

**POLICY ACTION
TEAM ON SKILLS**

FINAL REPORT

Contents

Chapter 1 - Introduction	page 3-8
Chapter 2 - Executive Summary and Recommendations	page 9-25
Chapter 3 - Skills for what	page 26-32
Chapter 4 - Skills and social disadvantage	page 33-38
Chapter 5 - Improving Skills	page 39-48
Chapter 6 - What is going wrong	page 49-60
 Annex A - Area Case Studies	
Annex A i - Moss Side/Hulme	page 61-68
Annex A ii - Peterlee	page 69-75
Annex A iii - Hackney	
Annex A iv - Hemsworth/ "SESKU"	page 76-85
.....	page 86-92
Annex B - Selected comments received on the PAT's website	
Annex C - Members of the Policy Action Team	page 93-97
Annex D - Organisations represented on the Consultative Groups	page 98
Annex E - Organisations consulted	page 99
Annex F - Bibliography	page 100- 103page 104- 105

POLICY ACTION TEAM ON SKILLS

FINAL REPORT

Chapter 1. Introduction

The remit

1. The Policy Action Team on Skills is one of eighteen Policy Action Teams established to examine a range of issues identified in the Social Exclusion Unit's report on neighbourhood renewal, published in September 1998¹. The PAT's formal remit, set out in that report, was to consider:

- the key skills gaps that need to be addressed in poor neighbourhoods to help those who are unemployed, in intermittent or unskilled employment, or lack basic skills and self-confidence;
- how well institutions such as Training and Enterprise Councils, Further Education colleges, adult education services, schools and libraries meet these needs and whether there are any changes that would be cost-effective;
- how well alternative methods (e.g. informal learning, outreach units, IT and distance learning) work to motivate adults to re-engage in education and training, and how good practice could be spread better;

and, in the light of our consideration of these, to:

- assess the number of adults in poor neighbourhoods who do not have essential employment-related and other life skills;
- draw up an action plan with targets to help them acquire these skills.

2. In addressing our remit, we tried to spend as much time as we could in disadvantaged areas and to talk to local people directly. Details of how we went about this are given below.

¹ *Bringing Britain Together*, HMSO, 1998

3. We were both inspired and shocked by much of what we saw and heard. There is much excellent work that helps people in disadvantaged communities to improve their skills. It is nevertheless hard to overstate the challenges of the environment in which this work is carried on and in which people live.

4. The communities we visited were beset by a brooding fear of crime; in some areas, people are fearful of leaving their homes during daylight because of the likelihood of being burgled. In many places, there is a striking lack of connection with the rest of the world outside, which to many people seems far away, hostile and forbidding. Travelling outside their immediate surroundings to find work or crossing the city to attend college requires resources of enterprise and self-confidence that many, unaided, simply do not possess. Inadequate public transport and poverty mean that apparently short distances can become insurmountable barriers for some.

5. People's sense of what is possible is further restricted by the inter-generational unemployment that afflicts some areas; the circle of acquaintance of many people includes very few who are in regular, paid work. On the other hand, people in these communities are also, in different ways, very resourceful, as they have to be to cope with what life throws at them. Much of the most impressive work we have seen has been organised or delivered by local people themselves.

6. We are very grateful to all of those who live and work in our four study areas who took the trouble to talk to us and to explain how they saw things. They have opened our eyes to the scale of the problems and to some potential solutions.

7. The PAT's original remit appeared in the Social Exclusion Unit's report under the general heading of "Getting the People Back to Work" and we have interpreted that as a clear steer towards labour market issues, on which we have accordingly laid a strong emphasis. We have certainly found that, for most people, the prospect of employment² - or of better-paid or more stable employment - is much the most powerful incentive to improve their skills.

8. The Team has also been very conscious, however, that the skills people have influence their lives - and those of others in their communities - in many ways that are related only very indirectly to paid work. People's horizons - their view of the society in which they live and of

² *National Adult Learning Survey, DfEE, 1997*

what it is possible for them to do or to attempt within it - are in many ways defined by their experience of education.

9. Poor basic skills can have a devastating effect on the quality of people's lives, above and beyond any impact they may have on their prospects in the labour market. To complete the circle, there is evidence³ that adults' parenting skills have a critical impact on their children's performance in compulsory education and hence on the incidence of disadvantage in the next generation.

10. Finally, we have found that learning delivered at the very local level in a way that is directly relevant to people's needs can have benefits above and beyond any improvement in skills for individuals. Where learning really engages people's interests, it can have a pivotal role in helping communities to cohere, to identify what they have in common in terms of both needs and opportunities and to work together. We have therefore placed a strong emphasis in our work on the importance of developing local capacity, which is simultaneously a pre-condition for and an important outcome from effective learning in local communities.

11. For all of these reasons, the Team has thought it necessary to take a broad view of its remit. Although the PAT has been principally concerned with skills for adults of working age, we have not excluded evidence relating to different age groups or deriving from other sectors, like health and housing.

Method

12. In common with other PATs, the Team has sought to adopt an open and consultative approach to its work and to involve people who live in the areas on which we are reporting, as well as professionals and practitioners. A list of all the organisations we spoke to appears at Annex E.

13. The core of the Team's work has taken place in six meetings of the PAT as a whole, held principally in London. In addition to that, our approach has had four main features:

- a) targeted fieldwork. The PAT decided early on that it wanted to focus its fieldwork on four contrasting areas. The main reason for this approach was a belief that many of the problems we were asked to examine are affected by specifically local factors which can only be properly identified and assessed with the benefit of detailed

³ For example, see *Rural Poverty: a study of economic and social exclusion in the villages of County Durham* - The Local Identity Agency, 1998

local knowledge. The Team felt that casting the geographical net too wide might cause us to miss some of these and that it was preferable to examine a small number of areas in as much depth as our reporting timescale allowed. These four case studies give us a range of practical examples and good practice which reinforce and exemplify our more general conclusions. They also provide invaluable insights into how the different strands of skills planning and provision work together in practice in particular neighbourhoods.

More details about the team's approach to its fieldwork are given at paragraphs 14 to 17 below.

- b) a facility on the UK Lifelong Learning website (www.lifelonglearning.co.uk), giving the public the opportunity to contribute on-line to the Team's work. Some of the comments we were sent appear at Annex B;
- c) a formal consultative group, including representatives of the principal national organisations concerned with skills issues. A list of the organisations concerned is given at Annex D;
- d) desk research to ensure that the Team kept itself properly informed about relevant studies conducted by others.

Fieldwork

14. The team's fieldwork focused on:

- Hackney in East London;
- Hulme and Moss Side in Greater Manchester;
- Peterlee in County Durham;
- an area of the former West Yorkshire coalfield including Hemsworth and the villages of South Elmsall, South Kirby and Upton.

15. We do not suggest that these four areas are in every sense representative of all disadvantaged communities. No four areas could be. But, culturally and economically, the four areas selected by the PAT are very diverse and may be said to be typical of a range of different types of neighbourhood. They include a mix of:

- inner-city, small town and rural areas;
- areas with significant ethnic minority populations;
- communities located in very different regions of the country with different patterns of employment and economic problems;
- communities with very distinct employment and cultural traditions;
- areas where the population is very stable as well as areas where it is extremely mobile.

16. For the purposes of fieldwork, the PAT divided into four sub-teams, each of them charged with looking at one of the four areas. Each of the areas was visited at least three times.

17. In each area, the relevant sub-team aimed to consult local agencies concerned with skills issues, including community and voluntary organisations, to consult employers, to talk to local residents about the problems they experienced and to gather any useful local research.

Moving targets

18. Since the Team began its work at the end of 1998, much of the background against which we were asked to report has shifted: new education and training programmes have been announced or new evidence about existing ones come to light; the Government announced a major review of the structures in post-16 education and training and published a White Paper setting out its conclusions; seventeen Policy Action Teams with agendas that are different from, but often closely related to our own have been working in parallel with us; and the Social Exclusion Unit itself published a report - *Bridging the Gap* - about 16-18 year olds not in education, training and employment. To date, about half of the PATs have published their reports.n.

19. That life has not stood still over the past six months has created opportunities as well as problems. On the one hand, it has meant that we have been able to take account of and learn from a good deal of new work that is in train elsewhere, including in particular in the other Policy Action Teams. Other work of particular importance for our remit has been taken forward by the Moser Group on basic skills and the National Skills Task Force. The fact that the structural arrangements for post-16 education and training have themselves been the subject

of a fundamental review during the same period, culminating in the publication of *Learning to Succeed*⁴, has meant that there is scope to take rapid action on some of our more fundamental recommendations.

20. On the other hand, the development of policy on other fronts has meant that we have had to contend with a number of “moving targets”. Work on this report was undertaken in parallel with the preparation of *Learning to Succeed* and, to ensure that the one was able to influence the other, it was necessary to feed in our emerging conclusions as the White Paper was being drafted. Many of the policies in place before the publication of the White Paper - for example Learning Partnerships, the “Widening Participation” initiative in further education, UFI, the Adult and Community Learning Fund and some aspects of the New Deal for Communities pilots- address squarely some of the themes we identify in this report. We obviously welcome this. Nevertheless, it is in many cases too early to draw firm conclusions about the effectiveness of these programmes in addressing the problems we identify.

21. It is the central argument of this report that, if there is to be change and renewal in the country’s most disadvantaged areas, Government, local agencies and employers all need to give more priority to working with local people to improve their skills and must take a broader view of the skills which are relevant. We nevertheless wish to acknowledge how much change for the better has already begun and to emphasise that, wherever possible, further change should work with, rather than against the grain of current policies.

⁴ *Learning to Succeed - a new framework for post-16 learning*, DfEE, 1999

Chapter 2. Executive Summary and Recommendations

Skills for what?

22. The skills people have affect every aspect of their lives. They have a decisive influence on their ability to secure paid employment and maintain themselves in it; on their capacity to understand, take part in and contribute to the wider society in which they live; on their status within that society; on their sense of self; on the quality of their relationships with other members of their family and their local community; and on their ability to give their children effective support in school.
23. To play an effective role in the labour market, people need a formidable portfolio of skills. These include the basic skills of literacy and numeracy; occupationally-specific skills; and generic work-related skills - also referred to as “key skills” - like communication, problem-solving and teamworking, on which employers are increasingly placing a higher premium.
24. However, what makes people “employable” is more complex than the possession of the right clutch of creditable skills. If they are to secure employment and maintain themselves in it, people also need a range of “deployment” skills, like the ability to present themselves and to navigate the labour market effectively, qualities like self-confidence and motivation and basic work habits, like time-keeping. The second report of the National Skills Task Force⁵ analyses the range of skills and qualities required and discusses the relevant background.
25. There is good evidence that “learning pays” and that people with better skills and qualifications are more likely to be employed and to be better paid. There is an important exception to this general correlation in the case of ethnic minority people, whose relatively high representation in further and higher education is not reflected in their position and status in the labour market.

⁵ *Second Report of the National Skills Task Force*, DfEE, 1999

26. To contend with the many pressures of everyday life and in particular with the new challenges associated with economic and social change, people also need a variety of other “coping” and inter-personal skills.

27. The factors which affect whether any particular individual is able to acquire and develop all of these skills and qualities are self-evidently complex. Besides experiences of education and training, they also include culture, environment and personality. However, just as the risks and uncertainties associated with the modern economy are rapidly increasing, the capacity within many local communities to help people navigate those risks with confidence is diminishing. This decline in “social capital” - evident in, for example, the striking reduction in the number and importance of community-level organisations in former coalfield communities - is a long-run phenomenon with many causes - and consequences. But it has a significant role in cutting people in some disadvantaged communities off from learning and the labour market.

Skills and social disadvantage

28. As a general rule, people who live in areas that suffer from severe social disadvantage are disproportionately likely to have few or no qualifications; poor literacy and numeracy skills; and low self-confidence and “coping” skills. They are also more likely than people who live elsewhere to be reluctant or lack the confidence to take deliberate action to improve their skills or to engage in learning.

29. Not all disadvantaged areas are the same of course; and there are differences in the demography and traditions of particular neighbourhoods that account for significant variations in the skills of local populations.

30. Low levels of qualifications and skills do not only mean that people are more likely to be unemployed and hence poor. Low skill levels have a sapping effect on people’s self-confidence and they also reduce individuals’ capacity - and their willingness - to act to improve their situation. The problem of local capacity is exacerbated where, as is often the case, very few residents of disadvantaged areas have higher level qualifications or belong to the more skilled occupational groups. It does not help that so many of the professionals who work in disadvantaged areas do not live there and that there are therefore no role-models of professional attitudes and behaviour for those who grow up locally.

Improving skills

31. Action to improve skills in disadvantaged areas comes from six main sources:
- a) the mainstream activity of the formal education and training system, including institutional provision through schools, colleges and universities and dedicated training programmes for the unemployed;
 - b) investment by employers in improving the skills of their own workforce;
 - c) area-based regeneration programmes like the Single Regeneration Budget and the New Deal for Communities, which have often included a significant “human capital” element;
 - d) local community and voluntary organisations, whether their primary purpose is educational or not;
 - e) local public sector organisations from non-educational sectors, including in particular culture and health;
 - f) the actions of individuals themselves.

32. In practice, of course, action on the ground is usually the result of several of these different agents working together.

33. Total national investment in education and training is now enormous. In 1997-98, it was estimated to have exceeded £44 billion. Of that total, about £33 billion came from public sector sources. At today’s prices, it has been estimated that an average person can now expect £70,000 to be spent on their education and training in their lifetime. While much of that sum will typically come from the taxpayer, an increasing amount is being invested by individuals themselves.

34. Of the £33 billion of public funding invested each year in education and training, a very significant amount is directed towards socially disadvantaged areas. There have, in addition, been a number of initiatives in recent years intended to ensure that the skills needs of people in disadvantaged areas are better addressed. However, a recent study⁶ of the destinations of Government spending found that, while disadvantaged areas receive proportionately more public education and training expenditure than more prosperous areas, the differential is significantly less than for most other types of public spending.

What is going wrong?

⁶ *Where Does Public Spending Go?*, DETR, 1998

35. Despite all the investment - both public and private - and the widespread acknowledgement of the priority that should be accorded to improving skills, there are areas of the country where the number of people who lack essential work-related or basic skills is extremely high - and where there is often little hope in sight. Why have the current arrangements failed them?

36. The PAT believes that there are three main reasons why this situation persists:

- a) for a variety of complex reasons, the education and training system is not adequately addressing the needs of socially disadvantaged adults;
- b) local capacity to develop and sustain initiatives which can help people improve their skills is usually weak and, as a result, local involvement in and ownership of learning activities equally so;
- c) residents of socially disadvantaged areas believe they have nothing to gain from improving their skills and that, no matter what they learn, it will make no difference to their prospects, in the labour market or more generally.

37. We believe that the education and training system is failing to meet the needs of socially disadvantaged adults because:

- a) too many adults have had a poor experience of compulsory education, which many feel has left them ill-prepared for adult life. People continue to leave school with significant literacy or numeracy problems, with no or very few qualifications few key skills and little understanding of business. However strong their motivation, that is a poor foundation for learning in later life. A negative experience of school often leaves people disinclined ever to learn again, especially if they continue to associate learning with a formal, institutional environment from which they feel themselves to have benefited so little and which they see as essentially irrelevant to their real problems;
- b) education and training provision for adults is often physically remote, intimidating or for other reasons difficult for socially disadvantaged people to access;
- c) not enough is done actively to engage adults in disadvantaged communities in learning;
- d) not enough is done to provide first-rung provision of the kind that is most

likely to appeal to adults with low self-confidence and to help them take the first steps back into learning and the labour market. In part, that is because public policy has concentrated strongly in recent years on providing education and training which leads to qualifications. This has led to a significant mismatch between the provision that is available and what is actually needed;

e) for similar reasons, there is little provision available to help people develop generic skills like self-confidence, self-presentation and timekeeping. There is evidence that these have a role equal in importance to vocational skills in helping people to access the labour market;

f) the qualifications system is itself complex and confusing and puts people off;

g) public sector organisations whose purpose is to deliver education and training for adults do not always treat the needs of socially disadvantaged adults as a priority. In part, this is a consequence of institutional incentives and disincentives created by funding systems operating at the national level;

h) the same organisations do not always work well together in either planning or provision. Again, this is in part because incentives and disincentives created by action at the national level which local agencies can often do little about; and

i) people who work in publicly funded education and training organisations are not always effective at addressing the needs of socially disadvantaged people.

38. Local capacity is weak because:

a) high concentrations of people with poor basic skills, low motivation and little experience of regular, paid work mean that local people willing and able to manage and support organisations in disadvantaged areas are thin on the ground; and

b) where local voluntary and community structures do exist, their effectiveness is significantly hampered by the funding and regulatory environment in the public sector, which is not well adapted to the needs of small organisations and which can make it difficult for them to cross the necessary threshold to become providers of learning.

