

**Evaluation of the  
Youth Supported Employment Project**

**Delivered by Elite Supported Employment Agency**

**Merthyr Tydfil**

**From 1<sup>st</sup> October 2006 to March 30<sup>th</sup> 2007**

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**May 2007**

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## **Section 1: Background and Introduction**

### **Overview**

This project was a 3-way initiative between Merthyr Tydfil County Borough Council 14-19 Pathways, Elite Supported Employment Service who implemented the approach and the authors of this report who designed the model and provided guidance and advice. The project was funded by the European Social Fund via the Merthyr Tydfil 14-19 Network. This pilot project aimed to fulfil many of the criteria set out in local and national initiatives that are intended to encourage people with learning disabilities to experience more meaningful and valued lives as participating and active members within their local communities.<sup>1</sup> Teenagers with learning disabilities rarely have access to normative life experiences and career development strategies. Part-time paid work from about the age of 16 years is frequently part of the transitional path that typical young people take as they move into adult life and employment. They may begin this by undertaking activities such as baby-sitting or a newspaper round and later, Saturday or after-school work in local businesses. The experiences they have in these jobs help them to determine their personal vocational strengths, gauge their future employment interests, and appreciate a degree of financial independence for the first time. Young people also begin to be independent actors away from school or parents and they learn about the world of work and what is required in terms of their behaviour.

Many young people with a disability do not have the opportunity to take on these early employment roles. Any barriers to integration that occur through separate schooling are amplified with this omission. While work experience and job tryouts may be introduced later when they are adult, there is frequently an age discrepancy for disabled adults who find themselves mixing with teenagers in these exploratory entry-level positions. Few support models exist which enable young people who need one-to-one support to experience part-time work appropriate to teenage life.

### **The Youth Supported Employment (YSEP) Approach**

This work was based on the model developed in Canada by Julie Allan<sup>2</sup> and was adapted for the UK by Dr Mark Kilsby and his colleagues in the Welsh Centre for Learning Disabilities, Cardiff University<sup>3</sup>. The approach is now viewed internationally as a model of good practice. The approach presents an opportunity to work in partnership to implement this approach in Merthyr Tydfil, giving young people with disabilities and their parents an opportunity to consider employment as a viable and desirable future prospect for teens with disabilities, while also providing social and skill competency development in inclusive environments. It also seeks to address the deficits in opportunities for secondary school youth with learning disabilities by providing access to career awareness, opportunities for career exploration, peer support, career preparation and competitively waged supported employment through after school and weekend employment.

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<sup>1</sup> The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education - England and Wales (2002) A memorandum for life-long learning. Analysis of the Merthyr Tydfil 11 to 25 Learning Network, 2004. Learning Disability Advisory Group Report to the National Assembly for Wales (2001); Fulfilling the Promises, Proposals for a framework for services for people with learning disabilities. Inspection of Services for Adults with Learning Disabilities in Merthyr Tydfil. SSIW (2005).

<sup>2</sup> Allan, J. (1996) Supported Employment and Youth with a Developmental Disability. Proceedings from the IASSID Conference, Finland Helsinki.

<sup>3</sup> Kilsby, M. & Beyer, S. and Allan, J. (2001) Report on the Youth Supported Employment Project in England and Wales. MENCAP. Swan courtyard, Birmingham B261OU

The target population of the project were teenagers between 15 and 19 years of age who have learning disabilities and non-disabled teens in the same age range. The teens in both of these groups would typically still attend school. Providing peer support to enable young people with a disability to take-up typical work opportunities at this time has been shown to have a number of positive consequences: First, it enables young people with disabilities to take their first step on the employment ladder, giving them that vital first entry on their curriculum vitae. Second, it provides age-appropriate models for young disabled people that can provide them with help in their skill development and social integration. This is particularly significant as frequently it brings together young people who have largely been segregated through separate schooling up to this point. Third, it provides young people without a disability the opportunity to explore support worker roles as a possible career path. Fourth, it may broaden disability awareness among young people who will become some of the entrepreneurs and business managers and policy makers of the future. Fifth, if linked to programmes such as the Duke of Edinburgh award scheme, it may provide young people with a source of personal development which can be accredited through their school portfolio of achievement and which will help them in later College and job applications. Lastly, this type of support has proven to be not only appropriate but also effective, setting the young person with a disability up for success rather than failure.

The non-disabled peers, who attend the same school or live in the same neighbourhoods as the teens with disabilities will provide on-the-job support. Students are matched to each other on the basis of their shared interests and compatibility. The students without disabilities learn that their peers with disabilities share the same aspirations and hopes as they do. The projects have observed that many non-disabled peer partners become champions and advocates on behalf of their peers with learning disabilities in school and community.

Project participants are sought through schools, disability networks, and through word of mouth referrals from parents and teenagers. Prospective students with disabilities may be receiving an inclusive or segregated education. The project will establish partnerships and/or links with school authorities and specific appropriate schools. These partnerships will enable project staff to approach schools and teachers to help identify students who may have an interest in peer-supported employment. Students with disabilities will be selected by project staff on the basis of their willingness to participate and not on the basis of any perceptions by staff or teachers as to their potential for success given their disability. Students without disabilities were selected on the basis of their values and interest in supporting their peers with disabilities and not simply on the basis of their academic success.

### **Pilot Project Aims and Duration**

The project aimed to deliver peer supported employment to up to eight students with learning disabilities and hire, train and supervise up to eight non disabled peer support partners over a 9 month duration, working with a total of up to 16 students. Success markers were based on the extent that the aims of the project were reached, and by directly comparing the outcomes of the current project with those from previous YSEP projects. These established YSEP sites in Blackwood in South Wales and Doncaster in North of England. The Merthyr project start date was September 2006, but delays in confirming contractual arrangements meant that the project did not get under way until

October 2006. Consequently, the project period evaluated is over a 6 month period from October 1<sup>st</sup> 2006 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 2007. This means that the evaluation period is approximately half the duration of those employed on the previous projects. Any comparison must take this into account when analysing the outcomes.

In line with the project specification the project had the following aims:

- 1) *To support up to eight teenagers with learning disabilities and their parents to begin inclusive career development practices at a chronologically appropriate time through the provision of one to one peer support of the disabled teens in part-time paid work*
- 2) *To create the opportunity to highlight successful paid employment strategies for teens with learning disabilities;*
- 3) *To support the teens and parents to begin to think about work, and to engage in activities geared toward work preparation (i.e. consider possible areas of work, and give project co-ordinator ideas for job search) thus kick-starting the transition from school into work;*
- 4) *To support the teens and their parents to begin to nurture and develop a working identity (for the teens) with all it's incumbent roles and responsibilities, and encourage greater expectations (parental and societal) for the future for the teens with disabilities;*
- 5) *To develop vocational profiles for the teens with disabilities to identify their interests and abilities which will then be translated into local community employment by the project co-ordinators;*
- 6) *To give both sets of teenagers access to a unique learning opportunity that enable them to develop long term vocational aspirations that reflect their experiences and interests;*
- 7) *To successfully develop natural supports and phase out the peer support prior to the end of the project;*
- 8) *To create relationships with employers, and work with them to create inclusive competitively waged work opportunities for teenagers with learning disabilities;*
- 9) *To create relationships with local organisations, such as Colleges, voluntary organisations, local community projects and/or other educational establishments to adapt (where necessary) and provide inclusive employment related pre-requisite educational opportunities;*
- 10) *To work with the Duke of Edinburgh awards scheme if appropriate;*
- 11) *To create a best practice model of YSEP in Merthyr Tydfil;*

- 12) *To generate interest in the continuation of the project in Merthyr Tydfil and to explore ways of sustaining the project beyond the pilot;*
- 13) *To support and encourage the development of a parent YSEP action/leadership group.*

## **Section 2: Evaluation Questions and Method**

### **Information Sources**

The evaluation employed a mixture of information collecting sources. These included the GEMMA<sup>4</sup> database, which was already installed as part Elite's internal monitoring system. This allows information about the hours worked and type of activities undertaken by the co-ordinators, peer supporters and the supported teenagers, and the rates of pay of the supported employees to be collated and tracked. Evaluation of the project focused on those variables used in previous empirical research in this area that cover the range of project aims and objectives.

