

October 2008

Action for Children briefing

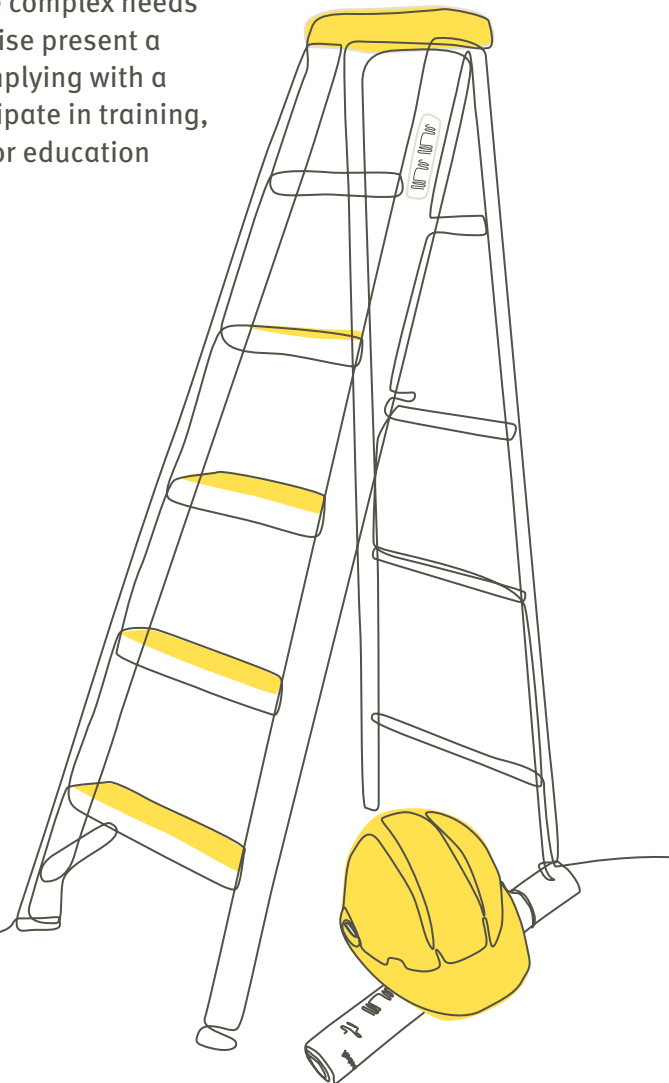
Youthbuild: Action for Children Scotland Meeting the needs of the hardest to reach

Action for Children Scotland Youthbuild is a pre-vocational programme of support for young people aged 16 to 24 for entry into the construction industry. It offers a programme of support and training targeted at socially excluded young people who may face challenges in entering and competing in the labour market.

Action for Children Scotland has particular experience in bringing employers together with young people not in education, employment or training to offer supported apprenticeships and training:

- ▶ the Action for Children Scotland Youthbuild initiative offers a model of how to work with young people from a range of socially excluded backgrounds, including young people with experience of the youth justice system and those with special education needs

- ▶ through the Action for Children Scotland Youthbuild programme we have helped employers meet the training requirements of young people whose complex needs would otherwise present a barrier to complying with a duty to participate in training, employment or education



Introduction

Since 2000, successive Scottish governments have become increasingly concerned at the number of young people not in employment, education or training (the NEET group), who need more choice and more chances if they are to fulfil their potential and to make the most of their lives. There were around 32,000 young people between the ages of 16 and 19 in Scotland who are not in employment, education or training in 2006. This equates to 12.4 per cent of the 16- to 19-year-old population.¹ Many young people spend only a limited amount of time looking for the right employment or training opportunity. Remaining in the 'not in employment, education or training' category for extended periods of time can lead to a range of other negative outcomes, from offending to teenage pregnancy and substance misuse. To address the NEET problem, in 2007 the Scottish Government launched 'More Chances, More Choices: a strategy to reduce the proportion of young people not in education, employment or training'. The strategy identifies prevention,

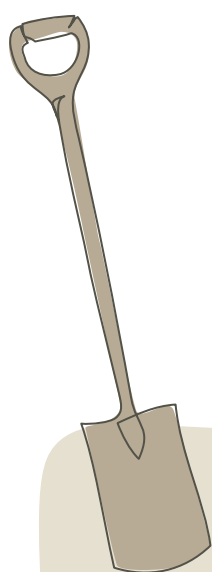
through early intervention with young people at risk of disengaging from education and training, as an effective way of increasing the opportunities for young people on the margins of society. Action for Children's approach to working with young people through training and skills development offers an effective way of re-engaging marginalised young people and meeting the challenges that More Chances, More Choices identifies.