39. People feel they have nothing to gain from improving their skills because:

a) in some areas, there are deep-seated cultural attitudes - often with specific

historical roots - which lead people to discount the benefits of learning. While people may acknowledge these in the abstract, they often think that learning is “not for them” - or lack the confidence to take part in it. One specific aspect of this general problem is that over time, such attitudes can lead to a culture which lacks enterprise and an appreciation of the potential of enterprise;

b) physical and psychological isolation, combined with little experience of regular, paid employment, means that people do not feel a sense of connection with the labour market;

c) the benefit system and fear of losing benefit can act as powerful disincentives to engage in learning;

d) some employers, typically SMEs, give a low priority to the training and development of their own workforce and there are few opportunities for people in low-paid employment to train independently of their employer. Some employers consciously or unconsciously also engage in recruitment practices that are perverse, unfair or discriminatory, particularly towards members of ethnic minority communities, but also towards the residents of particular areas;

e) Taken together, these factors have a significant “backwash” effect on people’s attitude to learning. They send the message that, just as the supply of suitable learning opportunities for disadvantaged people is inadequate, the perceived demand for skills does not make acquiring them worth the effort. People believe that improving their skills will have little practical effect in improving their prospects in the labour market and that getting a job depends not on what you know, but on who you know.

Recommendations

40. The Team is clear that the complexity of these problems will not respond to a single solution, but to patient sustained work on a number of fronts over an extended period.

41. The Team's recommendations are listed below. In a number of cases, there are close links between our recommendations and the emerging conclusions of other PATs. We have indicated these links where they exist.

The education and training system

Recommendation 1 - Neighbourhood learning centres

42. We believe that a new approach is needed to the delivery of education and training for adults who live in socially disadvantaged areas. It needs to recognise where people are starting from and to ensure that learning is truly accessible. We think that means that the right kind of learning opportunities - those which really engage people's interests and which help them develop the skills they want and need - should be made available in suitable local settings and that those involved in providing them need to take an active approach to engaging people, based on outreach. Engagement is much more likely to be effective where those involved in it have some credibility with local people, so the greater the involvement of local people in the management and delivery of learning, the better.

43. We therefore recommend that, to ensure that people in disadvantaged areas have access to the education and training they need, there should be a step-change in the level of "first-rung" provision that is available to them. Such provision should be delivered where people live through neighbourhood learning centres, in the management and operation of which local people should wherever possible have a significant stake.

44. Neighbourhood learning centres could take a variety of forms, including FE premises used for outreach work and Ufi Learning Centres, as well as local community centres. They could also be used to deliver a wide variety of learning programmes, including provision organised by community and voluntary organisations, the local college, employers and the Ufi as well as "learning" elements of over-arching regeneration programmes.

45. Their most important characteristics are that they should deliver learning which engages local people's interests; that, while recognising where people are starting from, what they offer should help people develop the skills they need in practice to access the labour

market successfully, including building their confidence and motivation; that they should be truly local and accessible in practice; and that they should have an active approach to the engagement of local residents.

46. The DfEE should publish a plan setting out an approach to the development of neighbourhood learning centres, indicating how they will build on existing initiatives, in particular the local learning centres of the UfI, the learning centres being set up under the Capital Modernisation Fund, the work of the Adult and Community Learning Fund and the New Opportunities Fund. The plan should be published by Easter 2000.

47. The structural changes that have been proposed to post-16 education and training mean there is an opportunity, from the start, to ensure that the new structures give the right priority to helping people in socially disadvantaged areas and take a strategic approach to ensuring that the right kind of community-level learning is available in the right places.

Recommendation 2 - Priority for socially disadvantaged people in planning and funding systems

48. Better planning, co-ordination and responsiveness to the needs of the socially disadvantaged should be high priorities in the development of the proposed Learning and Skills Council and its local arms. The thorough reform of the institutions responsible for funding post-16 learning over the next two years means there is an opportunity that should not be missed to “design in” a much greater degree of responsiveness to the needs of the socially disadvantaged.

49. We therefore recommend that, in the essential development work following the publication of the White Paper, the DfEE should ensure that:

- a strategic objective is set for the LSC and its local arms to ensure that adequate provision is made for people in socially disadvantaged areas, taking due account of the importance of outreach work, of “first-rung provision” delivered through neighbourhood learning centres and of the need to build local capacity to generate more activity in which local people feel they genuinely have a stake;
- action by the LSC to provide adult and community education gives priority to informal activity of the kind that is often most effective in engaging socially disadvantaged people;

- the new arrangements for planning post-16 education and training after 2001 allow for sufficiently “fine-grained” decisions to be made about the provision that should be available on a local level. These should be sensitive to any new mechanisms for neighbourhood influence over the manner of public service delivery in the forthcoming national strategy for neighbourhood renewal;
- the proposed LSC’s funding regime, and in particular any tariff-based arrangements, should take full account of the additional costs associated with providing education and training to people who live in disadvantaged communities.

Recommendation 3 - Training for practitioners

50. Many people who work for providers of education and training work very effectively in socially disadvantaged communities, have a good understanding of local people’s problems and are able to communicate and empathise with them effectively. This is not universally true however. If better connections are to be established or re-established between socially disadvantaged people and learning, more staff need to acquire the necessary skills. While, as proposed in recommendation 1, more involvement of local people in the management and delivery of learning will help in this respect, more and better training for the salaried staff involved is also important.

51. We therefore recommend that a programme of training and support should be put in place to ensure that practitioners responsible for delivering learning in disadvantaged areas are better able to meet the needs of local people. As a first step - and joining up with the cross-Government recommendation from PAT 16 - the DfEE should agree with FENTO by January 2000 how this recommendation might best be implemented for staff working in FE colleges.

Capacity-building

Recommendation 4 - Simpler funding systems

52. The most effective work we have seen with disadvantaged people has been delivered by local community and voluntary organisations, who usually have a much better understanding of local people’s needs - and more credibility with them - than larger, more inflexible organisations in the public sector.

53. People who work for these organisations, however, say that the multiplicity of funding regimes and the often burdensome auditing and reporting requirements that go with them make their lives much more difficult. In particular, they say that the “bidding culture” that has grown up in recent years, as a response by the public sector to pressure to improve value for money, means that scarce administrative time has to be invested in putting together complex funding “cocktails”. The short-termism of much public funding, which can make it very difficult to plan from one year to the next, is also frequently mentioned, as is an often unhelpful emphasis on “hard” output measures where these may be inappropriate and indeed at variance with desirable outcomes.

54. At the same time as these factors make life for community and voluntary organisations already involved in learning harder than it needs to be, they also make it more difficult for others to enter the market. So there is an argument for change on economic efficiency grounds too.

55. Central government, working with the voluntary sector, has begun to address these problems through the Compact with the voluntary sector and in other ways. We think it is essential that the implications of this work are fully worked through in the education and training field.

56. We recommend that, by April 2001, the DfEE should review its funding programmes and practices with a view to creating a funding and regulatory environment that allows for more community-generated initiative and enterprise in the delivery of education and training. As part of the related work on the Compact between central Government and the voluntary sector, the Home Office and the Treasury should together take the lead on the development of a code of good practice for Government funding programmes that are relevant to the community and voluntary organisations.

Recommendation 5 - Advice about funding

57. On a related point, many community and voluntary organisations say that they find it hard to make their way through the maze of requirements surrounding various funding programmes and that a local and sympathetic source of advice about how to navigate these would be immeasurably useful.

58. We therefore recommend that, to help small community and voluntary organisations in disadvantaged areas to access funding more easily and to reduce the bureaucratic burden on them, a publicly funded local service should be available to:

- a) offer impartial advice about funding for which small organisations might be eligible and, where possible, to guide them through the application process; and
- b) act as a signpost to other funding streams.

59. The Home Office should consult with DETR, DfEE, DTI, GOs, LAs and existing organisations already funded to provide this type of service with a view to making an advisory service more widely available to small community and voluntary organisations from April 2000.

Recommendation 6 - Community leadership training

60. If capacity is to be effectively built at local level - and in particular if more local people and local organisations are to be involved in the management and delivery of learning - , more needs to be done to encourage residents of disadvantaged areas to get involved in their community. Although it is by no means a complete answer, we think an important step is to give more encouragement to people who have the potential to start or lead locally generated initiatives.

61. To help engage more residents of disadvantaged areas in community activities, the DfEE, working closely with the Home Office, should organise a number of pilot community leadership programmes designed for local residents, to begin by January 2000. On the basis of the evaluation of the programmes, the two Departments should consider the case for a national programme of training in community leadership.

Attitudes to learning

Recommendation 7 - Information, advice and guidance

62. There is good evidence⁷ that sympathetic information, advice and guidance services delivered in the right way can have an important role in changing people's minds about learning and in seeing how it might benefit them. A range of recent national policy developments recognise the importance of effective guidance. There is therefore an opportunity that should not be missed to ensure that the right kind of services are made available in socially disadvantaged areas.

63. We recommend that, to encourage people in disadvantaged areas to engage in learning, the DfEE should work with the Ufi, the Employment Service, Learning Direct and Learning Partnerships responsible for developing local information, advice and guidance services for adults to ensure that all of these services cater adequately for people who live in socially disadvantaged areas and, where appropriate, reach out to and engage them. That should be a key priority for the national specification which will shape the development of local information, advice and guidance services after April 2000.

Recommendation 8 - School-business links

64. Experience of compulsory education exercises an important influence on adults' attitudes to learning and work. Effective activity in primary and secondary schools which demonstrates to young people the relevance of schooling to their future employment and which encourages a culture of enterprise is critical in laying the foundations for the future development of skills. This can be particularly important in socially disadvantaged areas, where young people may know few others from their direct experience who have improved their job prospects through learning and who can serve as suitable role models.

65. We recommend that, as part of its work, the Schools Plus PAT should consider the quality and effectiveness of current activity in disadvantaged areas to forge effective school business links and to encourage young people to be enterprising in their approach to work and make recommendations about how it might be improved.

⁷ For example, see *Demonstration Outreach Projects - Identification of Best Practice*, SWA Consulting, 1998

Recommendation 9 - Employers

66. We believe that action is needed to change the messages that people in disadvantaged areas receive about demand for skills in the labour market. Although they may say they think the skills of their workforce are critical, the behaviour of some employers may give the impression that they do not value them. Some continue to provide little training for their employees. Others also appear to make recruitment decisions on the basis not of the skills and aptitudes that people possess, but through informal recruitment networks and - worse - on the basis of prejudice about race or about where people live.

67. The DfEE should encourage employers to invest more in training for people from socially disadvantaged areas, who are likely to be low paid or employed on a part-time or insecure basis. Individual Learning Accounts, the Union Learning Fund, Investors in People, the National Training Organisations and the work of the Skills Task Force - particularly with SMEs - could all have an important role in helping employers to develop training programmes that are designed to help workers who currently receive little encouragement to learn.

68. To eliminate discrimination in recruitment decisions against people from particular neighbourhoods and ethnic minority people - and as also recommended by the Jobs PAT - central Government should take action to help employers improve their recruitment practices by promoting good practice and by taking a lead in its own approach to recruitment.

Recommendation 10 - Data

69. We do not know enough about the levels of skills in disadvantaged areas. That places obvious limitations on the effectiveness of plans to improve them. In particular, while it is generally clear that people in disadvantaged areas have lower levels of basic and employment-related skills than elsewhere, we know little about the skills which are particularly lacking in individual areas or about the differences between areas.

70. The DfEE should make firm recommendations by December 1999 about the data that should be collected to inform policy on improving skills in socially disadvantaged areas and on target-setting in the same areas (see recommendation 11 below). This work will need to be taken forward in the wider context of PAT 18's work on assembling better small-area information.

Recommendation 11 - Targets

71. We believe that, if all of these changes are implemented, they will make a significant difference in helping people in disadvantaged areas to become involved in learning, to enhance their skills and to improve their prospects in the labour market. We also believe that, provided the right baseline information can be established, these changes will be measurable.

72. There are good arguments for setting a clear over-arching goal to guide all the activity that is needed and to allow progress to be monitored. The Government recently adopted⁸ a set of national targets for improving participation and attainment in adult learning up to 2002.

The key targets were that:

- the number of adults with level 3 qualifications should be improved from 45% to 50%;
- the number of adults with level 4 qualifications should be improved from 26% to 28%;
- the number of non-learners should be reduced by 7%.

73. Local Learning Partnerships have been asked to develop local strategies to determine how they might contribute to the achievement of these targets in their areas.

74. We feel nevertheless that it would not be right for the Government to set specific external targets for the improvement of skills in disadvantaged areas. That would be inconsistent with the general message of this report that policy on education and training in disadvantaged areas has often been too “top-down” and that this has resulted in too little local ownership of initiatives aimed at improving skills.

75. We recommend instead that:

- we should adopt over-arching national aspirations to raise significantly the number of adults in severely disadvantaged areas who have level 3 qualifications; and to reduce significantly the proportion who are non-learners. The aim should be to bring indicators on both counts much closer to the national average. Because of the lack of “micro-level” data, more work will be needed to determine the baseline position in the relevant neighbourhoods and therefore what level of improvement should be aimed for and to what timescale;

⁸ *National Learning Targets for England for 2002* - DfEE, 1998

- as part of their new remit to develop local learning targets, Learning Partnerships should work with local communities to develop specific learning targets that make sense to local people and which respond to real local needs.

SKILLS PAT: SUMMATIVE ACTION PLAN

Recommendation	Action	By when?
1. Publish a plan for the development of neighbourhood learning centres in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.	DfEE	Easter 2000
2. Ensure that planning and funding regimes of the new national and local Learning and Skills Councils give priority to meeting the needs of socially disadvantaged adults	DfEE and LSC, when established	Ongoing, but review in March 2001
3. Training and development programme for practitioners delivering learning in socially disadvantaged areas	DfEE	Plan agreed with FENTO by January 2000
4. a) DfEE's funding programmes to be more sympathetic and accessible for small organisations b) Develop code of good practice on funding as part of central government Compact with voluntary sector	DfEE HM Treasury/Home Office	April 2001 To be agreed
5. Consider scope for a publicly funded local service to provide advice to community and voluntary organisations about funding	Home Office with DfEE, DETR and DTI	April 2000
6. Pilot local training programmes in community leadership	DfEE with Home Office	Begin by January 2000
7. Ensure adequate information, advice and guidance services are available to people in socially disadvantaged areas	DfEE with local Learning Partnerships and Ufi	To be implemented from April 2000

8. Review effectiveness of school-business links in socially disadvantaged areas and make recommendations	Schools Plus Policy Action Team	December 1999
9. a) Encourage employers to invest more in training for people from socially disadvantaged areas	DfEE	To be determined
b) Work with employers to improve recruitment practices	DfEE	To be determined
10. Recommend what data should be collected about adult skills to inform national policy and target-setting	DfEE	December 1999
11. a) Set national aspiration to improve adult qualifications and participation in learning in disadvantaged areas	DfEE	April 2000
b) Local Learning Partnerships to develop local learning targets for socially disadvantaged areas	Local Learning Partnerships with DfEE	April 2000

Chapter 3. Skills for what?

76. The Team decided early on in its work that it needed to take a broad view of the skills that were relevant to its remit. This chapter sets out briefly our view of what those skills are.

77. The skills people have affect every aspect of their lives, including in particular their prospects in the labour market, but also their capacity to understand, take part in and contribute to the wider society in which they live; their status within that society; their sense of self; the quality of their relationships with other members of their family and their local community; and on their ability to give their children effective support in school, in the transition from school to work and in further learning.

Basic Skills

78. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are the essential underpinning for all others. They were defined in the Moser Report (see box)⁹ as:

“the ability to read, write and speak in English, and to use mathematics at a level necessary to function at work and in society in general...”

79. People with literacy and numeracy problems are likely to find it very difficult to improve their skills in other areas. They are up to five times more likely than others to be unemployed and, if they are in employment, are more likely to be poorly paid. The following table¹⁰ shows the distribution of annual earnings for people with different levels of literacy and numeracy.

Annual Earnings	Literacy		Numeracy	
	Low	High	Low	High
Up to £4,000	20	11	26	6
£4,600-9,000	29	12	29	10
£9,000-13,000	27	16	22	17
£13,000-19,200	17	20	15	21
Over £19,200	7	40	7	46

⁹ *Improving literacy and numeracy - a fresh start* - 1999

¹⁰ Source - International Adult Learning Survey

A Fresh Start -the Moser Report

The Moser Working Group was appointed by the Secretary of State in June 1998. A Fresh Start proposes that the Government should launch a National Strategy to reduce the number of adults with low levels of basic skills.

As part of the National Strategy, the group has recommended that the Government should commit itself to the virtual elimination of functional illiteracy and innumeracy.

In addition to the accepted participation target for 2002, the group recommends that:

- Government should set specific basic skills targets for adults and for young people to be achieved by 2005 and 2010, on the scale proposed in the new National Strategy.

The aim is to reduce by half the number of functionally illiterate adults of working age by 2010. This means lifting some 3.5 million adults out of functional illiteracy over this period, and a similar number for numeracy

- A key objective is to encourage and help younger people, and by 2010, the aim should be that 95% of 19 year olds have adequate levels of literacy and 90% adequate levels of numeracy.