### **Evaluation Questions**

The evaluation aimed to answer the following questions:

- 1) *What were the characteristics of the supported teenagers in terms of age, gender and levels of disability?*
- 2) *What were the characteristics of the peer supporters?*

The level of disability of the client group was determined by the norm-referenced Inventory for Client and Agency Planning (ICAP)<sup>5</sup>. This is completed by someone who knows the person well and has been shown to be an objective way of gauging the extent of cognitive functioning of people with learning disabilities. It records detailed information regarding the nature and extent of support that each person would require on a number of daily living skills across a number of 'skill domains'. These include Motor skills, Social and Communication skills, and Personal and Community Living skills and the extent and severity of challenging behaviours. This approach was used in the previous YSEP projects, allowing a direct comparison that is free from variations in local authority assessments, which can change over geographical locations and time.

Information about the peer supporters was collected via the peer support Application Form, face-to-face interviews and reference checks.

- 3) *What were characteristics of the jobs obtained?*

Of interest here were the types, locations and rates of pay of the jobs obtained. This information was collected via Elite's internal monitoring systems. Also of importance were the timelines of the jobs obtained, the extent of peer support and the reasons for any job losses that occurred.

- 4) *What was the extent of peer support, withdrawal and job termination?*

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<sup>4</sup> **General Employment Management and Marketing Application**

<sup>5</sup> **Bruininks, B.H., Hill, K., Weatherman, R.F. & Woodcock, W. (1986). Client and Agency Planning, Allen, Texas: DLM Teaching Resources.**

Also of importance was the extent of integration in the work sites. Where there is only partial or poor integration, then employees would be identified as being different from their non-disabled colleagues and peers, creating a barrier to the social acceptance of disabled people in the work place. The extent of integration was gauged using the Employment Integration Index<sup>6</sup>. This breaks down integration into Social and Physical aspects of integration and allows each domain to be recorded as having 'excellent', 'partial' or 'poor' integration, the latter being characterised by differences in such things as the tasks undertaken, rates of pay, dress and access to company facilities, compared with the non disabled co-workers employed within the same work site as the disabled teenager.

5) *To what extent were the employees integrated into the worksite culture?*

Collecting information about the activities undertaken by the co-ordinator provided a basic description of the roles and diversity of activities that need to be undertaken for the project to be a success. Of importance here was how the hours spent on the project break down into the different activities.

6) *What were the activities of the co-ordinator and what were the diversity of roles and tasks undertaken to make the project a success?*

It was hoped that the project will have a positive impact on the expectations of the parents of the supported teenagers. A questionnaire was devised (see Appendix 1) that sought the views and opinions of the parents. Telephone interviews were conducted during which the parents' permission was gained to use any information they provided in subsequent written reports and presentations about the project. As Appendix 1 shows parents were asked whether their son/daughter had had a positive experience as participants on the project, whether it had helped their son/daughter to develop work skills and increased their future work potential.

7) *What were the views of the Parents about the project and did it change their expectations for their son or daughter?*

Parents were also asked about the support their son/daughter had received throughout the project and whether or not it had impacted their parental expectations about their sons /daughters abilities and their potential to develop a career in paid jobs in the future. They were also asked whether the project had led to increases in their childrens' self-esteem, confidence and social networks, as well as whether they would recommend the project to other parents. These proceeding questions were posited to the parents as positive statements and they were then asked to rate the extent of their compliance with each statement. The options provided were 'strongly agree', 'agree', 'neutral' (OK), 'disagree', or 'strongly disagree'. Each rating was supported by the parents' comments to clarify their views. Finally, parents were asked to explain what positives and problems had occurred throughout the project so far, and whether they had any other comments they wished to add for further information.

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<sup>6</sup> Lagomarcino, T.R. & DeStefano, L. (1989) *The Employment Integration Index*. University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Champaign IL.

- 8) *What were the views and opinions of the supported teenagers about the project and what impact did it have upon their expectations, confidence and self-esteem?*

The views of the supported teenagers were collected via a focus group within the local special needs school. In this they were asked about their experiences in paid work, and whether these have had any impact on their self-esteem, confidence and aspirations on leaving school (see Appendix 2).

- 9) *What were the views of the Coordinator and the School Principle of the project and what issues and problems arose?*

In total 4 interviews were conducted to gain the views and opinions of those involved in setting up and running the project. These were: The project Co-ordinator, who lived in Merthyr and is the parent and a daughter with a disability, the director and senior manager of Elite and the Vice Principle of the local special school. The questions were aimed at identifying what worked well, issues that arose and the activities undertaken during the project.

The data collected from this evaluation was compared with findings from previous research and a summary of the main findings was compiled. This includes a set of conclusions, and subsequent recommendations made for the delivery of future YSEP initiatives.

### **Section 3: Project Outcomes**

#### **Supported Employee Characteristics**

A total of 7 teenagers with a learning disability from Greenfields Special School participated in the project over the duration of this evaluation, with an eighth student identified for future support. Due to the timing constraints the disabled teens were selected on the basis that they were already known to Elite through their participation in a work awareness course run by the agency. Ordinarily, the project co-ordinators would solicit applications from prospective teens through schools that send information about the project to parents, who, if they are interested, fill in the applications on behalf of their children. The timing of the start of the project made this process impossible to follow. Interviews and Vocational Profiles were conducted by the co-ordinators to identify each job seeker's employment strengths and abilities, their work preferences, as well as their personal circumstances, such as health condition, living arrangements and likely support requirements.

Table 1 shows that as of April 31<sup>st</sup> the project had enabled 7 disabled teenagers to gain access to work. Six of these were paid jobs, and one was an unpaid work-experience that falls outside of the project aim of finding only paid jobs. Follow-up interviews with the co-ordinator and the youngster on this work-experience placement suggested that the decision had been made on the basis of the client's preferences for the type of job (working in IT) and based on their future career aspirations. Although it should be stated the YSEP model has been developed to assist young people to gain paid employment experiences in a more global fashion, i.e. learning non specific work skills and habits that can be translated into any future work environment. Despite this, finding and obtaining 6 jobs within the current duration is a notable achievement



comparing favourably against the previous projects. This indicates that the original target of obtaining 8 paid jobs is highly achievable for future YSEP projects.

Table 1 also shows the characteristics of the supported employees who obtained jobs through the project in the context of previous findings. It shows that there is a disproportionate number of males (86%), compared to females in Merthyr. This may partly reflect the fact that more males than females are reported as having a learning disability in the UK and the cultural expectation that work is more important to men than women. This is a widely reported finding in adult supported employment research in the USA and Britain,<sup>7</sup> and, as Table 1 shows, was also reported in the previous YSEP projects. In Doncaster and Blackwood male employees outnumbered female employees by 3 to 1. However, there is currently only 1 female in this project, presenting a clear challenge the co-ordinator in Merthyr to target young women in the area. It also shows that the average age of the employees in the Merthyr site fell within the target age group for the project of 16 to 19, the average age of the employees being 16 years and 8 months, which is in line with previous findings.

**Table 1: Supported Employee Characteristics**

	<u>Merthyr</u>	<u>Doncaster</u>	<u>Blackwood</u>	<u>Totals</u>
Number of employees	7	8	8	23
Number of Females	1 (14%)	2 (25%)	3 (37%)	6 (31%)
Mean Age (Years:Months)	16.8	17.3	16.8	16.9
Age Ranges (Years:Months)	16:0 – 18.3	17:2 – 20:8	15:5 – 18:10	15:5 – 20:8
<u>Service Level Score</u>				
8-9 - Infrequent or no Assistance	7 (100%)	2 (25%)	0	2 (12%)
7-8 – limited Personal care and/or regular supervision	0	3 (37%)	5 (63%)	8 (50%)
5-6 Regular Personal Care and/or Close supervision	0	3 (37%)	3 (37%)	6 (38%)
1-4 Extensive Personal Care and/or Constant supervision.	0	0	0	0

Table 1 also shows the level of disability for the Merthyr group as determined by the ‘Service Level Scores’ derived through the ICAP. This suggests that all of those referred to the project so far from Merthyr were defined as requiring infrequent or no personal care and supervision in their daily living skills. None of the Merthyr group had significant physical impairments and none exhibited challenging behaviours. This compares to the previous 2 YSEP projects where only 2 teenagers were classified as falling into this category. Of the remainder, 50% required some personal care or supervision and 38% were defined through the instrument as requiring frequent personal care and supervision. Three of the participants in the previous projects exhibited challenging behaviours, although their teachers and parents viewed these as non-problematic and infrequent.

