will generate a politics of resentment, while providing a classic example of

that very phenomenon (Phillips, 2000). The letters page a week later (Sunday Times, 2000b) was dominated by statements that either portray Fred Barras as the incarnation of disaffected youth, and/or justify his summary execution. William Hague, former leader of the Conservative Party, added his voice to the clamour too. This response to the incident is exemplified in Richard Littlejohn's conclusion in the *Sun*:

> [W]hen criminals break the law, especially when they violate someone's home, they should forfeit all legal protection. They have put themselves outside the law and they should face the consequences, even if that costs them their lives.
> (Littlejohn, 2000)

Such discourse represents the ultimate negation of the lives of those we construct as disaffected. However, it both derives from and sustains the political climate identified earlier in this paper – which has also driven mentoring to prominence as an intervention with the socially excluded.

What are the possibilities of empathy, acceptance, or solidarity between mentors and young people targeted by schemes for the disaffected? Haber (1994), in seeking to advance an oppositional politics to challenge dominant power relations, argues that solidarity only becomes possible with an acknowledgement of difference, of the plurality of communities and of the self, which can find affinity with different communities in contingent ways. It is perhaps this acknowledgement that we see in the accounts of the minority of mentors who avoid embracing the 'deviance' model when talking about disaffection. Without the ability to listen to *and hear* the voice and vocabulary of others, Haber (1994) argues that the tendency will always be to marginalise Others as deviants beyond the pale.

What *do* we think we're doing?

To return to our three models of disaffection, as deviance, deficit, or diversity, Watts (1999) also argued that each of these interpretations can be seen to have specific implications for what we think we are doing in interventions such as guidance or, in this case, mentoring. It makes a difference to mentoring practice, if we view disaffected young people as choosing alternative lifestyles, or as benefit dependants, or as complete dunces who should be sterilised.

If we take the 'deviance' view, the tendency is to think that one's task is to rescue young people from a subversive condition - and to punish or further isolate those who, when offered rescue, do not comply. They then become the self-excluded, rather like the Victorian notion of the undeserving poor. In a 'deficit' model, the focus becomes 'repairing' young people's lacks so that they can integrate with normative expectations and existing structures, with Victorian echoes again, this time of the deserving poor (Ecclestone, 1999). Although this is often given the gloss of 'empowering'

individual young people, it does not equip them to understand or challenge injustice or inequality in the structures of society. Like the deviance model, it similarly retains the potential for further exclusion of those who resist or fail to fit. The concept of 'empowerment' thus paradoxically embraces a regulatory moral authoritarianism rather than a genuinely emancipatory practice (Baistow, 1994/95; Ecclestone, 1999; Jeffs and Smith, 1996). These models seem particularly problematic where there are marked cultural distances between the helper and the helped. The findings from the research reported here suggest that cultural misunderstanding is not just a problem for youth from ethnic minorities (Forbes, 2000; Freedman, 1993), but also exists between white middle class mentors and white working class youth.

A 'diversity' model would locate solutions within communities rather than within the individual, recognising the inclusion generated by peer cultures and sub-cultures and the creative, constructive possibilities of adaptive behaviours, such as work within informal economies. It might highlight the need to broaden the bounds of tolerance and inclusion, rather than rescuing the socially excluded from beyond an excessively narrow pale. It is only this model which demands that mentors attempt to understand young people's personal and social constructs, and to empathise genuinely with them. However, the influence of dominant discourse about socially excluded youth may make it difficult for mentors to adopt such an approach.

Conclusion

Mentoring is a highly popular element of current policies to address social exclusion. It is already becoming embedded in national initiatives like the Learning Gateway, and it will move further into the spotlight as the *ConneXions* youth support service is introduced. Although small-scale, the research findings presented here reveal the weakness of the general assumption that middle class mentors can demonstrate empathy and acceptance of working class young people. In this respect, the current expansion of mentoring will undoubtedly help some young people, but at the same time may risk reinforcing the marginalisation of others.

There is, of course, scope for larger-scale and more detailed research in this area of inquiry, particularly among Personal Advisers in the new national initiatives which have recently been piloted. Such research might valuably investigate the personal constructs that professional mentors bring to their practice, the context of those constructs, social and economic factors which influence them, and the way they are controlled or deployed within mentoring relationships. Action research might be particularly useful in using the lessons of ethnic minority mentoring, and applying them to the mentoring of socially excluded youth as another form of cross-cultural mentoring – bearing in mind, of course, the arguments from some that young people are better served by mentors drawn from their own communities than by privileged adults from outside (Gulam and Zulfiqar, 1998).

The range of attitudes and values held by the volunteer mentors reported here may also be reflected among many professionals involved in mentoring roles with young people: careers advisers, personal advisers, youth workers and social workers, for example (Geoff Ford, personal communication, 17 December 2000). As Ford (1999) has already suggested in his evaluation of the Institute of Career Guidance (ICG) Mentoring Action Project, far more needs to be done to challenge mentors to consider the implications of their beliefs about disaffection, and to confront stereotyped images of disaffected youth. As well as the undoubted commitment to helping young people achieve their potential which mentors bring with them, there is a need to equip them also to recognise both the diversity of barriers (structural as well as individual) that young people face, and the validity of different forms of cultural practice in marginalised communities. This needs to be part of mentors' training, and part of the on-going support offered to them.

In addition, as Philip (2000) rightly notes, there is a need for research which can help develop theoretical understandings of mentoring by considering young people themselves as active agents within the process, rather than as passive recipients of it. Further research along these lines is undoubtedly warranted as mentoring becomes more tightly linked to compulsory participation for groups such as young offenders and benefit claimants (British Youth Council, 1999).

It may be that empathy and solidarity only become genuinely possible with an acknowledgement of difference, of the plurality of communities, and the plurality of the self, which can find affinity with different communities in contingent ways. This conclusion, however, would present a considerable challenge to policies which see mentoring as a 'quick-fix' remedial intervention to bring disaffected young people in line with dominant social norms.

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KEEPING TRACK OF VULNERABLE YOUNG PEOPLE:
A Policy Agenda

ANGELA CANNY, ANNE E. GREEN AND MALCOLM MAGUIRE

There has been significant change in the lives of young people in recent years. Increasingly, young people are remaining longer in education, with only a minority making the direct transition at 16 years from school to work (Gray and Sime, 1990; Roberts, 1995). Young people are remaining longer in a period of dependence, which has permeated all areas of their lives (Jones, 1995; Wallace and Kovatcheva, 1998). Research on young people since the 1980s has devoted considerable attention to describing and interpreting 'youth transitions', which are recognised to have become more prolonged, complex and less predictable (Cote, 1995; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997; Wyn and White, 1997). The transition from youth to adulthood is described using terms such as 'extended', 'protracted', 'fragmented' and 'destandardised' (Bynner, Ferri, and Shepherd 1997; Chisholm, 1990; Evans and Heinz, 1994).

It was recognised that while the range of opportunities for young people may have increased, so also has the risk of failure. There was increased concern in both academic and government circles for those young people who were failing to make a successful transition from school to work and ultimately into independent adult lives, and the growing polarisation between those who were succeeding and those who were failing (NIERC, 1997; OECD, 1998). Indeed, social exclusion and the need to both address and combat it has, over the 1990s, become a central element of government social policy. This is particularly evident in the establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) and publication of *Bridging the gap*, which highlighted the significant number of young people who were not in education, employment or training (SEU, 1999a). Within academic research much attention has focused on those 'vulnerable' young people who have become 'detached' from mainstream traditions (Johnston et al., 2000; 1997a; MacDonald, 1997b; 1998; Newburn, 1999). There is also debate surrounding the concept of 'vulnerable' young people, and the recognition that 'vulnerable' young people are a heterogeneous group, often facing multiple problems in the transition to adulthood (Newburn, 1999; Piper and Piper, 1998). Consequently, one of the issues emerging from this debate is centred upon service delivery to 'vulnerable' young people and the fragmentation of policy thinking and service delivery. The Social Exclusion Unit pointed out that at least eight departments have an interest in policies and services for young people, and at least four local authority services work directly with young people. There were calls for greater multi-agency co-operation and partnership between the different statu-

tory and voluntary agencies to deliver more effective, coherent, seamless and effective service support to young people (DoE, 1999).

In was in this context of increased awareness of the complexity of issues confronting young people in the transition from school to work that the *Learning to Succeed* White Paper DfEE, 1999b (now DFES) was published. The White Paper outlined the government's commitment to establishing a Connexions Strategy to support the foundation of a single support service for all young people, with an explicit aim to raise post-16 learning and reduce the numbers of young people not in education, employment or training. The ideology informing the Connexions Strategy can be conceptualised in terms of tackling disaffection through prevention, recovery and re-integration (Connexions, 1999b).

The Connexions Service, a central element in this strategy, phased in across England from April 2001, is a new advice, guidance and support service designed to integrate existing careers advice and support service for all young people aged 13 to 19 years (Connexions, 1999a). While the service is to be available to all young people, particular emphasis is to be placed on helping those young people considered at risk of dropping out of education, training or employment. The central support mechanism in this service is the personal adviser whose remit is to provide young people with individual advice and support, which is accessible, consistent and co-ordinated in order to ensure that they stay in a 'positive' learning environment. The emphasis is centered upon the individual young person and their individual needs. Consequently, there is increased emphasis on keeping in touch and keeping track of young people.

This paper reports on the main findings of a study funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, which examined the increased emphasis in policy and practice on keeping track of 'vulnerable' young people, and the corresponding importance placed upon 'partnership working' and 'joined-up' policy delivery (Green, Maguire and Canny, 2001). To date there has been an absence of debate in academic circles surrounding the growing emphasis on tracking young people. This paper seeks to address this by exploring the extent to which tracking mechanisms are in place across England, the rationale behind tracking, some of the advantages and limitations of current tracking methodologies. It identifies the difficulties encountered by agencies in building reliable, accurate, up-to-date and robust tracking systems.

There were a number of elements to the research. Due to their central location in the delivery of advice and guidance to young people, a pro forma was sent to all Careers Service companies in England in order to identify the extent and level of

tracking taking place within the Careers Service. In addition, contact was also established with a number of relevant voluntary and statutory agencies to establish the key issues in tracking. Eight case studies were then selected, of which seven were Careers Service Companies and one voluntary multi-agency group who were identified as undertaking interesting work in the field of tracking. The main focus of the case studies related to process and operational issues, to identify the key issues for tracking and examples of good practice.

Context

There have been profound changes in the experiences of young people over the past three decades as they make the transition from school to work (Evans and Furlong, 1997; Gray and Sime, 1990). In the early 1970s two-thirds of young people left school at 16 years and all but a minority obtained full-time jobs almost immediately (Roberts 1995; Wallace and Kovatcheva, 1998). With the collapse of the youth labour market from the late 1970s onwards, young people found it increasingly difficult to negotiate entry into the labour market. Mass youth unemployment presented a huge problem (Ashton, Maguire and Spilsbury, 1990; Ashton and Maguire, 1989; Raffe, 1985). In an effort to contain rising unemployment, there was a significant expansion in government training schemes, which were largely criticised for not presenting young people with increased opportunity but rather acted as a 'warehouse' for young people who would otherwise have been unemployed (Coles, 1988; Hollands, 1990; Mizen, 1995; Riseborough, 1993). Moreover, this 'mass' response to youth unemployment was criticised for ignoring the complexity of issues facing young people. Consequently, over the 1980s there was a growing disenchantment with training as a secure and permanent bridge to work, which was further reinforced by the erosion of the value of training allowances.

Post-16 Educational Participation

The most dramatic change in the youth labour market has been the increased participation in post-compulsory education. Figure 1 shows that in 1979, 42 per cent of 16 year olds were engaged in full-time education, this proportion increased substantially over the 1980s and by the early 1990s, 70 per cent of 16 year olds were in full-time education. The trend has remained fairly stable over the 1990s. In 1999, 71 per cent of 16 year olds were participating in full-time education in England. Figure 1 also shows that the participation rates for 17 and 18 year olds have also risen sharply. In 1979, just 27 per cent of 17 year olds and 15 per cent of 18 year olds were in full-time education, by 1999 the figures were 58 per cent and 37 per cent respectively.

Figure 1: Participation rates (%) in full-time education in England, 1979-1999
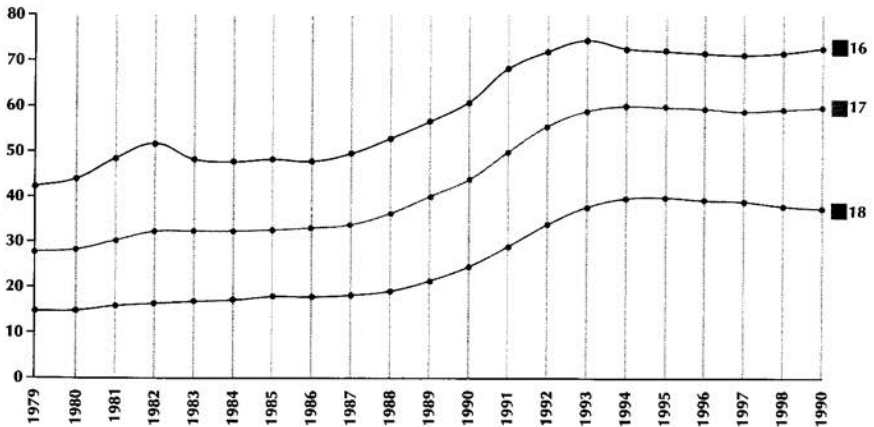
Post-16 Destinations

Examination of the destinations of Year 11 school leavers confirms this trend away from employment and training. Figure 2 shows that in 1989, 39 per cent of Year 11 school leavers were engaged in employment or government supported training. By 1999 this proportion had declined to 17 per cent. The proportion of the Year 11 cohort entering full-time education increased from 48 per cent in 1989 to 71 per cent in 1999. Explaining the rise in educational attainment, Brown (1990) has argued that as society becomes more qualified, this in turn raises expectations and creates a higher demand for education. There is also evidence that educational credentials are increasingly being used as an insurance policy against the vagaries of the labour market (Brown, 1995; Brown and Scase, 1994). As a result, those vulnerable young people who are unable or unwilling to participate in post-compulsory education are facing a higher risk of failure and exclusion in a labour market that is increasingly demanding higher skills and qualifications.

Figure 2: Year 11 Destinations, 1989-1999
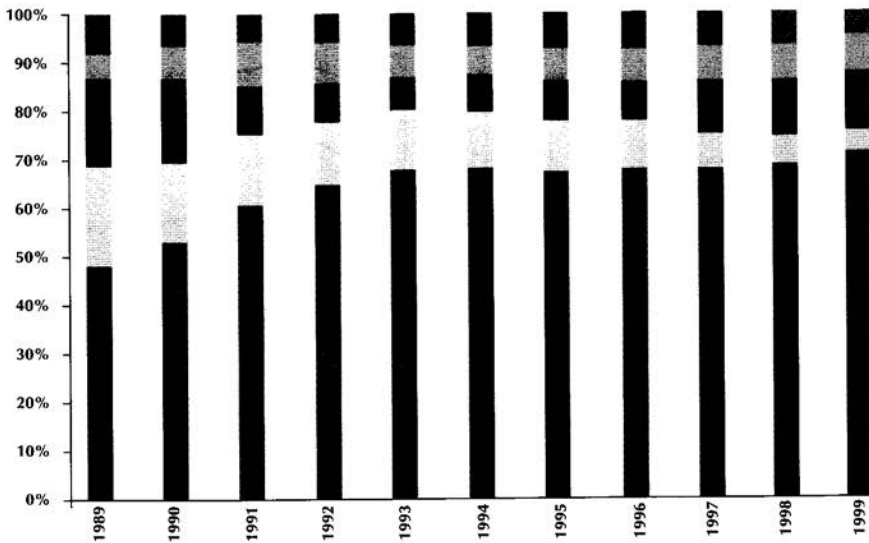
Source: Careers Activity Survey 1989 to 1999

■ Full-time Education   ▨ GST Training   ■ Employment   ■ Unknown   ▨ Not in Full-time, Education or Employment

These transformations in the transition process cannot be viewed in isolation from the main developments which have occurred in the wider labour market. The most profound features of labour market restructuring have been the sectoral shift from manufacturing to services sector employment, and the decline in opportunities for young people to enter traditional apprenticeship type training. This has in turn altered the types of skills and attributes that employers now demand of their employees (CBI 1989). Indeed, Crompton et al (1996) define this transformation as the shift from a largely homogenous, skilled and semi-skilled workforce towards a more segmented, fragmented and heterogeneous workforce.

There is increased demand for inter-personal skills and less upon traditional manual skills. Moreover, entry into organisations has become increasingly segmented by qualifications. Opportunities for a young person to work their way up the organisational career ladder have diminished, which is due both to changing employment profiles within organisations and changing recruitment strategies (Brown, 2000; Halford and Savage, 1995; Halford, Savage and Witz, 1997; Heery and Salmon, 2000). While the expansion in personal service and leisure occupations provide employment opportunities for relatively unqualified young people, the general trend has been towards higher demand for qualified workers (Maguire and Maguire, 1997).

Amongst those young people aged 16-19 years who do manage to get jobs outside government supported training, the majority are in poorly paid, insecure jobs, which lack any real training or long term career opportunities (MacDonald, 1997b).

The widening gap between qualified and unqualified young people
While the economic situation improved in the late 1990s, it is possible that unqualified and early school leavers face greater risk of exclusion and/or marginalisation than previous generations. Indeed, Payne (2000) concluded that while young people who left school at the minimum age in 1995 faced less risk of becoming unemployed than those ten years previously, they were more likely to be economically inactive and not engaging in either education, or employment and training.

There is a growing body of literature which raises concerns about young people who have failed to make the transition from education to employment, who face exclusion from full citizenship and life on the margins (see Pearce and Hillman, 1998; Williamson, 1997). During the 1990s several studies focused on young people not participating in education, training or work, who were referred to as 'Status 0' or NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training) (Instance and Williamson, 1996). There have been difficulties in quantifying the proportion of 16-19 year olds falling into this category, but the SEU (1999a) estimated that at any one time, 161 thousand 16-18 year olds (9 per cent of the cohort) were not in education, employment or training, with a further 20-25 per cent experiencing some degree of vulnerability. Wilkinson (1995) estimated that about 5-10 per cent of young people aged 16-17 years had dropped out of school having neither found employment or training. It was also recognised that those young people are disproportionately concentrated in disadvantaged neighbourhoods who experience fractured family lives, enduring poverty and alienation from the labour market (Coles, 1999). Most importantly, it was recognised that fragmented social policy delivery to these young people failed to make any real difference to their lives (Newburn, 1999).

The policy response and the emergence of the Connexions Strategy
In the 1980s and for much of the 1990s the principal policy response was one of 'containment': various training initiatives were established to deal with the problem of mass youth unemployment and exclusion. However, Williamson (1997) has argued that policies directed at young people increasingly worsened opportunities and possibilities for this age group and contributed to further polarisation (see also Riseborough, 1993; Stafford, 1991). Similarly, Craine (1997) contended that vulnerable young people became trapped in a 'black magic roundabout' where they are circulated through an array of training schemes, casual work in 'McJobs', petty enterprise, quasi criminal activities, cash in hand fiddly jobs and further unemployment (Craine and Coles, 1995).

One of the main problems with service delivery was its treatment of 'vulnerable' young people as one homogenous group, and its failure to recognise the variety of issues affecting young people (Berthoud, Burton and Taylor, 2000; MacDonald, 1997b; Morris, 1994; Morris and Irwin, 1992). There was increased recognition of the need for an individual led policy response to the needs of young people and more inter-agency co-operation (Coleman and Warren-Adamson, 1992; Coles, 1995). Indeed, Pearce and Hillman (1998:2) argue that policy making has been constrained by a failure to recognise the variety of interconnected issues concerning young people and by 'professional, institutional and organisational boundaries that prevent an integrated approach to individual needs'.

The Employment Support Unit (ESU) recommended the development of inter-agency networks to provide a co-ordinated response to the needs of young people. They promoted the idea of the 'one stop shop' where 'all relevant services are located under one roof' ((ESU 1999: 12). Similarly, the TEC National Council (2000) called for more effective and proactive partnership arrangements to deliver better support for young people with special educational needs. The Social Exclusion Unit (1999a), identifying weaknesses in the existing support mechanism for young people, pointed to institutional fragmentation and the vast array of individual agencies providing often overlapping services (see also Coles, England and Rugg, 2000). It was within this environment that the Connexions Strategy was conceived.

The Connexions Service

The Connexions Service is designed to be more coherent across current service boundaries in order to provide a more holistic response to the individual needs of young people by providing one single 'seamless' support service (Connexions, 1999a). It is envisaged that flexible and innovative delivery structures will connect the public and private sector, community and voluntary sector to deliver a more effective 'joined-up' service. It is intended that the Connexions Service will work with parents, carers and a wide range of partners such as schools, pupil referral units, youth work organisations, probation services, local community and voluntary organisations, employers, health service, police and social services to establish more imaginative ways of delivering services to young people. Within this partnership, the personal adviser is intended to play a pivotal role in connecting young people with the appropriate guidance and support services. The Connexions Service aims to embrace a more individualised response, where the needs of the young person are placed in a central position.

Keeping track of vulnerable young people

Closely allied to this individualised service, is the need to have readily accessible, organised and accurate information to provide the young person with the most

appropriate advice which will allow them to achieve their full potential. It is also recognised that this is crucial in enabling more effective service provision. At the heart of the Connexions Strategy is the establishment of a comprehensive and 'live' register of the 13-19 population which will ensure:

> *that young people do not fall through the net, or become lost to the Connexions service, a database to track their progress through their teenage years… It will maintain the record of the services support to the individual and referrals to other agencies. It will allow monitoring of the help provided to those not in learning or at risk of becoming disconnected from their current learning or work*
> (Connexions, 19996b: 57).