Action for Children Scotland works with marginalised and socially excluded young people whose experiences have led them to become part of the NEET group. This briefing explains some of the characteristics of these young people and what Action for Children Scotland can do to help them back into education or employment.

Action for Children Scotland has been working with young people not in employment, education or training through our Youthbuild programme, which supports trainees to develop skills to enter the construction industry. There are currently three Youthbuild projects within the programme, with a further three planned for 2008/09. The three existing projects work with a range of partner projects to give young people work experience on local sites where they are building homes, including work on local regeneration developments, and local housing associations such as Oak Tree, Cloch, Milnbank, and Govanhill housing associations.

The existing projects are also well supported through links to corporate partners, including Glasgow City Council, the European Social Fund, Inverclyde Council and Scottish Enterprise.

The Scottish Government has been very supportive of Action for Children Scotland's Youthbuild programme, with Adam Ingram MSP, the Scottish Government Minister for Children and Early Years, launching the Glasgow Great Eastern Youthbuild on 8 October 2007, and Maureen Watt, the



Inverclyde Youthbuild Project

Action for Children Scotland's Inverclyde Youthbuild was launched by Maureen Watt MSP, Minister for Schools and Skills. In its first few months, the project has proved successful in getting young people into permanent jobs in the building trade. The project started in June 2007 with 13 young people. Four of these young people have been guaranteed full-time jobs or apprenticeships, and the remaining nine are currently working on site with prospects of ongoing employment/apprenticeships. In February 2008, an additional nine young people were recruited, and have started their training programmes. The training programme is still ongoing but, even at this early stage, one of the group recruited in February has already secured the offer of a full-time job on completion of his placement.

Minister for Schools and Skills, launching the Inverclyde Youthbuild (PICT) Project in November. Adam Ingram MSP was also the keynote speaker at the recent Youthbuild Parliamentary briefing.

Action for Children Scotland has a comprehensive outcomes framework that enables us to measure the difference made to children and young people's lives by our services. The Action for Children Outcomes Framework provides our service managers and staff with a set of outcome statements

that allow us to see whether our services are truly meeting needs, arranged under the national outcomes framework in Scotland. Each Youthbuild project works with an annual business plan, which details key objectives for service delivery, how these will be achieved and what measures are in place to demonstrate that they have been achieved.

Glasgow Great Eastern Youthbuild Project

Action for Children Scotland's Glasgow Great Eastern Youthbuild project was launched by Adam Ingram MSP, Minister for Children and Early Years. It has been successful in getting young people from the East End of Glasgow – one of the most deprived areas of Scotland – into permanent jobs in the building trade. Twelve of the young people on the project have already found permanent jobs and training, with seven securing apprenticeships, and support is continuing for another six who are working towards the same goal. Future work experience will be based around the refurbishment of a landmark building in Glasgow, the B-listed building, the Great Eastern Hotel.



What is the extent of need in Scotland?

The number of 16 to 19 year olds not in employment, education or training in Scotland requiring support to re-engage with training has increased by 15 per cent between 1997 and 2006.² These figures include a range of levels of disengagement from training or work, with some groups, such as care leavers, young people with experience of the criminal justice system, and young people whose own parents are long-term unemployed, facing a high risk of long-term disengagement from further education and employment.

The impact of young people remaining out of employment, education or training carries a high social and economic cost for Scotland. The Scottish Government suggests a figure of between £0.5 and £0.75 billion for the direct cost of child poverty due to extra spending on services. They also estimate 'that the annual knock-on cost to the public purse of young people not in employment, education or training could be as high as another £1 billion'.³

² *The Cost of Exclusion: Counting the cost of youth disadvantage in the UK*, The Prince's Trust 2007

³ *Estimating the Cost of Child Poverty – Approaches and Evidence*, Scottish Government, 4 April 2008, www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/01/28111819/0

Who needs employability services?