<sup>7</sup> (Wehman, Hill, Hill, Brooke, Pandalton & Britt, 1985; Beyer, Goodere & Kilsby, 1996).

These results suggest that the Merthyr project could be working more with those students with higher support needs due to their cognitive functioning level. This was a view supported by the school vice principle, who suggested that, although the project had been of great benefit to those taking part, the YSEP approach would have greater benefit to those with higher support needs, the expectations for these individuals being lower. These results clearly indicate the need to ensure that those with higher levels of support are provided with more opportunities to access the project to increase wider expectations of those individuals, who previously would be expected to attend Sandbrook Day Centre or segregated College activities on leaving school.

### **Peer Supporter Characteristics**

One of the main aims of the project was to pair the supported employees with peer supporters of a similar age. Elite reported that they interviewed 5 peer supporters of whom 4 were offered the post. One of these declined the offer, and a further peer was not employed on the project over the duration, leaving 2 peer supporters (1 female) to support the 7 employees over the duration. The ages of the peer supporters were 17:11 and 17:0 at the time of recruitment. These ages fulfil the project target of recruiting same age peers, these being slightly older (6 months) compared with the ages of the employees. Although the age ranges of the peer supporters were similar to those of the previous YSEP initiatives, there were interesting variations in the numbers being recruited. The previous 2 projects each employed 6 peer supporters prior to the project start dates.

There may be a number of reasons for this variation including the fact that the project, although originally scheduled to start in September, did not get underway until October. Previous YSEP projects have illustrated the importance of accessing peer supporters at the very beginning of the school term prior to potential candidates filling their extra curricula diaries. This placed Elite at a disadvantage compared to previous projects.

The fact that the peer supporters were not paid for their work may also have had an effect on recruitment levels. In the previous UK projects, the peers in Blackwood were paid at the minimum wage levels for the time. While, the peers in the Doncaster project were not paid, the co-ordinator had sufficient time to link up with the local Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme (DofE) prior to the project, with the result that all of those undertaking work in Doncaster were working towards their silver or gold level awards. This strongly suggests a need to develop greater incentives for the peers in terms of pay, or local award schemes. Anecdotal evidence from Canada along with evidence from this project would suggest that in the future the peer supporters should be offered at least minimum wage levels for their work on the project to assist in recruitment. One very positive outcome was that one of the peer supporters received a local volunteering reward, in recognition of the time and effort they provided without pay.

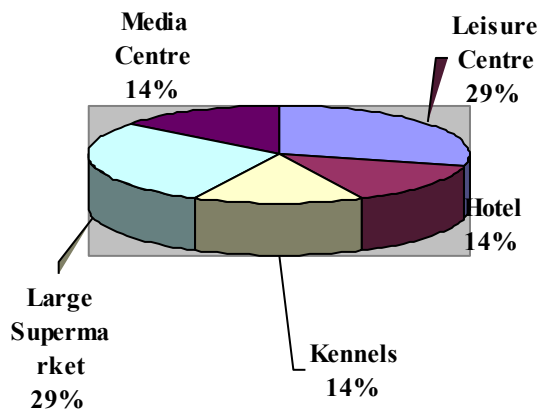
### **Employment Settings and Rates of Pay**

Seven jobs were found in a variety of locations and businesses, each involving different tasks and activities. Figures 1 and 2 show the variety of jobs obtained. One of the Supermarket jobs was based in Tesco's, within a (contracted) catering department involving clearing tables and stacking and using the dishwasher. The second supermarket job was based in a local Asda and involved facing and stacking the shelves. One job was located in a kennels, involving cleaning, feeding and walking the dogs; One job was in a local hotel, working within the restaurant area serving food and

cleaning tables; two further jobs were located in a local Leisure Centre and involved setting up sports apparatus (not at the same time), while the remaining job which at the time of this evaluation is an unpaid work experience, was based in a Media Centre, which acts as a learning facility, involving the use of IT and video work. It is to the project's credit that they secured a paid job in Animal Care, these jobs are often associated with high levels of voluntary and unpaid work-experience as youngsters try to establish careers in this area.

As Figure 3 shows, the jobs obtained also reflect a mixture of different sized organisations, ranging from those employing over 50 people to those employing between 3-10 co-workers (1 site with over 50 employees, 1 with between 25 to 50, 2 sites with 11-25 and 3 smaller sites with 3-10 employees) This indicates that the job sites had good potential for the supported employees to interact with non-disabled employees. Figure 3 shows that there is a healthy variety in the tasks involved in the jobs and the co-ordinator has done well to find such a high proportion of jobs involving interaction with members of the public. These jobs raise the profile of people with learning disabilities within society, projecting a positive image.

**Figure 1: Location of Jobs Found**



**Figure 2: Types of Job Found**

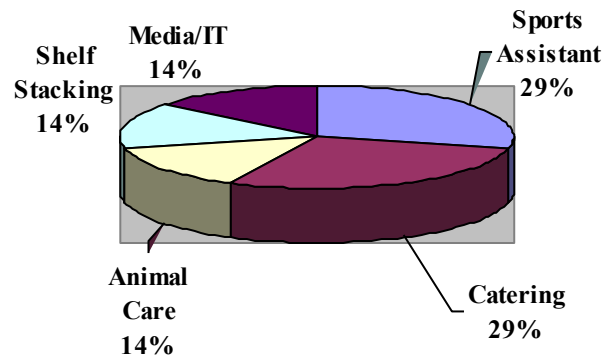
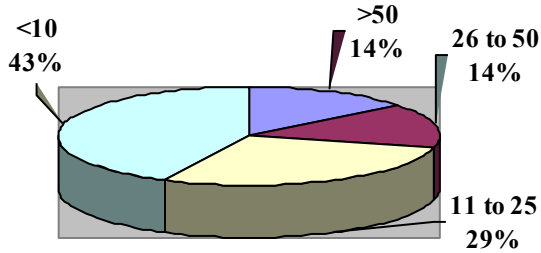


Figure 4 shows the number of hours per week that the supported employees spent in their jobs. It shows that 4 of the jobs (57%) were for 4 hours per week (Hotel, Kennels, Asda and Tesco's) 2 were for 3 hours per week (one of the Leisure Centre jobs and the Media job), the remaining job in the Leisure Centre being for 2 hours per week due to a reduction in the hours the manager required the employee to work. All of the jobs occurred once per week, reflecting part-time working hours that traditionally attract teenagers.

**Figure 3: Size of Employee Organisations**



**Figure 4: Hours Worked**

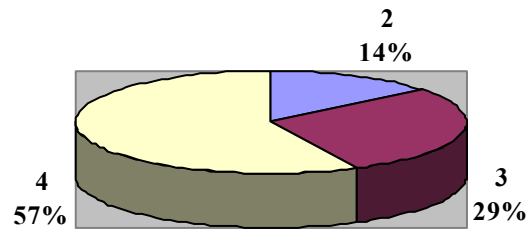
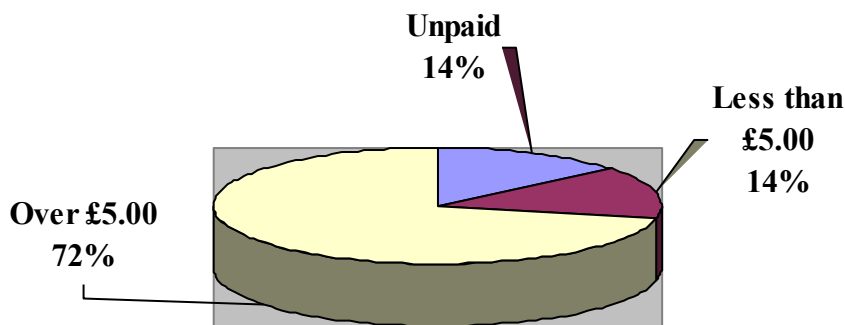


Figure 5 shows the hourly rates of pay for the supported employees. The majority of supported employees were earning £5.00 or more per hour. This is above the national minimum wage for this age group, which has stood at £4.45 an hour for 18 to 22 year olds since October 2006. One of these employees earned £5.00 an hour, while 2 earned £5.35, this being the minimum wage limit set for those over 22 years of age. Two employees were earning in excess of even this limit earning £5.69 and £5.85 respectively. Figure 5 also shows that 1 employee was earning less than £5.00 an hour, his hourly rate being £3.30, which is consistent with this employee's age (17 years) and the minimum wage levels for 16 to 17 year olds. This wage level is set to increase over the next month to £4.45. As previously mentioned, one employee was unpaid (Media Centre), and was awaiting the results of a funding bid to secure a part-time paid employment post. Although this would represent a positive outcome, research in adult supported employment<sup>8</sup> has shown that the provision of unpaid work experience can hinder disabled peoples' progress into paid employment opportunities. It can lead to a prolonged work preparation phase, hindering throughput into remunerative work. However, apart from this, the project has fulfilled the aim of paid employment, for at least going rates of pay for 6 young employees.