To enable this to happen, the group made 21 recommendations under ten headings which are:

- National targets
- An entitlement to learn
- Guidance, assessment and publicity
- Better opportunities for learning
- Quality
- A new curriculum
- A new system of qualifications
- Teacher training and improved inspection
- The benefits of new technology
- Planning of delivery

The system of provision proposed by the group will make it possible to achieve the proposed targets only if each year from 2002 on average 450,000 people pass the threshold for literacy, and a similar number for numeracy. This compares with, say, less than 70,000 a year under present arrangements.

To get a flow of 450,000 people to cross the key threshold, the total number enrolled needs to increase from the 500,000 planned for 2002 to some 750,000 by 2005.

To achieve the National Strategy proposed in the report, the group recommends that Local Learning Partnerships should have a key responsibility for improving adult basic skills. It recommends that they should be required to produce 3 year action plans for adult basic skills education and that these should be developed with the help of the Basic Skills Agency.

At national level there the group recommends that there should be a National Adult Basic Skills Strategy Group, chaired by a Minister, to advise on all aspects of the National Strategy.

Skills for work

80. To play an effective role in the labour market, people now need a formidable portfolio of skills. A number of long-established trends mean that the demand within the economy for individuals with higher levels of skills - and a greater aptitude for handling risk - is steadily increasing

81. The key trends include a shift towards a more service-oriented economy and away from traditional manufacturing; increasingly volatile and unpredictable career patterns for individuals; new technology; increased international competition; and de-layering and “flatter” structures within firms.¹¹ We saw evidence of the effects of significant economic change in each of the four study areas we visited. While it was most starkly obvious in the former coalfield areas of Peterlee and Hemsworth - where the main source of employment for men has simply disappeared in the past few years - it was also evident in Hackney, which remains a severely disadvantaged area despite being a stone’s throw from the City of London.

82. The skills individuals need to access the labour market and to maintain their position within it include the basic skills of literacy and numeracy and increasingly competence with information technology as well as occupationally-specific skills that can help to secure long-term employment. They also include more generic work-related skills - like communication, teamworking and problem-solving - also defined as “key skills” - that are increasingly demanded by business or which are critical if people are to market themselves effectively to employers.¹² . There are well-established definitions of the general skills that are most relevant to employment.

Key Skills

There is a reasonable consensus around the key skills that are most essential to be effective members of the workforce. Originally developed by the National Council for Vocational Qualifications, the list includes:

- 1) Communication
- 2) Application of Number
- 3) Information Technology
- 4) Working with Others
- 5) Improving Own Learning and Performance

¹¹ *Labour Market and Skill Trends*, DfEE, 1998

¹² *Second Report of the National Skills Task Force*, DfEE, 1999

6) Problem Solving

Specifications exist for each of these skills, describing each in terms of five levels, extending from the equivalent of GCSE to first degree.

83. Demand from employers for key skills is strong; some recent changes in the labour market have reinforced that demand and mean there is a higher premium on, for example, competence in IT or inter-personal and communication skills.

84. Consequently, there is a reasonably good correlation between people's possession of these skills, their likelihood of being in employment and the probability of that employment being well-paid. For example, employees who are able to use a computer derive a significant wage gain¹³; and young men with low levels of basic numeracy are much more likely to spend prolonged periods out of employment.¹⁴ It is worth adding, however, that this correlation between skills and employment is not always very evident to people from disadvantaged communities, who may feel that, whatever employers say about rewarding skills, they themselves are on the receiving end of "postcode" discrimination on the basis of where they live or - worse - racial discrimination.

85. In particular, the general correlation between the possession of higher skills and success in the labour market does not hold good where ethnic minority people are concerned. People from ethnic minorities are generally no less well-qualified than white people (see table) and are more likely to be involved in further or higher education yet, for most ethnic minority groups, their presence in the labour market does not reflect that.

Proportion of adults qualified to NVQ level 3 by ethnicity in England¹⁵

Ethnic Group	Proportion at Level 3 (%)
All	45
White	45
Non-white	44
Of which:	
Black	45
Indian/Pakistani/Bangladeshi	41
Other non-white	49

¹³ *The Market Value of Generic Skills*, DfEE, ?

¹⁴ *Does Numeracy Matter*, The Basic Skills Agency, 1997

¹⁵ *Labour Force Survey* - Winter 1998-99

86. Describing the skills an individual possesses defines only their basic “employability assets”. But the relationship between skills and work is far from being a directly instrumental one. Put more simply, the possession of certain skills does not guarantee that an individual will get a job, still less one of the quality that those skills might be thought to justify. Other factors are equally important in determining individuals’ employability (see box).

Employability

A study¹⁶ conducted last year for the DfEE found that individuals’ employability - their capacity to gain employment and to maintain themselves in it - depended on

- their basic “employability assets” in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes;
- their ability to use and deploy those assets through, for example:
 - career management skills, including awareness of opportunities in the labour market;
- job search skills, including the ability to use formal and informal networks;
- a strategic approach to labour market opportunity, including the willingness to be occupationally and physically mobile;
- the way in which the relevant assets are presented to employers, including through CVs and interview;
- their personal circumstances, including any family circumstances that might affect their ability to seek employment; and
- external factors which individuals have almost no capacity to influence, like macro-economic demand, benefit rules and employer behaviour and selection procedures.

87. This analysis is important because it makes clear that any strategies to help people from disadvantaged communities to become more employable cannot focus only on “equipping” them with the right skills, however these are defined. The ability to deploy and present skills, and the possession of qualities like self-confidence and self-discipline also matter.

88. These - and in particular self-confidence and self-discipline- are also exactly the skills and qualities that are needed for people to make a success of self-employment, a field in which socially disadvantaged people are of course significantly under-represented. Wider social and economic changes - for example the end of “jobs for life”, more flexible working patterns and the greater distances many people need to be prepared to travel to work - all mean that the ability to navigate “risk” or to be enterprising are particularly important.

¹⁶ *Employability*, Institute for Employment Studies, 1998

89. Because socially disadvantaged communities can for historical reasons be inward-looking and isolated, they are also qualities that people who live there are particularly likely to lack.

90. There are, of course many exceptions to that general statement and many people in disadvantaged communities are, because of their experience of life in often difficult circumstances, extremely resourceful. Skills that people possess that can not be readily accredited - or which do not fit a conventional mould - are, however, all too frequently not recognised or valued.

Skills for life

91. The skills that people have - or lack - have an importance that goes over and beyond their utility in helping to secure and maintain employment. Skills also have a critical impact on:

- people's self-esteem and their self-confidence;
- their sense of connection with the wider society in which they live and their ability to participate fully in it;
- their ability to contribute to the local community in which they live;
- their ability to perform a range of everyday tasks which most people take for granted;
- their ability to be effective parents and otherwise to care for members of their family.

92. Together with poverty and unemployment - to which the factors listed are themselves significant contributors - these are among the most important kinds of disadvantage experienced by people who live in the areas we were asked to study. People who suffer from all of them often feel isolated and without hope - they are "socially excluded" in the fullest possible sense.

93. There are some separately identifiable "life skills" - for example parenting and caring - that are directly relevant here. But, for the most part, the Team does not believe a clear line can be sensibly drawn between "life skills" that might help people reduce or avoid the kinds of disadvantage listed above and the "employment skills" discussed earlier in the chapter. In

reality, the same sets of skills are relevant in both contexts.

Chapter 4. Skills and social disadvantage

94. All the available evidence suggests that people who live in severely socially disadvantaged areas are disproportionately likely to have low levels of skills, whether these are defined in relation to formal qualifications, the basic skills of literacy and numeracy or other measures.

95. The following national evidence, although much of it is well-known, is particularly striking:

- schools with higher levels of free school meals uptake have fewer pupils attaining the target levels at every key stage. This polarisation becomes even more evident as children move through the key stages.
- levels of unauthorised absences are higher in schools in disadvantaged communities. The resulting impact on school achievement is stark. Only 11% of persistent truants obtain 5+ A-Cs compared to 55% of those who have never truanted;
- there is a close correlation between the local authority areas where the staying-on rate in education and training post-16 is low and areas of social disadvantage¹⁷;
- a study conducted for the Basic Skills Agency¹⁸ strongly suggested that there was a relatively high concentration of poor basic skills in the most disadvantaged areas. For example, the proportion of adults in each local authority district with very poor literacy skills varied between 9% and 24%.

96. The overall national picture is generally borne out by local research evidence in the study areas we have visited, though there are interesting contrasts between particular areas . For example:

In Hemsworth,

- 69% of ex-miners have no qualifications;
- 34% of all adult males have problems with literacy and 25% with numeracy. (the

¹⁷ *Participation in Education and Training by Young People Aged 16 and 17 - Statistical Bulletin 7/99 - DfEE, 1999*

equivalent figures for women are 20% and 25% respectively);

- for unemployed people, the equivalent figures rise to 60% for literacy and 53% for numeracy;
- 56% of men aged 40+ left school before the age of 16;

97. In Hackney, on the other hand:

- 27% of people of working age have no qualifications,
- 30% of people left school at the earliest possible age (the comparable national figure is 62%);
- 34% of residents have higher level qualifications - this is above even the average for central London;

BUT

- 75% of those who do not have higher or intermediate qualifications have no qualifications at all. The proportion of the population with qualifications equivalent to NVQ 1-2 (“lower”) is three times less than the average for central London.

98. In effect, these figures reflect the relative social and economic polarisation of Hackney, where more than 50% of the employed population works in managerial, professional or associate professional occupations, but where 17% of the adult population - much higher on particular estates - has never had a job at all. An apparently “good” set of figures on skills and qualifications masks the fact that a significant minority of the local population is severely disadvantaged.

99. Hemsworth, by contrast, is much more homogeneous; only 19% of the employed population works in managerial, professional or associate professional positions but - despite high levels of worklessness generally - the proportion of the adult population which has never had a job is 12% - significantly lower than in Hackney which apparently has a much better qualified population. That reflects Hemsworth’s history as a “company town” dominated by a single industry that employed a majority of the working population

¹⁸ Survey conducted for the Basic Skills Agency by The Opinion Research Business, 1997

100. These illustrations emphasise the importance of avoiding generalisations about skills in socially disadvantaged areas. Although there are many common problems, there is no single “type” of disadvantaged area. Apart from information derived from some useful local surveys like those covering Hemsworth and Hackney, however, we know little in detail about the levels of adult skills in particular disadvantaged neighbourhoods.

101. Avoiding generalisations is particularly important where ethnic minority people are concerned. According to general figures, people from ethnic minorities are more likely to be involved in further or higher education than whites. If the assumption that better qualifications mean people are more likely to secure employment holds true, one would expect that unemployment among ethnic minority people to be lower than for whites. Yet the opposite is true; ethnic minority people are both more likely to be unemployed and less likely to be employed.¹⁹

Economic status by ethnic origin, 1997		
	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Whites	74	6
All ethnic minority groups	57	15

102. These general figures, however, conceal very significant variations between different ethnic groups:

Economic status by ethnic origin, 1997		
	Employment Rate	Unemployment Rate
Black Caribbean	66	15
Black African	50	25
Indian	65	8
Pakistani	42	21
Bangladeshi	36	23

¹⁹ *Labour Market Trends* - DfEE, 1998
Youth Cohort Study - 1996

103. There are similar variations between groups in the figures for participation in full-time education post-16 and in attainment at GCSE. Indians are significantly more likely to stay on in full-time education and obtain better GCSE results than whites, while Black Caribbean young people and Pakistani and Bangladeshi young women are no more likely to stay on than whites. Attainment of 5+A-C grades at GCSE by Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Black young people (23%) is significantly worse than for whites (46%).

104. These figures support the argument above that there is an imperfect correlation between the skills that people possess and their success in the labour market and that other factors can be at least as important. In this case, we think the only conceivable explanation is the level of discrimination ethnic minority people encounter in the labour market. This issue is explored in more detail below.

105. Since poor skills have a sapping effect on people's self-confidence, they also reduce individuals' capacity - and their willingness - to act to improve their situation. Adults who are socially disadvantaged are much less likely than the general population to be engaged in learning. 50% of respondents to the National Adult Learning Survey who had not recently been involved in learning said that nothing would persuade them to engage in learning. Respondents falling into this category were disproportionately likely to be socially disadvantaged.

106. Again, there is a general exception to this trend in the case of ethnic minority people who, in the evidence gathered by the National Adult Learning Survey, were significantly more likely than white people to have a positive attitude to learning.

107. The problem of local capacity is exacerbated where, as is often the case, very few residents of disadvantaged areas have higher level qualifications or belong to the more skilled occupational groups. This is often cited in some disadvantaged neighbourhoods - Hemsworth and Peterlee among our study areas - as one of the reasons why it can be so difficult for communities to generate and sustain their own activities.

108. However, that view should be qualified by the evidence from Hackney mentioned above, where the presence of large numbers of highly qualified and well-paid people does not appear to offer significant benefits to those who are not.

109. It does not help that so many of the professionals who work in disadvantaged areas do not live there and that there are therefore no role models of professional attitudes and behaviour for those who grow up locally. This "non-residence" factor also contributes to the common

perception of public services - including the individuals responsible for delivering education and training - as an “alien presence” which is not readily capable of coming to terms with the real problems of an area.

Data

110. We have already made the point that, unless it is interpreted with care, the available data about educational attainment, qualifications and skills can give a misleading picture of the actual position in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. In part, that is because there are significant shortcomings in the quality, detail and coverage of the data that is available, including that which is collected as part of national surveys.

111. There are seven main sources of data about the skills and qualifications that adults have:

- a) *Adult Literacy in Britain* surveys the literacy skills of the population of working age;
- b) the *National Adult Learning Survey* provides information on adults’ involvement in taught learning and self-directed learning;
- c) the *Adult Basic Skills Survey* was designed to estimate the level of basic literacy and numeracy skills in England by local authority area;
- d) the *Labour Force Survey* provides a wide range of data about income, occupation, qualifications and training;
- e) the Census provides a large amount of detailed information, which feeds into the Index of Local Deprivation (ILD), a key set of statistics which affects amongst other things financial allocations to local authorities;
- f) local skills surveys commissioned by TECs and local authorities;
- g) administrative sources, like the “Client Progress Kit” administered by the Employment Service.

112. None of these sources provide reliable data at the micro-level about the level of adult skills and qualifications and their relationship with employment patterns. In particular:

- with the exception of c), none of them provide data below the county level. While the Adult Basic Skills Survey gives figures by local authority district, these are based not on hard evidence from each area, but on assumptions about local levels of skill based on geodemographic classifications;

- the 1991 Census included a question about higher level qualifications only and most of the “skills” data from which the ILD is derived is therefore schools-based. While such data may be have uses as proxy information, it tells us little about the levels of skill in the adult population, especially as we know that, in many areas, there are such important differences between generations;
- while there are many excellent local surveys - not least covering the PAT’s four study areas - it is rarely possible to make robust comparisons between the data available for different areas.

113. The PAT’s view is that there is a clear need for better information at ward and perhaps lower levels to inform future strategies for improving adult skills (**see recommendation 10**). We have commissioned a feasibility study from the University of Warwick to assess the best ways of taking this forward. The results of the study will be known later in the year.

Chapter 5. Improving skills

114. Action to improve skills in disadvantaged areas comes from six main sources:

- a) the mainstream activity of the formal education and training system, including institutional provision through schools, colleges and universities and dedicated training programmes for the unemployed;
- b) investment by employers in improving the skills of their own workforce;
- c) area-based regeneration programmes like the Single Regeneration Budget and the New Deal for Communities, which have often included a significant “human capital” element;
- d) local community and voluntary organisations, whether their primary purpose is educational or not;
- e) local public sector organisations from non-educational sectors, including in particular culture and health;
- f) the actions of individuals themselves.

Schools

115. For young people, the foundations of learning - of literacy and numeracy and of the skills they will need to access the labour market - are or should be laid during their time in compulsory education. Yet the attainment at GCSE level of young people in disadvantaged areas is typically well below the national average. The very significant challenges faced by teachers and schools serving these areas are, however, well-known. How better to address them is the subject of a report by a separate Policy Action Team (“Schools Plus”), which is due to report at a later date.

116. A good deal of action has been taken in recent years by both local and central government to focus resources and energy in raising attainment in schools in disadvantaged areas. For example:

- through the “literacy hour” and other measures, a stronger emphasis has been placed on work in schools to help all children develop essential basic skills;

- the *Excellence in Cities* initiative has been launched to tackle the education problems of major cities where standards have been too low for too long;
- Education Action Zones (see box) are intended to allow schools in areas of disadvantage and other local partners the flexibility to address problems that are a priority locally;
- additional support given to schools in areas of disadvantage by LEAs rose significantly between 1996-97 and 1998-99.

Education Action Zones

Education Action Zones (EAZs) are typically formed around two or three secondary schools and their feeder primary schools and are set up for between 3 and 5 years. They are intended to provide local partners with the flexibility and additional resources to introduce innovative and imaginative approaches to raising school standards in areas of social disadvantage.