It is envisaged that the database will have national, local and possibly regional components. At the national level, it is proposed that key data will be available for national monitoring and, although anonymised, there will be a need to identify young people who move between areas. At the local level, it is envisaged that the database will be accessed by a number of local agencies. Regarding access to client information, it is proposed that clear protocols will be established to govern data exchange and access to information. However, while this service will be provided to all 13-19 year olds, the focus will be particularly upon:

> *keeping track of the most disadvantaged young people and helping those at most risk of dropping out*
> (Department for Education and Employment 1999b: 52).

Thus three key activities relating to tracking are associated with the Connexions Strategy. The first is to maintain contact with young people. The second is increased inter-agency and partnership working. Third, there is an emphasis on the continual monitoring of young people's progress as they move into adult life. There is increased pressure on Careers Service to maintain contact, monitor and track those groups of young people who are not engaged in a learning outcome. This is particularly exemplified by the targets set by the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) for Careers Service companies to reduce the number of 'missing'/'unknown' young people in the Careers Activity Survey. Additionally, with inter-agency co-operation being a central component of connecting up support services, partnership co-operation and consultation will become increasingly more important issues of debate.

The Concept of Tracking

'Tracking' is a difficult concept to define, primarily because of its negative connotations with cries of 'surveillance' and 'big brother' being quick to surface. Such is the

contentious nature of the concept that the term is being replaced within the Connexions Service by the term 'Client Information System'. At its most basic level, the Oxford dictionary defines a track as a mark, or a series of marks/footprints left by a person, animal and thing. Tracking can be defined as the process of tracing that series of marks/footprints. Inserting the term 'tracking' into an Internet search engine produces terms such as 'tracking parcels' and 'hurricane tracking', and while seemingly unconnected both of these metaphors are interesting from the perspective of this study. Tracking parcels is concerned with tracking the progress of a parcel from origin to destination, whereas 'hurricane tracking' is concerned with changing meteorological conditions which are continually assessed and monitored. The overall aim of 'hurricane tracking' is designed to inform preventive action, so that negative consequences can be minimised. In this way we can see similarities with this and with the tracking of young people. Sheffield Strategic Education Forum describing tracking in an education, training and labour market context as: '...the planned, systematic updating of knowledge of the status of a person's attainments measured in qualifications, and their participation in the education, training and employment market' (Sheffield Strategic Education Forum 1998:2).

Essentially, in the context of vulnerable young people, tracking is concerned with tracing pathways through transitions with the explicit aim of informing strategic planning of service provision and intervening on behalf of a young person to facilitate positive outcomes. In the context of tracking young people there are two distinct forms of tracking, which can be compared with tracking parcels and tracking hurricanes.

- historical tracking: *is concerned with tracking the progression of young people with the aim of informing careers education, information and guidance. This type of tracking is exemplified in the previous work of the Careers Service, where they collected information on the destinations of Year 11 leavers.*

- interventionist tracking: *is concerned with tracking in order to work with individuals in priority groups. Compared to historical tracking, interventionist tracking pursues a proactive approach in ensuring that young people arrive at 'positive' destinations (i.e. education, training or employment with training).*

A crucial difference between historical and interventionist tracking is the frequency of information collection and the timeliness of the information held, with more frequent and timely information being required to support interventionist tracking than is needed for historical tracking. The 2000-2001 Careers Service Planning Guidance identifies interventionist tracking as a priority task for Careers Services (Department for Education and Employment 1999a). It outlines the need to establish regular means of obtaining information about young people's current situation in order to

intervene at crucial points and prevent social exclusion. This is not possible with historical tracking. The ultimate goal of interventionist tracking is to achieve 'advance notification' of changes in activity of young people. Indeed, reflecting this trend of looking to the future, the Social Exclusion Unit (2000) highlighted the need for a shift in emphasis from 'crisis intervention' to 'prevention'. Despite this shift in emphasis from historical to interventionist tracking, this study revealed widespread recognition amongst Careers Service Companies of the continuing need for historical tracking in order to set the context in which interventions take place.

Rationale for Tracking young people

The underlying rationale of tracking is seen to be one in which young people are facilitated to make successful transitions into the labour market and ultimately into independent living. Crucially, it is central to both national and local concerns with tackling disaffection, raising standards and addressing and preventing social exclusion. Information from tracking encompasses a number of elements. First, it provides information on the size of the population under consideration, its characteristics and needs. Secondly, it provides information on the activities and achievements of that population. Thirdly, it provides information on the interventions and outcomes of those interventions and finally, it provides information on the destinations of the population, which are essential for policy formulation. By providing such information, tracking activities are seen to have the potential to inform the targeting of resources towards identified groups of young people. The attraction of tracking lies in its ability to facilitate greater inter-agency co-operation to target appropriate interventions towards a specific individual at the right time.

Increasing Tracking activity - 'tracking by stealth'

The amount of tracking activity has increased markedly in recent years, particularly amongst Careers Service Companies. This increasing activity is, in many instances, linked to targets, which are in turn linked to funding; a process which might be described as 'tracking by stealth'. This raises concerns surrounding the reasons and rationale for tracking, particularly if the central focus on helping the young person is lost in the scramble to meet targets. Therefore, there is an important challenge and responsibility in ensuring that any tracking activity is a 'live' process with the young person at the centre, rather than merely a 'statistical' process in which organisational concerns are uppermost. Indeed, this is a concern issued by a number of Careers Service Companies.

Tracking has also been aided by the information technology revolution. Technological developments have enhanced possibilities for connecting databases and linking individual records from different agencies. This has in turn promoted the idea of

multi-agency co-operation and 'joined-up' service delivery, which is after all at the heart of the Connexions Service. Clearly the design and implementation of tracking systems raise issues of 'ethics', 'data protection' and 'confidentiality', particularly in a multi-agency partnership context.

We can identify a number of potential tensions in establishing tracking systems.

- *Who should be tracked? Should all young people be tracked, or just those deemed 'vulnerable'. In the latter case, this is complicated by the definition of 'vulnerability'. Different agencies use different definitions and categorisations, depending upon which groups of young people they concentrate their service provision at. It is also important to consider that a young people's status may change over time, and while they may be considered vulnerable at a particular point in time, this does not necessary mean they will be vulnerable at another point. In a geographical context, more affluent areas may have different conceptions of 'vulnerable' young people.*

- *How long should young people be tracked? What is the most appropriate age to track young people, and when should they be removed from the system or indeed, should they be removed from the system?*

- *Who should do the tracking and how should records from different agencies be shared? Importantly, this raises issues of access and control of client data.*

- *Respecting the provision of the Data Protection Act 1998 and safeguarding the confidentiality of individuals. One of the important issues is the extent to which young people are fully aware that information is being kept (and shared) on them and their knowledge of and access to this information.*

Tracking activities of Careers Service Companies

A survey of Careers Service Companies in England revealed that the vast majority of Careers Service companies (95 per cent) surveyed indicated they routinely collect information on young people additional to the core Department for Education and Employment Careers Service contract to monitor destinations of all Year 11 leavers. The main purposes for this information collection are threefold. Firstly, to monitor destination in order to identify those young people who are vulnerable and at risk of disaffection or exclusion. Secondly, to allocate resources particularly to those at risk and thirdly to facilitate equal opportunities monitoring in order to identify groups of young people who are failing to use their services. In some cases, this entailed the monitoring of service provision in different postal code districts. This has entailed a shift in emphasis from historical to interventionist tracking. Most Careers Service Companies indicated they track young people from Year 9 until 21 years of age or 25 years of age in the case of young people with special needs.

Virtually all Careers Service Companies indicated an increased emphasis on keeping track of vulnerable young people, with the explicit aim being to deliver and target resources more effectively and efficiently. This refocusing has been largely instigated from central government and the DfEE requirement to reduce the number of unknown Year 11 destinations, and to keep records up to date and comprehensive. Career Service Companies were also very aware of the financial implications of not reducing the number of young people with 'unknown destinations'. This has in turned entailed a more proactive approach to keeping in touch with young people, and particularly increased inter-agency co-operation and partnership working. Some Careers Service Companies argued that different agencies are now more inclined to refer young people to them; young people who, in the past would not have come to their attention. Indeed, one Careers Service Company commented that: 'we have "captured" more children that are outside mainstream education. This has been as a result of inter-agency co-operation'.

This pro-active follow-up of young people has entailed more imaginative and innovative approaches to monitoring and keeping in touch with vulnerable young people. Careers Service Companies indicated there is more systematic utilisation of networks, increased use of evening telephone calling, home visiting, outreach workers and community careers officers who focus specifically on vulnerable young people. One Careers Service company indicated it adopted a 'call centre approach' to track young people by employing out-of-hours staff to contact those young people. A number of Careers Service Companies offer inducements to young people in the form of cinema and/or music tokens, to encourage them to keep in touch with the Careers Service.

However, there were a number of particular problems highlighted. Keeping track of young people who move out in and out of their catchment area presented a particular problem for Careers Service Companies, particular those in metropolitan areas. Moreover, it was recognised that vulnerable young people were generally the most likely to move about, because they tend to have insecure accommodation arrangements or may be homeless. While keeping track of young people was deemed essential for the continuity of service and support, the majority of Careers Service Companies had no systematic ways of identifying young people who were leaving or entering their area. In this instance, the importance of inter-agency co-operation was highlighted. Some neighbouring Careers Service Companies indicated they had agreements to share data, if the destination of the young person was known. However, in most cases Careers Service Companies admitted they did not know where the young person had moved to. This highlights an important weakness in the current efforts to keep track of young people and a problem which is recognised to date, to be largely unsolved.

Careers Service Companies argued that the increased emphasis on tracking had led to a number of positive outcomes.

- *They pointed to better identification, targeting and monitoring of vulnerable young people.*
- *There has been increased multi-agency co-operation, which many Careers Service Companies indicated has led to greater respect and better understanding amongst the different agencies. It has led to a significant reduction in the number of 'unknown' young people , which has consequently led to an increase in the number of positive outcomes.*
- *The increased emphasis on interventionist tracking they argued has led to a better understanding of what happens to young people over a period of time rather than one point in time as was the case with historical tracking.*
- *Careers Service Companies admitted that they now have more frequent contact with young people over a longer period of time, which has led to the increase in the number of young people entering positive outcomes.*

However, there were also a number of problems identified.

- *The difficulties in tracking vulnerable young people, particularly those identified as being homeless and those with no fixed address.*
- *The difficulties in getting some agencies to co-operate in sharing information.*
- *The need to devote extra resources on tracking vulnerable young people has place financial burdens on most career service companies.*
- *There is a concern amongst all Careers Service Companies and agencies who are involved in collecting information on young people regarding confidentiality, relevance and accuracy of the information. Most Careers Companies had established formal 'codes of practice' outlining the principles and conditions of data sharing. However, some pointed to the need for a common DfEE protocol for data sharing, storing and exchanging information, which they argued would help clarify data protection issues.*
- *Data and computer system incompatibility between agencies were highlighted as being particularly problematic. While many highlighted the importance of a unique identifier in helping to resolve data problems, they were mindful that this conflicts directly with the rules of the Data Protection Act.*

Key issues in establishing Tracking systems

While most Careers Service Companies were undertaking various forms of tracking, it has to be recognised that in the majority of cases these were relatively unsophisticated and were primarily an additional element to their overall DfEE requirement to produce destination statistics. However, eight cases studies were undertaken, of which

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seven were Careers Service Companies who were identified as having more developed systems of tracking. Most had evolved initially from government funding. However, the majority were still in their infancy, being in operation for less than 5 years.

Case studies

- Hertfordshire: *Hertfordshire Individual Tracking System*
  - *an example of a strong and committed partnership establishing a stand-alone tracking system covering 'vulnerable young people' with potential for expansion into an 'all age, all agencies' system*

- Nottinghamshire: *Guideline Careers*
  - *an example of an advanced tracking system, with intensive development over the last 3-4 years. A particular feature of interest is the potential of developments relating to a 'Learning Card' to feed into the main tracking initiative*

- Black Country: *The Black Country Tracking Project*
  - *an example of a tracking project towards the forefront of tracking developments in England, providing a practical model of a working tracking project and of the types of information it can provide.*

- Tyneside: *Progression Observatory Project*
  - *an example of a specific initiative developed using SRB funding to identify and track young people who are disaffected or potentially disaffected.*

- Teesside: *Future Steps – mapping and tracking activities*
  - *an example of the development of a bespoke system producing management information and wider information pertinent to social exclusion, as well as information for historical and interventionist tracking*

- Merseyside: *Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Pilot*
  - *as the title suggests, a Connexions Pilot with a particular emphasis on tracking, providing an example of some of the issues to be addressed in developing a tracking system in an area with a complex institutional structure*

- Inner London: *London South Bank Careers - mapping and tracking activities*
  - *an example of the challenges to mapping and tracking in part of a large metropolitan area with an ethnically diverse and mobile population with high levels of deprivation (i.e. a particularly 'difficult' context for mapping and tracking)*

- Cambridge: *Cambridge Homeless Partnership – Young People's Sub-Group*
  - *an example of a 'bottom up' thematic development, in which front line workers from voluntary agencies have been amongst the key players*

It was a common theme across all the case studies that the establishment, operationalisation, maintenance and development of successful tracking systems involved considerable imput of resources in terms of time, staff and money. This is primarily related to the fact that 'vulnerable' young people are the most difficult to keep track of, and it is possible to spend finite resources on this group of young people, many of whom are hostile to being helped. This raises potential tensions between the objectives of tracking and reality. The object of recent tracking initiatives is to keep in touch with vulnerable young people, in order to intervene and deliver services more effectively on an individual basis. However, the case studies admitted that some young people were proving difficult to track and who were not interested in being helped. Most of the case studies had decided to concentrate resources on helping those young people who 'want to be helped' and although 'leaving the door open' to those young people who were unresponsive to their tracking efforts, it illustrates that no matter how comprehensive or effective a tracking system is, there will always be a minority of young people who for a variety of reasons do not want to be helped. Another source of tension related to who they should be tracking. Most of the case studies highlighted that while resources and efforts were being concentrated upon vulnerable young people, the needs of the majority of young people were being ignored. They were concerned that although not considered 'vulnerable' in the conventional sense, this group of young people could require help at particular points in time, but because resources were diverted elsewhere they would not receive the help they require.

Another issue highlighted by the case studies was the recognition that the race towards establishing sophisticated tracking systems and attention to the technical aspects of tracking could obscure the rationale behind tracking. They stressed the importance of ensuring that helping young people remains the central focus in tracking. In this respect, there was wide recognition that effective partnership within the tracking efforts was central to helping the young person.

Successful partnership working was recognised as a key piece in the tracking jigsaw. Underlining successful partnerships was the concept of trust, which was identified by all the case studies as one of the main reasons for the success of their tracking systems. They also pointed to an understanding of a shared purpose and non-competitive commitment to helping young people. The role of key individuals was also highlighted as being important in setting up, nurturing and driving partnerships forwards. Indeed, this individual commitment to young people emerged in most of the case studies.

The case studies also highlighted a number of IT and data challenges to tracking. Some partners do not hold computerised records of young people (this was particularly an issue for voluntary agencies). Data may be recorded in different formats, and

there is often no common format for categorisation. There is also a multiplicity of IT systems in use by different partners. Even where organisations/agencies have the same software, they often use it differently to suit the needs of their own organisation.

Data protection and the requirement to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998 emerged as a major issues in the case studies. Many of the case studies had established formal codes of practices with the various partners, which centred upon sharing, access and control of data. Moreover, the experience amongst the case studies was that once formal codes of practice were in place, data sharing became easier. It was suggested that some agencies hide behind data protection issues as a way of not sharing information or getting involved in partnerships.

Indeed, different organisational cultures emerged as one of the main barriers to sharing of information, particularly amongst those organisations that do not record information. Other organisations may be reluctant to share information because their relationship with young people is based upon the premise that information is not recorded. Other agencies may not share information because they fear their own organisational self-interest will be lost or that they will be pushed to the side in the development of tracking systems. Indeed, it was recognised by all of the case study interviewees that the culture of organisations and individual and agency wide working procedures and practices, particularly with recording, storage and exchange of information may prove more difficult barriers to establishing successful tracking systems, rather than the legalities surrounding data protection and confidentiality, and broader technical issues.

One of the most important issues in the establishment of tracking systems, is the level of co-operation received from young people. Most case studies found that the majority of young people did not object to data being recorded about them and shared amongst different agencies. While all the case studies emphasised the need to treat information with respect, sensitivity and ensure that the young person's best interests remain central to sharing of information, concern has to be raised on the methods though which consent is achieved. It is imperative that the young person is fully aware of what kind of information is being shared amongst the different partners and the purpose of this data sharing.

Implications for Policy

The introduction of the Connexions Strategy marks a significant departure from previous service delivery to young people. The intention of the Connexions strategy is to establish an up to date and comprehensive register of the 13-19 population with a national database used for monitoring purposes and local databases accessible to relevant agencies. The two primary aims of this tracking will be to maintain contact

with vulnerable young people and to monitor their progress. A central aspect of this agenda will be to bring together a range of agencies and interest groups.

There are a number of important issues that need to be addressed. First, the strategic role of tracking needs to be clearly defined. Secondly, it is important there is a rationale behind tracking young people and why it is being undertaken. Thirdly, tracking has to be regarded as merely a tool by which support and help may be provided to vulnerable young people. It is essential that it is not an end in itself. Fourthly, there is a danger in the current environment of 'chasing the missing' and the most 'vulnerable' that the needs of more able and less disadvantaged young people who may also need guidance, support and advice are being neglected. This issue of the balance between 'targeting' and 'universality' lies at the heart of the Connexions Service, and raises the question of whether there is a cut-off point at which the costs of focusing on the most vulnerable outweigh the gains. Fifthly, it is essential that the wishes of young people are respected, particularly those young people who do not wish to be tracked or who are not interested in being helped.

Crucial to the development of tracking systems is the establishment and development of partnerships. Central to the development of effective partnerships is the building of trust and co-operation across all agencies, a tangible sign of which may be the construction of a common shared database accessible to agencies at a local level. Moreover, consideration should be given to the introduction of statutory requirements for collecting, sharing and storing information on agencies other than the Careers Service Companies. At present, contractual requirements to undertake tracking activity, and any sanctions which may be imposed for failing to do so, differ across agencies.

The disparate nature of the many agencies who may be involved in a local partnership calls for an acknowledgement and understanding of the fact that, because of their different remits, these agencies often have different target outcomes, and, invariably, contrasting indicators of what may be termed 'success'. Thus, there is a need for the introduction of performance indicators which are relevant to a range of services or agencies, reflecting their common and agreed goals. In this way, 'success' can be measured in terms of the effectiveness of the partnership as a whole. It may even be appropriate to implement funding incentives which rely on collaboration between 'partners' in order for this to be achieved. Therefore, by making progress in this respect, the notion of 'joined-up' government may become more of a reality.

While assertions were sometimes made about the degree to which young people themselves accepted or objected to the collection of information about them, there was a dearth of empirical evidence which would enable decisions about young people's role in the process to be made with any confidence. Therefore, further research which explores young people's understanding of the implications of the

array of data collection with which they may be invited to contribute, and their attitudes towards this, is essential. It is also important that the views of different groups of young people, including some who may be considered to be 'at risk' or vulnerable are considered.

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TECHNIQUES FOR NEGOTIATING WORKPLACE 'REFORM' IN AUSTRALIA:
An Ethnography of the Youth and Community Sector

RUTH WEBBER and JUDITH BESSANT

Over the last decade those working in the youth and community sector have experienced rapid change to most aspects of their work courtesy of policies driven by economic liberalism. These ideas became fashionable by the mid 1980s when governments across many western countries including England and Australia pursued an agenda of policy reform of economic rationalism[1], emphasising a reduction of government spending and public-sector employment (Arblaster, 1989). Accompanying this was the privatisation of many previously public facilities and the contracting out of services (Pusey, 1991). Proponents of this 'new' regime claimed that increased competition and the adoption of economic liberal principles generated savings and would increase accountability and invigorate debt-ridden and inefficient governments (Kelsey, 1995). Moreover, these practices we were told, were not only desirable, but also necessary and in keeping with globalisation trends over which governments had little control (Osborne and Gaebler, 1993).

With the trend to deregulate, came a push towards a 'market model' in the public sector, particularly in the human services and this was accompanied by promises of greater productivity and profitability. These moves towards a 'market model' reshaped professional practice in the youth and community sector in ways that contest many of the traditional distinctions between the public sector and the business sector; a shift that eroded the morale of many staff (Sullivan, 1999).

Advocates of 'market reform' to the welfare sector argue 'freeing' services from the state interference provides opportunities to replicate 'best practices' in the private sector (Labonte, 1999). Moreover, this can only occur if the market place remains 'unencumbered' by institutionalised state 'rigidities' that 'obstruct the independence and vitality of the market'. In the last decade these ideas have significantly re-shaped the ways governments and policy makers have designed and delivered youth related services. Policy making in England and other Western countries has been extensively re-drafted to include 'enterprise', 'individual initiative', 'market', 'downsizing', 'account-ability', 'amalgamations' and 'competition' (Pusey, 1991). New public management models have dramatically influenced the delivery of human services resulting in the introduction of greater competition into both the public and private sectors through deregulation and privatisation (Hilmer, 1993, Jones, 1994, Osborne and Gaebler, 1993).

The application of economic liberal principles has changed the culture of government and human service delivery. It has led to the amalgamation of services (Romzek and Johnson, 1999), to 'rationalisation', the contracting out of services (Bessant and Emslie, 1997) privatisation (Davies and Harper, 1993), and managerialism (Rees, 1994; Moos, 1986). It promotes the use of business plans, performance indicators, short-term contracts, output-based funding and pay bonuses to staff to 'achieve' specified outcomes (Considine, 1994). It encourages the use of generic managers and a crossing-over of administrators from business into the public sector, so that a lack of knowledge and experience in the youth and community sector was no longer a handcap.