**Figure 5: Hourly Rates of Pay**



<sup>8</sup> Bellamy, G.T., Horner, R.H. & Inman, D.P. (1979). *A behavioural approach to habilitation. Vocational Habilitation of Severely Retarded Adults. A Direct Service Technology* (pp17-46). Baltimore: University Park Press.

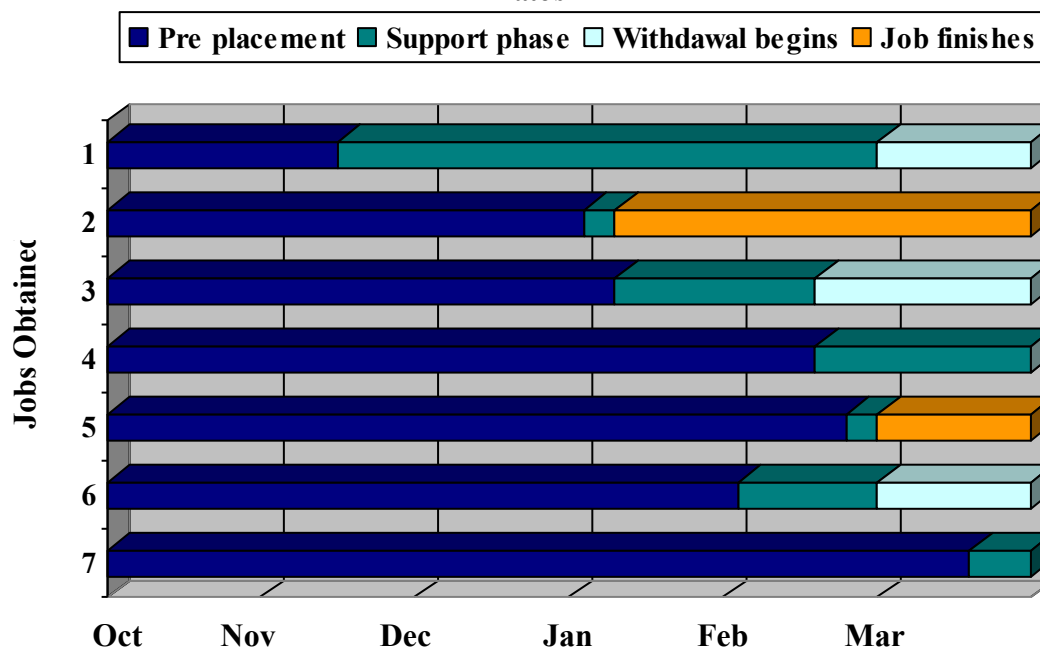
## Section 4. Job Starts, Finishes and Extent of Peer Support

### Time that Jobs Started

Figure 6 shows the months that the jobs started, when withdrawal of peer support began, and where job terminations occurred. It reflects the fact that 7 jobs were found over the 6-month duration. Figure 6 shows that the first job was obtained in November 2006, 2 jobs obtained in January, 3 in February, with the remaining job obtained during project month 6 in March 2007. The original project outline aimed to place the first teens into work by February 2007, allowing for an original set up period of 5 months. During the set-up period the co-ordinator undertook discussions with school heads, careers advisors, teachers, the parents, and the prospective employees and peer supporters. Interviews were conducted with potential project participants, and peer support partners and the process of conducting Vocational Profiles for the disabled teenagers was also begun. Also during this period, the co-ordinator, began canvassing employers for employment and job matching to find the young employees jobs that suited their preferences and abilities.

Also during this period each peer supporter met with the co-ordinator who made them aware of the aim of systematically withdrawing their support so that the supported employee would eventually work independently from ongoing one-to-one support. Interestingly, the training period consisted mostly of the co-ordinator providing one-on-one tutoring within the job sites during the initial phase of job placement. This differs from previous UK YSEP approaches, where training induction took place as a group activity spanning a week or more. While this may reduce the potential for bringing the peer supporters and the employees together as a group, it may also reduce the tendency for the peer supporters to stigmatise those they end up supporting, and increase the potential for the paired teenagers to work together as 'equals'. The Canadian YSEP projects originally gave peer supporters a 30-hour training course, however over time the necessity for this became questionable as more projects utilized the train on the job method employed by the current project.

**Figure 6: Job Start Dates, Extent of Withdrawal and Job Finish Dates**



With the project not starting fully until October 2006, this effectively reduced the set-up period to 4 months. This compares to an 8 month set up period for previous YSEP projects. There were reasons to suppose that the set-up period for the project in Merthyr would be less than those afforded to the previous 2 projects. First, the original projects were piloting the approach in the UK for the first time. This meant that all the materials had to be developed from scratch, and the processes associated with the approach piloted for the first time. Second, Elite had an already established network of employers developed through previous employment initiatives and the local school who they had previously worked with within the borough. Third, many of the processes and administration required to support the project were already available to the co-ordinating Supported Employment Agency.

Another advantage was that the co-ordinator hired to work on the project lived locally in the Merthyr area and was also a parent of child with a disability who had received Elite's services as a parent prior to being recruited. Senior agency staff reported that this had 'enhanced the project and its potential for success'. This represents a considerable achievement by the co-ordinator, given the timescale, and suggests that the agency is on course to meet the original target set of 8 supported employees over a 9-month period comfortably. The numbers of jobs obtained are also in line with the numbers of jobs obtained by a typical adult supported employment agency in the UK, where staff/supported employee ratios stand at 1:7 for the first year in operation. This reinforces the notion that the project requires a shorter set-up period in repetition projects and that the initial target of supporting 8 disabled teens in work over the 9-month duration could be increased to 10.

### **Extent of Peer Support Withdrawal**

Figure 6 also provides an indication of the extent of support being provided by the peer supporters, with a more intensive support phase immediately following the job start dates as the peer supporters assisted the employees to learn the skills of their jobs and settle into the respective workplace cultures. The withdrawal phases are represented by a reduction in the amount of on-the-job assistance as the peers adopted strategies to fade their level of their support over time. Thus, in job 1 the level of support was reduced from 4 hours to less than 1 hour a session, as was job 3, while job 6 was reduced from 3 to 2 hours. In jobs 2 and 5 the jobs finished prior to the commencement of the withdrawal phase. Jobs 4 and 7 at the time of this evaluation are still in the intensive support stage.

This fading of support is an important component of the supported employment approach. It allows resource to be freed up and used in supporting other new employees. It also encourages the employee to work independently, without the continued need of assistance from the peer support partner, and reduces the stigma attached to employees who require one-on-one support to successfully learn and complete the tasks of their jobs. Examples of effective withdrawal strategies provided by the peers included the use of Task Analyses to develop effective teaching plans, the application of progressively less intensive prompts and cues, and leaving the worksite area progressively earlier and earlier to systematically reduce the amount of time the peers spent in the job sites. This is encouraging and is comparable with findings from the previous projects where, on average, complete withdrawal was achieved following 4 months support (range=6 weeks to 6 months). One of the challenges remaining for the current YSEP project remains to withdraw remaining job site support completely,

allowing for a less intensive follow-up from the agency involving contacting the employers, employees and the parents to ensure that no unforeseen problems occur. Previous YSEP's have focussed on developing parental and employer connections that follow more closely natural developments and allow the supporting agency to withdraw more completely, only reinstating their role if contacted by either the parent or the employer.