Often the failure of young people to progress into training or education can be linked to earlier experiences in their lives. Many young people classified as not in employment, education or training have experienced one or more of the following:

- ▶ **Disrupted education** – In Scotland, young people not in employment, education or training are more likely than other young people to have truanted from school in year four, to have parents themselves who had left school early, and to have experienced educational disadvantage across one or more generations. Young people who fall into this category also have less positive views about school, with studies reporting that over half of these young people feel that school had not adequately equipped them to deal with the choices available to them post-16.⁴
- ▶ **Histories of placement in the care system** – According to the Scottish Government, nearly half of looked-after or accommodated children are not educated in mainstream provision and 11 per cent are not educated at all. The lack of mainstream education within this group leaves young people leaving care particularly vulnerable to educational failure and exclusion from the further education and employment market.
- ▶ **Chaotic family life** – Family structure and parents' ability to support children can affect young people's ability to progress through the education system. In Scotland, as many as 60,000 children are affected by parental drug misuse and the latest estimates indicate that there are approximately 80,000 to 100,000 children affected by parental alcohol misuse in Scotland. Many families are affected by one parent offending and almost 13,500 children experience having a parent in prison. Around 9,000 Scottish children run away from home each year, and almost a quarter of these will sleep rough. At any time, almost 100,000 children live

in a home where someone is suffering from domestic abuse, while research also shows 14 per cent of Scottish children between 7 and 19 years old undertake full-time caring responsibilities.⁶

- ▶ **Teenage pregnancy** – Research suggests a strong link between teenage motherhood and the risks of not progressing into employment, education or training opportunities post-16. In Scotland, there are almost 90,000 conceptions to teenagers every year, of which almost 8,000 involve under-16s and over 2,000 to girls under 14. Studies also show that 40 per cent of young women who were not in employment, education or training between the ages of 16 to 18 went on to have at least two children by the time they reached age 21. Of those young women who had not been in employment, education or training for six months or more aged 16 to 18, over 70 per cent were mothers at the age of 21.⁷
- ▶ **Contact with the youth justice system** – Young offenders are a key at-risk group in terms of their ability to move into employment after full-time education. Many young people who offend are also excluded from full-time education, further affecting their ability to move into employment at age 16. In surveys of young people not regularly attending school, 13 per cent have recognised that having a criminal record can act as a barrier to getting a job.⁸



4 'The effects of low attainment on young people's outcomes at age 22–23 in Scotland', Cathy Howieson and Cristina Iannelli, University of Edinburgh, *British Educational Research Journal*, Volume 34, Issue 2 April 2008, pages 269 – 290. In www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/77843/0018812.pdf

5 www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/77843/0018812.pdf

6 *Ibid*

7 *Literature Review of the Neet Group*, York Consulting Limited Scottish Government, 2005

8 *Ibid*

Ian's story⁹

Ian came to Youthbuild Glasgow in March 2007. He was referred by the Care Leavers Employment Services as he had been accommodated by Glasgow City Council and had just moved to a supported carers' environment.

Ian had spent a significant proportion of his childhood in a secure unit and residential accommodation. He had no qualifications, a history of violence and underage drinking. He also had an outstanding judgement for possession of a 'lock-back' knife. He was described by his employment development worker as 'very insular and suffering from chronic shyness'.

His employment development worker knew this was Ian's golden opportunity; he described Action for Children Scotland Youthbuild as the 'best-ever support package and opportunity for his client group, in the eight years that he had been working in the field'. He referred Ian to the programme and hoped it would work, but was worried that it would go the way of all the other experiences and that Ian would have little chance in sticking with it.

Two weeks into the programme, Ian was attacked on site and was out of the programme for a number of weeks. The staff worked to keep him on board. They