These changes created major problems for many youth and community workers. While many services have shrunk and resources declined the need for assistance by young people has risen. In the eyes of many youth workers, service demands have increased with growing youth unemployment, increasing levels of poverty and other social problems.

Research on privatisation and contracting indicates these 'reforms' present non-profit organisations in the welfare and health sectors with major challenges (Neal, 1999; Romzek and Johnston, 1999, Waters, 1999). In a study on 'contracting', Romzek and Johnston (1999) found that such practices could have dramatic influences on the operations of non-profit agencies. These agencies tended to be 'low tech', human service street front operations, typically located close to other social services to maximise opportunities for client access. Changes lay in increased caseloads and multiple sites, which meant an increased reliance on technology. They claimed that values normally attributed to non-profit organisations (i.e.: openness, accountability, service and charity etc) were also threatened. Moreover, values they identified with being professional, like a commitment to advocacy and social justice did not receive high priority under the new regime, which Romzek and Johnston (1999) argued was the cause of considerable anxiety on the part of many staff.

These ideas, accompanied by the implementation of new industrial relations laws and practices, (i.e., employment contracts and uncertainty of funding, increased employment insecurity) negatively affected staff confidence (Romzek and Johnson 1999). These shifts affected the 'core' business of non-government agencies with reductions in diversity of services, a reduction in local community involvement and an increase in the practice of large organisations delivering a range of services, with smaller, typically local services falling by the way side. Under the new accountability procedures, all services had to be quantifiable and measurable and those failing in this regard risked their funding.

While research on workplace reforms may indicate a need to create certain employer-friendly work environments, less research appears to have been conducted on *how employees have experienced and attempted to manage change*. There is for example, a sparsity of research on how youth and community workers have managed such changes – this is what we address here. In this paper we argue that even when major changes described by employees as negative take place, some youth workers find various ways to negotiate the new constraints and develop strategies that allow them to meet their needs and deliver services to young people. While many youth workers alter their work practices to fit the new policy directions, many also devise new techniques to maximise what they see as positive outcomes.

The Research Project

Although there is a considerable amount of literature that provides useful insights into various aspects of work-place change, they also have some serious limitations. The most significant limitation for us relates to their failure to produce a significant interest on the part of social scientists in the *employees' experiences of workplace change* (Sennett, 1998: 1-22). In other words, there has been little research done (or being done) on how workers experience their work sites or how they deal with changing managerial or policy imperatives, and this is true also for human service workers. Indeed there are various logics inherent in some of the dominant theoretical traditions that prevent those who draw on them from developing an interest in workers' experiences.

These features relate to a long-standing problem that has haunted many sociologists. It is the inclination towards structural determinism, a perspective that sees human action dutifully following social norms or discursive logics (i.e., found in the above mentioned literature on managerialism, economic liberalism and globalisation). That is, having once established that a certain structural or discursive imperative exists, the claim is made that human action automatically conforms to that structure. In management studies it appears to have suited its proponents to believe that workers obediently follow new policy directives or work designs.

As the analysis of interviews conducted as part of our study indicates, we encountered an enormous array of issues and experiences reported by practitioners. We were impressed by the number of times we heard completely different accounts of experiences ostensibly about the same event or phenomenon. This is not to ignore that the fact that there were many common stories of similar events and experiences, but simply to highlight that it has been difficult to get a clear sense of how human service workers (i.e., youth workers) experienced or 'coped with' the changes. This project is an attempt to redress these problems and to establish if and how youth workers developed strategies to deal with their new contexts and if there are any approaches in common.

The project involved collecting the narratives of youth workers about their experiences of workplace changes and how they impacted in their client groups and the agency in which they worked. Our primary interest was to ask in a context shaped by concerns about fiscal constraint and managerialism, whether workers developed strategies to help manage the changes in ways that they believed helped.

To identify and document the various ways the above-mentioned changes affected youth work practitioners, we developed an ethnographic project that involved interviewing eighteen human service workers from various parts of the youth and community sector. These interviews employed standard interview methods including open-ended questions and interviewee directed discussions (Patton, 1987). We saw considerable value in accessing workers' narrative accounts of work places under the influence of economic liberalism (Somers, 1992; 1994; Richardson, 1995). Narrative analysis has become increasingly popular for capturing experience. We live out narratives and understand our actions and ourselves through the stories we tell, and it is for this reason an ethnographic approach offers a useful way of coming to understand how some youth workers developed a sense of agency and capacity to manage the work situation in which they found themselves.

Narrative has a special importance because it is through talk that we express understandings of identity, feelings and events. Through telling stories we structure our experiences and clarify the significance of those events (Boden, 1994). For these reasons a narrative methodology is the most likely to generate the kind of material with which we are interested in working.

Ten female and eight male human service workers employed in the youth sector were interviewed. The areas they worked in included: drugs, housing, family services, policy, legal services, health, crises work, outreach and clinical services. The practice divides were not always clear; in part because several workers crossed a number of areas and some also operated on more than one administrative level in the organisation. We identify youth workers as those who practice in youth specific services as well as those located in more generalist services and whose primary 'client base' is young people.

The ethnographic approach is primarily interpretive; which means we are concerned with accessing the meanings people give to particular events and issues. Although we paid some attention to achieving a gender balance, the numbers interviewed are too small to attempt a representative sample. A representative sample, which is required for making generalisations, is not appropriate for ethnographic methodology, and for this reason we make no claims that the insights gained through the study are applicable to all youth workers or their agencies.

Results

The youth workers interviewed reported on an array of issues and experiences. And, although we sometimes heard minor discrepancies in the accounts of common experiences, all workers reported they had been affected negatively by recent 'workplace reforms'.

All workers also agreed that 'reform' of the public and community sectors had significantly reduced the quality of services and their work environment. While the content of the interviews tended toward criticism of the changes, some workers claimed a few improvements had also been made.

The changes that interviewees argued had serious negative consequences for staff, their agencies, the youth sector and young people included: constant re-structuring, the shift toward output based funding, case mix funding, competitive tendering (CT), de-funding, amalgamations, increased accountability and compliance exercises and quality assurance requirements. There was also unanimity that the new practice of contract tendering was 'a definite backward step' that had serious outcomes for young people and practitioners.

Reports of positive outcomes were few with reference to increased accountability, quality assurance requirements, the streamlining of certain practices and 'better forms of inter and intra agency communication'. 'Developments' like greater accountability were interpreted as positive in principle, but were critiqued from some for having been poorly implemented or poorly managed - i.e., 'having gone too far'.

Not everyone opposed the idea of change. Indeed some interviewees argued that the youth sector needed to 'lift its game' and become more professional. As one youth worker commented:

> *There is no doubt that youth services as a sector, needed to and still needs*
> *to become more professional*
> (Carol, July 1999).

Neil similarly framed some of the recent reforms in terms of 'a challenge' with an optimistic expectation of some positive outcomes:

> *There was a real need to streamline and generate efficiencies and consistencies*
> *and all that sort of stuff. And that has been a challenge to bring things into*
> *line and get a consistent approach across the agency.*
> (Neil, Feb. 2000).

Framing the problem, as 'challenge' seemed to give Neil, and others who described the changes in similar ways some sense of control or agency, albeit limited, over the situation – it was a challenge, a dare, a test. 'A challenge' also implied that the worker

had some choice and power; they could if they wished 'manage' the situation. Indeed a significant part of the counselling or retraining that some workers received to 'help' them accommodate 'the reforms' recommended talking in terms of challenges, along with focussing on ways they could 'enhance capacity' (Romzek and Johnson, 1999).

Although most workers accepted there was a need to 'tighten up', in terms of social accountability and fiscal responsibility, most experienced the new measures as 'having gone too far'. 'Numbers were now driving practice rather than client needs' with too much time devoted to compliance and accountability exercises. According to one worker before the new guidelines came in, she spent about 5% of her time 'ticking boxes on a page' and the rest on service delivery, now she spends 50% of her time engaged in accountability and compliance exercises. Most workers also believed that their primary role-as service providers - was undermined by excessive administrative requirements. As Harry explained:

> *Philosophically it's a good idea to have targets and outcomes that must be met. I've no problem with that whatsoever, it makes a lot of sense, and it does make philosophically again, agencies accountable for how they've spent the money. I think it has overshadowed service delivery and the quality of the service no longer seems as important as meeting the required accountability outcomes.*
> (Harry, Aug. 1999)

Two types of responses appeared to result from the implementation of economic liberal policies. Firstly, there were those who steadfastly and completely objected to the principles and discourses of economic liberalism. Secondly, there were those whose primary concern was with what they variously described as the poor implementation of the policies. Those whose primary concern was with the problem of implementation seemed to be the ones who had the most developed strategies for 'working around' obstacles so they could continue delivering effective services or what-ever objectives they had in mind. For practitioners whose principal concern was more resolute and philosophical, negotiating and working out how to manage the new work context appeared to be a greater task.

As we mentioned above, considerable attention has already been given to documenting the reforms and the ways human services workers critiqued the reforms (Labonte, 1999; Osborne and Gaebler, 1993). What has received minimal attention is how some practitioners maintained some sense of human or social agency by developing strategies to manage the reforms. This does not imply an acceptance of the new policies or their recommended implementation, on the contrary, often some of the new ways of operating involved circumventing obstacles to achieve their desired

outcome. This approach seemed to reflect Abramovitz's advice on dealing with social reform:

> *To fight back, social work and other advocates ... have to develop counter tactics*

(1998: 535).

Further, when we speak of strategies to manage the workplace situation, we do not mean that workers believed they had achieved complete control of their context, rather it usually meant that they knew when they could make a difference to the outcome and when trying to resist or 'finding ways around it' was simply a waste of time.

Stories from the Workplace

Although most services to clients seemed to be maintained in some form at least; the need to adapt to the many and on-going changes reportedly took a toll on staff morale and stress levels. According to interviewees, meeting the needs of clients meant staff frequently suffered work overload. Workers identified themselves as highly committed to the welfare of clients and sought to provide high quality case management and services despite the new constraints. While workers indicated they had developed a range of strategies to deal with the change, they also claimed some colleagues saw little hope of turning the change into something they could work with and could only discuss ways of getting a new job elsewhere.

Several workers explained how they drew on networks and their existing collegial support systems to cope with new policy directives. For Ray (Feb. 2000) this sometimes involved putting in joint tenders and submissions with other agencies that were *'more favoured by government departments'*. Holly, (July 2001) observed that some times workers would *'repackage what they did very well'* and were *'quite creative'*.

This also involved staff becoming more aware of what was taking place around them, being more alert and on the watch for the 'right' moment to advocate for their 'pet' projects.

> *... you have to be much more alert to all these little intricacies around meeting targets. So all of that, they're the challenges I guess.*
> (Neil, Feb. 2000)

Some workers indicated they had become more tenacious, determined and like 'yapping dogs' that lobbied anyone they thought could assist them in their work. They became more adept at finding out how 'to work the system'. For some workers, managing the new conditions simply meant 'working a lot harder' by developing your networks at various levels and becoming more organised.

> *Some people would bring themselves up to speed on tendering, establishing networks across their region, because one of the big things about youth and family services was that you had to have referral pathways.*
> (Holly, July 2000)

Developing greater tenacity and maintaining a strong commitment about what you were doing was how one worker says she managed to achieve what she wanted in a new situation.

> *One way [to achieve what I need] is by having greater tenacity. ... I think it's been acknowledged by different people in DHS[2] that that's been an important factor. I've got an incredible amount of tenacity, I really, really, believe in what I'm doing. I really believe very strongly about having a role to play working with young people. It's an important role, it's not necessarily understood by everyone, but I guess I really believe in what I'm doing.*
> (Robyn, September 1999)

For some achieving their ends in the new work context meant learning or refining the art of 'diplomacy'. As one worker put it:

> *We have had to get creative. There's no doubt about that, but it's been more in isolation than in a united way.*
> (Roy, Dec. 1999)

Another practitioner employed in the public service described it as 'game playing'.

> *... you become accustomed to having to play certain games, by passing over people that you know are going to stand in your way until your get to the person that is going to say yes to you.*
> (Harry, July 1999)

Another method of 'coping' with the changes was what sounded strikingly similar to 'expert talk' that some professionals now use to both counsel a young person and describe their 'risk factors'. Roy used such language when referring to himself as he spoke of a need for workers to 'develop resiliency' as a 'pro-active strategy':

> *People developed philosophies that helped them survive. I think people realised that they couldn't do everything and that they had to keep themselves healthy if they were going to support and work strongly within a community effectively.*
> (Roy, Dec. 1999)

Another method used for dealing with the changed conditions involved the sensible business of 'taking time out'. For Roy it was a matter of:

> *... taking holidays, having breaks and accepting that you could just do your best with what you've got. Also I think no matter how hard a worker is doing it, when you see how hard the people you are serving are doing it, in many ways I think that inspires a lot of us in the community sector.*
> (Roy, Dec. 1999)

Some practitioners saw themselves as winners and had little need to develop new strategies to get what they wanted. For one youth worker, the new arrangements were far better than she enjoyed previously.

> *... the changes have been generally positive. I think that is shown by the fact I started out eight years ago with $7000, one worker, and just did what I felt like doing. Now we have $500,000, six workers and a huge youth centre, yeah change hasn't been bad.*
> (Carol, July 1999)

Few workers however were 'winners'. For those who were not, being able to 'let off steam' and being to talk to other workers in the same agency or in their network was a successful technique for dealing with difficult changes. In some cases 'letting off steam' meant practitioners enjoying 'controlled explosions'. In one organisation, workers encouraged each other to 'spout righteous rage'.

> *There is nothing better than a good case of righteous rage, nothing better.*
> (Lyn, March 2000)

The need to debrief was mentioned by most workers who said that it helped people to cope. For Carol, dealing with major changes like a forced amalgamation initially involved a strong resistance and seeing colleagues from the other-soon-to-be amalgamated agency as the Other, as the enemy. In Carol's case coping at first meant denying what was happening and refusing to mix with 'them' while seeking out her former companions for comfort and a sense of security. Carol explains:

> *It was like the pub after work. When I look back at it that was probably our therapeutic environment. For six months we continued to stick together - even after we amalgamated. ...and we wouldn't invite them [workers they had amalgamated with]. After work we would continue to vent all of our horrors while we were getting tanked, which is probably not very professional, but probably the way that a lot of debriefing happens.*
> (Carol, July 1999)

Although 'winding down after work' helped some workers, others managed the changes by developing and using professional contacts and networks inside and

beyond their own agency. In Barbara's this involved securing support from her '… management committee and having a good staff team': that she explained was how she continued working effectively through the reforms (Barbara, July 1999)

Not every-one was so lucky in terms of having supportive colleagues. This was the case with Cathy who had to seek support from an outside counselling service.

> *I had to go out and see someone outside the centre. I did that on my own initiative, I had to do that.*
> (Cathy, Dec. 1999)

One worker described his approach as 'a little like the underground forces during oppressive regimes'. 'Secret deals' and reciprocal arrangements developed between staff from various agencies and between managers or staff from differing agencies (Neil, Feb. 2000). For example, he explained: *'Two agencies might agree not to tender against each other but instead to focus on their own specialisation. In this way one service could retain its specialised service'* (Neil, Feb. 2000) And although competitive tendering often had a negative impact by destroying co-operation between competing groups/agencies, paradoxically it also sometimes meant co-operation through necessity.

> *There is certain stuff in that around forming better partnerships that's quite positive. I think that youth services already is extremely well linked to the network sort of service stream, so we just form part of that.*
> (Neil, Feb. 2000)

For some, cooperation meant putting in a joint tender or submission with a neighbouring agency.

> *When it came to applying for money, some workers got together and had really good networks, like locally based community networks.*
> (Kelly, Aug. 2000)

Ray also used this approach:

> *If you weren't buddied up with another agency then your submission would not even be looked at for a start.*
> (Ray, Feb 2000)

'Repackaging old products' to meet the new guidelines and accountability measures was another strategy mentioned by several workers. Some were able to meet the agendas of their agency clients while also conforming to government policy directives by describing what they were already doing with the new language.

> *... youth workers have been fairly flexible trying to reshape what they have. Good youth workers would do good work with young people and they'll do that regardless of whatever flavour of government is in, and will just learn how to package it differently according to the times.*
> (Holly, July 2000)

Often, how staff 'accommodated' the changes depended not simply on the nature of the reforms, but on how the changes were implemented. In some organisations, 'management introduced the changes in a well-organised and relatively humane way', for others it was an 'ad hoc' and abrupt introduction that 'alienated and frightened staff'.

Acceptance of the changes was reportedly hampered when staff believed they were badly treated by management. One example of this was when 'management pretended' to consult, when all decisions had already been made. According to Neil, the only things that needed decision were

> *... just around process, the way you go about doing tasks, the way accountability is put in place, the way budgets are managed or staff managed or whatever.*
> (Neil, Feb. 2000)

Training in new skills helped some staff. For some it meant developing interpersonal skills in 'handling' those on the local council or state government who determined policy and allocated grants.

> *It was very important to have help in learning how to build connections with key departmental representatives or government ministers. They were the ones who would actually say "yeah I'll make sure that happens for you".*
> (Ray, Feb. 2000)

Similarly Linda (Aug. 1999) explained that she managed by 'becoming much more politically active in the field'; a process that involved an 'enormous learning curve'.

Others mentioned that new knowledge and skills like computer competence, learning how to apply for grants and how to undertake program evaluation made a difference to their employment stability and goal achievements. Multi-skilling was also described as a way of increasing your chances of getting what you wanted.

From an administrator's perspective one strategy that seemed to help accommodate new work conditions involved informing workers and making sure they all operated in a team. Robyn argued that this helped prevent feelings of isolation and resentment. She also made sure the difficult jobs were shared around and that each worker had a variety of tasks.

One of the things I try to do is minimise the burdens and meet regularly.
We've got a very small team; it's a very, very hard working team.
(Robyn, Sept. 1999)

For some, exercising good leadership meant re-designing the organisation after a dramatic change like an amalgamation. It meant recognising the skills and talents of the newly formed staff and coming up with ideas that worked. According to both the managers and workers we interviewed, such leadership was critical for survival. In one agency management encouragement of the worker's autonomy and sense of professional status was said to help preserve the separate operations and identity of specific services: an arrangement that was highly valued.

Again from a manager's perspective, the practise of supporting staff when they were required to take on what to them seemed like 'ever appearing new tasks' was essential for achieving what they wanted. Neil (February, 2000) described the process of 'matching' staff who complement each other and bringing in consultants with specialised skills to either do the new work or to assist others with the latest and sometimes complex tasks. This approach was said to be particularly useful for activities like preparing tenders for funding or for strategic planning.

Creative Budgeting
A major change with which most workers expressed difficulty, related to the new funding arrangements - particularly 'the problem' of insufficient funding. One strategy some workers used to manage the new funding arrangements involved 'imaginative budgeting', a process that entailed 'loading-up' particular workers to finance other activities. It other words, it was a practice of spreading or re-allocating money that had been given for a specific task so that 'other bases and other people's jobs were covered'. It also involved manipulating the figures for the audit processes. As Cathy explained:

... a government department might fund a project requiring 30 client contacts
(counselling sessions) be made in a week, but only 20 could actually be
done. To keep the session numbers up and to use the extra money for other
much needed services in the agency, workers would telephone 10 additional
clients to maintain the contact requirements
(Cathy, 1999).

This practice of 'loading up and spreading the funding' also has the effect of increasing the workload of youth workers significantly. As Paul explained:

It means having a caseload of 22 when the funding is for 15. The rest of the
money goes into other services that otherwise would fold if we didn't
(Paul, April 2001).

Although this is a strategy designed to accommodate the changes, it is one that carries a heavy penalty for both the practitioner and the young people receiving the services.

This approach means that some activities that are not likely to get funding can go ahead. Advocacy work is case in point. Sometimes loading up some workers means 'building in' a capacity for advocacy –albeit at a reduced capacity. For some practitioners, like Sally, whose primary role and identity prior to the changes revolved around advocacy work this strategy was beneficial

> *I'm the grass roots girl. I'm the grass roots girl out there doing it, advocating. If*
> *that's social justice, yeah, that's what I'm out there doing.*
> (Sally, Dec. 1999)

Other similar strategies used to 'cover all the work' with insufficient funds, involved using students on placement to cover a worker's responsibilities; using more volunteers, and in some cases to use the services of unemployed people on 'work-for-the-dole'. Although this approach may have some benefits, it also has a number of downsides. Paul explains:

> *Although this approach gets some of the jobs done. In the long run it is not*
> *good for the youth sector, it is not good for workers, young people or the*
> *community. Young people are getting services, usually indirectly, from*
> *people who are not properly trained. This practice also runs the risk of*
> *letting funding bodies, like government think all these services can be*
> *provided for peanuts*
> (Paul April 2001).

This practice also reportedly took its toll on some volunteers who complained about doing jobs for which they were not trained and about feeling exploited.

On the other hand utilisation of qualified legal volunteers in the Community Legal Service seemed to work very successfully. Sue, a worker employed in an inner city legal centre was very positive about solicitors or law graduates offering pro bono work to young people.

> *I don't see myself as a single worker, because I've got volunteers who are*
> *fantastic, like Greg. There is a number of them, I view it is a youth legal service,*
> *and get help from volunteer lawyers.*
> (Sue, Oct. 1999)

Conclusion

Youth and community workers were affected to varying degrees by recent changes to their work place. The strategies workers developed in response to the 'reforms' involved a full range of new practices from 'creative budgeting', to developing

new skills and knowledge bases, to establishing stronger support mechanisms. Some of these new modes of operating had considerable benefits to both youth workers and young people. However, many of the changes, like the move to spread funding thinly across a range of activities and the use of unpaid services of students or the unemployed, clearly had few benefits and indeed threatened the sector and the quality of service delivery.