### **Reasons for Job Finishes**

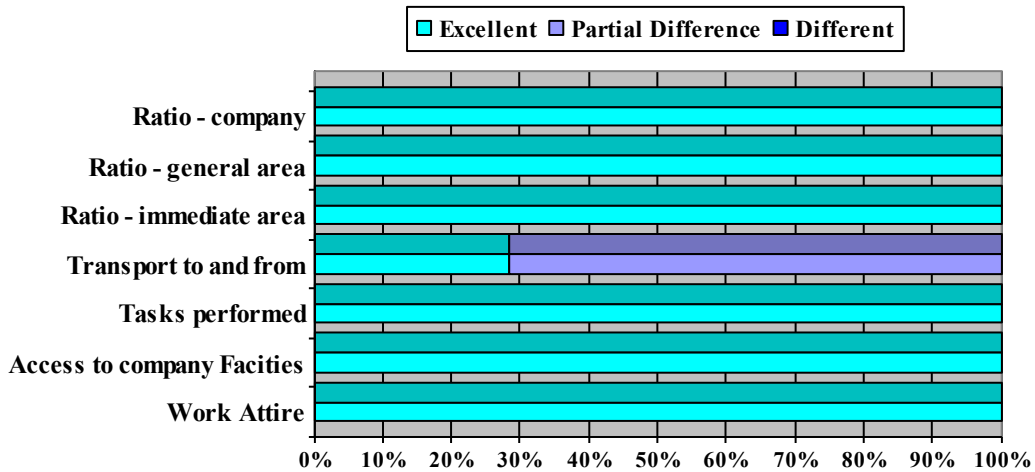
Figure 6 also shows that 2 of the jobs ended prematurely, with one of the jobs lasting only a single shift. Job 2 took place in the restaurant of a local hotel. The reason given for job finish is cited as 'Lack of Commitment', this was reinforced by the vice principles comments and that of the co-ordinator. However, the co-ordinator also reported that the pace and demands of the job (which occurred at peak restaurant times) had been too much for the employee, suggesting that this may have been a poor job match. 'Lack of commitment' was also presented as the reason for the second job termination. In this instance the job was in a local leisure centre and, as with the other job termination, the young person had only completed one shift and did not turn up for work the following week. This time the young person had been disappointed not to be able to use the sports equipment that he was setting up for others to use. This may also have led to this employee becoming bored with the job.

Clearly, some job losses are inevitable on a project of this nature: of the 16 jobs found in the previous UK YSEP projects, there were 4 job terminations. Obtaining a job for the first time can be balance between the lessons learned about the consequences of being too lethargic and not committed to the job, on the one hand, and the benefits of receiving pay and having access to wider social networks on the other. The ethos of the supported employment approach dictates that we view these job terminations as problems of support, pre placement planning or job matching. Where there is a lack of commitment on the part of individuals or their parents, then this can be difficult and underlines the importance of maximising people's motivation by matching people to jobs that suit their interests and working closely with parents to motivate the young people. Also, job failures can have a negative effect on the confidence of the young disabled teenagers and the expectations of their families. The agency needs to ensure that these individuals are followed up and supported into new jobs as soon as possible.

### **Integration of Employees**

Figures 7 and 8 present the extent that the supported employees were integrated into the cultures of the jobs obtained as provided by the Employment Integration Index. It suggests that overall the supported employees were extremely well integrated in the respective job sites. Figure 7 shows the extent that the supported employees were physically integrated into their jobs. It shows that in all the workplaces the employees wore the same work attire as their co-workers, had access to all company facilities accessed by the co-workers, performed the same tasks that non disabled co-workers would perform given the same job, and that there were no enclaves or segregated clustering of employees with disabilities, the ratio of disabled to non disabled workers being the same as the proportion of disabled to non disabled people in the wider population.

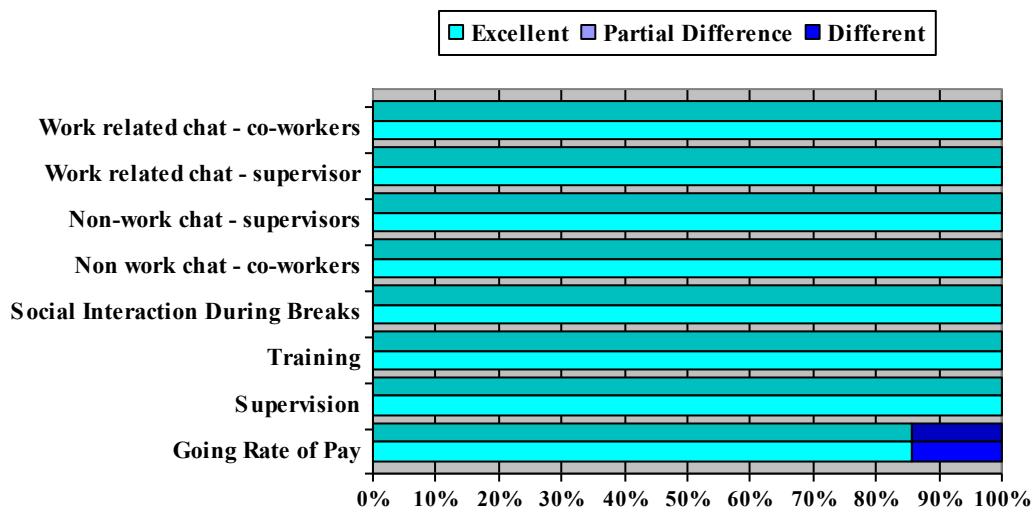
**Figure 7: Extent of Physical Integration**



The only partial difference for some employees was in the mode of transport used to get too and from the worksites. This reflects the use of a ‘community bus’, rather than transportation provided by a parent, or, independent travel by bus, train or on foot. Although this has the potential to stigmatise the employees, in this instance the community bus operating was accessible to all members of the community, including those without disabilities.

Figure 8 represents the extent of social integration of the young employees. As with physical integration the social integration of the employees was recoded as ‘excellent’. Most employees were paid the going rates of pay for their jobs, the one exception being the person undertaking work-experience. The results suggest that that the employees received high or partial levels of supervision and on-the-job training from the employers.

**Figure 8: Extent of Social Integration**





This is encouraging. It implies that the peer supporters were utilising the internal company resources. Research in adult supported employment has shown that a failure to link in with these natural resources makes job fading more difficult and increases the likelihood of involuntary job loss.<sup>9</sup> Figure 8 also suggests that integration was excellent in all 5 social interaction criteria. All the jobs provided opportunities for the supported employees to talk to colleagues during breaks, and during working hours. The balance of work and non-work related chat is important as research has shown that supported employees receive a higher proportion of work related interaction with their supervisors and co-workers, compared to their non-disabled counterparts and that non-work related conversations occur less frequently. The project results suggest that both forms of interaction were frequent, with excellent opportunities to engage in all forms of social discourse.

### Co-ordinator Activities

Figure 9 provides a break down of the coordinators activities over the duration. It reflects the diversity of tasks undertaken by the YESP coordinator in Merthyr. It shows that the highest proportion of the co-ordinator's time was spent in activities not involving the clients. This is unsurprising; tasks such as job finding, contacting employers and negotiating job placements, attending steering group and other meetings, much of the marketing and developing data bases and many admin tasks all involve non-contact activities. Appendix 3 provides a list of these non-contact activities as reported through the Gemma database.