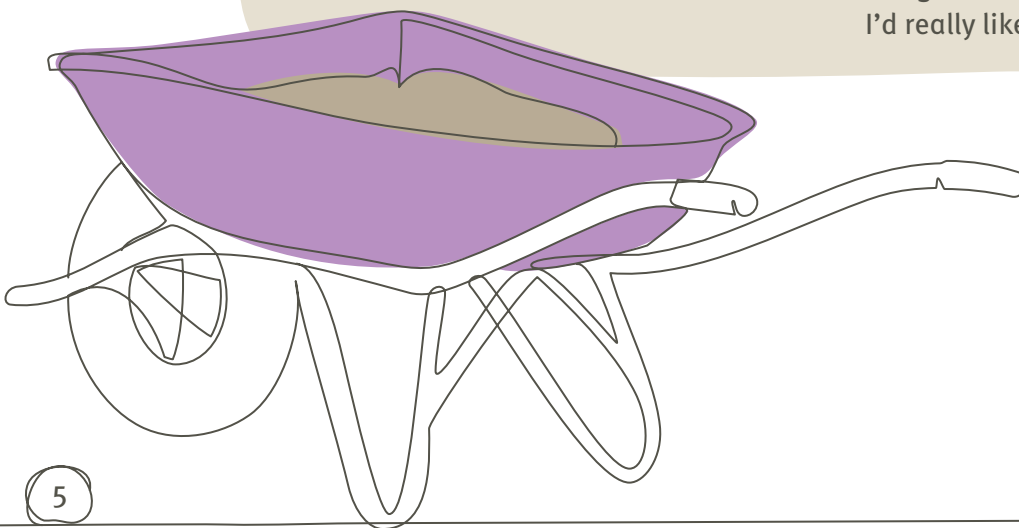
acknowledged all the issues he had and helped him deal with them.

On his return, Ian received a lot of one-to-one support from both the manager and his support worker and was given a placement. His initial goal was to secure a bricklaying apprenticeship, however he was placed as a general labourer.

His work experience and paid employment opportunity turned things around for him. He was working in a small site, which was easy to travel to, and he was working with 'older guys', who expected him to knuckle down and learn but who also took him under their wing. He rose to the challenge and his attendance has averaged out at 92 per cent (taking account of his period of absence due to the on-site attack). He is the highest Youthbuild earner with an average gross weekly wage of £303 and his confidence and self-esteem has risen considerably. His outstanding judgement has been considered and he received a fine.

Ian is now on the pathway to sustained employment and a stable, secure lifestyle, and says:

'It's brilliant here, the guys are a pure laugh. I'm working with all the trades and the ganger, Andy, is brand new. He's told me I've got a very good chance of a full-time job; I'd really like to stay here.'



A proven success: Action for Children Youthbuild evaluation¹⁰

In December 2007, an independent evaluation of the Youthbuild programme was commissioned to explore the cost effectiveness and outcomes for young people who have engaged with the Youthbuild programme and who received intensive support to help them enter, and stay in, the employment market.

Successes on the Action for Children Scotland Youthbuild programme include:

- ▶ a 70 per cent to 80 per cent success rate across the three projects for helping young people move into employment following their involvement in the programme¹¹
- ▶ high completion rates for the programme, with 32 of the 43 young people who entered

the Action for Children Scotland Youthbuild programme completing and moving into either construction or some other form of employment¹²

- ▶ considerable savings of working with this cohort – for example, the annual cost for a male in a youth offenders' institution is estimated at £47,000¹³

Scotland has one of the highest rates in Europe of unemployment among young people. Action for Children is successfully working in partnership with a number of local agencies and through our Youthbuild projects. Our aim is to show how the problem of youth unemployment can be positively addressed for the benefit of the young people concerned, their communities and for the wider economy.



Action for Children Scotland Youthbuild – creating opportunities for young people through supported training programmes

In Scotland, Action for Children has a strong profile and delivers a range of services for vulnerable children and young people. Action for Children works in partnership to run more than 64 services for more than 6,500 of Scotland's most vulnerable children, young people and their families. We are highly regarded for our residential and fostering work, as well as our services to support socially excluded young people enter the workforce. We work with nearly every local authority in Scotland and continue to be one of Scotland's leading children's charities.

We work to help vulnerable young people realise their potential and make a successful

transition to adulthood. Some of the young people we work with have mental health, drug or alcohol problems. Others are teenage parents. Many fall behind at school or are excluded. They are all on low incomes. Our projects help them to overcome these difficulties, often by working with specialist local agencies to provide total support.

Action for Children Scotland believes that employers, colleges and trainers will be deterred from offering socially excluded young people the places they need, as they are often without the appropriate support and life skills required.

¹⁰ Evaluation of NCH Scotland Youthbuild Projects Final Report, December 2007, Carroll Kelly, 21 April 2008

¹¹ Ibid

¹² Ibid

¹³ Social Exclusion Unit, 2002

as long as it takes