While acknowledging that an ethnographic methodology does not involve making generalisations, there can be much gained from listening to the experiences of other youth and community workers. We suggest that the experiences of our interviewees have quite clear implications for youth work practitioners and policy makers interested in thinking strategically about the future. For those in relative positions of power such as managers or policy makers, the experiences of our interviewees indicate there are definite and long-term advantages for all concerned if they consult as widely and as inclusively as possible across the sector. At the implementation stage, we suggest that managers introduce changes in an orderly and open manner and set in train practices that assist workers to manage them, including providing opportunities for team building and for the acquiring of new skills. These actions appear to bring benefits in terms of goodwill and co-operative activities between management, workers and the youth and community sector (ie., the pooling of resources and information etc). Indeed there are ethical, political and pragmatic reasons for a more open and participatory way of operating that in the long will run benefit all parties.

Although the inclusive approach usually involves a large amount of work, it seems from interviewees' comments that such an investment of labour pays off in the long run. On a pragmatic note, such involvement is one way of staving-off potential opposition that could be quite destructive down the track. It is also a more democratic approach and is respectful of people's human agency. Such consideration and acknowledgment of worker's and other stakeholder's entitlement and capacity to make a worthwhile contribution is more likely to have a more positive outcome than is an approach that ignores and over-rides people's moral right to have a voice in decisions that impact on their lives.

Further, the workers who have been party to deliberations are more likely to be collaborative about the proposed actions than those who have been ignored. An inclusive approach to work place change that draws on a range of experiences and perspectives is likely to produce better quality outcomes (ie. programs, policies etc). Finally, a genuinely consultative processes can generate and help maintain professional or sector identify by strengthening networks that can be used to exercise political power in policy making communities.

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Notes

1 Economic rationalism or liberalism is the dominant view and set of practices promoted by many western governments including the UK and Australia which emphasise economic competition and individual responsibility rather than the older discourses of social justice and communitarianism (Labonte, 1999).

2 Department of Human Services, Victoria

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HOW YOUTH AND EDUCATIONAL SERVICES IN THE UK ARE BEING PRIVATISED

ANDY GIBSON AND DAVE PRICE

In June 2001 the Labour Party came out of the closet over privatisation in a manifesto commitment to bring the private sector into the delivery of public services. A conveniently timed paper from the Institute of Public Policy Research (IPPR) lent weight to this policy initiative and much was made of the involvement of the private sector as the only way to turn round public services in the next four years. All this has happened at a time when there was a welling up of concern and interest among the electorate for the improvement of public services. Suddenly, public services seem to have become a jewel to be preserved rather than a disaster to be condemned and since the election, the question of investment and delivery has been at the centre of political debate.

For the first time for decades, a Government has real opportunity to applaud, improve and invest in a down trodden and stretched public sector. It could engage in a drive for reform and renewal which celebrates accountability, equity and quality in the public domain. Instead the new Labour administration has chosen another route based on the private sector as the main vehicle for the improvement of services. This choice is not a sudden change of policy or new direction. This is a planned and deliberate transformation of public services for which the foundations have been laid for the last five years in a programme of modernisation which has reconfigured public administration. The domestic strategy of previous administrations has systematically paved the way for radical change within an international agenda of policy transfer.

Youth and education services, like the rest of the public sector in the UK are enduring a process of change which includes remodelled service administration and increased contracting out to the private sector. Many organisational changes have been brought in under the banner of New Public Administration. This revolution in service provision has been achieved through management reforms designed to increase entrepreneurialism, local autonomy, and competition among providers. The creation of executive agencies, the separation of policy from funding and purchasing, competitive contracting, and flexible staffing are all key features of these reforms. These upheavals are justified in the name of greater managerial efficiency as

> *New management structures [distinguish] between political and managerial responsibilities. Such an approach suggests that accountability is enhanced by tighter definition of tasks, measurement of performance, devolution of resource control, strengthening monitoring and clarifying incentives.*
> (Kaul,1997).

However, the real target of reform is the substitution of market systems for traditional public services. The UK's aggressive policy of marketisation merely gives local expression to an internationally co-ordinated policy of trade expansion designed to benefit the private sector and transnational corporations. In this article, we describe both the domestic and the international pictures with reference to youth and educational services.

The Domestic Agenda

The move to a market-based system is clearly evident in youth work and educational reforms. The reform programme follows a common pattern of undermining confidence in the public sector and developing new allocative mechanisms. Whilst this can all be seen as 'new public administration' and be lauded for its anticipated efficiency and effectiveness, it is also the foundations for a much wider liberalisation of services for which it is necessary to cultivate a competitive and expansionist private sector in the delivery of youth and education services.

Undermining confidence in the Public Sector.

There is little evidence that private sector companies are better able to run and support youth and education services than local authorities. For example, evidence from the health sector suggests that privately managed hospitals in the USA spend up to three times more on administration than NHS equivalents in the UK (Pollock ,2001). However it has come to be taken for granted that failure in the public sector can only be remedied by bringing in the private sector. The question of why the private sector should be interested in this and where their profits will come from has been less discussed. The promotion of the private sector as an unproblematic solution has been underpinned by the relentless criticism of the public sector. Apart from the 'scars' on Tony Blair's back from the public sector, the main targets of criticism in educational and youth work are the LEAs. In the opinion of Chris Woodhead until recently the Chief Inspector of Schools, they, 'cannot be trusted to run their own services and they should have a much slimmed down role in the future' (Guardian 23/11/99). This appears to have political support. In 1999, Estelle Morris announced that up to 10% of Local Education Authorities would be contracted out, in full or part, to private companies (Guardian, 23/11/99). That figure has recently been increased to 30%.

Local authorities, the bastion of public services, have seen their power and influence systematically undermined. Delegation of funding to schools under the 'Fair Funding' arrangements, marginalisation of local government from the new funding streams, and the outright removal of LEAs from local authorities all point towards their minimal involvement in the new market. The recent injection of funds into the youth service through the Neighbourhood Support Fund, The Youth Inclusion

Programme and the New Opportunities Fund all bear this hallmark, local authorities have had a small and insignificant part to play. Likewise elected members have a minimal involvement in the Learning and Skills Councils and the Connexions Partnership which are predominantly made up of individuals from outside of the local authority. Over the next few years only the remnants of services for young people will remain wholly within the local authority. Most new growth is taking place outside of them, their control is increasingly to lie within external 'partnerships' and all will increasingly have to compete with external bodies for the work they do. It may be that many services will reside within the local authority in name only.

A flexible labour force is being developed that favours private sector practice. Performance related pay in schools is a vital element allowing flexibility in the labour market for teachers and allowing employers to negotiate their own conditions. Equally the disparity in wages between voluntary, statutory and private youth organisations are increasingly evident. Labour 'flexibility' is important because of the common policy of private sector employers to reduce the terms and conditions of public sector workers transferred to them under privatisation agreements. Indeed, many of the private sector efficiencies claimed for privatisation depend on wage and staff cuts.

Developing new funding streams and allocative mechanisms
This is a complex and often technical field, but there are core elements that are pre-requisites for contracting out and privatisation.

Contracting platforms.
The marginalisation of local government is associated with new payment mechanisms by which quasi-public bodies channel funds to the market. The Youth Justice Board and Youth Offender Teams, the Connexions Partnerships, the Neighbourhood Support Fund and the Learning and Skills Councils all involve competitive bidding. None of these agencies is elected and are, in essence, contracting platforms for purchasing of services within central government guidelines. They effectively take these services out of politics. The traditional support many youth projects have had from their ward councillors will count for little with these bodies.

Capitated Payments.
One of the features of the new funding streams is capitated payment mechanisms, funds that follow individuals. The essential feature of capitation is that it provides opportunities for providers to 'risk select' by choosing risk pools of users which will maximise their funding. For example, if funding is tied to improving school attendance, contractors will select individuals who offer the best chance of this outcome. Profit opportunities like this are generally not available when funding is

based on populations; the risk of failing to produce an outcome is too high and costs and outcomes cannot be so tightly controlled under these circumstances. Private sector involvement is heavily dependent on risk assessment so that high cost, high risk cases can be left in the public sector. This was illustrated by one of the bidders for the £15m a year contract to run Islington LEA . The bid came from a partnership involving Arthur Anderson Consulting and Birmingham LEA but was withdrawn because 'There was a danger that the ratepayers in Birmingham could have become liable for risks in running Islington services' (FT 27/10/99). Overall the private sector will always prefer contracts tied to individuals than to populations.

Capitated funding also opens up the possibility of added value to the private sector. The proposed 'individual learning account', for example, introduces the capacity to bring in user charges and other alternatives to tax-based funding. Individual learning accounts are co-payment schemes. These schemes are often conditional on personal payments being made into the account thus encouraging providers of education and training to seek additional income over and above that from a state subsidy. The commercial significance is underlined by a 'senior executive of a financial institution': 'We probably do need an individual learning account to encourage people to spend more on learning – opening an account is a real incentive.' (http://www.dfee.gov.uk/ila/complete.htm). This measure promotes education and training as personal consumption rather than a universal service, enables providers to bring in additional charges and opens up the possibility of a two tier system, one for those who can afford the extra and one for those who can't, in almost exactly the same way as student loans limit the options for those who cannot afford them.

Individualising data to aid product specification.
An important dimension of risk calculation is that, in order to make informed calculations, considerable data is required and the ability to track and monitor each individual is essential. Performance measurement and provider bench-marking have become a new UK growth industry offering precisely this kind of risk assessment. SATs, accreditation, attendance figures, youth offending records, statistics collected by Youth Services and evaluations all fit into this overall need for data for both contract compliance and for risk selection. With the 'Unique Pupil Number' introduced in schools in 1999 much core data is being brought together in one central data base including SATs, special educational needs, attendance, qualifications and exclusions, which will be made available to pupils, parents, the school and LEA, bona fide research organisations and.....'other local education or training agencies with a legitimate interest in the pupil (such as the Careers Service)' (DfEE, 1999).

Given that many careers services are private companies it is hard to justify not making this kind of data available to any one bidding for a contract to work with school age young people. Such data allows contractors to select the risk pools which they will wish to work with in much the same way as the 11 plus exam enabled grammar schools to select their pupils.

Performance measures and product specification.
From the point of view of the Government this kind of data is also necessary for the purposes of contract compliance. If services are to be put out to contract there needs to be some way of specifying the product you want to purchase and making a judgement as to whether it has been delivered. This product specification by a purchaser defines outcomes, measures the changes and funds by results. Youth policy in the UK has seen huge movements in this direction. Output related funding, testing, assessments, best value, outcomes and milestones are all elements of this. If the right assessment procedure is in place, so the thinking goes, an intervention can be defined and purchased.

So the government is currently investing heavily in refining, specifying and measuring the interventions it wishes to see take place. The growing importance of evaluation, assessments and outputs is testament to this. It may be that current rounds of funding through the Neighbourhood Support Fund, Excellence in Cities and through the Youth Justice Board can be seen as much as a process for refining these systems, as a mechanism to deliver increased services. Much the same can be said for the work going on under the Connexions Service; assessment tools designed with measuring guidance work in mind as much as effective practice and recent studies regarding the measuring of 'soft outcomes and distance travelled' (Dewson, Eccles, Tackey and Jackson, 2000).

One further aspect of this product specification is that through centralised bodies, such as Connexions and the Learning and Skills Partnerships, central government can dictate precisely the activities that are funded. One example of this is that the two primary targets for Connexions are concerned with raising participation in education and training a further 10% by 2004 and increasing levels of achievement by equally ambitious amounts. Both these targets will form the centrepiece of any contract between individual Connexions Partnerships and the national Connexions Unit. In practice this will mean that the sub-regional partnerships will be duty bound to fund programmes that give best value in achieving these two targets. Their performance will be judged on such outcomes. In practice the most effective services in these terms may not turn out to be youth work at all, let alone that delivered by local authorities or voluntary agencies with a commitment to a wider agenda. Thus the contracting chain in Connexions allows detailed central control

of activities delivered. Over the next few years as evaluations and research identifies for central government a more precise understanding of 'what works' these findings will be built into this contracting chain, further refining and prescribing services to be delivered.

If services are to be supplied through a liberalised market then it is fundamental that commodity-related, cost-output systems are put in place. Population or area-based funding on a block grant basis is incompatible with a policy of un-bundling integrated services for private sector takeover.

The cultivation of a competitive and expansionist sector
The UK's education industry is still in its infancy but growing rapidly. 105 companies applied to tender for the contract to run Hackney LEA, but only 10 made it through to the approved list and even this was questioned by Price Waterhouse Coopers which advised the DfEE that some of these companies were too small and naive to tackle the task (TES, Aug 27th 1999). A whole raft of private companies have been formed to carry out Ofsted inspections, (Cambridge Education Associates (CEA), the Centre for British Teachers, (CfBT) and 3E's are all examples of this) and more recently CEA have won the contract for teacher assessment for performance related pay. To these can be added the recent development of a string of 'Academies' at least one of which is going to the private sector and a stable of companies already contracted to deliver Careers Services which, when all taken together, make up a small, but nevertheless ambitious and expanding private sector. Many of those organisations with past experience as training providers are beginning to expand into youth work and related activities. The involvement of the Learning Alliance, a consortium of national voluntary organisations, in the Neighbourhood Support Fund is evidence of this and as Careers Services broaden out to take on the Connexions agenda they are likely to be prominent bidders in future rounds. As soon as you begin to explore the private sector involvement in the 'back office' in the production and sponsorship of learning resources, in the provision of technology and in facilities management (both the latter two being classic routes for the private sector into public sector provision) the list grows.

This Government is actively encouraging such private sector growth by, for example, taking private soundings and announcing plans to advertise for more applicants to join the approved list for taking over LEAs. The Financial Times reported that 'It is understood that WS Aitkins, Serco, Amey, Aquman, the facilities management arm of John Mowlem are among those companies sounded out by ministers' (FT, 16/12/99).

The development of a new industry is inevitably gradual. Private sector companies such as Nobel Learning Communities (NLC), a publicly quoted company with a turnover of $100m, running 134 schools in the US, understand this. NLC describes its concept of 'education as a business':

Nobel Learning Communities begins with the development of pre-schools in an area...Nobel develops several pre-schools in a geographic area adding full day kindergarten and usually first grade. Then a Nobel elementary school can be built...the elementary schools likewise feed students into the Nobel middle school in an area. (Nobeleducation.com).

This approach is also adopted by 3Es (a UK organisation) who, according to an article by James Tooley, are 'seeking to set up a chain of schools replicating the excellence of its mother school' (a City Technology College) (Guardian, 23/11/99). In each case profits will come from economies of scale, running one school or one youth programme is less likely to produce profits as running a cluster with the savings that can be made with single administration, support, management and purchasing systems.

It may be gradual but market analysts see a steadily expanding sector. Graham Walker, the head of government services at Arthur Anderson accountants (which has also been advising the government on cutting bureaucracy in schools and helping develop the Private Finance Initiative) predicted as early as 1997 'that schools will be putting all their back office services into the private sector within a few years' (TES, 19/12/97). Neil McIntosh, chief executive of Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) was reported in the same article as saying 'The market is opening up - and I don't have any doubt it will continue to grow....I would like to develop to the point where the schools that come to us come to a one-stop shop, in principal there is no reason why private companies shouldn't run whole schools'. These kinds of companies will always attempt to push the private sector agenda forward. For example, Nord Anglia and CfBT, who both tendered for the Hackney contract were said to favour a role in improving 'coasting schools' - not just the highly publicised failing schools' (Guardian 23/11/99). Shortly afterwards reports appeared about the 'Government's growing concern about coasting schools in leafy suburbs' (Observer 6/2/00). No surprise, therefore, that six months later it is announced that the first 'coasting' school is to follow such a route.

Overall the private sector in education is a growth industry. The UK education and training index which measures the performance of publicly quoted companies in this field shows an out performance of the FTSE by a factor of three (Guardian, 20/06/00).

Emerging on a parallel track are a range of quasi-private organisations. Many of the national voluntary agencies fit into this as do specialist agencies, some based around challenge and outdoor activities, some around volunteering and some around specific 'therapeutic' interventions. Although many of these organisations are 'not-for-profit', they are competitors and are neither elected or accountable to

the communities in which they work. It may be that profit is not the driving force but expansion is and these organisations are often as ambitious and acquisitive as the rest of the private sector.

However this development of contracting platforms, capitated payments, individual data collection, performance measurement, product specification and the active cultivation of the private and quasi-private sector is only half the story. It is nothing less than one part of a pincer movement which is complemented by a bigger, transnational picture.

The Global

The service sector has become an important target of economic policy. As profitability in manufacturing has declined because of international competition, US and European corporations have turned to services as an alternative source of profit and governments have turned to them as a source of economic growth. According to the European Commission:

> *The service sector accounts for two thirds of the European Union's economy and jobs, almost a quarter of the EU's total exports and a half of all foreign investment flowing from the Union to other parts of the world.... In the USA almost a third of economic growth over the last 5 years has been because of service exports.*
>
> (www.ei.ie.org).

The education sector is no exception to this. Globally it has been estimated to be worth more than one trillion dollars (Education International www.ei-ie.org) and in the UK, Capital Securities, a corporate finance house, considers that failing education authorities and greater financial freedom for schools in the UK could create a £500m market alone (Times Educational Supplement 27/8/99). Tooley has argued that there are 'huge amounts sloshing around in the system' (Guardian 23/11/99). In the US The Education Industry Group, (www.educationindustry.com), values its market at $650 billion, making it twice as large as the defence industry and second only to health care in capital expenditures. In Canada, the Canada Education Industry refers to 'the $700 billion education growth industry'...an 'education for profit industry (that) will grow and grow' (quoted in McMurty 2000, p14). By any measure, the education market in the developed world is huge and falling profits in other sectors means that transnational and national companies are becoming increasingly interested. The International Finance Corporation, the private finance arm of the World Bank, has funded research to look at opportunities for private investment in education in developing countries.

How the WTO is co-ordinating the policy

The opening up of these opportunities for the private sector are being co-ordinated through international trade agreements, the most inclusive of which, the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS), is the responsibility of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

The Geneva-based WTO was established during the Uruguayan Round of the General Agreement on Trade and Tariffs (GATT). Its aim is economic growth and stability based on free markets and minimal government interference. Although the WTO's membership includes 138 nation states, the transnational corporations that sit on all the important advisory committees determine detailed policy and set the agenda. WTO trade agreements have been described as a bill of rights for corporate business. (Price, Pollock, and Shaoul, 1999)

The WTO talks in Seattle in December 1999 focused on revising the GATS, a system of international law intended to expand private enterprise involvement in the increasingly important service sector. Health care, social services, education, and housing are among the 160 service sectors covered by the GATS and each has been targeted by trade negotiators in the US and the EC.

Expansion of the private services sector depends on opening up markets in the traditional areas of public provision. The WTO, the World Bank, and the European Union have carefully crafted their policies to ensure that this takes place. In November 1998, the EU and US formed the Transatlantic Economic Partnership (TEP) under which they agreed to work together to 'instil momentum into the Seattle Round and to try to reach agreement on additional liberalisation in sectors of common interest for EU and US service suppliers' (European Commission, 1998). A few weeks later, a US coalition of private sector companies identified European health services as their prime commercial target, and both the WTO and US trade department characterised health and education services in the developed world as major private sector growth areas.

The GATS allows member countries to force the removal of 'barriers' to foreign participation in the service industries of other member countries. The WTO now has three main objectives: to extend coverage of the GATS, to toughen disputes settlements procedures so that member states can more easily be brought into line, and to change government procurement rules so as to create the conditions for market access in the public sector.

During the WTO ministerial conference in Seattle last December, the EU, alert to the political sensitivities of its member states and one of the main architects of service sector 'liberalisation', was forced to issue a statement that traditional public services

like health and education were not included in negotiations. However, all service sectors, public and private, are covered by the GATS and all EU governments have signed a treaty obligation to remove barriers to private sector expansion in these areas. Traditional public service areas are not excluded from the policy and in the UK the trend of domestic policy, as we have seen, suggests that it is not intended that they should be.

What has been developed through the domestic policy agenda is merely a reflection of an international development and transfer of policy specifically designed to open up public services to the private sector.

The Consequences of Market Access.

The market is not an efficient mechanism for securing social ends. The uncritical assumption that the private sector is best is flawed. Questions need to be asked about the terms under which the private sector will get involved. Where will their profits come from? Will they need guarantees of numbers? Who will pick up the young people they fail to engage or consider too high a risk? How will the detail of the work be regulated and how does such regulation sit with a government committed to reducing red tape? What are the costs of all this data collections, monitoring and specification? Why and on what terms did a company like Vosper Thorneycroft diversify into careers work? All these questions are fundamental to such a shift in public policy and as yet remain unanswered.

Above all as market systems spread through education and training, the old public ideals of equity, accountability, and solidarity come under threat.

The goal of equity is affected by the requirement on contractors to maximise contract income and minimise cost. Evidence from the health sector suggests that such incentives encourage providers to risk select so that they only take on clients who give them good returns (Kuttner, 1997). The evidence emerging from the US suggests that schools run by the private sector are recruiting less black pupils and higher proportions of high achievers. In education and training in the UK the same process will lead to the exclusion of young people who are not a good bet in terms of outcomes or whose needs are likely to exceed the contract income they can generate. Exclusion will also occur where self-payment is an integral part of schemes. The Learning Account is one example. These kinds of outcomes can be seen in the Youth Training field where these kinds of policies have been in existence for more than a decade. The outcome was, as Anne Weinstock, then the chief executive of Rathbone CI, (but now interestingly enough the head of the Connexions Unit) described it in 1996, 'We are faced, in effect, with training those who are job-ready - white, bright and the trouble free'.