**Figure 9: Co-ordinator Activity**

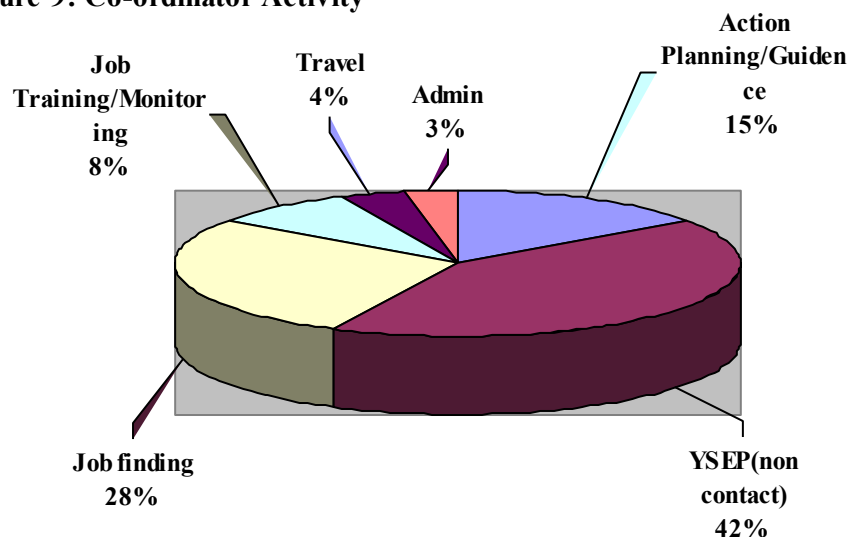


Figure 9 also shows a breakdown of activity occurring with the supported employees and/or their peer supporters. It shows that the co-ordinator had used pro-active job finding procedures, involving the job seeker in the initial stages of job finding. This represents over a quarter of all activities undertaken (28%). This category also included supporting the young applicants to successfully undertake the interviews for their jobs, one-on-one working to prepare the youngsters for their new roles as employees, and dealing with transport issues. Action planning and guidance also took up a significant

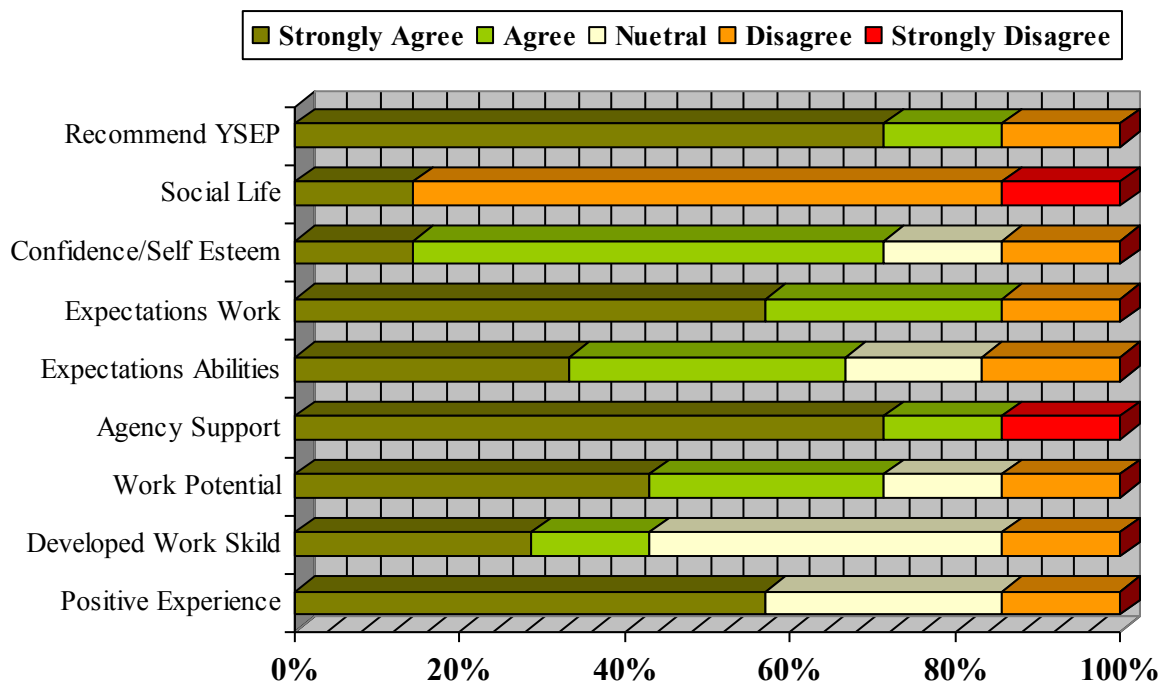
<sup>9</sup> Greenspan, S. & Shoultz, B. (1981). Why mentally retarded adults lose their jobs: social competence in work adjustments, *Mental Retardation*, 19, 103-106.

proportion of time (15%). This included beginning the vocational profiling procedures that are crucial to achieve a good job match. Unsurprisingly, job training and monitoring also accounted for a high number of hours, with 8% of time dedicated to supporting the peer supporters and the new employees in their jobs. This reflects the fact that the co-ordinator provided training to the peer supporters through experiential learning by providing hands on one-on-one support in the workplace. Refreshingly, only a small proportion of time was spent travelling (4%), this reflecting the location of the co-ordinator, with only 3% of time taken up with admin work with the peers.

### Parent/Carers Views

Figure 10 shows the parents/carers views of the project. The green hues represent positive statements about the project: the orange and red hues are negative views. As is shown, the project received mostly positive views, with some neutral and some negative ratings. Encouragingly in 7 of the 9 categories, the majority of parents reported positive views of the project. Most felt the project had a ‘positive impact’ on the lives of their sons and daughters (4=57%, all strongly agree); led to an increase their sons and daughters future work potential (Strongly agree=3, 43%, Agree=2, 29%); were impressed with support from Elite (5, 71%, 1, 14%); had reported increased expectations about their sons and daughters abilities and of obtaining paid work in the future (2, 29%, 2, 29% and 4, 57%, 2, 29%); observed increases in the youngster’s levels of confidence and self-esteem (1,14%, 4,57%); and a further 6 parents agreeing that they would recommend the project to other families in the locality (5,71%, 1,29%).

Figure 10: Parental Views on the Project



Comments made by some of the parents reflect this positive overview. The majority of the parents felt that overall the project had a positive impact on their sons and daughters (4=57%). As one parent commented:

*“It’s done her well – she enjoys working every Sunday she loves it.”*

The fact that the jobs had enabled the youngsters to “get out of the house” was a recurring positive from both parents and the young employees, this being seen as mutually beneficial, as apart from going to school, the youngsters rarely left the house. Parents highlighted the discipline of getting prepared for work and having to arrive on time among the work skills learned.

*“It’s her first job. She gets herself organised for work and looks forward to it.”*

The same parent stated:

*“Her ability, cleanliness, organising herself it’s picked her up she’s more confident now”*

Some parents also felt that the project had increased their son/daughters potential to get paid jobs in the future. One parent stated:

*“His work in computers has given him more scope.”*

Another stated:

*“I’m glad he’s got something to do. He would have done something when he left school, but College. But now he might work instead or do both”.*

And another:

*“I never thought she’d get a job in a cafeteria – I never would have thought she’d get a job.”*

Although the project has failed to have a major impact on the social lives of most of the teenagers so far, there were signs that the young employees were successfully mixing with a wider range of people, other than those they met at school. One parent stated:

*“He’s meeting with other people not just those he sees at school.”*

And another:

*“It’s giving them a chance to meet and mix with other children giving them an outlook on the wider world.”*

Praise was also given to the co-ordinator and peer supporters. One parent stated:

*“She had someone there for the first three months then the support eased off until he was doing it on his own.”*

Although there was some negativity from some parents, the majority (as figure 10 shows) felt that they would recommend the project to other parents and their children. One parent stated:

*“It can only be positive, most parents can’t see beyond them being at school.”*

And another:

*“It puts them in with ordinary people in an ordinary environment and shows that they can be capable of doing a real job for money.”*

Although the feedback from parents has been mostly positive, as figure 10 also suggests some parents had neutral and negative views of the project in some areas. The negative ratings mainly represent the views of the 2 parents whose children had lost their jobs. Comments made by these parents, therefore, largely reflect the disappointment of early job finishes. One parent reported that:

*“All of X’s friends have jobs now but he doesn’t. So now he just feels bad about himself.”*

This parent also had a feeling of being abandoned, she goes onto say:

*“They seem to have stopped looking for work – he only had one job for one day”*

And that:

*“If he had had a good experience I would recommend it.”*

Encouragingly, this parent goes on to say

*“I am looking forward to X starting work again we’re so grateful to be chosen to be on the project.”*

Some parents suggested that the experience of their son or daughter had been a neutral one (28%), As one parent stated:

*“He only attended once and didn’t like it.”*

And another:

*“He got bored, he wanted to work with sports.”*

This latter parent acknowledged that the job gained for her son was in Leisure Centre setting-up sports equipment, but that he had not had the opportunity to use it. Other neutral responses may largely reflect the relatively high ability levels of the youngsters. One parent commented:

*“Much of what he is doing he does at home anyway.”*

These negative and neutral views underline the importance of following up as soon as possible when jobs fail and that although getting a job can be a potentially rewarding experience in and of itself, when job failures occur, then the overall effect can be very negative, leading to a sense of failure, self-doubt and disappointment on the part of the students and their families.