The first 25 zones were announced in June 1998. 12 started work in September 1998 and the remaining 13 on 1 January 1999.

So far, the zones have involved:

- working with, and learning from businesses - over 140 companies are already involved and a total of £5 million sponsorship and support from them;
- radical alterations to the curriculum to make sure that it is tailored to meet the needs of each pupil;
- making sure all services are 'joined up' so that they meet the needs of the community; and
- exploring new arrangements for appraising and rewarding teaching in order to attract and retain the best staff.

117. It is too early to be able to evaluate the long-term effect of these changes, though they can offer only indirect help to adults with low skills, who will be of working age for many decades to come.

Colleges of further education

118. There are 435 self-governing colleges (including sixth form colleges) in England. While they are also concerned with full-time education for the 16-19 age group, they are the main publicly funded providers of learning to adults. Colleges vary greatly in character, size and mission, from small specialist institutions to large urban colleges aiming to offer a full range of provision to both young people and adults.

Bridging the Gap is the title of the Social Exclusion Unit's report on 16-18s not in education, training or employment.

The report assesses the scale of the social exclusion amongst the 16-18 age group, analyses the reasons why this happens and makes proposals to reduce the numbers involved.

There are just over 160,000 young people outside education, training or work - one in eleven 16-18 year olds. The report recommends that all young people should stay in learning until at least 18 and highlights the consequences of non-participation - young people who drop out of the system between sixteen and eighteen are more likely to become long-term unemployed, turn to drugs, crime or both.

The report proposes:

- a new graduation certificate for achievement at Level 2 or higher by age 19, which will set demanding but achievable standards and recognises achievements in key skills, community work and arts or sport;
- better advice, guidance and support during the teenage years through a new Youth Support Service;
- work on new financial initiatives, extending the scope of education maintenance pilots; and
- a youth discount card, building on the learning card, to encourage young people to stay in education until they are 18.

The report's approach dovetails with that of the White Paper *Learning to Succeed*, and its proposals will be implemented gradually from year 2000. They will be taken forward by a DfEE-led interdepartmental group reporting to a Ministerial Group led by the Secretary of State.

119. The Further Education Funding Council has the main statutory duty for the provision of further education to both young people and adults. Under Schedule 2 of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 - which established the Council - the activities of the FEFC have related principally to the provision of academic and vocational courses that lead to a qualification

120. Most public funding that colleges receive is allocated through the FEFC's funding methodology. Funding is related to the course being followed and is linked to the initial assessment and guidance of students, their retention on courses and their achievements. Additional funding is also provided by the FEFC for colleges to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

121. The Kennedy Report, "*Learning Works*"²⁰, emphasised the importance of drawing back into learning those who have traditionally not taken advantage of educational

²⁰ *Learning Works - Widening Participation in Further Education* - FEFC, 1997

opportunities, in particular those with no or inadequate qualifications. In response to the Kennedy report, the Government announced its intention to bring about a major expansion in FE numbers, giving an extra 700,000 students by 2001/2002 (compared with 1997/98), principally focused on widening participation previously under-represented groups.

122. As a further response to the Kennedy Report, the FEFC introduced in 1998-99 a “Widening Participation” factor into its funding methodology to give colleges an incentive to recruit students from the most disadvantaged local authority wards. The factor provided for an average funding uplift of 6% for students from these areas, identified by postcode. The range of students for whom the funding uplift was granted has been significantly widened this year, to include certain categories of disadvantaged people (e.g. the homeless, asylum-seekers and refugees) whether they live in disadvantaged areas or not, students on basic skills courses and students whose courses are part-funded by European Social Fund money.

123. FE colleges also receive substantial funding for specific projects from the European Union, in particular through the European Social Fund. They are often important partners in local regeneration initiatives.

Higher Education Institutions

124. Universities and higher education colleges vary considerably in the extent of their work in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The Higher Education Funding Council for England is allocating funds from 1999/2000 onwards to encourage recruitment of students from disadvantaged areas identified, in the same way as in further education, by a postcode analysis. £20 million a year will be distributed in the form of a 5% per head premium in funding to HE institutions (HEIs) for each student from such areas. HEIs can also bid for special project funding.

125. Many HEIs already have ‘outreach’ initiatives in local communities, either to attract students into mainstream HE courses or to provide adult education which does not necessarily lead to a qualification. Although these activities are especially associated with the ‘new’ universities, older universities such as Sheffield, Bradford and Surrey also run schemes targeted at disadvantaged areas. A report on good practice in widening access to HE, ‘From Elitism to Inclusion’, was published last November by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals.

LEA adult education services

126. Although some services are much stronger than others, all local education authorities retain an adult education service, for which they currently receive £9 million pa from central Government, on a matched funding basis. That is a reflection of their statutory duty to provide further education for adults that does not lead to a qualification - the obverse of the FEFC's duty.

127. Although, in financial terms, LEAs' level of activity is small compared with colleges and universities, they are an important source of learning opportunities provided at the community level.

128. Much of what LEAs provide is adult education of a traditional type. However, many LEAs are also introducing measures to encourage participation such as websites, learning shops, open learning centres and provision in old peoples' homes. Others are making particular efforts to develop schools as community and lifelong learning centres and to deliver basic skills provision and family learning in community settings. Some are working to raise levels of basic education in targeted wards or for groups such as travellers, and to involve older people in community learning.

Training programmes

The New Deal

129. The New Deal is the generic title for a range of Government programmes aiming to help provide opportunities for unemployed people to gain new skills or update the ones they already have.

130. The New Deal for Young People offers 18 to 24 year olds the opportunity to train towards a recognised qualification, usually up to a NVQ/SVQ level 2 or equivalent. This can be achieved by joining the Full-Time Education and Training Option where a course of education can be taken for up to twelve months, or by taking part-time training for up to six months whilst participating on one of the other three Options. Over 42,000 unemployed young

people have started on the Full-Time Education and Training Option and a further 47,000 on one of the other three Options.

131. The New Deal for the long term unemployed offers people over the age of 25 the chance to gain a recognised qualification, up to NVQ/SVQ level 3 or equivalent, by entering full-time education courses or work-based learning.

132. Under the New Deal for Lone Parents, limited financial assistance can be given to lone parents undertaking external work related training courses of up to 12 months duration which will lead to a qualification of no higher than NVQ/SVQ level 2/3.

133. The New Deal for people on income replacement benefits over the age of 50 is currently being developed and will offer provision for skills improvements on the same lines as the other New Deals.

Work-based learning for adults

134. Work based learning for adults (over 25s) is delivered through TECs. Around 116,000 people will be helped this year. Almost all will have been claiming JSA for at least 6 months though early entry is possible for those with particular disadvantages. All are volunteers. The programme has two principal strands:

- occupational skills training to equip people for particular jobs through a mix of employer based and NVQ provision; and
- basic employability (BE) training which is targeted on those who lack the fundamental skills and qualities for employability.

135. Access to BE is for those with multiple needs including motivation, self confidence, interpersonal & social skills, work habits and disciplines and basic skills. About 15% of trainees have never worked and the rest average 5 1/2 years since their last job. About a fifth are disabled, about half have basic skill problems and half lack appropriate life skills. The vast majority are JSA claimants - other benefit claimants are eligible but very few join.

136. Provision is largely via voluntary sector contractors. Providers are encouraged to offer individually tailored, flexible support which provides whatever combination of basic employability and occupational skills are required to at least access an entry level job in the local labour market. "Training" covers a wide range of activities including group work, projects, work tasters and placements. Some may get help with the transition to work. Chalk and talk is avoided.

137. The programme has been increasingly skewed towards the basic employability strand over the last few years so that resources are increasingly concentrated on the most disadvantaged. 35,000 BE starts are planned this year, rising to 40,000 in 2000-01. Funding (allowing for an average programme of about 7 months) for the BE strand is planned at £136m this year rising to £165m in 2000-01 (about £2000 on training fees and £1800 on training allowances per person). Total funding this year for TEC-delivered work-based learning for adults is £312m.

138. Funding for TECs is related to local levels of long term unemployment. TECs are responsible for ensuring that provision, particularly BE, reaches the most disadvantaged. TECs and ES district offices are required to enter joint planning arrangements to ensure the most effective delivery of work based learning. ES refer most of those who join.

Learning to Succeed

The arrangements sketched out above describe briefly the activity of the formal education and training system in disadvantaged areas at the time of writing. However, the Government announced at the end of June 1999 a set of proposals aiming at the comprehensive structural reform of that system. These proposals are set out in the White Paper, *Learning to Succeed*. Implementing most of them will require primary legislation. Assuming that Parliament approves the legislation, the new arrangements will enter into force from April 2001.

The analysis in the White Paper of the shortcomings of the current system is supported by many of the arguments in this report and indeed was influenced by them. The main points of that analysis are:

- the education and training system as currently established fails many of the most socially disadvantaged;
- too few young people stay on in learning beyond compulsory school age;
- learning needs to become more accessible to its intended customers;
- people need better advice and support and access to more flexible ways of learning;
- the quality of many education and training providers is not up to scratch;
- public sector mechanisms for planning and funding learning are complex, inconsistent and confusing.

Specific proposals put forward in the White Paper include:

- the FEFC should be replaced by a new Learning and Skills Council (LSC) with a strategic responsibility for delivering all post-16 learning outside higher education;
- the new LSC will work through a network of c.50 local Learning and Skills Councils, which will be responsible for planning and co-ordinating provision locally;

- both national and local LSCs will be directed by a Boards of whom a majority will be representative of learners, rather than providers;
- OFSTED will assume responsibility for inspecting all 16-19 provision, wherever it takes place. A new unified post-19 inspectorate will be responsible for all provision for adults and all work-based learning for people of any age;
- the creation of a new unified support service for young people (see also the box on *Bridging the Gap* above);
- responsibility for work-based learning will transfer to the Employment Service.

Employers

139. Most employers invest very substantial resources in the training and development of their workforce. 82% of employers provide some off-the-job training for their staff, although this proportion has scarcely increased in recent years²¹. Of the types of training funded or arranged by employers, health and safety training is by far the most common, followed by induction, training in new technology and management training.

140. As already noted - and as suggested by the type of topics which are a priority for off-the-job training - people who are low-paid or in part-time employment are less likely to receive training than more secure employees. In addition, some employers continue to be deterred from investing in skills by doubts that the long-term benefits will justify the short-term costs and fear that employees who have been trained at their expense will leave. These concerns are particularly marked in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises.

Area-based regeneration programmes

141. There is a long history of “integrated” regeneration programmes seeking to address the problems of disadvantaged areas. These include the Urban Programme and the Single Regeneration Budget, as well as the more recent New Deal for Communities, Employment

²¹ *Labour Market and Skill Trends, 1998/99* - DfEE,

Zones (see box) and Education Action Zones..

142. Such programmes have often included an element at local level intended to help adults improve their skills and return to the labour market. However, as the Social Exclusion Unit's report on Neighbourhood Renewal²² noted, past regeneration programmes have had a strong emphasis on physical infrastructure and have sometimes neglected the need to help the people, as well as the place, to improve. The mechanics of such programmes, with their focus on "hard", quantifiable outputs, have tended to reinforce this approach.

143. The New Deal for Communities (NDC) is an attempt to put these problems right. It aims to cut across the barriers which have traditionally led to the multiple causes of social exclusion being tackled in isolation from each other and to promote "joined-up thinking to tackle joined-up problems". NDC projects are intended to:

- improve job prospects;
- bring together investment in buildings and investment in people; and
- improve neighbourhood management and the delivery of local services.

144. 10 Pathfinder local authority areas have so far been identified and invited to put forward delivery plans by July this year.

Employment Zones

Currently running in five areas, **prototype Employment Zones** are delivered through local partnerships made up of TECs, local authorities, ES, the voluntary sector, local employers etc. They were introduced in February 1998 as an interim measure to test innovative approaches under the 1973 Employment and Training Act. Employment Zones aim to tackle the multiple barriers faced by long-term unemployed adults trying to re-enter the labour market. Long-term unemployment leads to social isolation and exclusion and, if not addressed, can reinforce patterns of social deprivation.

Fifteen **new Employment Zones** will run from Spring 2000. Organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors were invited to bid to run the zones. Three different contractors have been chosen to run the first eleven new Zones: Working Links - a new public/private sector partnership comprising the Employment Service (ES), Manpower PLC and Ernst & Young; Reed in Partnership with local organisations and Pertemps also working with local organisations. Contractors for the remaining four Zones will be announced in the New Year.

The new zones will have maximum flexibility over the way they help the long-term unemployed move back into work, unlike the prototypes. Powers under the 1999 Welfare Reform & Pensions Act allow personal advisers to work with participants to develop fully costed action plans. Participants 'buy' the

²² *Bringing Britain Together* - HMSO, 1998

help they need to get a job or start a business with their personal job account.

Strong links with other initiatives are a requirement in all Employment Zones. There will be NDC projects in half the English Zones. Links will also be made with Education and Health Action Zones as well as the various New Deals

Community and voluntary organisations

145. Community and voluntary organisations come in all shapes and sizes. Some - like for example the Workers' Educational Association - are national organisations which are very significant providers of learning in their own right. Many smaller organisations are also important providers of learning in their own locality, increasingly in association with colleges of further education or more "formal" providers..

146. Whether they are themselves providers or not, community and voluntary organisations tend to be closer to local people than larger, more faceless, public sector institutions and can have a critical role in engaging socially disadvantaged people in community activities like a local tenants' group or a community association. Participation of this kind can often be an important step in confidence-building which can lead on to further learning.

"Other" public sector organisations

147. Many public sector organisations outside the formal education and training sector nevertheless have an important role in helping adults to learn and to improve their skills. Chief among these are organisations in the broad cultural sector, notably libraries, museums and galleries, which have an explicit mission to promote learning and which often have extremely effective links with local providers of education and training. Other kinds of less obvious "cultural" activities supported by public bodies- like sport - can, because they are a good way of engaging adults' interests, act as important gateways to learning.

148. Finally, the public sector is also of course a very significant employer in its own right, employing in some services a disproportionate number of socially disadvantaged people.

Individuals

149. Individuals are increasingly motivated to contribute towards the costs of their own learning. The National Adult Learning Survey suggests that - excluding full-time students who

went straight from school to college or university - 5 million adults contributed something towards those costs over a three year period.

Chapter 6. What is going wrong?

150. Despite all the investment - both public and private - and the widespread acknowledgement of the priority that should be accorded to improving skills, there are areas of the country where the number of people who lack essential work-related or basic skills is very high - and where there is often little hope in sight. Why have the current arrangements failed them?

151. The PAT believes that there are three main reasons why this situation persists:

- a) for a variety of complex reasons, the education and training system is not adequately addressing the needs of socially disadvantaged adults;
- b) local capacity to develop initiatives is usually weak and, as a result, local involvement in and ownership of learning activities equally so;
- c) residents of socially disadvantaged areas believe they have nothing to gain from improving their skills and that, no matter what they learn, it will make no difference to their prospects, in the labour market or more generally.

The education and training system

152. The education and training system employs a large number of highly qualified people. There are educational institutions in every community in the country. Many of them have an avowed mission to help the socially disadvantaged and there is a long and honourable tradition of education, including adult education, playing a critical role in widening horizons and opportunities for socially disadvantaged people.

153. Yet, in our four study areas, we felt there was often a disturbing lack of connection between educational institutions and some of the local communities they exist to serve. In many places, local people simply did not believe the institutions - schools, colleges and universities - had anything useful to offer them or were genuinely interested in helping them. Cynicism and mistrust is often a strong feature of communities that have experienced several regeneration initiatives which have apparently resulted in little effective change. Depressingly, the lack of connection that results sometimes co-existed with a good deal of excellent work, innovative thinking and good intentions on both sides.

154. More provision in educational institutions is not the only or even always the best way to help socially disadvantaged adults to learn. But, even where learning takes place outside an institutional context, institutions can have a vital role to play as providers of outreach, resources, expertise and support for learners and for community organisations involved in delivering more informal learning programmes. In addition, of course, where those programmes have been effective, they should lead to more formal institutional provision, as people acquire more and better qualifications. So establishing or re-establishing connections between socially disadvantaged people and local educational institutions is critical.

Compulsory education

155. By the time they reach the age of 16, young people have spent at least eleven years in the compulsory education system. Yet in socially disadvantaged areas, large numbers of people continue to leave school with significant literacy or numeracy problems, with no or very few qualifications and with little notion of what role they might play in the labour market or of how they might access it.

156. Many young people have effectively disengaged from the compulsory education system before the age of 16. Non-attendance of course makes a significant contribution to poor attainment. But, whatever the reasons, a poor experience of school often leaves adults disinclined ever to learn again, especially if they continue to associate learning with a formal, institutional environment from which they feel themselves to have benefited so little and which they see as essentially irrelevant to their real problems. In Hemsworth, for example, education is often not valued for its own sake as it is in, for example, the former Welsh coalfield; and school results are below both local and national averages.