Democratic accountability has been seriously impaired by the new contracting environment as new funding streams and service providers have been established outside local government structures. With public spending increasingly following through these new channels, a real constitutional question mark hangs over the legitimacy of the new agencies. Public scrutiny is also being avoided because of commercial confidentiality. This raises questions about probity in public financing. This same question mark hangs over much of the voluntary sector. As competitors for work their accountability is open to question. How can a national organisation with a head office in London be accountable to the residents, elected officials or young people in the West End of Newcastle? As Hilary Wainwright has written public service is about notions of efficiency which concern social needs that the market does not measure. "Value for money" cannot be measured by legally definable targets. It requires a constant process of evaluation in which the people using those services have some real power' (Guardian 30/05/01).

The search for new financing mechanisms or alternatives to tax-based funding is an essential part of public/private partnerships. Self-pay and parental contributions are growing features of training and education in the UK and have been evident in higher education for some time. However, tax-based funding remains the most efficient financing mechanism in a progressive funding system. The shift away from tax-based funding inevitably involves sacrificing the progressive ideal and the belief that education and training are social responsibilities not consumer goods.

Conclusion

Domestic reform of youth and education services is increasing private sector participation and private ownership of service infrastructure. These moves form part of an international policy engineering market access to public funds. The problem for the voluntary and local authority sectors which have traditionally provided these services is that although they will be able to bid for contracts, the private sector risk selection will leave them with the high cost end of the market but fewer resources. The problem for the public is a growing emphasis on user charges and the probability that some service groups will drop out of public provision altogether. Two tiers of provision will become the norm. The private sector is targeting public funding as a source of revenue making the public goals of equity and comprehensiveness impossible to achieve.

On a local level it is going to mean the youth service operating in a very different arena to that in which it has traditionally worked. Competition will force down costs as different organisations vie to offer the most cost effective solutions. Practices such as best value and continuous improvement will forever focus downwards on

that which has been specified as desirable. Every time there is any evidence that x works (in their terms) better than y, they will demand x regardless of any other advantages y may have. By avoiding good labour practice and traditional social objectives, as product specification unfolds, funding will increasingly be directed to a limited range of measurable outcomes such as reducing school non-attendance, reducing exclusions, reductions in crime and access to the labour market. There is currently little or no mention of things like social education, working to a young person's agenda or any ideas of collectivity and community and the consequence of this is that there will be little or no funding for this field of work. The rhetoric in recent policy documents about consulting and involving young people will remain rhetoric if young people actually go so far as to question the key outcomes.

Unless checked, this move to markets will evolve into a centralised and highly prescriptive enterprise. The Connexions service will control nearly all funding for work with young people, and at the very least it will have a significant say in any remnants of youth work left within local authority youth services. What will be left to sustain other approaches to working with young people, and other objectives will be through charitable trusts and the National Charities Lottery Board. Given the colonisation of all the other Lottery funds by government it may not be long before one of the questions on the application form is. Does your proposed project have the support of the Connexions Partnership?

All this paints a pretty grim picture for youth work. There will be many opportunities for good work with young people, but they will steadily become more and more prescribed to achieve more specific outputs over the next few years.

What is even more dubious about these wholesale changes in public services is the lack of debate. There is little or no evidence to support such changes and the central co-ordination, both between departments in central government and between global and domestic policy is detailed and unrelenting. Until there is a public debate about the privatisation of public services and until there is a recognition that young people deserve more than to be shunted into someone else's list of objectives it is a revolution that shows little chance of slowing up.

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AVOIDING THE NEW DEAL:
A Case Study of Non-participation by Minority Ethnic Young People

VIRINDER S. KALRA, EDWARD A FIELDHOUSE AND SAIMA ALAM

The New Deal for young people (NDYP) is one of the central planks of public policy to tackle unemployment amongst the 18-25 age group. Given the high levels of unemployment amongst minority ethnic groups in this age range, the NDYP represents an opportunity for dealing with this issue. However, measuring the success of the NDYP is a contentious and subjective process. The Employment Service have commissioned numerous research projects that aim to measure the success of the NDYP in terms of, destinations of leavers, implications for the macro-economy and attitudes of participants towards the programme.[1] This research finds a general pattern of good experiences that match or exceed participants expectations. In contrast academic researchers focusing on the NDYP report a far more mixed picture of experiences (see Hasluck, 2000 in contrast to Philpott, 1999; and Ogbonna and Noon, 1999). This debate has dwelled on the experience of participants but it is important to note that this is only half the story as large numbers of young people, despite being eligible, do not participate in NDYP. Indeed, both academic and government sponsored research, with the notable exception of Hoogvelt and France (2000) has solely focused on an evaluation of the programme, leaving out the group of young people who do not for a number of reasons participate in the initiative.

To obtain a fuller understanding of the New Deal for Young People, it is necessary to understand the perspectives of those who, despite being long term unemployed, do not participate or have dropped-out. By focusing solely on participants, research is unable to reveal any disaffection that might exist amongst those avoiding the NDYP. One of the main aims of NDYP is to enhance the employability of young people and to target those most detached from the labour market. If one of the symptoms of labour market detachment is avoiding participation in the NDYP, then the programme may simply be providing extra support to those young people who would have gained employment without the NDYP.[2] This article examines the reasons for avoidance of NDYP by focusing on the experiences of young people who have become eligible for the programme but for a variety of reasons have not participated. The findings are based on a local case study of a town in the North West of England, but the themes that arise are applicable to other areas with similar minority ethnic populations and to non-participators as a general group.

Previous youth training programmes have been criticised as having little relevance for minority ethnic communities and having little impact on their unemployment levels (Baqui, 1987; Cross and Smith, 1987; De Souza, 1987) Much of this research

took place in the 1980s and revealed differential rates of participation as well as low rates of achieving employment after Youth Training for minority ethnic youth. Research in the 1990s has focused on more specific ethnic groups, such as Asian Muslim women (Brah and Shaw, 1992) and Pakistani and Bangladeshi males (Kalra et at, 1999). These more recent studies also highlight differential rates of participation in YT and less likelihood of gaining employment for these specific ethnic groups. One of the key explorations in this paper is whether previous experiences of training have an impact of non-participation in the NDYP. Specifically, do young people from minority ethnic backgrounds view the NDYP as just another part of what MacDonald (1996) has so succinctly termed 'schemeland'?[3]

Avoiding the New Deal: Some Quantitative Evidence

Between April 1998 and April 2000 there were over 470,000 starts on the New Deal for Young People of which 65,500 or 14% were from minority ethnic communities. However a substantial proportion of those eligible for NDYP will drop out or avoid the programme altogether. There are two major categories of NDYP 'avoiders'. The first group are those who avoid New Deal after becoming eligible but before attending an initial interview. In other words they do not participate in any aspect of the NDYP. In the first two years of the initiative 41,700 or 12% NDYP leavers had left prior to initial interview[4]. The equivalent figure for ethnic minorities was very similar (11%). In fact, overall, minority ethnic young people have similar leaving patterns from the New Deal as their white counterparts. The second group of interest are those who drop out of the NDYP at some point after the initial interview and do not participate in any subsequent activities. There are no statistics specifically on this group, but they are included in the research design adopted here. However, we do have statistics on the destination of those leaving Gateway (the first stage of NDYP). According to the ES monitoring information published in June 2000, since the NDYP's inception in 1998, 33% of all eligible participants (including those who do not attend the initial interview) drop-out of the Gateway and transfer to other benefits or go on to other or unknown destinations. In other words they opt to leave NDYP rather than embark on an option or move into employment known to the Employment Service. However, the equivalent figure for the 55,400 ethnic minority young people leaving Gateway is 40%, compared to 27% for whites. The highest proportion is for Pakistanis (44%). The largest proportion went to unknown destinations, although a substantial proportion transferred to other benefits or went to other known destinations.

The implication of these statistics is that there is no difference in initial participation on the NDYP by ethnicity, however, once the young person has entered the programme more minority ethnic group are likely to leave. This does not necessarily mean that

they are leaving because of poor experiences of the programme. Research undertaken at the National Centre for Social Research (Hales and Collins, 1999) found that 57% of leavers to unknown destinations, that is those who left the NDYP during the initial period, actually left to take up a job. However, after a period of some time it was found that over half were unemployed, which indicates that these jobs may have been short term. Many of these (23%) were continuously claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) whilst the remainder had moved from employment to unemployment or had ceased claiming benefits. There was no discernible difference between those who had left at the post – initial interview stage or during the Gateway. The statistical evidence at a national level highlights differential patterns of dropping out by ethnicity once a young person has entered the scheme. To tease out some possible reasons for this we turn to our local case study.

Contextualising the New Deal in Oldham

This research is based on a case study of the New Deal in the Metropolitan Borough of Oldham in Greater Manchester. The New Deal in Oldham is delivered by the Employment Service in partnership with the Oldham New Deal Strategic Taskforce. Gateway programmes including key skills courses and mentoring are provided by the private sector and the Oldham Careers Service. Oldham has relatively large Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities, and a small number of people from other minority ethnic groups. Historically, the main pull factor to the town was the presence of the textile industry and an abundant demand for labour in the 1960s.[5] With the demise of the textile industry the town has an employment profile similar to that of other post-industrial areas. Although Oldham suffers from average levels of unemployment, it is not spread equally. According to the 1997 Oldham Labour Force Survey around 15 per cent of all young people aged 16-24, described themselves as unemployed. The figure for young Pakistanis and Bangladeshis aged 18-24 who were unemployed (17 per cent) was significantly higher than that for whites (14 per cent). However, this does not take into account the smaller proportions of economically active young Pakistanis and Bangladeshis who have higher rates of educational participation and other forms of labour market inactivity than the white population (especially amongst young women). Taking conventional measures of unemployment (the International Labour Organisation rate as a percentage of economically active) the difference is much larger. Twenty-two percent of economically active Pakistani and Bangladeshis in this age group are ILO unemployed compared to 13 per cent of whites. (The overall rate is 7 per cent). Whilst the claimant unemployment rate is undoubtedly lower than self assessed unemployment or ILO unemployment, due to the strict conditions for benefit eligibility for young people, this still represents extreme and disproportionate levels of unemployment within this group. There are therefore proportionately greater numbers of minority ethnic young people eligible for the NDYP.

In Oldham, in the year April 1999 - March 2000 there were 772 starts on NDYP, as defined by those invited for initial interview. Overall 65 per cent of these clients were white, although a further 18 per cent did not disclose their ethnic origin. The ethnic monitoring data also provides some evidence about differential experiences of the Gateway. Minority ethnic young people were more likely to participate in Gateway programmes, indicating a higher level of take up of basic skills courses (whether or not this is real). This may reflect lower skill levels on entry, or as perceived by personal advisers. This may have a positive impact on their experience of the New Deal, if (and only if) such programmes are tailored to the needs of individual clients. There are also differences in Gateway outcomes. The national figures suggest there is a difference between minority ethnic groups and young white people in their propensity to move into unsubsidised employment from the Gateway. In contrast, the Oldham figures from participants joining between April and June 1998 indicate that, by January 2000, a slightly larger proportion of minority ethnic young people had moved into unsubsidised jobs (52 per cent) compared to whites (50 per cent). The proportion of minority ethnic young people in subsidised jobs was 6.1%, compared to 6.3% for whites. The overall percentage obtaining jobs was therefore very similar for minority ethnic groups (59 per cent) and for whites (57 per cent). These figures are important insofar as they constitute core performance measures for the Employment Service.[6]

Of those going into other options, minority ethnic groups were more likely to move into the voluntary sector option, and less likely to move into the environmental task force option. The reasons for this are unclear, and may simply reflect specific preferences of the different groups. Surprisingly, given higher overall rates of participation in education, there were relatively fewer young people from minority ethnic groups taking up the full-time education option. This is contrary to the national figures which suggest minority ethnic groups are over-represented in the full-time education and training option. It has been argued that, in the past, Youth Training schemes largely failed to meet the need of minority ethnic young people. In Oldham, recent evidence from a study of the barriers to employment faced by young people from minority ethnic communities in Oldham generally supports this view (Kalra et al, 1999). Negative perceptions of Youth Training and a preference for education were widespread amongst young people from minority ethnic groups in the Borough. Indeed, negative experiences of YT also led to marked levels of differential participation. Data from the Oldham Careers Service Partnership indicate that over a thousand young people from minority ethnic young people entered youth training within a year of leaving school during 1996-1997. Proportionately, young Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were more likely to follow this route than any

other demographic groups. Conversely, young Pakistani and Bangladeshi men were much less likely to enter youth training than their white counterparts. Furthermore despite high participation rates, Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were found to have very negative experiences of youth training, resulting in them dropping out. A link between prior experiences of YT and current valuation of the NDYP forms the crux of an ESRC research project which has also part-funded this study. It is also important to take note of the effect that poor prior experience of YT may have on avoidance of the NDYP altogether, a point taken up later on in this article.

Information from the local New Deal Evaluation Database also tells us that the proportion of minority ethnic young people leaving NDYP prior to initial interview in Oldham is the same as the national average (11%). Destination data is available and reveals a similar pattern, again to the national picture, with over half the cohort securing employment and half entering back into benefits or some unknown destination. Unfortunately an ethnic breakdown of destinations is not possible, it is therefore necessary to rely on qualitative methods to understand some of the processes that are leading to non or partial participation.

Qualitative Research Findings

A common misconception surrounding partial and non-participation is that the majority of young people are deliberately avoiding the NDYP because they are work-shy or would rather avoid employment.[7] The use of terms such as drop-out or disaffected young person is often applied with a pejorative meaning attached. In order to avoid these kind of value judgements and therefore to be able to explore the actual reasons for non or partial participation, we divide the multiple reasons for non-participation into three broad sections: firstly, avoidance due to gaining employment, secondly avoidance by non-attendance and thirdly, those who are unable to participate for reasons external to the NDYP and their labour market position. Within these broad categories we also examine, in some detail, a number of illuminating sub-themes. It should not be automatically assumed that gaining employment is a positive outcome and that avoidance is a deliberate act. As we shall demonstrate the reasons for non-or partial participation are varied and complex. A blanket approach is not useful when attempting to understand the issue.

The results reported here are based on 25 semi-structured interviews with young people living in Oldham who have dropped out of the NDYP either before reaching initial interview or between initial interview and joining the Gateway. The young people were contacted through three different routes:

The first group are eight young people previously interviewed on the Economic and Social Research Council Funded project which looked at experiences of

minority ethnic participants on the NDYP in Oldham. These had been unemployed between 3 and 6 months, but did not go on to join the NDYP. Having already interviewed these young people these repeat interviews provide important comparative information about their perspectives on the NDYP and why they did not participate in the programme.

The second group consisted of six young people invited for initial interview but who subsequently withdrew from the benefits system. These were identified with the assistance of the Employment Service in Oldham. After their initial interview they were approached and their details were noted. They were asked whether they would be willing to participate in the research and if so, they were re-contacted after 2-3 weeks. If they had withdrawn from NDYP they were asked to assist by taking part within an informal interview by the researcher.

Thirdly, young people were approached at random in the job centre and in the Spindles shopping centre. They were asked about their current status and if they had been unemployed in the past and been invited onto New Deal either by letter or by attendance at an initial New Deal interview. If they had, they were also asked as to what the outcome of this invitation was. If they pointed to the fact that they had 'dropped out' even though they had been eligible for NDYP, then they were asked if they would be willing to be interviewed for our research. Eleven young people were interviewed after approach in the jobcentre and shopping centre.

As noted above, the sample includes some young people who decided not to attend the initial interview after having received the letter of invitation and some who attended the initial interview but did not subsequently return. Our results are subdivided by a typology of reasons for partial or non-participation.

Gaining Employment

Gaining a job has become one of the key aims of the NDYP since October 1998, which reflects a shift from a focus solely on improving the quality of labour supply (Finn, 2000). A distinction needs to be made between 'sustainable' jobs, those which last longer than thirteen weeks and 'other' jobs. Our research indicates that there is a further distinction to be made, between jobs that were wanted by minority ethnic young people and those jobs that were taken to avoid participating in NDYP. In both cases it could be argued that NDYP was successful in motivating a young person into work. But almost by definition sustainable jobs were also desirable and vice versa. Viewed in this way going into an unsustainable job implies a double negative, entering work that is not wanted due to the NDYP and then to find that it is short term and precarious.

Five of the interviewees in our sample managed to secure employment that they wanted without assistance from the NDYP.

> I   *So I take it that you were invited for interview [on to NDYP]?*
>
> P14   *I was told to attend in a letter. But I got another job, then I didn't bother and I told them about the job.*
>
> (P14 : Pakistani Female, 21 years, Employed part-time)

This respondent had a general positive attitude towards the NDYP, but had managed to secure employment and was not averse to using the NDYP in the future.

> P14   *I would have liked to have gone on to New Deal if I hadn't found a job. I think it would have been very helpful.*

Across our interview sample the majority of young people were keen to get a job and earn a wage. One of the reasons for avoidance of the NDYP concerned the fact that the NDYP placement was not considered to be a 'proper job' with 'proper wages' and 'just working for benefit'. The following extract illustrates this point.

> P15   *I don't want to do something where I am just getting trained. I want a proper job and however much they make you feel that you are doing a proper job on New Deal, you aren't really are you? You just get dole money and they make you work hard at the same time...I'm not doing that thanks.*
>
> (Pakistani Female, 23 years, Employed part-time)

This extract illustrates a lack of clear understanding about the subsidised employment option and the NDYP as a whole which is an important issue in itself. Moreover, the possible reason for this misunderstanding is the perception that NDYP is a scheme rather than a proper job. Indeed, NDYP was not seen as enhancing long-term employment prospects by another one of our respondents.

> I   *You never went onto New Deal; do you not think you may have bene-fited if you had? It may possibly have improved your employment prospects?*
>
> P3   *I somehow don't think it would have increased them. These schemes are not regarded that highly. They don't have the same credibility as if you had done a college course... If, god forbid, I hadn't found a job, then yes I would have done it. I would have had to go on to New Deal, I would have had no choice. But I am glad that I didn't have to. I can't see how it has affected my employment prospects at all.*
>
> (Bangladeshi female, 21 years, employed)

If the jobs secured by these young people prove to be sustainable then this group of minority ethnic young people will have found work despite the operation of NDYP. However, recent quantitative research shows that minority ethnic groups are more likely to enter unsubsidised unemployment and that this is likely to be for less than 13 weeks in duration (Hasluck, 2000). Although securing any form of employment could be considered a positive outcome or a sufficient reason for not taking part in the NDYP, in certain cases the young people may have taken a job merely to avoid the New Deal, with the job being of the type they would not have usually taken. Indeed, in our sample we found that five of our respondents entered into work as a way of avoiding NDYP and entered work that they did not want or that was inappropriate for their situation.

> P5   *The job that I am doing was offered to me about 3 months before I was told I was going to go onto New Deal...At the time I didn't take it...But when I realised that I would have to go onto New Deal I decided to ring the boss up at the takeaway and take the job straight away and luckily he said it was still available.*
>
> (Bangladeshi male, 22 years, Employed part-time)

This young man had previously avoided working in a take-away and preferred to find other forms of work. The compulsory nature of the NDYP has meant that he has to take up the job he did not want.[8]

> I   *So what do you think about New Deal overall?*
>
> P5   *Do you really want to know? I think it is wrong to forcefully make people go on to one of these schemes and work...I know they do it in the States and it is really demoralising and makes you feel inadequate...everyone then thinks you aren't capable of finding a job and that you are worthless to society. Why can't they help you more to find a job...they don't do that... the jobcentre are really bad at trying to help people get a job, most of the people who work in there think they are something but they are nothing... they have a really bad attitude, especially when it comes to the Asian people.,*
>
> (Bangladeshi male, 22 years, employed part-time)

Negative attitudes towards NDYP are closely related to a perception that the programme does not offer real opportunities. To avoid this situation, employment is sought that may not be appropriate to the young person's skills, qualifications or aspirations. This is starkly highlighted in the following extract, where the young woman took a job that she would not have usually considered.

P16 *At the moment I am working at Debenhams as a part-time sales advisor... I am not interested in carrying on this job. I have just had to take it because I needed to get off the New Deal...I am a graduate and have specific skills and knowledge and I would have been trapped by New Deal. I don't think a scheme of that nature would have been appropriate for me*

(Pakistani Female, 24 years, Employed part-time)

This last respondent highlights another issue that has hitherto not been examined by previous research, that of graduate entry into NDYP. Unemployment amongst minority ethnic graduates is an issue that is of increasing concern (Modood et al, 1997). The NDYP has no specific strategy for helping unemployed people with this level of qualification, but nonetheless, they remain an eligible group. Another graduate had the same experience of taking on a job in order to avoid New Deal. Although the job was financially rewarding, it was also unsuitable given his level of qualifications.

P19 *I am looking for a job...I am doing this [taxi driving] on the side at the weekend, it's just to make the money, that is all. I don't have ambitions to be a taxi-driver though with a degree in politics and law. All you need for that is to be able to read a map and know the streets.*

(Pakistani Male, 22 years of age, Employed part-time, Higher Education Part-time)

While we can draw no generalisations about the situation of minority ethnic graduates in the local labour market, national research highlights the greater time taken for minority graduates to secure employment (Pathak and Shalini 2000) signifying the need for the issue to be addressed in the design and implementation of the NDYP.

Our respondents were asked whether they would consider going on to the NDYP at some stage in the future. This was particularly pertinent to those young people who had gone into unsubsidised employment and may therefore become eligible in the near future. Once again most of our respondents were negative about this possibility. This young Bangladeshi man is particularly hostile to the idea:

I *If you were unemployed again would you take part in New Deal in the future?*

P5 *No, never! I would try and do something to avoid it, like take another different job or even if I didn't have a job, I would sign off and suffer the consequences, just so that I didn't have to go onto New Deal at all.*

(Bangladeshi Male, 22 Years, Employed part-time)

This level of hostility towards NDYP belies much of the positive feedback and encouragement that recent, Employment Service sponsored research has revealed

(Hasluck, 2000). It is apparent from our interviews with non-participators that the positive attitudes may largely reflect the self-selecting nature of the participating group. A sharper focus by Employment Service evaluations needs to be made on those that are avoiding NDYP. The NDYP monitoring procedures now takes into account transfer on to unsubsidised jobs after the first interview as a job obtained while on NDYP. This shift into unsubsidised employment is to be encouraged as part of the NDYP rationale. However, in our research this aspect of the NDYP process covers levels of dissatisfaction and actual avoidance of the further stages, rather than only reflecting a positive outcome of a job. Given the fact the minority ethnic young people are less likely to go on to a subsidised employment place, it seems that avoidance of the NDYP is being seen by some as a preferable option.