It is also clear that some of the parents' neutrality reflects the relatively high ability levels of this particular group compared to previous projects, and that, although getting a job may have had a positive impact in some areas, many of the students already possessed the skills and abilities to complete the tasks of the job and, despite the project, were already expected to get jobs at some time in the future. This suggests that the agency needs to continue to focus on finding jobs that not only match the skills and interests of the new employees, but also reinforces the potential of the project to develop paid work opportunities for those with higher support needs.

Figure 10 also shows that parents mainly felt that the project had made little impact on the social lives of the young employees. Some of the parents did, however, report that their offspring had made new relationships at work, but these tended to be work acquaintances, restricted to the workplace. One of the hopes for the project was that the teenagers would form close social relationships with their new work colleagues, or their peer supporters. Apart from one instance, this has not happened. This reflects findings in the previous projects, where it also emerged that following the project, only 2 of 12 parent respondents stated their child still stayed in contact with their peer supporters. Although this is disappointing, it is worth noting that no research currently exists to show the longer-term impact of the YSEP approach on the social networks of the YSEP employees nor upon the peer supporters and the inclusion of people with disabilities in their lives beyond their time with the project. If the approach increases the chances of the youngsters moving into work, or, obtaining integrated College courses, rather than taking-up segregated day service or education options, then this could lead to dramatic differences in the diversity, size and locations of the clients' social networks.

### **Opinions of the Supported Employees**

Five of the 7 youngsters attended the focus group. The teenagers reported two main reasons for wanting to work. These were to provide an alternative to being at home and to earn money. People reported that their experiences in being in paid jobs had made them feel more confident, more independent and "older" and more adult than previously. The teenagers also reported that they had learned new skills as a result of their employment: Apart from learning the actual skills involved in carrying out the jobs (e.g., using a dishwasher and stacking shelves), they also reported that they had learned to "respect" their supervisors and, "as long as there was no risk involved", to follow their directions and instructions. They also reported that they had learned to be more punctual in work; while it was ok to be leisurely outside of work, during work they had to turn up on time and take breaks at the appropriate times. Encouragingly, some of the employees stated that they had "learned to get on with other people more."

When asked what they most liked about working one person replied "everything". Others stated that they enjoyed meeting other people including their co-workers and the customers. One young person said they had made new friends, and now regularly goes shopping for clothes with some of her work colleagues. Only one person stated that they found their job boring and when they were asked what they least liked about work, nearly all agreed that the interviews had been stressful, but very confidence building and a relief when they were accepted for the jobs. When the group were asked if the work they had done would help them get jobs in the future, they unanimously replied 'yes', stating that the experience of working before would improve their chances, as would their increased confidence, at being able to hold a job and in being around other

people. The employees praised the work of the project co-ordinator, stating she had helped them to choose their jobs and had helped them through the job interview stage.

The peer supporters were also praised for helping them to settle into the worksite culture and, where necessary, to learn the skills involved in the jobs successfully. Some felt that they could have been working more independently sooner. One person complained that his support partner had not turned up to support him on his first day at work and that this could have been one reason that he lost his job. When asked what they wanted to do in the future all responded that they wanted to go to College. However, they also had clear career aspirations naming 'Car Mechanic', 'Hairdressing', 'Carpentry', 'Work with Computers' and 'Paramedic' among their preferences. All saw College as a route to reach these aims, confirming the suggestion that they viewed College as a stepping-stone into their careers and not an end in of itself. Some stated that they would also like to have a paid job while they are attending College, reporting that the money would be useful. All the employees stated that they would recommend the project to other teenagers with learning disabilities.

#### **Section 4: Conclusions and Recommendations**

The project has clearly begun to fulfil many of its main aims in Merthyr within a short duration. It has enabled 7 teenagers with learning disabilities to engage in paid work in the community. Those supporting the teenagers were non-disabled same-age peers from a local mainstream school. This shows that part time paid work can be a reality for teenagers with learning disabilities in Merthyr who attend Special Schools. It also reinforces previous findings that despite the young age of the Peer Supporters (17 years) they were able to demonstrate responsibility and provide effective support to assist their disabled peers in the workplace.

The project has clearly had a significant impact on the lives of the youngsters who have obtained paid work and their parents. It has kick-started a change in perception making it more likely that these youngsters will develop paid career options, alongside any College activities they may choose in the future. The young employees reported learning a variety of work skills including punctuality, work discipline as well as social and work related interaction in the workplace. This has provided them with invaluable experience of what it is like to work and earn money in integrated paid jobs. Clearly, understanding the importance of turning up for work on time and 'who is in charge', are important prerequisites as is having a chance to develop social skills that are unique and specific to the paid work context.

Most impressively, the project has had a significant impact on the teenagers' confidence and self-esteem. This was a view backed up by all stakeholders, especially the young employees themselves. Stories of people 'coming out of themselves' as a result of participating in YSEP speak for themselves. The parents too were generally positive about the project, many reporting increases in their expectations about their son or daughters abilities, and levels of confidence and self-esteem. Six out of the seven parents stated that they would recommend the project to other families in the locality.

#### **Recommendation 1: That the YSEP project is sustained within Merthyr.**

The stakeholders and employees were also impressed with the support provided from Elite, with the project co-ordinator receiving much praise. The variety of the jobs

obtained was good, as were the locations of these jobs. This creates the potential for accurate job matching around the choices and abilities of the disabled teens. Elite has also secured work in a variety of large and small businesses. This develops the potential to create relationships with a cross section of organisations and to create more jobs within these organisations. The jobs obtained through the project provided the disabled employees with excellent levels of physical and social integration. The project results suggest that both forms of interaction were frequent, with excellent opportunities to engage in all forms of social discourse.

As in other YSEP projects, the co-ordinator has also had to develop a variety of new roles to support the YSEP approach. This has included marketing, presentations to employers, and schools, recruitment of peer supporters and the disabled teens, negotiating with teachers, and developing induction training for the non-disabled peers. The use of a hands-on approach to induction has so far proved to be an efficient method for training the peers. While the total withdrawal of peer support has yet to occur, the systematic reduction in the amount of support provided by the peers indicates that the peers developed and learned effective ways of reducing their support, including the effective use of Task Analysis Techniques and pro-active job finding approaches with the clients.

**Recommendation 2: That the Project in Merthyr should be delivered by Elite Supported Employment service.**

Although, overall, the project has been a success in Merthyr, there were issues and problems that arose that can serve as lessons learned and provide improved guidance for the future delivery of YSEP. As with previous YSEP projects in the UK, the participants in Merthyr to date have been predominately male (6 of 7). Although this may partly reflect the disproportionate number of men to women with learning disabilities in the UK, and the cultural tendency for work to be male orientated, the agency should target more females to redress this imbalance and create a more equal access the work opportunities in YSEP. This may take the form of developing marketing materials that are more appealing to teenage females, or, finding ways of increasing the number of females being referred to the project.

**Recommendation 3: Develop strategies aimed at increasing the proportion of teenage females accessing YSEP.**

While the project was clearly of benefit to the participants on the project, the evidence suggests that the project should and could be targeting more young teenagers with higher support requirements. This is supported by evidence from the ICAPs. This showed that the Doncaster and Blackwood groups (by the same measure) included people with higher support requirements. It may also be the case, that the project is of greatest benefit to those with higher support requirements, These groups are more likely to be categorised as incapable of paid work and become dependant on Adult Day Service provision in adult life.

The challenge to those involved in developing and running the project, will be to enable greater numbers of people with higher support requirements to come onto the project. This may involve selecting referrals that represent the wider scope of those with learning disabilities. Two possible avenues would be to refer those with

relatively higher support requirements based on localised assessment procedures and at the discretion of the teachers, local youth services and the Elite Staff. The ultimate challenge for the project delivery of YSEP in the UK still remains finding effective ways of supporting those with the highest support requirements in our communities to gain access to paid work in the community alongside their non disabled teenage peers.

