

Every Contribution Matters

The VCS Contribution to the 'Achieving Economic Well-being' Outcome



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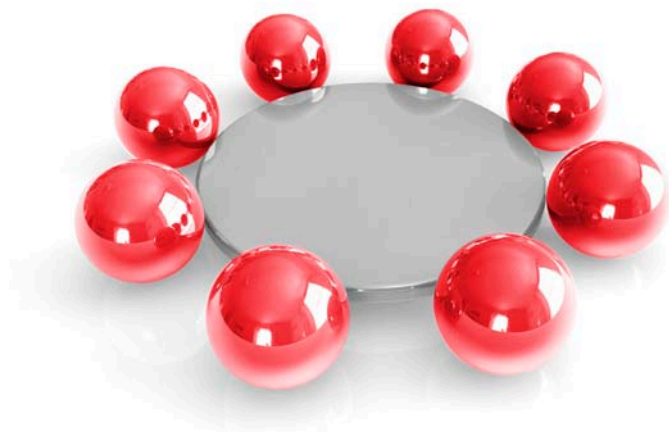
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Section One – Executive Summary

1.1 Introduction

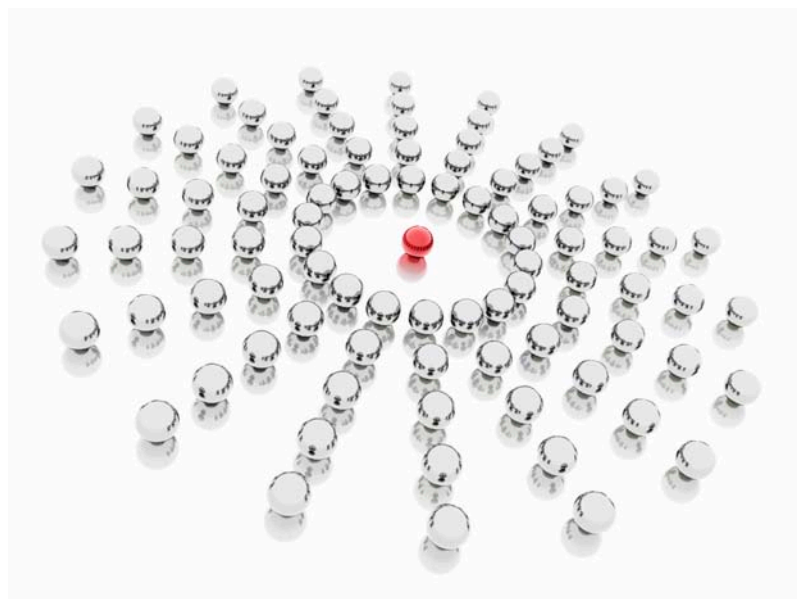
The publication of the Every Child Matters (ECM) green paper in 2003 and the passing of the Children Act in 2004 established 'Achieving Economic Well-being' as one of the five key outcomes sought for children and young people.¹

The publication of the Green Paper ECM signalled major changes in the way that services for children and young people are designed and delivered. Successive legislation and subsequent guidance has identified and reinforced the contribution that the voluntary and community sector (VCS) can make in improving outcomes for children and young people as part of this.

Children England, through its leadership of the VCS Engage worked with COVER and RAISE to commission some research in 2010 to map the contribution that the VCS makes alongside Children's Trusts and other agencies in working towards achieving the Economic Well-being outcome in the South East and Eastern Regions. The aims and objectives of this research were to:

- Provide a brief overview of the VCS contribution to achieving Economic Well-being.
- Provide a contextual, policy-based, narrative that analyses the environment in which Economic Well-being contributions are made, paying particular reference to children and young people who are not in education, employment or training.
- Provide case studies that encompass a range of activity that the sector delivers in support of achieving the Economic Well-being outcome, specifically in relation to engaging young people in education, employment and training.

The research brief only sought to provide an overview of the VCS contribution to the Achieving Economic Well-being Outcome. This was in lieu of the Economic Well-being Outcome having a clear overlap with the Making a Positive Contribution and Enjoy and Achieve Outcome. The research work was to build on existing feedback obtained from the sector which informed the Making a Positive Contribution and Enjoy and Achieve Outcome.



¹DfES (2003) Every Child Matters. Green Paper (Annesley, Nottingham: DCSF), pp. 35-36.