Deliberate Avoidance

One of the main target groups for NDYP are those young people who are most detached from the labour market and who can therefore benefit from the counselling and work experience that the initiative offers. It is this group which seems to also be most active in avoiding the NDYP through non-attendance. The following quotes illustrate avoidance behaviour in the form of ignoring letters and appointments and non-attendance to interviews.

> P9   *Yes I was invited for an interview but I made an excuse that day and said I wasn't feeling well. They said that they would send out another letter to me. But I'm not going to go.*

> (Pakistani male, 19 years, unemployed on benefit)

This young man's reasons for avoiding NDYP were concerned with the lack of guaranteed employment after the programme.

> P9   *I don't know but I don't want to do it. I don't want to spend 6 more months on something and then still not find a job...it is a long time to try it out and then if it doesn't work I have wasted a lot of time.*

P9's attitude towards NDYP was shaped by a lack of conviction about its utility in his case. However, his lack of any previous employment experience and few qualifications means that mechanisms are required to encourage this kind of non-participant on to NDYP. In contrast the following young man has avoided NDYP despite benefit sanctions and illustrates a wider sense of disaffection with the labour market.

> I   *So why didn't you go to the first interview?*

> P10   *Because I have no interest in New Deal and I don't want to do it. So I ignored the letter and didn't bother going. Then I got two more letters*

> *and then they stopped me from signing on and they stopped paying me my benefit money...*
>
> *Why did you decide not to go along?*

P10 *It was just going to be a waste of my time and of theirs. I don't want to be doing this New Deal thing.*

I *Would you have stayed on jobseekers allowance if New Deal had not been introduced?*

P10 *Yeah of course I would have...I would have stayed on it and kept signing on if they didn't bring this damn silly thing in.*

(Pakistani Male, 22 years, unemployed without benefit)

This young man has no qualifications and limited previous work experience in a bakery. His attitude towards NDYP, despite benefit sanctions was very negative and was reflected in his total lack of participation in the initiative. This level of disaffection was rare amongst our respondents, but also indicates the need for strategies to engage this type of young man. In most cases previous poor experience of training or the perception that NDYP was another scheme rather than a proper job influenced participation and attitudes towards the programme.

Previous Experience of Training

Some of the young people interviewed had previously taken part in either Modern Apprenticeship schemes or the Youth Training Scheme (YTS). The NDYP was, for these young people, envisaged as just another 'scheme'. Obviously this carried a great deal of negative connotation and resulted in avoidance and non-participation. The quote below illustrates this point more clearly

I *Why do you not want to do New Deal?*

P22 *I don't want anymore training I have done most of that in the modern apprentice course.*

This attitude was reinforced by poor experience at the initial interview.

P22 *[At the first interview] the advisor was being pushy with me and persuading me to sign up for it, which I had to do at the time, but I am not going to do this... I didn't like her, she was being too dominant and trying to force me into something I wasn't wanting to do. She was going on about this and that but I wasn't truthfully interested.*

(Indian Male, 20 Years Unemployed)

For some young people there is a seamless transition from YTS to NDYP with all of the negative associations that this can bring.

> P5   ...I don't want to be doing this New Deal... I have heard that it is like YTS is that right?...if it is then for definite I wouldn't want to do it...they make you work for a full week like YTS and you don't get much money and you could end up working for a really horrid place that treat you badly...
>
> (Bangladeshi Male, 22 Years Employed part-time)

A further example of the strong association with YTS and NDYP is provided by the following interview:

> P6   I think it's a waste of time like the YTS. These schemes don't work in practice they just always fall through... New Deal is nothing it doesn't hold that much value, it is only an Employment Services scheme.
>
> (Bangladeshi male, 24 unemployed)

This young man had previous experience of Job Clubs as well as other Adult Training Programmes. It is clear that his negative attitudes are due to his previous poor experiences with training. Other research also highlights the link between previous poor experiences and current avoidance or negative attitude towards the NDYP (Ogbonna and Noon, 1999; Bryson et al, 2000).

Initial Interview and Other Influences

Our typology distinguished between those who dropped out after the initial interview and those who avoided NDYP all together. Our aim was to see whether reasons for non-participation could be related to first impressions of NDYP gained at the initial interview. From our interviews it is apparent that most of the young people who wished to avoid NDYP had made up their mind before the initial interview and that this had little to no influence on their decision. Rather the following quotes suggest that the personal advisors approach and manner was seen as positive and helpful, if a little forceful.

> I   What about the personal advisor in the interview, how did you find her?
>
> P15   She was OK, pushy, but she explained everything to me. She was nicer than some of them in there.
>
> (Bangladeshi Male, 24 unemployed)
>
> I   What were your thoughts about this initial interview?
>
> P7   I can't recall all of the information, but it was generally very informative and the advisor was very caring and kind almost like a counsellor...not the typical benefits type.
>
> (Mixed Race, 21 Years, employed)

While there were also negative comments about the initial interview this mainly related to the Personal Advisor trying to persuade the young person to attend NDYP. However, in these cases, neither positive, negative or indifference towards the initial interview and Personal Advisor changed the decision to not participate in NDYP.

Previous research has shown the importance of word of mouth and peer's impressions on the career decisions made by young Pakistani and Bangladeshis. (Kalra et al, 1999). Our respondents also indicated that their avoidance of NDYP was influenced by the negative experiences of others. This worked via a process of reinforcement where one bad experience worked its way through a grapevine to produce an overall bad impression.

> P15 *I was told when I went to sign on that I would have to start this thing called New Deal and I wasn't happy at all...A friend of mine did it and she had a really bad experience, she advises anyone against going on New Deal*
>
> (Pakistani Female,23 years, Employed part-time)

Amongst our respondents, peer pressure and other influences were more important in the decision not to participate on NDYP rather than any particularly negative experience at the initial interview stage. Though existing attitudes whether positive or negative tended to be re-enforced at the initial interview stage.

Unable to Participate

One of the underlying assumptions of the NDYP is that young people have a great deal of agency when it comes to making labour market decisions and that unemployment can be solely resolved by tackling lack of employability. However, most research on young people and the labour market indicates that social issues play a large part in determining capacity for participation.[9] In the previous cases, NDYP has in some sense acted as a catalyst for the outcomes experienced by the young people from minority ethnic groups, whether this be finding a job or total avoidance. However, not all of the factors for the non-participation in NDYP were related to labour market issues. Some of the young people had dropped out of New Deal for other reasons which were more circumstantial and related to external factors. Two major reasons for non-participation emerged from this group, the first was extended visits abroad to South Asia, particularly Bangladesh and Pakistan and the second was having to take the role of a carer for a family member.

Initial New Deal interviews occasionally coincided with a trip abroad to Pakistan or Bangladesh. When this occurred, the young person had to sign off and inform the employment service of their long-term absence.

I   *If you hadn't gone to Bangladesh would you have attended the interview?*

P1   *If I hadn't gone to Bangladesh, then I would have attended the interview, I would have been interested in doing something if I didn't have a job...but it may never have got to that point because I wasn't looking for a job I was going to Bangladesh*

(Bangladeshi Female, 20 years old, unemployed)

Trips lasting longer than six months can also be seen as a way of avoiding participation in the NDYP. However, few young people chose to go on these trips, they were often a result of attendance of a set of family functions, such as weddings and funerals. Here a marked gender difference is also present. Young Pakistani and Bangladeshi women were more likely to go on extended stays as part of the process of getting married. On return, the NDYP would not be appropriate, as they would need to be employed for purposes of family reunion. (Kalra et al 1999).[10] For young men, trips abroad afford the possibility of avoidance of the NDYP but on their return the same eligibility criteria apply so this is only a temporary reprieve.[11]

Other situational factors also reflect a gender divide, with young women not participating due to family responsibilities, this could include looking after a family member who needed care and attention or an elderly parent. This young woman had to stop claiming JSA and go onto another benefit as she was having to look after her disabled brother. This meant that she was no longer eligible for New Deal.

P4   *Well I was interested in going onto New Deal, I was invited to attend and my parents left to go to Bangladesh and I had to look after my brother. I rang the jobcentre and explained this to them and they said that I would be pardoned from going onto New Deal and that I would need to stop claiming JSA and apply for the carers allowance if I was to be looking after my brother.*

(Bangladeshi female,22 years of age, carer)

Given the complexity that young people have to deal with in managing the contemporary labour market factors outside of the employment sphere, such as caring for a relative, obviously make a marked difference to outcome. Our interviews illustrate that non-participation is therefore not necessarily related to a negative attitude towards or previous poor experiences of the NDYP, but rather circumstances can play a determining role.

Conclusions

To simply equate non-participation on the NDYP with a work-shy attitude has been shown to be a gross and inaccurate view of the complex of reasons that

determine labour market outcomes for minority ethnic young people. The widely accepted understanding of New Deal outcome in terms of a dichotomy between favourable (i.e. getting a job) and negative (e.g. moving to other benefit) cannot adequately explain the biographies of our respondents. Outcomes are to some extent independent of the young people's perceptions or experiences of New Deal. For example, an individual with a negative perception or experience of the NDYP may leave for a 'positive' reason (e.g. to get a job) but this have nothing to do with the programme. In contrast, an individual with a positive view of the NDYP may subsequently drop out without finding a job for unrelated reasons. In many cases, the most 'positive' impact of the NDYP is that it forced young people to make a choice. However, whether this was necessarily to the long-term benefit of the individual is not always clear.

Overall, there was a diverse range of reasons for dropping out of NDYP, not all of which were negative. Where negative attitudes were held these were often due to poor previous experiences of training schemes and a sense that the NDYP was not really going to deliver a 'proper job'. Many of the issues that we highlight have also emerged in other research with white young people. The most comparable study to ours, carried out by Hoogvelt and France (2000) also reveals that avoidance of NDYP was '…neither "drop-outs" nor especially inadequate young people; they just did not think the New Deal could offer them anything' (118: 2000). This broadly concurs with our findings. However, there were significant differences in the status of the disengaged, with Hoogvelt and France's sample being concerned about the financial hardship that NDYP might entail, an issue that was not apparent in our sample. Furthermore, there were few factors relating to non-participation amongst the white young people that were not directly related to the labour market, whereas one of the important reasons for not participating amongst our sample was due to more general circumstances.

If there is any single important point to make from this research it is that addressing the needs of those young people from minority ethnic groups not participating in the NDYP may require an approach which is not solely focused on labour market issues. Rather providing a mechanism where the totality of the young persons circumstances can be taken into account and relevant support provided would seem to offer a better hope for tackling entrenched and persistently high levels of unemployment. It is only then that the NDYP may offer a realistic and attractive New Deal to minority ethnic young people.

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Notes

1 We have also carried out research on the impact of the NDYP on minority ethnic young people: 'The impact of the New Deal on young people from minority ethnic communities in Oldham' Fieldhouse, E; Kalra, V and Alam, S (CCSR, University of Manchester) funded by the Economic and Social Research Council and Glodwick SRB.

2 These have been commonly termed substitution (where the NDYP replaces a job that would have been created already) and dead-weight (where jobs are created with no meaningful future) effects. Philpott (1999 p 16) noted: 'There are to date no firm estimates of how many New Deal jobs are additional having allowed for dead-weight and substitution'. NIESR (1999) considered the NDYP to have reduced youth unemployment by approximately 30,000 relative to what might have been without the programme, however conceded that: 'Approximately 50 per cent of individuals leaving unemployment via the NDYP would have done so in the absence of the programme'.

3 Rather than seeing the scheme as a way of providing employment it is simply another government programme to reduce unemployment levels.

4 Claimants' records are marked after 5 months unemployment. The next time their record is accessed for any reason, a letter is issued inviting them for initial interview. At this point they are recorded as participants, regardless of whether they subsequently withdraw before attending an interview.

5 For more details of the migration to the town see Kalra (2000) From Textile Mills to Taxi Ranks

6 Current figures and notes of explanation available at http://www.dfee.gov.uk/ndimprove/.

7 See MacDonald (1997) for a series of similar arguments about the labelling of young people as 'underclass'.

8 Research by Kalra et al (1999) illustrates how negative experiences of take-away/ catering work can be for future employment prospects of young Bangladeshi men. NDYP could be contributing to this overall negative effect by forcing young Bangladeshi men into the catering trade.

9 See Robert MacDonald, Paul Mason, Tracy Shildrick, Colin Webster, Les Johnston and Louise Ridley

   (2001) 'Snakes & Ladders: In Defence of Studies of Youth Transition' Sociological Research Online, vol. 5, no. 4, http://www.socresonline.org.uk/5/4/macdonald.html for a useful review of the literature.

10 Also see Sachdeva (1993) for details of the immigration law on family reunion.

11 See McLoughlin and Kalra (1999) for a more detailed discussion of the impact of trips abroad by young men from Mirpur, (Azad) Kashmir.

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Classic Texts Revisited

W.D. Wills
The Hawkspur Experiment
London: Allen and Unwin 1941

W.D. Wills
The Barns Experiment
London: Allen and Unwin 1945

CAROLE PUGH

These books offer an account of two remarkable experiments in residential work with 'difficult' young men. Both were set-up by the author, outside the state system, and each in turn attracted a great deal of attention both here and abroad. For many, at the time, they seemed to offer an exciting alternative to the harsh regimes of the Borstals established in 1922 by Alex Patterson, who had been active in youth work at Oxford House and elsewhere. The Borstals were in many respects a great advance on what had gone before. They created a house system, discarded officers uniforms for the staff, introduced summer camps, increased the responsibilities given to the boys and recruited educated and often sympathetic men from the public schools and universities as house masters. Some boys were however segregated, with the 'worst' going to institutions not markedly different from those encountered in the pre-Patterson system. While Patterson influenced the system he failed to change the underlying ethos which assumed that constant pressure applied to the young men would create 'good habits' that would survive once the pressure was removed – it was truly a grind them down and build them up approach (Hood 1965).

Wills worked in a Borstal but soon left for the comparative freedom of the voluntary sector. He was deeply influenced by the work of Homer Lane (he was later to write a biography of Lane) whose work with young offenders was based on self-government and loving approval. He also admired the contribution of A S Neill, the founder of Summerhill, who sought to apply the new 'science' of psychoanalysis to his work with 'difficult' and 'damaged' young people.

Wills joined the Quakers in 1930 and his approach and methodology is firmly embedded in his deep faith, his pacifism, his opposition to punishment and his complete belief in the validity of a consistently loving approach. He argued consistently that punishment was incompatible with Christian principles and that more importantly it did not work (Wills 1972). His approach was frowned upon in official circles, but he

remained convinced that a consistently loving approach was right and that time would prove its efficacy. As he explained:

> I have given several reasons why we ... believe in the maximum amount of freedom for the boys in our care. They were for the most part based upon rational judgement of what was most likely to be helpful in contributing to the 'therapy of the dis-social', but the underlying and fundamental reason - for me – is, as with the non-use of punishment, a religious one ... There are times when we seem to be doing no useful work at all, when a boy upon whom we have set the highest hopes will do something that seems to suggest that we have never touched him, times when the whole business seems to be so discouraging as to be hardly worth while; times even when we feel we should like to scream. If at those times our work is based only on rational grounds, we should begin to doubt its value, and I very much doubt whether I should keep on with it. But because we are able to say with TS Eliot (however unscientifically!) 'Take no thought of the harvest, but only of the proper sowing' I am able to carry on. (Wills 1945: 82-83).

Ideology

William David Wills was born in Wales in 1903, prior to training as a psychiatric social worker he had worked as a YMCA boys club leader. His working life was largely devoted to working with young people in trouble in various non-punitive residential settings where he sought to 'substitute loving care for punishment' (Fairn 1980). Wills' Quaker beliefs lead him to advocate an approach to work with delinquent young people that relied on 'unqualified love, shared responsibility and good human relationships' in order to reform behaviour. Hawkspur, a camp for difficult young men aged 17-25 was founded in 1936. Barns House, a home for difficult evacuees (8-14) opened in 1940. The Hawkspur and Barns books must be read as 'a personal confession of faith', which attempts to expound and promote the principles underpinning them. Through a tapestry of individual case histories, description of incidents and transcripts of meetings the stories of Hawkspur and Barns emerge in the texts.

The Hawkspur Camp was a kind of voluntary Borstal institution, where young men either brought themselves or were sent by professionals or parents. Hawkspur was a camp, not a home: when the first member arrived there were only tents. The camp was self sufficient, between the staff and members all the work that needed doing: designing and con-

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structing buildings, water systems, gardening, farming, cleaning and cooking, had to be done, providing opportunity for

> *contributing a quota to the general good, learning new skills, acquiring confidence in his new found knowledge and increasing capacity, becoming self-reliant by learning to do everything for himself and, above all, by seeing the results of his labour, discovering that he is a person, and that when he pulls his weight it really makes a difference.*

(Wills 1941:106)

Barns was established in Peebles in 1940 as an evacuation hostel for 'difficult' boys 8-14, with a school attached. The establishment of Barns began with a term of 'surging unrest' where the boys put the claim of no punishment to the test, seeking the security of outward compulsion. The house was not self sufficient in the same way as Hawkspur had been. Staff were employed to do some duties, but the emphasis on shared responsibility remained.

Wills argues that what all the residents had in common was an awareness of their 'failure to fit in' and a desire to start over (Wills 1941: 18). While the ages of the young men differed the approach remained rooted around three key themes; the need to treat young people with acceptance and love rather than punishment; the importance of self government which is learned though practice and experience; and the role that psychological treatment had to play in rehabilitation.

Wills' main concern was the inappropriateness of inflicting punishment on young people who were 'victims' coming from homes where there was 'something amiss' (Wills 1945:32). This contrasted with the method prevalent at the time founded on a belief in power of punishment to reform. The fundamental reason for Wills non-penal attitude was, as mentioned earlier, his belief that it was inconsistent with Christian teaching. He questioned the morality of using punishment to maintain adult authority, and while he recognised its 'usefulness' in maintaining order, argued that real education was about more than this. A higher motive for conduct than the fear of punishment was sought because the latter served to inhibit initiative and prevent the growth of self-reliance by removing responsibility from individuals.

Self-government is a vital component of this approach. Hawkspur and Barns provided an environment of greater freedom than ordinary society.

By learning to control themselves in these circumstances, life in society would pose fewer problems for the residents. In order to temper the burden of self-responsibility Wills advocated developing a self-government system, which exercises collective responsibility. Self-government is not seen here as a privilege, as it was within the Borstal system, reserved for only a few offenders, but as a necessity. The aim at Hawkspur was to 'develop the capacity for personal judgement so that when he goes from us the lad does not necessarily accept the standards of the first group with which he happens to come into contact, even if the group happen to be normal citizens' (Wills 1941:60-61).

This freedom is not sufficient treatment itself and was allied with psychotherapy provided off site. Wills asserts that 'the youths who came to Hawkspur are disordered ... they are socially sick' and as such a 'cure' is sought. The case history is gathered and the symptoms (usually the delinquency) observed. Staff at Hawkspur therefore aimed to build positive relationships with young people for therapeutic ends.

Method

The responsibility for 'maladjustment' was placed firmly at the feet of the family. Wills supported intervention in families by social services to support and 're-adjust tangled emotional situations' (Wills 1945: 138). Where this failed he argued 'that in a large number of cases the cure for juvenile delinquency is to – take them out of their own homes, cut them off from their parents and give them a new, real home and new parents' (Wills 1945: 136). Ideally these would be foster homes, but institutions such as Barns also had a role to play. The experiences offered at Barns and Hawkspur sought to undo some of the damage inflicted upon young people by their home situations. The key to the treatment of offending behaviour at Hawkspur was making sure that the young people felt that they were loved. This entailed making a clear distinction between the person and their acts. Wills fully demonstrated this approach; often inviting young people to his house on his day off and having groups of them regularly for Sunday tea. As the head of Barns he sought to be a surrogate father to the boys in his care.

Self-regulation was managed through a self-government system; at Hawkspur this took the form of Camp Council, at Barns it was the 'house meeting'. Wills and the staff retained ultimate control, exercising this when self-government failed to take responsibility for itself. There were three grades of responsibility; absolute - which was retained by adults in

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matters such as health and dealing with external agencies; 'influence' - which was brought to bear by adults on certain subjects through discussion in the meetings; and the authority of the house meeting. Wills argued that it was better to give young people a limited sphere of absolute responsibility than a large, vague area where adults can veto certain decisions. House meetings were an ongoing process of arranging duties, organising activities, setting and enforcing rules and reorganising the system and so on. Wills warned 'Do not look for efficiency. If you want that you must provide it in the good old way. This is learning by doing in a very real sense, and nothing is learnt if no mistakes are made' (Wills 1945: 59). The only type of punishment was a fine for any acts of physical violence and these were imposed by peers meeting in a democratic assembly. The books describe the development of the self-regulation structure through periods of stability, anarchy and dictatorship.

Wills realised that Hawkspur-type treatment was suited best to young people who were 'beginners' in offending. However he firmly believed that overall the treatment approach, rather than detainment or punishment held the key to working with young people who found themselves in trouble.

Evaluation
There are two problems faced in evaluating the work of Wills. The first is the minimal amount of objective records concerning the success of the project. The second is the more general problem of evaluating the ideas in relation to their historical context. Whether or not any of his methods could be employed today depends very much upon the extent current youth policy and legal restraints would allow this to happen.