**Recommendation 4: Increase the diversity of people accessing the project to include those with relatively higher support requirements.**

One of the required outcomes of the project is the clients' receiving payment for the work that they do. While unpaid work experience and voluntary work often provide valued and beneficial experiences in 'real' work places for the clients, they do not demonstrate so powerfully the potential that teenagers with learning disabilities have for successfully undertaking work for money. Receiving money was also clearly a motivator for the teenagers. Previous research has shown that where unpaid and paid employment are delivery options, then the unpaid option can compromise the numbers of paid jobs obtained.

**Recommendation 5: Continue to focus upon finding only 'paid' employment options for the disabled teenagers.**

Some parents raised the profile of the negative outcomes for teenagers if they lose their jobs. This, understandably, had negative effects on the clients' self-esteem and confidence. With some job losses inevitable, Elite should ensure that these effects are minimised with swift follow-up in contacting the parents, in reassuring the teenagers, and in obtaining new jobs for them.

**Recommendation 6: That Elite continue to develop their follow-up provision to ensure swift and consistent follow-up procedures when disabled teenagers lose their jobs.**

One aim where progress had been slow was the development of a parent group consisting of those whose sons and daughters had participated in the YSEP project. This may have been due to the reduced set up period. Developing these groups has been shown to have highly beneficial effects in previous YSEP projects, especially those in Canada and Doncaster. Through these groups parents have been encouraged to develop citizen advocate roles and even take control of recruiting new peers and widening local parent networks.

**Recommendation 7: That Elite develop a parent group specifically around the YSEP project and encourage their active participation in its future development and delivery.**

The findings strongly indicate a need to develop greater incentives for the peers in terms of pay, or local award schemes. Evidence from this project and from previous ones in Canada show that no-pay is (unsurprisingly) a powerful disincentive for the non disabled peers to apply to be on the project. Currently, Elite has done well to recruit 2 non-disabled peers on a purely voluntary basis and to see to it that at least one young person received kudos for their volunteerism. There is also potential to link into the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme within the borough, along with the Welsh



Baccalaureate. This provides the potential to broaden the scope of recruits from those being paid for their work and those working towards a certificated award or educational qualification.

**Recommendation 8: YSEP approaches need to cost-in payment for the peer supporters with at least minimum rates of pay for the age group, and develop links within Merthyr to utilise existing award structures.**

The findings from this project, as in previous YSEP projects have illustrated the importance of accessing peer supporters at the very beginning of the school term prior to potential candidates filling their extra curricula diaries. It suggests that this is more likely to result in a longer-term commitment from the peers and is at a time when they are developing new plans for the school year ahead.

**Recommendation 9: Develop the current and future YSEP projects to recruit teenage peers in early September.**

The current project also suggests that a shorter set-up period is possible, compared to the eight months afforded to previous projects. The fact that procedures were being replicated along with advantages of already established agency links in the area, reduces this set-up time and increases the potential to place more than 8 disabled peers over a 12 month duration.

**Recommendation 10: Increase the project targets for the disabled employees from 8 to 10 for the remaining period of this project and up to 12 disabled employees for new YSEP projects in other locations over a 12-month duration.**

The model is highly replicable and its effective delivery is now well described and demonstrated in 3 UK locations. The YSEP model has the potential to be developed and implemented in other areas of the UK. The strengths of the approach are in its simplicity and the potential it has to change people's perceptions about the client group.

**Recommendation 11: Disseminate YSEP Approach to be replicated in other areas of Wales and the UK.** This could be through the statutory youth services in collaboration with supported employment agencies and experts in the YSEP area.

Like supported employment, the approach also has an integrity, and if parts of it are left out or not delivered according to a strict values system, then the overall impact of the approach can be significantly reduced and its full potential not realised. Compromises should not be made around integration, the age of the peers and their peer supporters, developing support for those with higher levels of disability and in accepting only paid jobs. Put simply, if these elements are missing it cannot claim to be a YSEP project.

This can often create challenges for services in areas where expectations are low and traditional service models well entrenched. This suggests that those introducing the approach to other local authorities need to provide induction that enables local stakeholders to commit to the specific values and aims of the project, and to ensure that monitoring arrangements are in place to accurately reflect progress and adherence

to the approach. Monitoring would ideally reflect the key components of the approach and use consistent measures that can ensure some degree of objectivity and make comparisons with current YSEP benchmarks possible. This includes continued use of the ICAP to overcome problems of regional and changing local assessment procedures. Only if this is adhered to can there be the potential to develop the YSEP approach as a model of good practice across the Welsh Regions and throughout the rest of the UK.

**Recommendation 12: That the YSEP approach be developed within the Welsh Region as a Model of good practice and that objective measures of progress continue to be employed.**

## Appendix 1 Parent Questionnaire

### YSEP Evaluation Kilsby and Allan 2007

Parent Interview Schedule  
Youth Supported Employment Project Merthyr Tydfil  
Mark Kilsby and Julie Allan  
April 2007

Name of Teen

Parent Name

Age (in years)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Read Confidentiality Statement?! Y N

Question 1: Please could you tell us which of the following accurately reflects your views of the project:

A. Your son/daughter had a Positive Experience

Strongly Agree    Agree    ok    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

Comments/Quotes

B. Your son/daughter developed work skills and habits

Strongly Agree    Agree    ok    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

Comments/Quotes

C. The Project helped with your son/daughters future work potential

Strongly Agree    Agree    ok    Disagree    Strongly Disagree

Comments/Quotes

D. Your son/daughter received the appropriate support from Elite and others

Strongly Agree      Agree      ok      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Comments/Quotes

E. The project increased your expectation of X's abilities

Strongly Agree      Agree      ok      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Comments/Quotes

F. The project increased your expectation that X will get a paid job in the future

Strongly Agree      Agree      ok      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Comments/Quotes

G. The project has increased x's confidence and self-esteem

Strongly Agree      Agree      ok      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Comments/Quotes

H. The project has made a difference to x's social life

Strongly Agree      Agree      ok      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Comments/Quotes

I. I would recommend this project to other parents

Strongly Agree      Agree      ok      Disagree      Strongly Disagree

Comments/Quotes

Question 2. Please can you tell us what have been the biggest positives from your point of view

Question 3. Please can you tell us what have been the main problems and issues from your point of view

Question 4. Any other comments

## **Appendix 2 Client Questions for Focus Group**

### **YSEP Evaluation Kilsby and Allan 2007**

#### Supported Teenager Focus Group Questions

- 1) What Job did you get?
- 2) Did you want to work – if so why?
- 3) Does having a job make you feel differently?
- 4) What are you learning at work?
- 5) What do you like best about working?
- 6) What is the worst bit?
- 7) Do you think the jobs you have now will help you get other jobs when you are older?
- 8) Did the project help you to find a job?
- 9) Did the project improve your social network?
- 10) How much help have you had from the project?
- 11) What do you want to do in the future?

### **Appendix 3**

#### **Activities of the Co-ordinator that did not involve Client Contact**

Personnel admin: completion of weekly timesheets, requesting annual leave, other leave; Dr's appointments, etc.  
Lunch times, break times  
Annual leave, Bank Holidays and sickness absence  
Emails, post, telephone messages, general telephone calls;  
Project updates to managers/meetings;  
Staff meetings;  
YSEP meetings;  
Learning Disability Review meetings;  
School contact –mainstream schools and visits / calls to Greenfield Special School,  
Liaison with other professionals involved in the project e.g. CST,  
Transport company liaisons.  
Peer Support Partners recruitment, interviews, training, chasing references/ parent consent, school presentations;  
Photocopying, filing, faxing, post in / out.  
Marketing of the project: downloading photos, production of notice boards in school, marketing materials, leaflets etc  
Meetings with VAMT;  
Marketing events, Merthyr Media contact re: DVD, VAMT event, distribution of posters.  
General travel (non client related);  
Staff training;  
Calls to Joy, Julie etc;  
Collation of evaluation/research information for meetings for Mark.  
Reading minutes, memos, circulars, policies, procedures etc;  
Host to visitors, re YSEP;  
Dealing with IT issues i.e. system down;  
Administration and collation of expenses, own and Peer Support Partners;  
Staff Supervision/staff appraisal;  
Liaison with colleagues;