1.2 Key Findings

The research for this report has demonstrated clearly how invaluable the role of the VCS is in working alongside Children's Trusts to achieve their Economic Well-being priorities and objectives.

The report highlights the VCS's ability to effectively engage and prepare young people up to the age of 19 years or age of 25 who are vulnerable due to physical, mental or social disadvantage, in acquiring new skills and knowledge needed for employment which leads to them becoming more economically independent. This evidence includes arrangements for developing self-confidence, enterprise and teamwork, advice and training, including financial competence, and the accessibility of opportunities for work experience and work-based learning.

Some of the key findings for the research were:

- The most commonly cited indicator in Children and Young People's Plans (CYPPs) is NI 117, which measures the number of the young people not in education, employment or training (NEET). Most of the case studies in this report evidence the VCS role in supporting young people into education, employment and training.
- A range of educational, training and volunteering programmes are delivered by the VCS, right across the South East and Eastern Region in support of equipping young people with the skills, qualifications and hands on experience needed to enter into employment.
- There is a number of VCS organisations delivering advice, information and guidance to young people in accessing further training and employment.
- The VCS offer support to families and young people who may be disadvantaged in a variety of ways and help them to address the underlying and root causes that may prevent them from achieving economic well-being.
- The prioritisation of enterprising behaviours is not a common place objective in many of the CYPP's plans. There are examples of the VCS making a contribution to achieving this for young people which equips them in gaining real life skills for achieving economic independence.
- There are good examples of integrated working, with two case studies evidencing the VCS working alongside many partner agencies to deliver a central point of access and signposting to services.



Section Two - Policy and Strategic Context

2.1 The Legislative and Policy Planning Backdrop

The publication of the Every Child Matters (ECM) green paper in 2003 and the passing of the Children Act in 2004 established 'Achieving Economic Well-being' as one of the five key outcomes sought for children and young people.²

The ECM Framework addresses economic well-being at individual, family and community levels and expresses its aims in terms of specific outcomes: -

- Engage in further education, employment or training on leaving school
- Ready for employment
- Live in decent homes and sustainable communities
- Access to transport and material goods
- Live in households free from low income

The former government set five Public Service Agreements (PSA) that stretch across the Making a Positive Contribution and Achieving Economic Well-being. The PSA's are as follows: -

PSA 14	Increase the number of children and young people on the path to success
PSA 9	Halve the number of children in poverty by 2010-11, on the way to eradicating child poverty by 2020
PSA 20	Increase long term housing supply and affordability
PSA 21	Build more cohesive, empowered and active communities
PSA 26	Reduce the risk to the UK and its interests overseas from international territorialism

The Achieving Economic Well-being outcome is a wide and broad reaching outcome and for the purposes of this report, the policy context focuses on the former government's ambition to reduce the number of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET).

The government set a PSA target to reduce the proportion of 16 – 18 year olds who are NEET by 2 percentage points from 9.6% in 2004 to 7.6% in 2010. Local areas are demonstrating equal commitment to this challenge, with the NEET indicator chosen for more Local Area Agreements than any other.³

As part of the previous government's ambition for all young people to achieve economic well-being decisive steps were taken to strengthen existing provision and put in place new support for young people. Some of the steps taken are as follows:-

- In 1998 the *New Deal for Young People* (NDYP) was introduced, aimed to ending long-term youth unemployment. It provided support for all people aged 18-24 years who had been claiming Jobseekers Allowance for 6 months or more. It was the first time that every young person had to participate in meaningful activity design to improve their chances of getting a job. It helped over 750,000 young people aged 18-24 years into sustained work.
- In March 2005, the government set out its strategy for education and training reforms in the White Paper *14-16 Education and Skills*. The strategy aimed to ensure that all young have

²DfES (2003) Every Child Matters. Green Paper (Annesley, Nottingham: DCSF), pp. 35-36.

³DCSF (2009) Investing in Potential, backing young Britain, pp. 5

opportunities to learn in a way that motivates and stretches them and prepares them for adult life and included proposals to re-motivate disengaged learners.