“[There is a] need to accept that many of those who most need “education and training” have a natural and understandable resistance to anything that comes labelled as education or training. This is related to their (often correct) perception that either:

- the education I already had didn't work for me why should more education do me any more good?

or

- what is the point of developing skills if unemployment levels are such that I have little chance of a worthwhile job even when I have the skills

or

- *employers “out there” are so prejudiced against people “from in here” that I will stand little chance of either employment or preferment by a really good company*

or some combination of these.” (Website comment)

157. The Government has put in place a number of policies aimed at improving the quality of education in socially disadvantaged areas and targeted particularly at improving literacy. It will nevertheless be many years before the effects of those policies are fully evident in the population of working age.

158. That these policies should work is obviously critical if, in the long-term, adults in disadvantaged areas are to develop the skills they need. We have made no attempt to assess how best schools might take these forward in disadvantaged areas, as that task falls to the separate “Schools Plus” PAT.

159. Members of the PAT felt, nevertheless, that they should draw attention to one very important task for schools in the areas we looked at. People in these areas - particularly those in the former coalfield - often feel that their schooling has little relevance to the world of work. In addition, because they live in communities which are still very insular, they often feel little sense of connection with the world outside and can consequently lack enterprise and confidence in seeking opportunities at any distance from their home. Typical travel-to-work distances in Hemsworth, for example, are small; we were repeatedly told that Leeds - 20 miles away and served by good public transport links - was too far away for people to travel to for work or learning.

160. These attitudes are part of the town’s heritage from the past. The PAT felt that, if they are to be overcome, allowing young people access to a wider range of opportunities than their parents, that a sustained effort will be required in local schools. For these reasons, work in schools on education-business links is the subject of a separate recommendation (**see recommendation 8**).

Access

161. Many people in socially disadvantaged areas say they want to become involved in learning and to improve their skills but, for a wide variety of reasons, feel unable to do so. The reasons most frequently quoted to us were:

- the lack of suitable courses;
- the direct costs of courses, which are often cited as an obstacle, even though for many of the people concerned they are in practice free;
- the cost and practical difficulties of arranging childcare;
- the costs of transport and the absence of adequate public transport links. This can be a serious problem in urban as well as in more rural areas like Peterlee and its neighbouring villages. For example, the absence of good tube access in Hackney was frequently cited as an obstacle to adult participation in learning in the borough;
- the need to forego income to engage in learning. We were given a poignant illustration of this by the college at Peterlee, who say that their drop-out rate among adults rises sharply in December, as people take up temporary work so that they can afford a family Christmas;
- fear of losing benefit, whether well-founded or otherwise;
- inflexible opening hours at college - a particular problem for people with family or caring commitments;

“training should be [at] a time and at a venue which is comfortable for the residents, NOT one which is easy for the formal education and training providers.” (Website comment)

- people do not always know what is on offer;
- when they do know what is available, they sometimes find it hard to make sense of what the options for them might be and to relate them to their own circumstances.

162. We believe there are a range of other obstacles which people are less willing to cite, for example:

- for many people who have not been involved in any learning since school, educational institutions can be intimidating places. A community development worker who had returned to learning after having her children told us that, in her first few weeks in college, she had frequently felt physically sick as she approached the college gates.

163. We saw a range of interesting and imaginative measures which providers had adopted in an attempt to overcome these obstacles. For example, East Durham Community College offers new students a cash bursary as an incentive to enrol; a number of other providers seek to offer learning to socially disadvantaged people in settings with which they will feel comfortable and familiar

164. The best practice we saw, however, was where providers had sought systematically to analyse and address the obstacles that local people faced. We believe that much the most important of these is location. Attending an institution that is distant from where they live can create problems for residents of socially disadvantaged areas that are simultaneously financial, cultural and logistical. We were told in Hackney, for example, that the recent rationalisation of the college into a smaller number of much more modern buildings had created access difficulties for some residents. Even if there are public transport links, people may not be able to afford to use them, while travelling to the other side of the city in which they live may be asking too much of people who lack self-confidence.

165. There are a number of different ways in which learning can be effectively delivered in community settings, including through “outreach” work. We saw a number of interesting “one-off” examples in our fieldwork, including a laptop IT project run by Northern College but delivered in the Alpha Working Men’s Club in downtown Hemsworth.

“Adults do NOT wish to enter a building where they have to fight their way through young people smoking on the steps. The venue could be a pub, community centre, café, health centre or anywhere they will feel comfortable entering and as unlike school as possible.” (Website comment)

166. We believe that such work is most effective, however, where it is provided in a setting:

- with which local people genuinely identify, but
- which offers a wide range of opportunities and
- which is sufficiently large and well-resourced - and effectively connected to other work and learning opportunities - to offer real prospects of progression from the activity which initially engaged local people’s interests to further learning and the labour market.

A community-based video and drama project run from Hulme Adult Education Centre has been very successful in bridging the gap between the local community and progression to employment and higher education.

The project makes productions in and about the local scene, dealing with issues of interest to people like drugs, violence, etc. "Recruitment" is largely by word of mouth by the tutor (who is local) and his students, or local showings which attract a big audience because people know people who have worked on the productions or have seen filming going on.

Potential participants are allowed up to 3 months "visiting time" to dip in and out before committing themselves formally to a course. Pass rates are good and local people have gone on to Universities (mainly around Manchester) to pursue the subject - not people who previously thought of themselves as destined for HE. Job placing rates are also good.

The project has built good relations with, and made programmes for, Granada TV (geographically close) and BBC (it contributed to the Windrush series last year).

But even this project is facing problems because they need to update to digital equipment and do not know where they might get the capital funding from.

East Leeds Family Learning Centre

East Leeds Family Learning Centre is a community organisation located in a part of the city where residents are subject to severe and multiple educational and social disadvantage. It helps residents progress into education, training and employment by helping them improve their skills in a local and familiar setting. Free child care is available for daytime courses.

Much of the centre's work is strongly focused on the labour market; it offers a "Key Skills" unit in association with local companies like Elida Faberge and Halifax Direct. It also organises a very successful Jobs Fair with Sainsbury's the Burton Group and others in the heart of one of the most disadvantaged areas in Leeds.

The Centre also offers courses in "softer" subjects like aromatherapy and gardening. The key is to offer adults something which initially engages their interests and which gets them involved in the work of the Centre. A comprehensive information, advice and guidance centre based in the Centre helps adults think through their choices and to be clear about the links between the courses offered by the centre and opportunities available in the local labour market.

Engagement

167. Although there are many people who want to be involved in learning, but are frustrated by the various obstacles they encounter, there are also many residents of disadvantaged areas who say they do not want to learn or are even actively hostile to the idea²³.

²³ See, for example, *Widening Participation in inner-city estates* - Further Education Development Agency, 1999

168. People who fall into this group are unlikely to be persuaded to engage in learning by arguments related to vocational skills or qualifications, by which they usually set little store. Previous experience of poorly organised and targeted Government “schemes” has engendered a good deal of cynicism.

169. We believe the best ways of overcoming cynicism and of involving such adults in learning, are to pro-actively seek to engage them in learning through the right kind of intermediary. For this audience, it is not enough for educational providers simply to advertise what they have to offer and wait for people to turn up. More imaginative strategies are required.

170. During our fieldwork, we saw excellent examples of community workers who had succeeded over time in winning the trust of local people, helping them build up their confidence and encouraging them to reflect on how they might benefit from learning (see “Ascent 21” box). Such work must not be simply a “front-end” for learning provision; it is more of a half-way house between more conventional educational guidance and established advisory services that people trust like, for example, Citizens’ Advice Bureaux.

Ascent 21 is a small outreach/brokerage project operating from shop premises in a small parade on the ground floor of a large block of flats on the Haggerston estate in Hackney. Through “constructive loitering” at school gates and wherever people congregate the project worker has gained the confidence of the local community and helps them to think through their approach to employment and learning. She emphasises that success is dependent on a long lead-time which allows her to build relationships that enable the introduction of questions in a non-threatening or inquisitorial way.

The other end of the project is building a trusting relationship with London Underground. The project explored all of LU’s recruitment practices - criteria, timetable, tests used, interview procedures, etc.. The project then offers local people the opportunity to prepare for the applications, the tests, and for interviews to follow. The project is strict about standards and LU are reassured they will only send them people it’s worth looking at. Support even stretches to ensuring people know how to get to the test centre on time. Ascent 21 have got very impressive results at good starting salaries (£17,000 p.a - which takes them right out of the benefit trap) - and even those who didn’t get jobs with LU got jobs elsewhere.

An additional spin-off benefit is that people employed by LU get free uniforms and free dry-cleaning vouchers. All Haggerston estate people take these to the local dry-cleaners (in the same parade of shops as Ascent 21) which is run by a local Turkish family - so their business is thriving.

First-rung provision

“[There needs to be] a higher emphasis on developing skills which are fun: so often people in poverty are urged to do “worthy” “improving” things which they don’t want to, instead of the kinds of enjoyable things that wealthier people often opt for. Interfacing with “the state” is so rarely a good experience for adults in poverty.”
(Website comment)

171. Just as the location where learning is available can be intimidating to people who have done little of it since leaving school, the very idea of “learning” or “education” can also be off-putting. People are very ready to assume that it is not for them or that it has little relevance to their lives. Those ideas can be reinforced where provision looks too formal, too “scary” or too academic. The complexity of the qualifications system, which many do not understand, does not help. For different reasons, because admitting to poor literacy skills carries a significant stigma, it can be difficult to persuade people to enrol on courses which describe their object too explicitly as improving “basic skills”.

“any training and learning offered in these areas should be sensitive to [the local] culture, and novel ways devised of presenting learning. Formally organised provision will be seen as similar in nature to the learning they rejected at school...”
(Website comment)

172. The kind of learning that is on offer can therefore have a critical effect on whether people who are not learners are willing to give it a try. Among the approaches that work best are those where learning is organised around activities that are familiar and enjoyable and which engage people’s interests; or where adults can see in the learning that is on offer an obvious benefit that they can apply in their daily lives.

“There should be consciousness of the potential value to people of short modular DIY/budget cookery and other money-saving schemes, complete with the necessary equipment and materials” (Website comment)

173. Activities that can work well in this connection include art, sport and other leisure pursuits, activities connected with childcare and information technology.

174. We came across many examples in our fieldwork where participation in such activities led to improvements in self-confidence for individuals so that they were willing, with time, to tackle more challenging learning. The box on Pride House in Peterlee gives details of one such concrete example.

Pride House

Pride House is a small community centre located in an ordinary council house in Eden Hill, Peterlee's most disadvantaged estate. It was originally set up by the police as a community project to help prevent youth disaffection and crime, though it has since branched out in other directions.

A group of local women had become involved in the centre over time, because their children used it for social activities. When planning an outing to the seaside for young people connected with Pride House, the women discovered that they would need some formal health and safety and first aid training, which was delivered on a one-off basis by the local college in Pride House itself. The women enjoyed their course so much that it led them all into further learning. Three of them, who before their involvement with the centre had had no qualifications, now have university degrees - and still live in Eden Hill.

Qualifications and participation

175. Unfortunately, there has been relatively little public financial support in recent years for such informal, unaccredited provision. Public policy has concentrated strongly on providing education and training which leads to qualifications or to some other readily measurable outcome. The most important change occurred with the Further and Higher Education Act 1992, which had the effect of prioritising provision in the formal further education sector which led to academic or vocational qualifications.

176. Attaining qualifications is an important aim, for people in socially disadvantaged areas as for others. Qualifications are an important commodity in the labour market and possessing them can in itself be a source of pride to people and help to reinforce their confidence and motivation.

177. The argument is not that pursuing qualifications is itself wrong, but rather that their acquisition has been given undue weight in recent years and that this has squeezed out less formal provision.

178. Many feel that this has led to a significant mismatch between the provision that is available and what is actually needed. The effects have been felt most strongly in socially disadvantaged areas where people may not have been involved in learning for a considerable period and where the arguments are strongest for the provision of intermediate stages between non-participation and formal, accredited courses.

179. In particular, as already discussed. it has meant that there is not enough appropriate “first-rung” provision of the kind that is most likely to engage socially disadvantaged people and to help them take the first steps back into learning and the labour market

Priorities

180. A frequent complaint we heard during our fieldwork visits was that public sector organisations whose job it is to provide education and training for adults locally - the local college, the Training and Enterprise Council or other providers - did not treat the needs of socially disadvantaged areas - or of individuals from these areas - as a priority. In other areas, we were told that these same agencies were too remote to understand the needs of local people properly.

181. It is obviously very difficult to evaluate these claims fairly. Institutions operate in a complex environment where their decisions about priorities are strongly influenced by a wide variety of pressures, which include the priorities of central Government itself, as well as the funding methodologies which determine how resources are distributed.

182. Nevertheless, it seems clear that a number of problems stem from the fact that it is not the explicit role of any local agency to ensure that the right kind of learning opportunities are available to socially disadvantaged people in their area. Some colleges - and some TECs - strive to treat the needs of socially disadvantaged people as a central part of their mission. But this has been in many ways a matter of choice. Responsibility for planning what provision should be available locally lies under the current system with the Further Education Funding Council in Coventry, which is arguably too distant to make sensible decisions about the kind of provision best calculated to engage adults in learning in particular localities. We saw some of the consequences of this in Hemsworth, where it did not seem to be anyone’s job to ensure that the local site of the district’s FE college offered a curriculum likely to appeal to young males; and in Peterlee, where we were told that the local college could not secure any public resources to support a course to train people to work in call centres - a boom industry locally - but had no difficulty in attracting funding for courses in mining engineering, which are hardly in demand in this ex-coalfield area..

183. The new structural arrangements announced in the *Learning to Succeed* White Paper are intended in part to address these problems. Our fieldwork suggests that among the key priorities for the new institutions should be ensuring that planning decisions are effectively made much closer to the local level than now; and that it should be an important part of the

remit of the new institutions to ensure that the particular needs of socially disadvantaged areas are met effectively.

Coherence

184. Another point frequently made during our consultations was that local organisations in the education and training field did not always co-operate well together, in part because their responsibilities overlapped or were unclear and in part because - in the case of for example FE colleges - tariff-based funding systems had encouraged them to compete for students.

185. Local capacity is weak because:

- high concentrations of people with poor basic skills, low motivation and little experience of regular, paid work mean that the human capital resources and motivation to run organisations in disadvantaged areas are limited

186. Despite these difficulties, voluntary and community organisations play an extremely effective role in many areas in helping people improve their skills, often as intermediaries for much larger providers. Their effectiveness is significantly hampered by the funding and regulatory environment in the public sector, which is not well adapted to the needs of small organisations.

187. People feel they have nothing to gain from improving their skills because:

- in some areas, there are deep-seated cultural attitudes - often with specific historical roots - which lead people to discount the benefits of learning. While people may acknowledge these benefits in the abstract, they often think that learning is “not for them” - or lack the confidence to take part in it. There is a specific aspect of this general problem in that over time, such attitudes can lead to a culture which lacks enterprise and an appreciation of the potential of enterprise;
- physical and psychological isolation, combined with little experience of regular, paid employment, means that people do not feel a sense of connection with the labour market;
- the benefit system and fear of losing benefit can act as powerful disincentives to engage in learning;
- some employers, typically SMEs, give a low priority to the training and

development of their own workforce and there are few opportunities for people in low-paid employment to train independently of their employer. Some employers consciously or unconsciously also engage in recruitment practices that are perverse, unfair or discriminatory, particularly towards members of ethnic minority communities but also towards the residents of particular areas. Taken together, these factors have a significant “backwash” effect on people’s attitude to learning. They send the message that improving their skills will have little practical effect in improving their prospects in the labour market.

ANNEX A - AREA CASE STUDIES

ANNEX Ai - HULME AND MOSS SIDE

1. Hulme and Moss Side lie immediately south and west of Manchester city centre and have a population of around 28,000. Within the City of Manchester, the two wards score 1st and 5th respectively on the Government's most recent index of urban deprivation. Key indicators are listed below. There is a high concentration of ethnic minority residents and lone parent households in the area, as well as refugee communities, and the area has experienced high levels of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion for many years.
2. Moss Side has a large Black African-Caribbean population. Old terraced housing stock, much of which is rented, is being renovated by housing associations. The area's reputation for violence associated with the drugs trade has diminished and the place is generally much safer now.
3. In Hulme attractive new houses and flats are being built and this activity will continue for several years. . Hulme has always had a more mixed population - students and graduates moving in and out bring a more bohemian atmosphere. Statistics show the area has the highest concentration of graduates anywhere in Manchester. The new housing is attracting people from outside the area who want to live near the City Centre: a priority now is to get them to stay by providing family houses and good schools.
4. Important elements in regeneration strategy are a new "high street" incorporating well-known stores, a new market, smaller shops catering to the African-Caribbean and other ethnic minority residents, a Youth "Powerhouse" and a focus on culture, arts and recreation, including plans to establish a new young people's arts centre . Manchester City Football Club, on the borders of Moss Side, is moving to a new site in 2003 and there are plans to use the stadium for rugby (including creating a team).