As Wills stated at the beginning of his 1941 book, it was neither a scientific study of a methodology, nor an impartial observer's account, so no claims regarding accuracy of reporting are made. In the second edition of *The Hawkspur Experiment* published 25 years later Wills added an account relating to what he knew of the boys with whom he was still in touch. This is generally encouraging: one young man had gone into a psychiatric hospital and two he was unable to trace, but of the rest he offered positive reports. It is worth remembering however that the young men who went to Hawkspur were not a representative cross-section of young offenders. They all had to be able to pay a maintenance fee or have a sponsor willing to pay it for them, and they also attended on a voluntary basis. However it is fit to pose the question; what would the picture have been if they had gone to a Borstal instead?

One central criticism of Wills' ideology is the belief that the behaviour of young people was caused predominantly because 'something is amiss' in the family situation. Although bad parenting is a sad reality, socio-economic factors also form a causal chain to delinquency. Wills' contemporary Alex Patterson considered that delinquency could be reduced by the provision of good housing, education and regular employment (Hood, 1965: 105). This analysis is omitted within Wills' approach. An examination of contemporary practice reveals similar problems. While research reveals that 'family' related risk factors may be fair predictors in medium and high social economic backgrounds, in low socio-economic neighbourhood, 'neighbourhood factors' often outweigh the influence of the family (Pitts, 2000). Could it be that one reason for the success of the Hawkspur and Barns approaches, was the removal of young people from their 'neighbourhood'? The current focus on poor parental and school discipline as causal factors conveniently overlooks the more complex (and costly) elements relating to economic deprivation and social marginalisation. The introduction of parenting orders which require attendance at parenting courses is an example of this, such approaches do not stem from a supportive approach to parents, but form a blame culture, which can be un-helpful and debilitating to those already experiencing problems and located in disadvantaged circumstances (Drakeford and McCarthy 1999).

Wills argues for a broader definition of 'immoral acts' that could lead to a child being removed from their home, and disputed that ' a bad home is better than none' arguing that a good foster home would be better than many of the homes the boys he worked with came from (Wills 1945). Practice today is rooted in the belief that even the best residential establishment is rarely able to meet the emotional needs of young people in a superior way to the 'negligent' family (Pitts, 1999). NACRO, of whom Wills was a founder member, certainly view removing children from home as a discredited approach to reforming behaviour (NACRO, 1993). Wills does not consider the possibilities of working with young people and their families, his method required intense intervention which it would be difficult to undertake in a non-residential setting. However it is worth considering if it would be possible to adapt his method to working with young people and their families in their home environments of local communities.

However as noble as the scheme seems the reliance on the self-government system and willingness to allow disorganisation and even chaos as part of the learning process in a residential setting would perhaps be an unworkable one in today's climate.

A different criticism levelled at Wills concerns his emphasis on welfare rather than justice. At Hawkspur where most the young people attended voluntarily, and Barns where young people were there with the permission of parents, this is acceptable. However if this is to be an approach to working with young offenders, where their attendance at the centre is a sentence, the focus on welfare rather than justice raises questions. Who would decide when the 'treatment' was over, would there be at any time an infringement of the young person's rights? Would it be possible to make attendance beyond a set date voluntary? While the time spent at Hawkspur is not seen as a punishment by Wills, what would prevent a young person from seeing it as such?

Conclusion

Even though evidence suggests that imprisonment serves as a poor method of rehabilitation or deterrent and is ineffective in tackling youth crime (Moore, 2000) the 1990s saw an increase in the number of young people incarcerated. The prison system, while no longer permitting the corporal punishment of young people, as it did in Wills' day, still 'treats children and young people as offenders first and as children second' (op cit: 125). Wills' criticism of the Borstal system and his argument that 'punishment' and 'discipline' are not useful in treating young offenders, coupled with advocacy of an approach that is compassionate to young offenders still has a great deal to offer. The adoption of group work techniques to work with young offenders, and the emphasis on young people in trouble being 'children in need' is key to his work and is now a legal concept within the Children Act 1989. Pitts (1999) identifies several key roles performed in good practice in work with young offenders, all of which sound similar to the background atmosphere created at Barns and Hawkspur: being a 'non judgemental supporter'; 'a critical ally'; 'an appreciative professional friend who celebrates achievements'; 'a solid adult'; and 'a sounding board' who helps young people sort out ideas, priorities and choices.

The Hawkspur and Barns combination of self government, a loving environment and individual therapy could offer something to the debate about creating a system which works with those young people in trouble

who have to be removed from their home setting. From the start it promoted the valuable belief that young people should be supported in creating their own experiences by using experiential learning programmes, conversation and democracy as key tools in working to support development and education.

Reading the Hawkspur and Barns experiments one cannot fail to be impressed by Wills' commitment to the methods he advocated and the young people he worked with, as well as the integrity with which he lived these out. While he resisted the observation that the projects relied on his personal characteristics, it is hard to imagine similar programmes surviving without such an inspirational leader.

Carole Pugh *is a youth worker in York.*

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Feature Review

Bob Coles
Joined-up Youth Research, Policy and Practice
Youth Work Press, 2000
ISBN 0 86155 244 X
£16.95
232pp

Fred Cartmel

Historically, sociological youth transition research has been distinguished from other sub-disciplines within sociology through rigorous empirical investigations into the experiences of young people in Britain in contrasting situations; unemployment, training schemes, employment, youth work etc. At the heart of youth transition research is an exploration of how radical economic and social changes occurring in the twentieth century have impacted upon young people's everyday experiences and their future life chances. Bob Coles in *Joined-Up Youth Research, Policy and Practice* suggests that a new research agenda is required for youth transition research to move forward into the twenty-first century. Crucially, the author's suggestions have fundamental implications for youth transition research throughout Britain and indeed the viability of the sociology of youth as a distinct discipline in the future.

The major concern that I have with the book is the underlying assumption that youth transition research is only concerned about young people as a 'problem' or 'problematic youth'. The implications for youth studies is that the discipline could be deemed to be returning to an era of theorising and researching youth as a problem and ignoring interesting areas of youth research that have no relationship with policy. This book is about youth policy research, which is not what all youth research encompasses. The point behind policy research is to identify young people who are having difficulties in the labour market, in order that youth can be assisted in making a successful transition into the labour market. Bob Coles' book could provide readers with the impression that youth transition research is the only youth issue being investigated, but there are many youth researchers who are not interested in Government policy and are attempting to theorise about how broader social and economic changes impact on young people's lives. There already exists a major divide within youth studies between hard quantitative empirical researchers and softer cultural qualitative/ethnographic researchers who appear to work

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in different discourses, although both camps research young people. This book will be useful to researchers, policy makers and practitioners whose interests lie in identifying who succeeds and who fails in the youth transition, it is not for academics who are seeking new theoretical angles on the experiences of the majority of young people in Britain today.

In his book Bob Coles considers the impact of new youth policies introduced in Britain (although mainly England and Wales) over the last two decades and suggests how new or pending legislation will affect the lives of young people. Of the nine chapters, six deal with the major 'youth problems' policy makers have addressed with new policy initiatives over the last twenty years. In the first and last two chapters the author suggests how a move towards more a holistic youth transition research agenda should be attempted and the implications this has for future research. In the empirical chapters the author describes the situation of young people using secondary empirical evidence, interspersed with interesting 'cameos' of successful youth projects throughout the United Kingdom collected through qualitative interviews during his 'youth tourism' research phase.

The first empirical chapter deals with youth unemployment and provides an excellent summary of policy initiatives introduced over the last twenty years. There is detailed discussion about the latest Government initiative the New Deal, with examples of empirical research conducted into this initiative. There are discussions relating to young people who are labeled 'status zero' or to use the Labour Government's preferred acronym NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) and the policies introduced to shepherd these young people back into the fold. There is detailed discussion of research conducted by the Social Exclusion Unit and the new Connexions initiative. Coles concludes this chapter stating that:

> one of the main interests of this book is to examine whether there is a new approach and new policy agenda to address problems and whether this meets the criteria of the more 'holistic approach' as outlined in first chapter.

(Cole 2000: 40)

Although the chapter provides empirical research results to highlight the plight of young people struggling to enter the labour market, there is no suggestion that Government youth policies are deficient. The author places great faith in both the New Deal and the Connexions initiative stating that these highlight an holistic approach and address all young people's

'barriers to exclusion' (ibid: 41). Research into the Youth Training Scheme has documented that the majority of young people entering this initiative have been failed by the education system and Government initiatives are in place to initiate the young into the 'work ethic'. Coles recognises that problems facing unemployed youth facilitate themselves in the education system and discusses this in chapter three 'Tackling educational disaffection and disadvantage'. This provides empirical evidence about which social groups are susceptible to disadvantage in the labour market. The author acknowledges that there are gaps in this chapter due to the amount of research conducted into educational underachievement in Britain.

The next chapter considers the housing and domestic transition and the plight of the young homeless. The following chapter concentrates upon young people leaving care and is overloaded with 'cameos' from projects dealing with young care leavers. The chapter on young people and health, illness and health promotion discusses issues frequently ignored by youth researchers, who often hold common sense assumptions that youth is equated with good health. Youth crime and criminal justice is the last empirically based chapter and provides enlightening empirical evidence. The policy based chapters all provide detailed descriptions of relevant Government policies. Coles attempts to highlight why the holistic approach to youth transition research should be introduced in the conclusion of each policy chapter. Although the substantive chapters provide valuable empirical information relating to young people, sociological analysis is weak. This is not a criticism of the book, but a criticism of the majority of youth transition research in Britain today, especially empirical investigations into Government initiatives. Research into Government initiatives is too often 'normative', providing recommendations on how small adjustments could herald more successful programmes, rather than suggesting a major overhaul of policies that could assist more young people. The empirical chapters are well written and provide examples of youth projects identified as exemplifying 'good practice' in each of the chosen topics areas. The implication of the policies introduced is discussed thoroughly in each chapter.

The Youth Transition Model

The implication of recommendations for youth transition researchers made in chapter two under 'Principles of a Holistic Perspective' on how the youth transition model should be developed, I feel are critically important and require a great deal of attention and will be dealt with individually. Carter (1962) was one of the first researchers to consider young people's movement from school to work. Ashton and Field (1976) superceded his

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work and investigated the emergence of a distinct youth labour market and laid the foundations of the youth transition model. Roberts (1992) added to the academic debate on youth transition by arguing that young peoples career choices developed within a local 'opportunity structure' that structured their eventual employment choices. The youth transition model then diversified to include other important transitions (housing, domestic, etc) in young people's lives that impacted upon their eventual adult status. This led to a more holistic approach where other transitions in young people's lives were considered when investigating the school to work transition. Fragmentation in youth transition research led researchers to investigating specific issues occurring within the transition model and the impact these had on young people's lives, for example the effect of unemployment on young people, Government training schemes and young people leaving care. Although, the various youth transition fields have remained distinct, there has been an emphasis towards investigating the links between different transitions. The youth transition model has solid foundations that have allowed researchers to diversify into fields of investigation on influences (health, disability and neighbourhood) that can effect a young person's transition. The suggestions posited by the author appear to be a natural progression and yet another refinement in the youth transition model.

The first suggestion to enhance the youth transition model is that youth researchers should incorporate 'childhood experiences' into the transitional model. Methodologically this could be difficult as the only two means of gaining access to childhood experiences is either longitudinal research or qualitatively through individual life biographies. The problems with longitudinal research are that it is expensive and high attrition rates can occur, especially among young people whom later become disadvantaged. Previous youth research has collected information on the young persons background characteristics, but more in-depth information is required before childhood experiences can be incorporated into a quantitative research project. Qualitative life biography research can reveal key experiences that have impinged upon young people's lives, but for many transition researchers and policy makers quantitative research is deemed superior to the qualitative methodology. The major problem that I see with present youth transition research is the age young people are deemed to have succeeded or failed in the labour market. The Youth Cohort Study has followed young people to the age of 23, but even this can be too soon to assess many people's final labour market situation. For example, a young person who takes a

year out after leaving education, enters higher education on a four-year degree programme would not complete their education until they have reached the age of 23, which is too early to predict success or failure. Coles refers to this point in his second suggestion. That youth research should include the experiences of the 'young adult'. He argues that:

A model of youth transitions, therefore, needs to extend onto early adulthood if these are to be fully explored and understood. We may need to think more carefully about 'young adults' rather than 'youth'.

(ibid: 12)

Perennial problems regarding when a young person reaches the status of youth and when this status expires have long intrigued youth researchers. Psychologists have got around the definitional problem of youth by concentrating their research into 'adolescence', which is a time period fixed by biological factors. Longitudinal data could follow young people through to their late 20s, which would provide information on the movements of young people in the labour market and pinpoint when they achieve a settled labour market position.

The third holistic recommendation is that researchers should avoid linear assumptions, accepting that when a positive status is achieved, youth has ended and adulthood and full citizenship has been achieved. Linear assumptions are a failing in housing transition research as many young people move backwards and forwards to the parental home. Movement between statuses also occurs in the school to work transition, with European researchers now using metaphors of 'butterflies' or 'yo-yo' to describe young people who flit from status to status. The main question arising from this recommendation is the assumption that if one transition is completed when can adult status then be bestowed upon the individual? There has to be more than one adult status achieved before a young person can be accredited with achieving an adult status.

The fourth suggestion is that youth transition researchers should avoid normative assumptions where:

The youth transition is also implicitly normative. It assumes that getting a job, securing accommodation independent of the family of origin, and forming households, partnerships and family independent of them are 'good things' and important steppingstones to adulthood and full citizenship.

(ibid: 13)

I agree with Coles that the youth transitional model is paradoxically normative and that not all the transitional experiences are good things. There is a dichotomy in the youth transition field where researchers endeavor to move away from normative assumptions, but are often dragged back by policy orientated research that demands quantitative data to highlight the labour market position of young people. Indeed, policy makers rely on normative assumptions to ascertain whom they deem to be at risk, status zero or NEET. In an ideal world youth researchers could experiment with different theoretical ideas about the youth transition, but in reality they are funded by organisations that require understandable results and committed to providing usable information for policymakers.

The fifth and sixth suggestions made by the author relate to investigations into the careers equation and considering the careers equation holistically. The seventh suggestion is including young people as full participants in the research process or providing young people with a voice. Coles is primarily concerned that young people should be encouraged and supported in participating in policy development and the evaluation of practice delivery.

The eighth recommendation is that there should be realism in research with a:

> realistic appraisal of the social, familial and economic circumstances in which young people live and what can be realistically and sensitively accomplished in the short, medium and long term by policy intervention.

(op cit)

The ninth suggestion is for understanding patterns of difference among the different sets of issues young people face, urban rural differences, gender differences, young people with disabilities, and young people from different ethnic groups. The tenth and final suggestion is that youth research should be inclusive of all groups, not merely focussing on those defined as vulnerable or at risk. We have argued elsewhere that the starting point for all research into the youth transition should be the premise that at a subjective level all young people are vulnerable and at risk (see Furlong and Cartmel 1997).

I agree with many of the author's suggestions regarding youth transition research. The idea of 'normative assumptions' underlying youth transition research are indeed opposite to sociological theoretical concepts for challenging the 'common sense' ideas held by individuals. The youth transition literature in many cases assumes that young people who gain

employment have concluded a successful transition, but there is an underlying normative assumption that employment is a 'good thing'. The sociology of education in the 1970s challenged the notion that post compulsory education was good for everyone, youth transition researchers have to beware of assuming that all employment is good and that gaining a job heralds a successful transition.

I would argue that the holistic nature of youth research at which Coles is aiming, could be summed up succinctly by stating that youth researchers should be considering 'processes' in the youth transition together with measurable quantitative outcomes. Childhood experiences are undoubtedly important socialization processes for young people's later life chances and mould individuals future career plans. Young people's lives are complex and they are bombarded with influences that can mold their future, attempts to unravel the effect of these processes on later lifer chances are paramount. Processes that are occurring when young people interact with institutions of the state need investigating to discover the amount of choice or lack of it young people have in the decision making process.

In order to understand the processes that impact on young people's lives it will be necessary for youth transition researchers to combine longitudinal data and qualitative interviews to investigate the effect of decisions made in the transition at an objective and subjective level. Sociological youth transition research will inevitably have to consider psychological measures related to such factors as self esteem, self efficacy and locus of control in empirical research to enable them to measure the 'subjective' as well as 'objective' measures of the processes that lead to a successful transition into the labour market. Coles argues there has been reluctance among sociologists to consider using psychological measures as a dimension of investigation in the youth transitional model. The use of psychological measures could indeed enhance the search for processes that are occurring in young people's lives.

Are Holistic Policies the answer?
The author reviews the changes in youth policy over the last twenty years and concludes that:

> *whilst the SEU (social exclusion unit) has been the major lead player in joining up youth policy, other arms of the government have been attempting to do so. While there is delegated responsibility for developing join-up solutions, as is the case for the Youth Justice*

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Board, the Teenage pregnancy Unit, the Drugs Prevention and Advisory Service, and the Connexions Service, there are dangers that each of these separate initiatives may begin to develop their own agenda for change and begin to pull in contradictory directions.

(ibid: 210)

Coles envisages problems with the coordination of a holistic youth policy that will require monitoring. The main question is will holistic policies assist youth or will more young people become further detached from mainstream society and labeled 'problematic'? The main problem with previous youth policies has been the bias towards a stick approach, there has been little inducement for young people to become involved with employment and training initiatives, and the Government relies heavily on the threat of benefit sanctions to get young people to participate. The New Deal has been heralded as a success in getting young people into employment, but has had little effect on helping young people on the margins in areas of high unemployment. Structural economic conditions influence the fate of many young people who through no fault of their own are trapped in areas where there are few employment opportunities. The policymakers are recreating the wheel with every fresh initiative and maybe new radical policies to encourage young people to become involved in mainstream society could be considered.

The major question that remains unanswered on the holistic policies that are being introduced (i.e. Connexions) or any universal youth service is *who will be running these projects?* The most successful youth projects are those that have evolved over time and which meet the needs of local young people. The author provides many cameos of successful youth projects that are assisting young people through problems and facilitating good practice. Many of these projects are funded through the voluntary sector, but would their funding continue under joined-up policies? The Government polices are responding to the problems that young people face throughout their youth phase that are facilitated by the failure of the education system to serve their needs. The Government appears to be introducing new policies that are aimed at patching up present faults in the education system, without considering a more radical approach of addressing the original problems within that system.

The new Connexions initiative intends to track young people from the age of thirteen and provide mentors to help them negotiate the move

into employment. The problem I have with this approach is that this is another covert operation used by the Government as a means of surveillance. Foucault argued that as society became more sophisticated new means of surveillance would be needed to monitor the movements of the population. The Connexions initiative is a means of monitoring young people at the margins of society and an attempt to socialize them into the normal aspirations of society.

Overall, Coles has made a valuable contribution to the on-going debate about the future of youth transition research and policy in Britain. There will be many academics, policymakers and practitioners who will agree with the recommendations the author has made about youth transition research. There will also be dissenters who feel that the future of youth research lies in other areas such as consumption, lifestyle and musical tastes. The future of youth transition research is exciting, with a Government committed to tackling youth issues it provides the opportunity for academics to debate the merits and failings of the administrations interventionist policies. Bringing youth onto the political agenda should allow researchers to engage in dialogue and charter unknown research areas that have now opened up with the introduction of new youth policies.

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Jan Fortune-Wood
Doing it Their Way: Home-based Education and Autonomous Learning
Educational Heretics Press 2000
ISBN 1-900219-16-6
£9.95 (pbk)
pp 112

Julie Webb
Those Unschooled Minds: Home-educated Children Grow Up
Educational Heretics Press 2000
ISBN 1-900219-15-8
£9.95
pp 92

Roland Meighan
Learning Unlimited: Home-based Education Case-files
Educational Heretics Press 2001
ISBN 1-900219-18-2
£7.95
pp 68

All the above are available direct from: Educational Heretics Press,
113 Arundel Drive, Bramcote Hills, Nottingham NG9 3FQ

Tony Jeffs

Some social movements have a slow gestation period. Others burst forth destined to make an instant impact. Some last, others don't. Home-based education, teaching your children at home instead of handing the job over to public or private schools, in both respects is clearly in the former category. It has grown slowly, but steadily, in popularity and on the basis of extensive evidence is clearly not a passing fad. Currently in the United States almost 700,000 families opt for home-based education and such is the rate of increase it is expected that in some states the proportion will soon top 10 per cent. In Britain even conservative estimates put the figure at 40,000 families and rising. When we are encountering mounting difficulties in recruiting teachers it is worth asking why almost half of those 'opting out' are themselves school-teachers disillusioned with the environment and low standards prevailing within the system.

The reasons why young people and parents select this route vary. In the United States some are fundamentalist Christians who object to a secular education system which refuses to indoctrinate their children for them. So

to ensure their off-spring have the narrowest possible 'education' they keep them at home. Others may have equally dubious social and religious motives but these are a fringe minority. Opponents of home-based education who dismiss practitioners and advocates alike as a motley band of eccentrics, bigots and anti-intellectuals are making a profound mistake - they are not. Rather I would suggest the evidence points to home-educators being, in the main, articulate reformers who belief we have to find a better alternative to what exists. Certainly the home school movement is not going to quietly fade away, but is clearly here to stay for the foreseeable future. Indeed home education is now beginning to pose the most profound threat yet to the supremacy of mass-schooling since the latter first emerged in the Nineteenth century. He may be hasty in his judgement but John Gatto may yet be proved correct in his claim that this quiet, leaderless revolution is one of the most exciting social movements to arise for a long time. One that may sooner rather than later force educationalists to drastically re-assess their hitherto bovine attachment to our warehouse schools wherein we daily incarcerate millions of young people.