Employment

5. The area is well-placed for employment, bordered by the city centre and Manchester's HE institutions. A 12 acre strategic employment site is being created at "Archway" close to Princess Road. Salford Quays and other river/canalside developments are nearby and Manchester Airport is also easily reached by good public transport links. Scottish and Newcastle Breweries and ASDA are the main private sector employers in the area: other local opportunities lie in the public and voluntary sectors. The revitalised High Street should provide more service sector jobs.

6. The brewery has a long-standing local labour agreement with the City Council and a similar arrangement covers the building work through which the housing stock is being redeveloped. Supported by one of the local training and employment agencies, ASDA went out of its way to recruit local people when it set up its new store, working on the assumption (subsequently proved correct) that crime would be less of a problem if local people felt they had a stake in the store.

Educational institutions

7. The area has two local secondary schools, one of which has recently been completely rebuilt after it burned down, and a city-wide Church of England secondary school at the edge of the patch. All are said to have good local reputations. There is a sixth form college but no FE college.

8. There are several Adult Education centres - in Hulme, the 1960s library was refurbished with City Challenge money and also includes a café and a library to draw people in. In Moss Side, the main centre - Greenheys - is an old school building recently refurbished to provide adult education services. Manchester City Council gives substantial support for adult education (the funding for the centres is roughly 45% FEFC, 35% LEA and 20% other). We were told that local residents have little contact with the neighbouring HE institutions, apart from those who have moved into the area because they already have a place to study.

9. Local agencies provide pre-recruitment training and business support. Learning also takes place through a rich variety of community-based activity and voluntary groups, for example the Community Health and Resource Centres (see below).

Previous regeneration activity

10. Hulme City Challenge provided £37.5 million between 1992 and 1997, which was used to change the face of the area through physical redevelopment. The notorious 1960s council flats were replaced with modern private sector and housing association properties designed in consultation with local people and police. Latterly the programme concentrated on securing a sustainable economic base for the area and better provision of e.g. health facilities. Over £100 million in private sector investment was committed to the area.

11. Capital Challenge provided £11 million to extend physical, economic and environmental redevelopment from Hulme into Moss Side.

12. The Moss Side Initiative, using over £12 million from SRB Rounds 1 and 2, has provided a comprehensive social, housing, education, training and jobsearch programme focusing on young people, particularly those who are disaffected. The flagship development, is the recently completed Millennium Powerhouse, a multi-function resource centre providing for leisure, recreation and ICT, health and careers advice, study support, FE, training and business support, meetings and debate.

13. The area is currently benefiting from £5 million funding from the EU URBAN initiative. Three strands of activity cover: launching new economic activity; securing training and employment for local people; and community safety. As the programme ends shortly, there is concern that a lack of matching funding will mean they will be unable to draw down some of this funding. There is also an ERDF/CED Action Plan for the area.

Main agencies

Moss Side and Hulme Partnership - a division of the City Council - takes forward the general regeneration of the area, co-ordinating the programmes outlined above.

Moss Side and Hulme AED is responsible for preparing the economic strategy for the area, bringing together agencies and delivery, and for identifying and addressing gaps in provision for the area in training, employability and business support.

Manchester TEC runs an Education Employment and Training Measures Group for the area which includes local residents among its membership.

Community Health and Resources Centres Ltd. (CHRC) is a charitable company providing:

- i) a hub for many small local voluntary groups (many of which include an element of learning in the services they provide) at the Zion Centre;
- ii) primary healthcare and health education at the Kath Locke Centre;
- iii) culturally-diverse childcare including training for workers; and
- iv) complementary treatments and counselling

Moss Side and Hulme Economic Forum hosts and chairs Firmstart, providing managed work space and skills and enterprise support

Community Development Trust delivers pre-recruitment training through Moss Side and Hulme AED

Moss Side and Hulme Women's Action Forum (MOSHWAF) delivers business support and skills training mostly to women from ethnic minorities. Women are generally felt to be more active than men in community activity, education and support for young people.

Main issues emerging

14. Findings largely support the analysis in the PAT consultation paper Problems in increasing skill levels in deprived neighbourhoods, and key players in the area confirm that the paper accurately and comprehensively reflects their views. The “headline” issues from the PAT’s visits are:

- the need for **consistency of funding** - long-term, mainstream (not project), not matched, not from lots of different pots with different criteria, monitoring procedures, forms, timescales etc. Community-based providers need a long lead time to win trust / make links / embed in community which is the key to their success;

- several people emphasised that **what many people need is a space to try things out / fail and try again / sort their lives out** - but short-term, output-driven funding regimes do not allow for this. The benefit regime does not help. A holistic approach is vital - people cannot focus on learning if they e.g. have no home / income / reliable childcare
- **The benefits issue is central.** It is especially worrying for people on Disability Living Allowance - clients are terrified that if they go for anything remotely like vocational training the Benefits Agency will declare them fit for work before they are ready, but this makes it impossible for people to move on. It is not just the issue of a drop in income but the fear of not being able to get back on the same benefit if they “fail” or have a relapse.
- **Over-reliance on outputs / targets / quantitative measures as means of allocating funding works against the “gentle slope”**, pre-pre-vocational provision that draws in reluctant learners. The system should value (and fund) the learning process / experience as well as outcome. Some argue the need for a certain level of core funding to ensure longevity of community-based resources and avoid uncertainty among staff and clients (and time spent chasing funding every year).
- **Hard quantitative measures are also often unsuitable for judging quality and effectiveness.** Success criteria could be negotiated with each project / group. Or a process should be reintroduced which involves qualitative judgements made by experienced people - such as peer measuring, like OFSTED.
- **The contract culture** in education and training works against proper partnership / co-operation / organisations concentrating on their strengths. At present, there is no structural reason or body to promote collaboration, and consequently no planning / co-ordination, and a danger of duplication and gaps. People are hopeful that Learning Partnerships may sort this out, though that initiative is still in its early stages.

Examples of good practice

- Manchester TEC has combined New Deal, Single Regeneration Budget, TEC and Local Authority funding to support an Intermediate Labour Market model which has become Option 3 and 4 of the New Deal for Young People. The programme provides 12 months paid employment within the voluntary and environmental sectors, training in a vocational qualification and personal development.
- The introduction of the programme, with 8 different payment types and 58 funding triggers, has considerably added to the administration involved for all organisations. The Community Health and Resource Centre which has a contract for 15 jobs feels the negative effects of the situation. However, they have actively engaged in the ILM programme.
- The Zion Centre is part of Community Health and Resource Centres Ltd. It provides much-needed premises and support to many small local voluntary groups (one of these - a mental health support group - involves its clients in running the café at the centre). A familiar and accessible presence in the area, the Centre provides the sort of non-threatening, informal opportunities that seem to be effective in drawing marginalised people into engagement and activity at a pace that suits them. Lots of “volunteers” start by just hanging around the Centre or using services - then gradually start doing things to help out as they begin to feel comfortable and develop a sense of ownership and belonging. Their identification is with the place and people and joining in with what goes on, rather than deliberately choosing a particular activity.

Relevant local research

Hulme City Challenge - Did It Work? (European Institute for Urban Affairs, Liverpool JMU, 1998)

An Independent Review of the Training, Education and Employment Needs and Opportunities for the Residents of Moss Side and Hulme (MPCS Consultants, 1998)

European URBAN Community Initiative: Moss Side and Hulme Approved Local Action Plan 1997-1999 (Moss Side and Hulme URBAN Partnership group, 1998)

Organisations and Individuals Consulted

Moss Side and Hulme Partnership
Moss Side and Hulme Economic Agency
Manchester TEC
Employment Service (Alexandra Park)
Government Office for the North West
Manchester Adult Education Service
Greenheys Adult Education Centre
Hulme Adult Education Centre
City College
Community Health and Resource Centres Limited at Zion Centre
HARP mental health project
Phobic Society
African-Caribbean Mental Health Project
Waberi project at Saltshaker
Manchester Foyer
ASDA
Mushroom
Anglo-American Coach Industries Limited

Data

Adult population	28,000
Ethnic minorities	33.9%
Unemployment rate	17.1%
Long-Term Unemployment	33.3%
Households receiving benefit	60%
Households without a car	73.3%
School leavers with 5+ GCSEs at grades A-C	3.7%
School leavers with no qualifications	54%
Lone parent households	13.9%
Under-16 pregnancies per 1000 conceptions	47.3
Burglary per 1000 households	104.6

Robbery per 1000 population 15.5

ANNEX Aii - PETERLEE

1. Peterlee is a new town in East Durham that was designed and built from 1950. Its foundation was part of a much wider plan for the area aimed at clearing away dereliction in a very polluted coalfield area, improving transport links and creating new jobs.
2. As part of the plan, people from the surrounding villages were re-housed in modern, new accommodation in Peterlee. They were encouraged to stay by a systematic policy to deny planning permission for all further village housing developments. This resulted in former residents of different village communities, each with their own distinct identities, living together side by side in what many felt to be a manufactured and alien environment. In some cases, a whole generation of people were displaced from their village communities.
3. The local economy boomed, but was almost totally dependent upon the coal mining industry. By 1950, three out of every five workers in the district were employed in coal mining or heavy industry. The lives of local people and their families were closely intertwined with the pits. The traditions of both employers and unions were paternalistic. People regarded the National Coal Board as not just a provider of jobs, but of community and social services.
4. Rapid closure of the pits in the 1980s and early 1990s meant the loss of one third of local jobs. They left the community in a state of shock, and the area suffering from serious social and economic problems. Typically, these include high rates of long term unemployment, serious health problems, chronic skills shortage, high youth unemployment and widespread disillusionment and disaffection. Pockets of deprivation exist which, in terms of the severity of disadvantage experienced, are on a par with inner city areas. The problems are compounded by a rural location and inadequate public transport links.

Employment

5. The economy of East Durham has changed dramatically with dependence upon mining and heavy industry being replaced with a range of new industries. Between 1984 and 1991 the proportion of part time workers increased from 21% to 25% whilst the proportion of women in the labour market increased from 43% to 48%.

A recent study into skills in County Durham produced the following findings.

Occupational Distribution.	
Occupational Group	%
Managers	6.9
Engineering Professionals	4.3
Other Professions	1.6
Clerical	5.5
Secretarial	1.5
Skilled Engineering Trades	10.3
Other Skilled Trades	6.3
Buyers and Sales Representatives	2.0
Other Sales	1.0
Machine Operators	22.1
Assembly Workers	21.0
Drivers	2.7
Other Occupations	14.7
Unspecified	0.2
Total	100

6. The tradition of public service employment and heavy industry has not facilitated the development of a large self-employed sector. Self employment is very low compared to the national average.

7. Increasingly, the skills base of an area is coming to be seen as a key component of local economic competitiveness. County Durham as a whole has a serious, long term structural skills shortage. A survey of County Durham employers' perceptions about skills carried out by Durham County Council and the County Durham TEC in 1996 showed that literacy and communication skills in potential employees were regarded as seriously deficient.

Educational institutions

8. Peterlee has three secondary comprehensive schools - Shotton Hall, Dene House, and St. Bede's Peterlee R.C, all of which achieve significantly worse GCSE results than the average.. The following table shows GCSE pupil/school performance for each school.

Secondary Schools in Peterlee: Pupil/School Performance

School	Pupils	%5+ A*-C	%Zero A*-G
Shotton Hall Comprehensive	207	22.2	15.5
Dene House Comprehensive	93	23.7	10.8
St. Bede's Peterlee R.C. Comprehensive	174	23.6	11.5
County Durham		35.7	7.4
England		46.1	6.6

Of these schools, only St. Bede's Peterlee R.C. Comprehensive has sixth form provision.

9. The majority of 16-18 year olds engaged in further education attend East Durham Community College which, in addition, offers a wide range of vocational and non-vocational training to the surrounding community.

10. A partnership led by the Local Education Authority has had an application to designate Peterlee as an Education Action Zone shortlisted. It is proposed that the EAZ will be located within Easington District (in which Peterlee falls), within the area of the East Durham Task Force. Through joint working with schools, the EAZ aims to raise the attainment of all pupils, improve attendance, improve the 'staying-on' rate, reduce exclusions at secondary level, improve basic skills, improve 'employability' and social skills, engage parents in learning and support families in need.

11. Sustainable systems are proposed which aim to promote continuous improvement leading to higher standards. These include early intervention, developing learning and social skills with families, the presence of other adults in the classroom and closer active involvement of partners in business and the community to facilitate the delivery of a well resourced and relevant curriculum.

Previous Regeneration Activity

12. From the 1950's onwards, programmes of renewal focused on clearing away the visible dereliction and environmental legacy of mining, providing new infrastructure and communications and attracting inward investment and new jobs. In particular, a great deal of

local authority resources were devoted to rectifying the structural housing problems in Peterlee following the transfer from the CNT to local authorities.

13. More recently, the focus on regeneration in East Durham and the county as a whole has been in the creation of new jobs.

14. The East Durham Task Force is an umbrella body formed in 1991 to examine the needs of the area and co-ordinate a range of activities aimed at addressing these. It brought together the main partners in order to prepare a response to the anticipated closure of the area's collieries. A 10 year regeneration package 'Programme for Action' was launched the same year.

15. While the Task Force has a long list of achievements to its credit, it has not been successful at securing significant amounts of public funding for the area. There is a very strong view in County Durham that this is because decisions about the allocation of Government funding give too little weight to the problems of rural deprivation.

Main Agencies

Council for Voluntary Services

County Durham and Darlington Training & Enterprise Council

Durham County Council

Durham University; and

County Durham Careers Service

Durham College of Agriculture and Horticulture

Easington District Council

East Durham Compact

East Durham Community College

East Durham Development Agency

Employment Service

Government Office for the North East

Groundwork East Durham

North East Chamber of Commerce

Main issues emerging

- There is a very strong sense of local identity in Peterlee and the surrounding villages and people feel a strong sense of attachment to and pride in their local community.
- Nevertheless, people are concerned that this sense of attachment increasingly fails to translate into a willingness on the part of local people to do something active in their local community. There is a concern that, as hard times for the area seem to have lasted so long, apathy is on the rise.
- We were told that local agencies in the education and training field do not always co-operate well - individuals and organisations sometimes seem to put their own interests first rather than working together to achieve the common good.
- Lack of adequate public transport isolates communities from employment and learning opportunities.
- Even when opportunities lie on their doorstep, people seem reluctant to travel even short distances to take advantage of training provision and employment opportunities.
- Quality of life issues - vandalism, drug abuse, housing - all impact on the outlook that individuals have towards improving themselves.
- Many adults express concern about the prospects for local young people, who often seem to suffer from low self-esteem and low expectations of themselves. The right amount of support and encouragement is not always forthcoming in families where 3 or 4 generations have suffered from unemployment.
- Funding systems only seem to have been able to offer short-term solutions for complex long term problems.
- Many of the effects of the further education funding methodology appear from a local perspective to be perverse. The main growth industry in Peterlee at present is call-centres - the college in the town were told that they could have funding for a course in mining engineering, but not for a course to prepare people for work in call-centres. The bitter irony of this in a disadvantaged former pit community is hard to overstate.
- Though formal and informal networks exist, responsibility for “joining things up” on the local scene is diffuse
- Some small local organisations are doing excellent work on a shoestring
- People that work in local community and voluntary organisations are proud of what they do and want recognition for their work. They are very keen to point out that they are

professionals, yet don't seem to be treated as such, particularly by Government agencies. They feel that the very demanding and important work they do is not valued.

Examples of Good Practice

- *East Durham Community College*
- *Pride House*

Relevant Local Research

East Durham Programme for Action - The Road to Success 1997-2001. The East Durham Task Force.

Rural Poverty - a study of economic and social exclusion in the villages of County Durham. The Local Identity Agency.

Skills in County Durham. County Durham TEC and Durham County Council.

Young people not in education, training or employment in East Durham. University of Durham.

Organisations and Individuals Consulted

Caterpillar Peterlee Ltd

Council for Voluntary Services

County Durham Careers Service

County Durham Constabulary

County Durham TEC

John Cummings MP

Dene House Comprehensive School, Peterlee

Durham County Council - discussions held with:

- Director of Education;
- Deputy Director Education;
- Senior Policy Officer, Education;
- Senior Inspector, Education;
- Community Education Manager;
- Community Education Co-ordinator for East Durham; and

- Senior Community Education Worker, Peterlee Youth Centre.

Easington District Council

East Durham Community College - discussions held with:

- Principal, Vice Principal and staff; and

- Student Focus Group.

Government Office North East

The G.T. Group

New Horizons Project

Data

Adult population	38,861
Ethnic minorities	0.6%
Unemployment rate	10.2% (18-24 year olds - 17.5%)
Long-Term Unemployment	36.4%
Households receiving benefit	7,300 on Income Support
Households without a car	39.7%
School leavers with 5+ GCSEs at grades A-C	22.6%
School leavers with no qualifications	14.7%
Lone parent households	13.9%
Under-16 pregnancies per 1000 conceptions	13.3
Burglary per 1000 households	10.98
Violent Crime per 1000 population	7.84

ANNEX A iii - HACKNEY

1. Hackney is an inner London borough situated to the north of the City and the east of Islington.
2. Ranked 4th in terms of overall disadvantage out of 357 areas listed in DETR's Index of Local Deprivation, much of the borough has yet to benefit from the overall buoyancy of the London economy. In June 1998 the unemployment rate was 15.7% which was the highest in Greater London.
3. The borough has a relatively high turnover of residents, and suffers particularly from "successes" moving away as quickly as possible, perpetuating the concentration of low skills and unemployment.. Hackney has played host to successive waves of refugees and asylum-seekers which also adds to overall poverty and complicates the provision of education because of the need for English language tuition.
4. Housing in much of the borough is predominantly rented public sector (including several large estates of Council flats in varying stages of repair and reconstruction). Low property prices, and the vibrancy generated by a very diverse population, do attract a relatively high proportion of educated, employed owner-occupiers, producing some very localised examples of "gentrification", but their working and social lives lie largely outside the borough.
5. The lack of good access to the tube is considered a major isolating factor.

Employment

6. Local employment opportunities are mainly in the public and voluntary sector. There have been some successful small-scale efforts to secure construction jobs for local people under regeneration projects but the scope to insist on this is limited by legislation. In the private sector, SMEs predominate, though even they are relatively thin on the ground; only 2% of London businesses registered for VAT are in Hackney.
7. On the doorstep, the City and the West End abound with jobs but few disadvantaged Hackney residents work in either area: those who do are generally in unskilled support jobs.

Hackney residents lose out because of: commuting; UK and overseas migration; lack of transport; low education base and lack of appropriate skills.

8. Recruitment agencies are a very significant player in the London labour market (only 10% of private sector jobs are filled through ES) but they are situated near employers i.e. not in poor areas like Hackney.

9. An Employers Equality Network, with members committed to recruiting local people, operates under the umbrella of the borough's voluntary sector network.

Educational institutions

10. Hackney Community College was formed in 1992 from the merger of a local 6th form centre, adult education and technical college. Several older centres around the borough have been closed and provision is now focused on two main sites in the south of the borough (including a new purpose-built campus funded from a variety of sources including a large contribution from FEFC) and through some 80 community-based groups (largely ESOL tuition). Provision is characterised as predominantly "second chance" education: basic skills and ESOL from the bulk of FEFC-funded programmes and demand outstrips supply.

11. Learning also takes place through the borough's extensive voluntary sector training base, coordinated by Hackney Training and Employment Network (H10) which also provides training for staff and volunteers.

Previous regeneration activity

New Deal For Communities (NDC): *Shoreditch* New Deal Trust

12. Shoreditch was selected as one of the Pathfinder New Deal. It is a deprived community, with unemployment double the Greater London average, poor levels of educational achievement, high incidence of long-term illness, high proportions of pensioners and single parent families and high levels of drug related crime.

13. The Shoreditch Trust is currently working on the Phase 2 of the programme - developing a delivery plan for the scheme to take up the £50 million New Deal funding offered over 10 years. The Trust has a clear vision of a sustainable community fit to work and to enjoy a good quality of life. They want to realise real benefits for their children, and the long-term aim is that future generations will want to stay in Shoreditch, because they will have the quality of homes, the skills and the employment prospects to do so.

City Challenge - Dalston City Partnership (DCP)

14. DCP was funded for 5 years up to March 1998 to deliver physical, social and economic regeneration in the Dalston area. The scheme was funded with a grant of £37.5 million and levered in just over £110 million of private sector funding.

15. DCP revitalised the area by delivering a range of projects from large-scale commercial developments, refurbished buildings and housing schemes, to community based education, training and employment initiatives and crime prevention projects. Outputs include:- almost 3,000 dwellings completed or improved, 9,900 jobs created or safeguarded, 107,000 square metres of business floorspace created or improved and 570 business start ups.

Hackney Task Force (HTF)

16. HTF was funded up to March 1998 at around £1 million per annum to assist local people into employment through assistance with training provision, business advice, and educational support. It provided smaller grants than most other regeneration schemes in the area, often supporting locally-based community and voluntary sector projects.

SRB Round 5 Bid: *A Sustainable Future For Stamford Hill*

17. A bid was submitted for SRB Round 5 funding of £32 million over seven years, attracting match funding of a further £66 million. The community, which is very diverse and includes a significant proportion of Orthodox Jews and other ethnic minority groups, had been developing the bid for some time and there was a very high level of local partnership and support on the ground.

18. The bid was for an ambitious and comprehensive scheme, including a large housing element aimed at regenerating the notorious Woodberry Down estate and improving some of

the worst private sector stock. GOL believed the bid to be achievable, but it was not supported by the LDP. However, the LDP indicated that they may be prepared to consider a bid under the next round of the SRB.

HACKNEY SRB SCHEMES

Hackney Wick: *Another Piece In The Stratford Regeneration Jigsaw*

19. The aim of this scheme is to ensure that the residents of Hackney Wick reap the maximum rewards from the changes planned for the Stratford area over the next decade by equipping people with the necessary skills and training to succeed, creating a successful and vibrant sector and establishing a confident and sustainable community. Hackney Wick is situated in the south-east corner of the borough, on the borders with LB's Tower Hamlets and Waltham Forest, and its population at the start of the scheme was 12,194.

20. The scheme is currently in its third year and will finish in 2003/04. The total funding for this scheme is £65,906,000 of which £19,235,000 is SRB, £12,187,000 is public sector and £34,484,000 is private sector.

21. By the end of the scheme, the Hackney Wick Partnership aim to create 1,168 jobs, train 3,623 people to gain qualifications and ensure that 11,070 pupils will benefit from projects designed to enhance or improve their level of attainment.

The Heart Of Hackney - *Building On Our Strengths*

22. The aim of this scheme is to provide sustainable development through education and training and provide business support in order to improve the competitiveness of the local economy. The scheme includes initiatives for better quality housing through a greater choice of tenure and diversity of management and maintenance arrangements and measures to tackle crime and fear of crime through community safety projects. The Heart of Hackney Partnership also hope to attain a better quality of life for local people by improving arts and recreation provision, health and social care facilities and by improving the local environment as a whole. The Heart of Hackney area is situated along the Mare Street corridor, running from the border with LB Tower Hamlets in the south to the Lea Bridge roundabout in the north, and its population at the start of the scheme was 18,783.

23. The scheme is currently in its fifth year and will finish in 2001/02. The total funding for this scheme is £116,228,340 of which £25,296,000 is SRB, £44,167,340 is public sector and £46,765,000 is private sector.

24. By the end of the scheme, the Heart of Hackney Partnership aim to create 540 jobs, train 453 people to gain qualifications and ensure that 9,949 pupils will benefit from projects designed to enhance or improve their level of attainment.

Haggerston Partnership - *Connecting Regeneration*

25. This scheme aims to empower the local community to seize opportunities offered by local regeneration initiatives and enable them to take a key role in the revitalisation of the economy and environment of Haggerston. The Haggerston Partnership hope to achieve this by reducing unemployment through skills development, business development and by reducing crime and the fear of crime. Haggerston stretches from St Leonard's Church in Shoreditch to Broadway Market, and its population at the start of the scheme was 11,878.

26. The scheme is currently in its third year and will finish in 2003/04. The total funding for this scheme is £31,701,000 of which £9,987,000 is SRB, £15,450,000 is public sector and £6,264,000 is private sector.

27. By the end of the scheme, the Haggerston Partnership aim to create 683 jobs, train 816 people to gain qualifications and ensure that 4,520 pupils will benefit from projects designed to enhance or improve their level of attainment.

Main agencies

28. Renaisi Ltd., established by the local Council as a single, "arm's length" agency, supports local projects in writing bids for funding. Each project is run by a local partnership board involving key local agencies and community representatives. Renaisi has set up two agencies brokering local jobs in construction and other work, and are developing contacts with a set of quality-assured providers to provide customised training. Another Renaisi project will

offer 12 months work experience with employers in Hackney, the City and further afield e.g. Stansted Airport.

29. A long-standing partnership involving the Council, TEC, ES, College, Careers Service, New Deal provider and H10 (voluntary sector network) has agreed an Employment Action Plan for Hackney which coordinates each player's activities and acts as a strategy document to guide funding applications. The partnership is working on a strategy for business support.

30. Hackney is a New Deal for Communities pathfinder area: plans are currently being agreed with DETR .

Main issues emerging

31. Hackney has the usual problems associated with inter-generational unemployment and the low value placed on education by local residents. Several agencies highlighted a growing **gap between Hackney residents' skills and employers' expectations** (which are felt to be unrealistic). Level 3 is generally considered the minimum for entry to employment. Employers can afford to be choosy and take people with well above the minimum criteria set for any job. The local (private sector) New Deal provider's view is that apart from a general low education base, specific skills lacking are: appropriate communication; motivation and self-esteem; basic skills/English language.

32. "External" reasons for Hackney residents not accessing City/West End jobs are:

- the tradition of **commuting** e.g. a very high proportion of clerical workers in the City are women living in Essex. Word of mouth is still an extremely common method of recruitment so the situation is self-perpetuating.
- **migration to London** from UK and abroad, which makes for a transient workforce and lower salaries. Local people with low skills now lose out to bright motivated young "year out" types.
- **globalisation**, which means employers do not necessarily feel responsibility for the well-being of London or Londoners on their doorstep

- employers reportedly prefer to run with vacancies rather than take any sort of risk in employing someone. A rare local employer who tries to employ local people reports a **pattern of drop-out in the first two months** - signalling a need for some sort of transitional support.
- **Transport** - costs, logistics and reliability - is also cited as a complicating factor.. People from ethnic minorities have particular concerns about where they will travel for work e.g. young black men worry about being stopped by the police outside what is considered their usual area
- TEC research on one estate found people would need a **starting salary of £13.5k** a year to make working worthwhile - yet most do not have the skills to command this level of income straight away. Lack of affordable childcare for people in work is a major concern.
- Rationalisation of the Hackney College estate is a mixed blessing. There are **fewer local centres** (nothing now in the north of the borough) and some potential users may find the spectacular new campus intimidating (we heard it referred to as “Fortress Hackney”) - though conversely it creates a safe environment for study which is appreciated by those who do join
- **the FE funding regime** has led the college to introduce more Level 1 courses to combat previous drop-out from Level 2 provision - yet level 3 is generally considered “entry” level for employment
- FOCUS Central London (the **TEC covering Hackney**) is **felt by some to be too big and remote**. Local people feel the borough receives relatively little of the TEC’s overall budget.

- High proportions of refugees and asylum seekers mean:
 - **lack of recognition for overseas qualifications is a major problem** - Hackney would be a richer borough if refugee residents could work in their previous professions
 - **demand for ESOL provision - particularly “pre-entry” level - outstrips supply**
- Locally-based voluntary groups proliferate but experience all the **familiar problems of short-term, uncertain funding and associated bureaucracy**. As small organisations their effectiveness is often dependent on the calibre and personality of key individual staff exposes their activity to significant risks if those staff leave or become ill.

Examples of good practice

34. **“Silver surfers”** on the Woodberry Down estate is a good example of:
- i) taking learning out to where people live; and
 - ii) happenstance providing further opportunities that have paid off.
35. After the “rationalisation” of Hackney College, Woodberry Down estate in far north of Hackney found itself without any local learning provision. An IT organisation based in South Hackney took over a vacant flat on the ground floor of one block and filled one of two small rooms with laptops with internet access then advertised drop-in, cyber café-style provision by leafleting all estate households. Further recruitment by word-of-mouth followed. A good response led to a request for more organised courses at introductory level - which in turn has led to some people now being prepared to make the journey to South Hackney to carry on learning at the provider’s main premises.
36. Premises are very cramped so the project asked for temporary use of the over-60s club in the flat next door. The quid pro quo was that the project should provide an introduction to IT

courses specifically for over-60s. Despite all stereotypes about IT being a young person's thing, these classes have proved extremely popular, with big demand and excellent retention.

Hoxton bibliotheque

37. Hoxton bibliotech is an unusual project, offering training to Levels 3-4 in electronic media and webpage design. Their funding means they recruit Hackney residents only. Courses are developed and constantly reviewed by providers in close contact with employers in the industry. The course also involved industrial placements too, which are brokered by the providers. Electronic media is a fast-moving field so the provider is constantly referring back to employers to ensure courses stay relevant. But the speed of development also means it is hard to get people who are trained in up-to-the -minute techniques - so the bibliotheque's nippy footwork suits employers too. Again, a case of an agency being effective and getting results because it has built up a relationship of trust with employers.

38. The provider is clear that they can't deal with people who have low basic skills or no acquaintance with IT but apart from this what they look for is interest and enthusiasm. Trainees are not all IT enthusiasts - they often have an artistic background, for example.

The Queensbridge Trust/Holly Street Estate

39. On the patch is a well-known and -documented example of local community empowerment. The local residents association demanded training from the Council to make it more effective in planning the regeneration of the estate. Features which they initiated included: customised refurbishment rather than demolition of one of the tower block and restriction of tenancies to the over-50s; employment for local people in construction work associated with regeneration; introduction of a range of alternative therapies to the new health centre.

Relevant local research

Survey of 1000 Unemployed People in Hackney USER Research Ltd (1996)

Vocational Education and Training for Unemployed People in Hackney Mike Cushman (1996)

An Overview of the City Fringe Labour Market City Fringe Regeneration Audit Group for London Borough of Hackney (1997)

Unemployment in Hackney - A Review Hackney Task Force (1996)

Living in Hackney and Islington: Labour Market Experience and Working Lives Focus central London (1998)

Getting Hackney Back to Work: An Employment Plan for Hackney Hackney Employment Action Group (1998)

Data

Adult population	147,700
Ethnic minorities	35.8%
Unemployment rate	15.7% (June 1998)
Long-Term Unemployment	34% (1 year+)
Households without a car	61.7%
School leavers with 5+ GCSEs at grades A-C	30.4%
16-19 participation	62%
Lone parent households	9.2% (1991 census)
Under-16 pregnancies per 1000 conceptions	11.8 (East London & The City)

ANNEX Aiv - HEMSWORTH & SOUTH ELMSALL, SOUTH KIRBY AND UPTON **("SESKU")**

1. South Elmsall, South Kirkby, Upton and Hemsworth are former mining settlements in the south-east corner of the Wakefield district. The two local pits (South Kirkby and Frickley) directly employed over 3,200 workers at their peak. The last pit in the area (Frickley) closed in 1994 with the direct loss of over 700 jobs. The local communities still suffer from serious environmental, social and economic problems - and a crisis of morale - as a result of the loss of jobs in the mining industry.

Employment

2. The Wakefield district generally has suffered from the collapse of mining and a decline in manufacturing and engineering employment. Across the district there has been some increase in employment opportunities but these have tended to be in warehousing and distribution activities - Hemsworth and SESKU are very well-placed in relation to the national motorway network - and in part time and lower skilled jobs with lower income levels.

Unemployment rates have fallen but not as fast as national trends.

3. There is little tradition of enterprise in the area. For many years, local people did not have to make their way in the labour market, as the pits were the near-universal destination. This lack of an enterprise culture is aggravated by a strong sense of nostalgia for the past.

4. The restructuring of industry and work following the pit closures has been largely based on the public sector, manual work in large storage depots on the edge of town (universally known to local people as "the sheds") and part-time temporary work. There are few quality jobs in the immediate area - before the introduction of the minimum wage, hourly rates of £1.75 were, we were told, not uncommon.

5. Levels of employment are also very low. In particular, there is a striking reliance on incapacity benefit. 50% of Hemsworth's miners went straight onto this benefit when the pits shut.

6. Car ownership is low, and there is an unwillingness to travel relatively short distances to work/train, which is partly cultural but also, possibly, reflects the economics of a low wage sub-regional economy and indifferent local public transport links.

Educational Institutions

7. The following organisations have participated in discussions and visits:

- City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council, Adult Education Service and Regeneration Department
- Leeds Metropolitan University, Policy Research Institute
- New Hall Prison Education Wing, Wakefield
- Northern College
- Minsthorpe Community College
- Wakefield College

Education/Qualifications

- In 1998, 38.7% of Wakefield pupils gained five or more GCSEs, compared to a regional average of 41.8% and England average of 46.3%.
- Local TEC research shows that the proportion of the working population of Wakefield district as a whole with NVQ 3 and 4, at 45.1% and 30% respectively, is above the UK average of 41.8% and 23.9%.
- Ward level data on education and training is not available.

Previous Regeneration Activity

8. While the SESKU area has benefited significantly from investment from the Single Regeneration Budget, Hemsworth itself - just up the road - has not. This is the cause of some local resentment as people in Hemsworth feel that, in terms of economic and social indicators, there is little to choose between the two areas.