Fortune-Wood is a home educator. She argues that young people are not products to be manipulated and coerced. To be forced to jump endlessly through the pre-set hoops of the national curriculum, SATs and other imposed criteria. She firmly believes that 'true education is not a matter of performance' (p. 88) but must be embraced as a way of opening up the vistas of a life worth living. At the core of the text lies a belief in the need for autonomous education. This is founded upon the primacy of the intrinsic motivation of the learner. Therefore it builds up from the first principle that those engaged in an educational experience must always have true autonomy. That is the freedom to stay or go. It also rejects the 'lure of products and outcomes' (p. 42) and respects the autonomy of the learner by striving to avoid pre-set agendas. This is breaking with the schooling mentality that constantly seeks to narrow the definition of worthwhile or 'proper' knowledge to what is identified as such by those state agencies responsible for setting the official curriculum. Finally unlike mainstream schooling autonomous education is founded upon a conviction that young people are rational and creative beings. Souls who can, on balance, be trusted to make the right decisions regarding their own learning needs. Who like all learners best proceed via the process of 'conjecture and refutation' (p. 17). Fortune-Wood, one surmises, is not a writer with much sympathy for the concept of andragogy.

Autonomous or 'learner-managed' education, Fortune-Wood argues, is not an approach that either can or should be imposed but is a movement that 'proceeds by 'argument and example' (p. 7). It flows in her words from 'purposive conversation' – a wonderful phrase. Unlike transmissive instruction it is centred in the individual and 'learner managed'. The author borrows openly from the work of progressive educators like Neill, Freire and Holt but unlike the former opts to abandon attempts to re-create the school according to a new template. Indeed she is far closer, in many ways, to the informal education tradition of writers like Brew. Not least because she perceives a crucial role for youth work and other informal education provision as a way of delivering 'learner managed' programmes that young people can freely opt into. As youth workers increasingly embrace (for reasons of financial gain, status or for want of a better alternative) the role of handmaiden to the schools autonomous education offers a far more appealing and worthwhile future. Instead of merely rounding up truants and delivering them reluctantly to the gate and perimeter fence; walking the school and college corridors to manage conflict, contain the violence and 'jolly the kids along'; or hunt down the hard cases for the Connexions Programme and dispense platitudes about how wonderful New Deal and NVQ1 are - why not seek an alternative? How about providing genuine educational opportunities for home-based autonomous learners who wish to learn in a collective and group environment those things they believe they can't so easily or fruitfully learn as individuals? Rather than being 'child wardens' according to this model youth workers might become co-ordinators of learning webs. Webs comprising the clubs, classes and activities autonomous learners of all ages seek so that they can partake in informal and social education. Sadly as long as we use schools, clubs and colleges as warehouses in which to dump young people so parents can get on with their interesting lives and simultaneously ignore the whole issue of providing meaningful work rather than 'useless toil' for school-leavers the whole educational system will remain tainted. Teaching will be demeaned and education, as opposed to training for a job or promotion, will be treated with indifference by far too many. You sense that Fortune-Wood and her colleagues are doing more than offering their own children a decent education, that they are indeed forming the vanguard of a movement that may yet rescue education itself from the clammy claw of the Gradgrinds and philistines currently in control. One can only wish them well.

For those who fear, as I once did, that home-educators are going to produce a sub-species of selfish isolates who as a consequence of being locked in the house with over-indulgent parents are unable to relate to other young people and adults Webb's book offers a much prized antidote. Based on research into the post-16 lives of those who had been predominately educated at home it provides a fascinating insight. It emerges that as a group they, with only one exception, followed different paths from their parents; are far more likely to be involved in community and voluntary activity than the rest of the population; do not, with a couple of exceptions, regret having missed the totality of the school experience; and seem a remarkably well-balanced socially aware group who found no difficulty in making friends or socialising. In an era when funding led research and RAE fodder is fast becoming the norm this is a rare example of someone talking to young people in order to discover something fresh. It grabs your attention and demands that the reader re-visit a prejudice or two.

Learning Unlimited is a collection of 15 vignettes relating to the experiences of home-educators. Ranging from the amusing to the disturbing they offer in an accessible way an insight into how young people relate to this 'alternative education'. It serves as a perfect compliment to the other books and would provide a wonderful text for any discussion or training group seeking to consider the issues and dilemmas of home education. Indeed for those involved in the ubiquitous world of 'parenting education' it is highly recommended as an antidote to the prevailing orthodoxy. There is it seems an alternative to re-casting 'the awkward squad' so they correspond to the pre-ordained model of the ideal parent drawn up by the DfEE.

These three texts are part of a burgeoning literature on home-education exists. For those interested they provide a worthwhile entrée into it. Fortune-Wood however offers something extra to those involved in work with young people and youth policy. Via a powerful advocacy of autonomous education that recognises the traditions that pre-dated its recent growth she challenges, deliberately or otherwise, virtually every assumption that underpins current policy. It is an expert well-crafted demolition that even those who may have little sympathy with her position would be well advised to familiarise themselves with.

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Bernard Davies
StreetCred?
Values and Dilemmas in Mental Health Work with Young People
Youth Work Press, 2000
ISBN 0 86155 237 7
£8.50 (pbk)
pp. 120

Barbara Scott

From the outset this short book emphasises that its subject, the organisation 42nd Street which provides a community based mental health resource for young people under stress, is value driven. My initial reaction was that this would be a commentary on the financial prowess of a voluntary organisation and its survival strategy within a harsh funding regime. I anticipated learning the ways and means of eliciting financial support from funders where budgets are tight and details of the progress that had been achieved despite this adversity. However, the terminology in fact relates to the moral values and codes that go to make up the distinctive culture which Davies states has given 42nd Street its reputation as a particularly valuable resource for adolescents.

The book was commissioned to commemorate 20 years of existence for this Manchester based agency which now also serves both Trafford and Salford and provides outreach services to the local communities. Support is targeted at young people aged 14 to 25 years who are under stress. The aim of the book is to avoid a simplistic historical account and focus on the values that drive and sustain the organisation. The supporting evidence has been gathered through conversations with over fifty people who have all been involved with 42nd Street and contributed in some way to the development of these values whether as a user, worker, volunteer, committee member, referral agent or funder.

The author has many years of experience as a youth worker and community worker, lecturer and consultant and has written extensively on the provision of youth support. It is unfortunate that in this particular book it has been thought necessary to patronise the reader by using bold type to highlight the key words in sentences. If the target audience for the book were planners, managers and practitioners as suggested on the cover, it would perhaps have been more appropriate to let them draw their own emphases. Far from giving an objective account, the author is happy to admit to a bias in favour of 42nd Street, having acted as a consultant to

it. Nevertheless, his narrative clearly highlights not only the successes but also the problems that have had to be faced when the application of key values has conflicted with accepted norms within the mental health arena.

The book opens by discussing age related issues and the fact that the 42nd Street organisation bridges the traditional gulf between services offered to 'children' or 'adults' by accepting that adolescence is not just a period of transition but a state in itself. By encompassing such a wide age range specific problems have arisen, such as the need to break confidentiality with clients under 16 year olds in certain circumstances. Also experience has shown that user needs can be significantly different for a 14-year-old as compared with a 25-year-old.

Chapter 2 highlights conflicting approaches to mental illness and/or mental health. It describes how 42nd Street has pursued an alternative socially based regime in contrast to the dominant medical model offered by most agencies. For example the issue of labelling particularly within the mental health arena whether it has racial, sexual or medical overtones is prevalent throughout society. 42nd Street has taken a positive stance to overcome this negative experience and promote the confidence and self worth of individuals and marginalised groups.

Although able to provide traditional counselling, young people referred to 42nd Street are able to access a wide range of therapies as well as youth work and informal support. However, this multi-disciplinary approach is seldom without tensions. A current employee who states that 'there is a hierarchy of disciplines here - and it's not just perceived' expresses one view of the group dynamics within the employed staff. In contrast, it is suggested that many other staff have benefited from the experience of working within a multi-disciplinary environment.

A key strategy is to encourage the users to participate at every level within the organisation and help maintain the youth centred ethos. It is thought that by learning to take responsibility within a 'secure' environment the users are able to explore and develop their ability to take control of their own lives more easily. However, despite the admirable aims of the organisation, the author makes clear that it is necessary to strike the 'balance between user participation and organisational efficiency'. It appears that participation can produce its own problems. Who participates? In respect of users - is it representative or a select minority? In respect of workers – do employees either full time or part time participate to the same degree as volunteers? Sheer practicality would suggest that this is

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unlikely. The telling comment is made that 'it (42nd Street) has never grown old - never become fuddy duddy' and that it draws 'repeatedly on these renewable sources of organisational energy'. This could perhaps indicate a high staff turnover, although no figures are given.

Although the cover publicity denies the desire for a self congratulatory vehicle, it would appear there is much to applaud and 42nd Street has indeed achieved a level of street credibility as can be shown through its continued financial support and growing client numbers. Whether StreetCred? itself becomes influential as a text remains to be seen. However, as the multi-disciplinary, youth centred role model it projects has been in existence for 20 years it would appear to have established its own level of credibility. It can only be hoped that the effectiveness of 42nd Street's approach will be respected and emulated by other regimes and that it will continue to help ameliorate the stresses of the growing number of young people who use the service.

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Barry Goldson (ed)
The New Youth Justice
Russell House Publishing, 2000
ISBN 1-898924-72-4
pp 196

Keith Munro

The publication of this book coincides perfectly with the recent implementation of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) and the forthcoming introduction of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act (1999).

Goldson has brought together 11 excellent chapters, each of which explore key developments or current debates within the field of youth justice in England and Wales. However for the reviewer three chapters stand out and it is on these I will focus. They are 'The Politics of Electoral Anxiety' by John Pitts; 'Youth Offender Panels and Restorative Approaches" by Haines; and finally Moore's 'Child Incarceration'.

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Pitts provides a powerful and critical analysis that charts the development of the policies of New Labour relating to youth offending. He notes the importance to New Labour of its criminal justice legislation and the haste with which they placed it on the statute book - 14 months. He compares this to the three years it took a Conservative government to produce the 1982 Criminal Justice Act and the five an earlier Labour government spent preparing the ground for 1969 Children and Young Person's Act. Pitts challenges many of New Labour's assertions underpinning their policy and legislation. For example by showing that 'serious research' demonstrates that 'neighbourhood factors will often overwhelm the best efforts of the best parents' in deterring offending behaviour by children and young people from low socio-economic status localities. Thereby, challenging New Labour's assumptions regarding the overwhelming correlation between familial risk factors and youth offending. A belief that lies at the heart of the their approach to youth crime.

Haines discusses the introduction of restorative approaches to the English and Welsh youth justice system. He identifies a number of key points relating to the development of restorative justice in respect of children and young people. At the policy level he rightly questions the cultural appropriateness of adapting New Zealand led restorative processes to our youth justice system. Haines also exposes a number of inherent conflicts regarding the UK's responsibilities to treat children and young people who offend in a manner which is consistent with international treaties e.g. UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) Article 3. The UK Government is committed via this Convention to actions that promote the best interests of the child as the primary consideration. Yet at the core of a restorative justice approach is the view that the position of the victim is central. He also highlights concerns about difficulties in defining restorative justice as a concept and consequently a set of consistent practices.

I share these concerns. However only time will tell if restorative justice is to become prey to those politicians, managers or practitioners who see it as a form of retributive justice. Encouragingly Haines clearly identifies the main potential safeguard that could prevent this happening. In that restorative justice options should only be pursued with and for young offenders when they are in the best interests of the individual young person. I believe that the balance between the 'best interests' of the young people and the victims perspectives can be achieved but only when the former have committed themselves to the process following genuine informed consent and subsequently victims also agree to participate.

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Moore explores trends in the incarceration of children and young people with a particular emphasis on the consequences of the Crime and Disorder Act (1998); an Act that has fuelled the rising trend of imprisoning children and young people in England and Wales. She puts together a strong argument that locking up children and young people has a long history of failure in terms of effectiveness; rates of offending on release; and financial and human costs. Moore draws upon a wide range of sources and research to conclusively demonstrate that prisons are wholly inadequate responses to offending behaviour by children and young people.

Whilst rightly acknowledging that a small number of children and young people need to be kept in secure environments to protect themselves and the public from serious harm, Moore puts forward a convincing view that these should be child centred institutions designed to address the needs of some of the most damaged and disadvantaged people in our society. She concludes by reminding us that there are few simple solutions to the complex challenges presented to professionals, courts and local neighbourhoods by those children and young people who are categorised as persistent or serious young offenders. Nevertheless we know from experience and research what should be avoided - namely incarceration. A reality that constantly obliges us all to seek out 'new and better alternatives' to find what works.

Although I have focussed on three chapters it is important to stress that all of the contributors to this book provide a rich diet of thought provoking material. It is a text I would recommend without any reservations to students, professionals and academics alike.

Keith Munro *manages a restorative justice project for the Children's Society on Teesside.*

Tom Storrie
The Evaluation of Intercultural Youth Exchange
Youth Work Press, 2000
ISBN 0 86155 225 3
£8.50 (pbk)
pp 129

Sean Harte

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The Evaluation of Intercultural Youth Exchange is a brave attempt to throw some light on the complex and under-theorised subject of evaluating informal learning opportunities. In particular, it aims to deal with those experienced within intercultural youth exchanges. The book is mainly composed of texts translated from published material, collated through the action-research of the OFAJ *(the Office franco-allemand pour la Jeunesse)*. This organisation was created to promote and nurture mutual understanding between French and German young people, with the ultimate aim of reducing the likelihood of war between the two countries after their problematic histories.

The Evaluation of Intercultural Youth Exchange is split into four parts; examples of exchanges; contexts of inter-culturality; dynamics and problematics; and actual evaluations. Strangely the topic that might be expected to cover the majority of this text, the 'hows' and 'whys' of evaluation, accounts for only twenty-five pages. This creates a book that is somewhat lacking in substance. Unfortunately, the book also suffers from the result of direct translation of French and German commentators and can be heavy going at times.

Whilst this book is targeted at those who are involved in the planning and organisation of international exchanges, the style and content may not appeal to this group. The composition is heavily theoretical and at times draws upon deeply philosophical perspectives. The practical use and application of any of the information in this book is limited and it would certainly require serious thought and self-reflection before any learning became apparent. *The Evaluation of Intercultural Youth Exchange* is most certainly not an `idiot's guide` to evaluating international exchanges and whilst I would not expect such a text, the relevance of this text for anyone attempting to plan for such an event may be somewhat restricted.

Perhaps the chapter of most interest was that by Lipiansky, who challenges what he sees as the common aim of intercultural exchanges, as a pedagogical attack upon stereotyping. Lipiansky discusses psychological factors which affect the building of stereotypes and describes how a pedagogical

teaching exercise aimed at breaking down stereotypes is likely only to make these negative views become hidden, rather than challenged and broken down. Instead he proposes a framework based upon a dialogical exploration of stereotypical views of different cultural aspects. This method accepts that differences exist and are intrinsic to individuals understanding of their selves, and this is a theme which is further explored by Demorgon in a later chapter. Furthermore it is proposed that by examining how stereotypes and prejudice have been constructed that an opportunity is provided for learning about ones self and other cultural identities simultaneously, and thus a truly informal educational experience is promoted.

Probably the most useful chapter in this book is Müller's section on the practicalities of evaluating intercultural exchanges. A general contrasting of mechanisms of evaluating formal learning with possibilities for reflection within informal education is followed by a concise model of evaluation based upon aesthetic theatrical criticism. Whilst an interesting proposition, the model is never given life, only briefly hinted at. Perhaps this shows a lack of congruence between the abstract theory and its practical application, or perhaps it just has not had enough time to be tested? Moreover, if one accepts that theatrical criticism is an almost entirely subjective measurement based on individual, and indeed cultural values, one wonders what purpose this attempt at empirical measurement of intercultural exchange serves. Indeed one may be led to question what value any model for evaluation of this sort of experience may have to anyone except each individual participant.

The commentary within this book would suggest to the reader that intercultural youth exchanges play a major part in creating individual identities and exploring stereotypes within young people. However, perhaps cynically, I feel I must challenge this grandiose theory. The financial and time resource required for these experiences, coupled with unrealistic funding application time-scales ensure a reality where it is often a very privileged minority who are offered these experiences, and even then they are allowed little input into the planning and organisation of the programme. Surely a book that seeks to evaluate intercultural exchange should look to analyse and critique the organising and participating bodies and their methods.

Perhaps this personal view leads to my major criticism. I feel that the book is a vain attempt to analyse how one may measure something that is truly unmeasurable. Can the value of intercultural exchange be subjected to empirical measurment? If so what value does this measurement have? Can we really improve the next experience through it? Surely each experience offers possibilities for learning and exchange that cannot be measured,

and indeed each is unique so that little value is gained by an attempt at evaluation. I believe the true extent of the success of these programmes remains unmeasurable. Success has infinite possibilities. These successes may occur sooner or later, due in part or in totality to personal and social experiences gained from an intercultural exchange.

Overall, *The Evaluation of Intercultural Youth Exchange* is limited in usefulness and is a highly theoretical resource more readily useful for the student than the practitioner. The title is somewhat misleading and I feel the content of the book to be rather disjointed and superficial. It is unlikely that reading this book will assist the reader in developing strategies for evaluating intercultural exchanges or indeed defining broad aims and objectives. Whilst the topic of evaluation within informal educational experiences is one in serious need of some high quality theoretical analysis, this text does not do justice to the complexities or intricacies of the subject matter, neither questioning its need nor explaining its necessity.

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Helen Martyn (Ed)
Developing Reflective Practice:
Making Sense of Social Work in a World of Change
The Policy Press 2000
ISBN: 1 86134 238 1
£16.99
pp 224

Chris Dearden and Saul Becker
Growing Up Caring:
Vulnerability and Transition to Childhood - Young Carers' Experiences
ISBN: 0 86155 233 4
£12.95
pp 48

Dustine Evans

It was enormously difficult to compare these two books. This was because they are in many respects so very different. However, all the authors held two aspects in common. First, an ability to present information

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in an easy readable format; second, a willingness to include first-hand accounts of life experiences, that brought a sense of realism to the text.

The similarities end here. I will begin by summarising *Developing Reflective Practice*. This book is a sound starting point from which workers can begin to realise what is required to become expert in their field. This is through the opportunity to journey with other practitioners through difficult and sometimes painful pieces of work they have undertaken with young people or families (particularly those that evoked unexpected learning) and consequently the opportunity for improved practice and the extension of knowledge.

The first book is divided into three sections, the first two of which include several short case studies each written by different authors on real events. Each study is then reflected upon and evaluated in terms of learning on a personal level and the theories that were useful in practice. I found the studies themselves extremely interesting, honest and likely scenarios. My only regret was that the discussion around evaluation and theory was generally brief and lacking depth. Fortunately, all other aspects make this book a worthwhile read in their own right and would hopefully provide a platform for further reading.

The third part draws on the implications of the compilation of four studies. It offers a useful conclusion to the book and seems to begin to compensate for the limited discussion around theory in earlier chapters by exploring in a more philosophical manner the significance of theory for informed practice. This section also raises important issues relating to work with individuals and families. One such is the tendency of practitioners to be inclined to hold greater emphasis on the method and process of intervention as opposed to purpose and outcome (or the 'why' and 'how') (p. 202). Another is the need to include those with whom we are working in the process of evaluation and certainly in the planning stages where goals and targets for the work are set.

The review of this particular book will close by reiterating important messages raised for myself from the first chapter, which are key for anyone with an interest in the welfare of young people. Professionals do and should be aware of the wide range of theories and methodologies that inform their practice. It is equally important to recognise when they do not posses the appropriate skills and knowledge if young people are to be given the best possible service available. Whilst this book does not elaborate on theory, it is a useful beginning from which further reading can stem. It is an essential read for any social work student, as I am certain

it would have been invaluable to myself when producing required practice reports. It could also provide a useful discussion tool for supervision sessions and, perhaps, team meetings. Regardless, it is great to know that many of the dilemmas faced and questions raised through the practice of social work are indeed shared by others.

The second book, *Growing Up Caring*, is in contrast, a summary of research. It is significantly shorter than the previous text, but nevertheless effectively covers a lot of ground.

The book is laid out in format common to research write-ups and commences with a summary of the study. The research involved 60 young people who were caring for someone at the time of the study or have done so in the past. It explores their roles within the family and the extent of responsibility they have had in providing emotional support as well as in carrying out domestic tasks and care. It was enlightening to learn that in this study half of the young people were living in lone parent families, none of the parents who were ill or disabled were in employment, with the majority having previously been in manual occupations. Services for the families were not always received, helpful perhaps but they were often perceived as intrusive and of poor quality. Not surprisingly, this has led to an important concern in terms of young carers that once caring had been established within families, services were more likely to be cancelled and therefore the carer became evermore relied upon.

The book continues by highlighting the transitions the young people have made into adulthood, and particularly, the difficulties and benefits the experience of being a carer has provided. The negatives of caring bore a striking resemblance to those raised by young care leavers, such as educational difficulties through missing school and thus not obtaining necessary qualifications. It was also found that many teachers and welfare officers colluded in absences from school (p. 2).

The book also attempts to acknowledge the sensitivity of this issue and how understandable it is in some cases that young people become carers and continue to do so into adulthood. Young people were also asked to identify the positives of being a carer. Responses included maturity, the development of useful life skills, the ability to make decisions and building a loving and close relationship with parents. It is important to note however, that caring for many brought some tough times, such as feeling stressed and depressed, having less time to oneself, and also a restricted social life and education.

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The authors are very clear about their recommendations for legislative and cultural change. Amongst other concerns, they identify the contradictory messages young people are presented with both by the adults around them and within policies. Particularly the notion of a need to 'protect' their childhood as a distinct phase, alongside an expectancy laid upon them to be responsible mature carers. It seems a great deal needs to change for this issue to be given the recognition it warrants and appropriate services established. These, crucially, must be tailored to meet the needs of young carers and be supportive of those whom they care for both as parents and individuals.

In conclusion, this book will be useful for anyone with an interest in young people and their progression into adulthood. It is my hope that this research will also prove influential enough to help raise the profile of young carers and their families. Hopefully from such debates positive policy changes will emerge.

Dustine Evans *works for Barnardo's with young people experiencing a transition to independence.*

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