Consultees

9. The main agencies and individuals consulted were:

- SESKU Partnership,
- Employment Service
- Guidance/Careers Service
- Wakefield TEC
- Government Office Yorkshire and the Humber
- Y & H Regional Development Agency
- The Hemsworth Partnership,
- West Yorkshire Police,
- Employers,
- Westfield Resource and Enterprise Centre,
- Hemsworth Centre of Wakefield College,
- Kinsley and Fitzwilliam Community Resource Centre,
- Havercroft Skills Project, Havercroft Parish Hall,
- Northern College at:
 - Fitzwilliam Working Mens Club
 - Alpha Working Men's Club
 - Coalfields Learning Project, Acorn Centre, Grimethorpe
- Hemsworth Training and Research Study. The Hemsworth Initiative 'Shop'
- Wakefield TEC's mobile 'drop-in' development centre
- Wheels in Motion Residents Group,
- Community Action Forum,
- National Union of Mineworkers,
- WISH (Women's Information Service Helpline),
- Citizens Advice Bureaux,
- The Homework Club, Upton Library,
- Training in Action, Upton Village Hall,
- SESKU Wakefield College Training Group,
- Education Officer, New Hall Women's Prison
- Discussions held with residents of the City Housing Estate, Fitzwilliam, participating in the BBC Webwise Internet taster course.

- Kinsley Craft Centre

Main Issues Emerging

- Education does not appear to be valued (as it is in the former Welsh coalfield) and school results are poor, relative to local and national averages. This and the very limited cultural outlets locally, is likely to discourage the inflow of new middle income/middle class residents.
- While suitable opportunities are available locally that are supported by the LEA, there is no male-oriented training curriculum at the Wakefield College's site in the area. The local college provides courses in child care, use of IT and horticulture, which are unlikely to appeal to young men from a mining background. The college is unsurprisingly viewed by many locally as a "women's college". Wakefield College does provide engineering courses - but at a different site in Castleford, which many people are unable or unwilling to travel too.
- There is a strong sense of community in the area, and an evident determination on the part of key residents, at a very local level, to work (voluntarily) for the survival of the community.
- At the same time, morale is paradoxically very low. There appears to be a feeling that Hemsworth is "the forgotten outpost of Wakefield" (although some people who live elsewhere in the district would strongly disagree!). On the weakest estate we visited, there is a distrust of agencies and politics, as well as a strong feeling of being at the very margins of their interest. Even worse, there is a feeling that the estate is the last stop for "problem" families, which is beginning to result in a fragmentation of the social cohesion.
- There seems to be a lack of focus among local officials about the key strategic goals for the area, very little strategic co-ordination and little idea of who is responsible.
- An important concern is the difficulty of making separate funding streams - each with their own audit and reporting requirements work effectively together.
- Objective 1 status is to be granted to neighbouring South Yorkshire. However, since Hemsworth, despite strong similar problems falls outside these boundaries, local people fear it could become further marginalised.

Relevant research

Developing for the future, an assessment of the Wakefield economy and its future prospects.

1998 Survey of Employers An analysis of current trends in the Wakefield District. Wakefield TEC Ltd

Yorkshire Household Survey 1997/1998. Wakefield TEC Ltd

Detailed SRB research studies from Leeds Metropolitan University, Policy Research Institute

Hemsworth Training and Enterprise Research Study

Airedale and Warwick Needs Audit

Beyond the Baselines: A Baseline Study of Disadvantage in Priority 5n Areas of the Wakefield District.

SESKU SRB Programme Executive summary

Creating A Learning Dome Over The SESKU Area - Minesthorpe Community College

The College in Hemsworth - New Directions

Data

10. Local or ward level data is limited. The latest available economic activity rates at ward level are based on the 1991 Census of Population. The attached tables show that activity rates in South Elmsall, South Kirkby and Hemsworth were below the district, regional and national average. Rates will certainly be much lower now, following the pit closure in 1994.

11. Unemployment rates are not officially available at ward level. Estimates using current numbers of unemployed (claimant count) by ward as a proportion of the economically active population in 1991 show that unemployment in the selected wards is above district, regional and national level. These figures probably underestimate the true picture. Long term unemployment (over six months) varies across the three wards but overall is higher than the district and regional rate and lower than the national rate.

Figures supplied by GOYH

Percentage of Economically Active Residents 16+

Numerator	Denominator	Ratio	WARD91 Name
6,603	11,654	57	Hemsworth
6,403	11,438	56	South Elmsall
5,943	11,035	54	South Kirkby
18,949	34,127	56	Column Totals
148,561	247,321	60	Wakefield LAD
2,309,239	3,851,441	60	Yorkshire and Humberside

26,776,802 43,865,121 61 Great Britain

Source : 1991 Census of Population

Unemployed claimants November 1998

403	6.1	Hemsworth*
309	4.8	South Elmsall*
430	7.2	South Kirkby*
1,142	6.0	Column Totals*
7,641	5.8	Wakefield LAD
6,577	5.6	Wakefield and Dewsbury TTWA
7,840	5.8	Wakefield TTWA (1998)
127,083	5.5	Yorkshire and Humberside
1,229,544	4.4	Great Britain

Source : Claimant Count November 1998

* Rates are not available at ward level. Calculation made using 1991 economically active, but this is likely to underestimate true position - Wakefield LAD is 5.1% on this basis.

People unemployed more than six months as a percentage of all unemployed in area

Persons	%	WARD91 Name
184	47.1	Hemsworth
141	44.9	South Elmsall
172	40.6	South Kirkby
497	44.0	Column Totals
3,127	41.3	Wakefield LAD
55,751	43.9	Yorkshire and Humberside
549,555	44.7	Great Britain

Source : Claimant Count October 1998

ANNEX B - SELECTED COMMENTS RECEIVED ON THE PAT'S WEBSITE

Culture and incentives

“A few of us have got out of the spiral because we believed in our own abilities...until we can give people the inner belief that they can learn to learn we will get only a few small paces ahead.”

“Consultation with local people ought to include broad options and be careful of jargon and terminology common in education circles.”

“You need to somehow involve the people you/we need to help in this process themselves, so that they are "active" in defining the help that they need for their particular community.”

“Students do seem to enjoy and relate to the vocational studies - we draw on local issues and information which they say opens their eyes to things going on in their own area. Given the range of difficulties and obstacles that students have to overcome, they need to feel they can readily relate to/engage with whatever education is on offer drawing on their own personal experiences and finding some solutions for personal difficulties along the way.”

“If training can be built on something that interests them and is carried out in a venue which is acceptable to them ie NOT IN AN FE OR OTHER COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT. Adults do NOT wish to enter a building where they have to fight their way through young people smoking on the steps. The venue could be a pub, community centre, café, health centre or anywhere they will feel comfortable entering and as unlike school as possible. Many adults have a very poor experience of school and fear failure. The trainers (NOT teachers or lecturers) need to appreciate the hopes and fears of the target group and to be able to empathise with them. Ideally they should come from the “poor areas” themselves. Perhaps the first stage of any programme should be to identify and train trainers from that community.”

“An increase in confidence brought about by an improvement in skills can reduce the dependency culture and lead people to take positive steps to improve their circumstances. Community run shops, credit unions, organising play areas for kids can all turn these disadvantaged areas around and thus improve employability for everyone in the area. To help with this employers could be encouraged to be involved, which should remove the prejudice they have.”

“Many of these people have been in a situation of no hope for years. They need to be encouraged and their self-esteem needs to be boosted. Constant failure is damaging to the ego especially when you have been consistently blamed by society for it. Success in this context must depend on building on the talents they have - many do voluntary work helping an elderly neighbour with the garden for example. Just surviving on the dole means they must have considerable budgeting skills more than many in more fortunate positions.”

“Pushing people back into areas where they (or the educational system or their environment) have obviously failed will...demotivate them. Focus on what people can do and want to do and build from there.”

“Leadership and energy needs to come from within the local community and the community needs to see itself as “pulling in” services and resources from external institutions etc. We need to break the cycle of perceived dependency.”

“People with low skills levels would perhaps benefit from looking at the skills that they already have, not in term of qualifications, but in terms of the things they can do - such as drive a car, rearing children, gardening, etc etc. A preliminary skills audit with an adviser may help boost confidence and set them on the road to undertaking more training of a more formal nature.”

“A change in the perception of what constitutes learning may provide the individual with the realisation that they have acquired skills, albeit not taught formally”

“Education and learning is not viewed as being “for the like of them”.”

“In order to address this issue, any training and learning offered in these areas should be sensitive to [the local] culture, and novel ways devised of presenting learning. Formally organised provision will be seen as similar in nature to the learning they rejected at school.”

“It might help if the benefits/tax system was overhauled to make it worth people’s while to work. The cycle of welfare dependency needs to be broken, and people be supported back into work.”

“One of the first skills to encourage people to develop is self-belief and self-respect. For people who may not have done well academically it is important that they are able to recognise and articulate those skills that they have developed throughout their lives. Once they realise that they do indeed have very valuable and transferable skills, they may well see the relevance to their lives of acquiring more.”

“If you REALLY wish to help residents of disadvantaged areas then sufficient funding will need to be available to allow outreach work, small class/group size, well-trained specialised adult trainers who can empathise with the target group.”

“For many in poor areas who have skill gaps, their immediate need is money. Experience of training without a direct connection with meaningful paid work that is fulfilling and well paid quickly becomes counter productive. There are far too few examples of people gaining success through skill improvement as even skilled work have low wage levels. In some areas, finding work means moving away, which depletes the poor area of role models.”

Basic skills

“Developing the necessary basic skills is a mountain to climb for many students, which is not always helped by the cumbersome accreditation that is sometimes imposed upon them and can make tutors feel like “sherpas”.”

“Real Second Chance education is more than basic skills, but it can lead to these skills being acquired without the ‘diagnostic/ pathologising’ approach.”

“Basic Skills is not just about vocational training. It should be about helping people to learn how to learn for themselves and their own self-esteem first and foremost.”

“Basic skills are the foundation. However pre-foundation work is required to secure the foundation. Pre-foundation work needs to focus on equipping people with the skills to make realistic choices, and identify their skill deficiencies. Once we are able to customise learning and tailor it to a person’s need then we can move on. Basic Skills may be the priority item for practitioners, but it may not be given such a high priority for the individual. We need to enable the individual the opportunity to prioritise their learning, to enable them to identify their basic skills issues in relation to their life choices and take it from there. It is more effective to work with the student’s agenda, rather than the practitioner’s agenda.”

Prejudice

“One way of addressing employers’ prejudices would be to engage businesses in contact with schools in these areas, and make contact with school pupils to gain some awareness of their potential.”

“If more businesses became involved with community activities, this may alter perceptions held of some communities.”

Outputs vs. outcomes

“It’s about “change management”, it’s a long term thing, and Government should not expect to get too many “instant” success stories.”

“I support the view that there is a need to establish qualitative outputs rather than quantitative. However this has always been a major problem when justifying project activity to funding agencies.”

There is a chance that the government’s current policies could work for a number of the socially excluded, but it will not be a quick fix, rather a systemic re-orientation towards a community-supported society.”

“Terminology which is inconsistent across government departments and local agencies can be a fundamental barrier to collaboration.”

“Where bidding is concerned, clear criteria and accessible help with the bidding process is very important for local voluntary groups. Some bidding processes, particularly set up by local councils, can miss the importance of these basics.”

“[There should be] monitoring [of] every new participant in a publicly funded informal or formal learning scheme of any kind on the basis of previous participation/involvement. This could be an indicator of levels of new engagement/inclusion. This may require a clear, if broad definition of lifelong learning used by government, local government and provider agencies, which might be a good thing in itself.”

“My experience has shown that outcome measures which are negotiated with participants themselves are recognised and effective. Although “official” certificates are generally thought to be intimidating or irrelevant, some form of certificate is welcomed, and is often treasured.”

Coherence

“Competition for funding between organisations impedes co-operation and the best use of resources. If organisations can only obtain funding for projects if they are in a partnership within a local area they will realise that it is in all their interest to work together to improve skills in an area.”

Institutional priorities

“Providers may need awareness training in understanding poverty and its impacts.”

“One barrier is attitudes within the service delivery and resource-providing institutions and organisations and networks, in which too high a proportion of the people delivering or channelling them have a “help the needy” perspective rather than “release and empower the potential that is already there.”

Quality and variety of provision

“Some investment has to be made in providing venues that are secure and well equipped, local people should be involved in the planning of such provision. This increases the sense of ownership and can encourage people to protect what they have achieved.”

“Our conclusion was that the way forward is “learning by doing” rather than learning by learning, and that the “doing” needs to be:

- intrinsically interesting and of a nature that useful things can be done without having to do a lot of preliminary learning;
- strongly and visibly connected to wider opportunities, particularly to novel kinds of opportunities that embed the element of “the wider networked economy” and are open to people regardless of their geographic and social setting.”

ANNEX C - MEMBERS OF THE PAT

Derek Grover CB(Chair) Director of Skills and Lifelong Learning, Department for Education
and Employment

Ellen Cockburn Northern Foods

Andrew Crook Cabinet Office (Social Exclusion Unit)

Alan Davies Department for Education and Employment

Jay Derrick City and Islington College

Tony Dyer Department of Culture, Media and Sport

Felicity Everiss Department for Education and Employment

Prof Bob Fryer CBE University of Southampton

Craig Harris NACRO

Marion Headicar Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions

Bob Little Department for Education and Employment

Victoria McKechnie Great North Eastern Railways

Allan Mayo Department of Trade and Industry

Sandy Murphy Department for Education and Employment

Andrew Olive HM Treasury

Simon Perryman Government Office for Yorkshire and the Humber

Haroon Saad Birmingham City Council

Prof Tom Schuller Birkbeck College

Michael Ward Centre for Local Economic Strategies

Marcus Bell (Secretary) Department for Education and Employment

ANNEX D- ORGANISATIONS REPRESENTED ON THE PAT CONSULTATIVE GROUP

Association of Chief Education Officers

Association of Colleges

Advisory Council for Disabled People in Employment and Training

Basic Skills Agency

Career Decisions Ltd

City Parochial Foundation

Coalfields Learning Initiative Partnership

Commission for Racial Equality

Confederation of British Industry

East Leeds Family Learning Centre

Equal Opportunities Commission

Federation of Small Businesses

Further Education Development Agency

Further Education Funding Council

Local Government Association

Monteney Community Workshop Trust

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education

Secondary Heads Association

TEC National Council

Trades Union Congress

Workers' Educational Association

ANNEX E - ORGANISATIONS CONSULTED

National organisations

Association of Chief Education Officers
Association of Colleges
Advisory Council for Disabled People in Employment and Training
Basic Skills Agency
Commission for Racial Equality
Confederation of British Industry
Equal Opportunities Commission
Further Education Development Agency
Further Education Funding Council
Local Government Association
National Council for Voluntary Organisations
National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education
Secondary Heads Association
TEC National Council
Trades Union Congress

Education and training providers

City College, Manchester
Dene House Comprehensive School, Peterlee
East Durham Community College
Greenheys Adult Education Centre
Hackney Community College
Hulme Adult Education Centre
Minsthorpe Community College
Northern College
Wakefield College

Employers

Anglo-American Coach Industries

ASDA

Caterpillar Peterlee Ltd

Employers Equality Network

Federation of Small Businesses

The GT Group, Peterlee

ING Barings

Reed New Deal

Warburg Dillon Read

Yorkshire Water

Local government

City of Wakefield Metropolitan District Council

Durham County Council

Easington District Council

Easington Economic Development Unit

London Borough of Hackney

Manchester City Council

Community and voluntary organisations

Acorn Centre, Grimethorpe

Ascent 21

African-Caribbean Mental Health Project

City and Hackney Computer Project, Woodberry Down Estate

City Parochial Foundation

Coalfields Learning Initiative Partnership

Community Action Forum

Community Health and Resource Centres Limited at Zion Centre

East Durham Council for Voluntary Services

East Leeds Family Learning Centre

HARP mental health project
The Hemsworth Initiative 'Shop'
Kinsley and Fitzwilliam Community Resource Centre
Havercroft Skills Project, Havercroft Parish Hall.
Hoxton Bibliotech
Manchester Foyer
Monteney Community Workshop Trust
Mushroom
New Horizons
Phobic Society
Pride House, Peterlee
Queensbridge Trust and Centre, Holly Street
Springboard Hackney Trust
Ulster People's College
Waberi Project at Saltshaker
Westfield Resource and Enterprise Centre
Wheels in Motion Residents Group
Workers Educational Association

Other

The Brokerage
Career Decisions Ltd.
County Durham Careers Service
County Durham TEC
Enterprise Careers Services
Focus Central London
“H10” (Hackney Training and Employment Network)
HM Prison, Wakefield
Manchester TEC
Moss Side and Hulme Partnership
Moss Side and Hulme Economic Agency
National Union of Mineworkers
New Islington and Hackney Housing Association

Policy Research Institute, Leeds Metropolitan University

Renaisi Limited

SESKU Wakefield College Training Group

Upton Library

Upton Village Hall

West Yorkshire Police

Yorkshire & the Humber Regional Development Agency

WISH (Women's Information Service Helpline)

Workforce

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