- In 2007 the *September Guarantee* was rolled out nationally. This offered young people aged 16-17 years who had completed compulsory education a learning opportunity of one of the following: -
 - Full or part-time education in school, sixth form college, independent learning provider, or FE college;
 - An apprenticeship or programme-led apprenticeship that included both training and a job or work placement.
 - Entry to Employment (E2E) or Foundation Learning;
 - Employment with training to NVQ level 2
- In 2008 the *Education and Skill Act* legislated rising the participation age of all young people staying in education and training until the age of 18 years by 2015. Raising the Participation Age (RPA) means that all young people will continue in education or training to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015.
- In 2008 the then Department for Children, Schools and Families, published *Reducing the Number of Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)*. The strategy built on the above developments and addressed the recommendations of the *Leitch Review*. The *Leitch Review* stressed that it is necessary for young people to have up to a Level 2 qualification by the age of 19 because that is the basic platform necessary for the being employable⁴.

Despite Government investment and all sectors working to make significant strides in supporting young people back into education, employment and training, it was reported that the number of young people who are unemployed had risen since the start of the recession. In 2008, one in five 18 to 24-year-olds had been unemployed for more than 12 months⁵. In August 2009, the NEET rate for 16-18-year-olds rose to 11.9%, up from 9.7% at the end of 2007⁶.

In April 2009, the former Chancellor announced a £1 billion Future Jobs Fund was to be made available to create additional jobs for unemployed people. The Future Jobs fund was built on the recommendations made by Councillor Houghton for a challenge fund to provide additional resources for local partners to deal with the impact of the recession and to create jobs. This was extended through the publication of the White Paper *Building Britain's Recovery* - to offer a total of 170,000 jobs for young people and those furthest from the labour market. The fund is an integral part of the *Young Person's Guarantee* that ensures that every 18 to 24 year old receives an offer of a job, training or work-experience when they reach the 6 month point of their claim for Jobseekers Allowance (JSA).

⁴Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills (2007) World Class Skills: Implementing the Leitch Review of skills in England

⁵(Source: Social Trends, No.39,2009)

⁶(Source: NEET statistics - Quarterly brief, DCSF, August 2009).

In December 2009 the Government published *Investing in Potential*, its strategy to increase the proportion of 16–24 year olds in education, employment or training. The Strategy announced government plans to increase investment in post-16 participation in 2010–11 by £202 million. It further announced that the Government would:

- Provide employer subsidies to support more 16 and 17 year olds to take up an Apprenticeship place.
- Better integrate the services offered by Jobcentre Plus and Connexions for 16 and 17 year olds who are looking for work, including providing 16–17 year olds who are NEET with access to Local Employment Partnership vacancies, with training or as an Apprenticeship where possible.
- Continue the Activity Agreement and Entry to Learning pilots in 2010–11.
- Work with Connexions services and Jobcentre Plus to explore the introduction of group advice sessions for 16–17 year olds.
- Provide young job seekers with access to a dedicated personal adviser from day one of their unemployment claim, more time with an adviser throughout their claim, and more opportunities to be fast tracked to the support available from six months.
- Bring forward the Young Person's Guarantee so that all 18–24 year olds still unemployed after six months would be guaranteed access to a job, training or work experience.
- Introduce a Graduate Guarantee that all new graduates still unemployed at six months would have access to an internship, training or help to become self employed.
- Make available over 100,000 additional government funded training, internship, work experience and job opportunities to help deliver the guarantee. This includes a target of 16,000 apprenticeship places through the Future Jobs Fund.
- Introduce a requirement that all young job seekers take up one of the places on offer before they complete ten months on JSA.⁷



⁷HC 316-1, 8 April 2010

Section Three – Outcomes of the Research

3.1 Overview of VCS Case Studies Generated by the Research

This section of the report highlights the range of services that the VCS delivers across the South East and Eastern Region in supporting Children's Trusts and their partners to work towards the achievement of their targets and objectives for the Achieving Economic Well-being.

3.1.1 Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment and training (NEET).

According to research carried out on behalf of the National Youth Agency, 115 Local Authorities out of the 150 have chosen to reduce the number of young people who are NEET as one of their top priorities⁸. In the government's strategy, *Investing in Potential*, it details the need for joined up and integrated working practices across central and local government, Local Authorities, Jobcentre Plus, learning providers, employers and third sector partners in delivering tailored support to individual children.

The young people who fall into the NEET category are far from homogenous. The National Audit Office has, however, identified a number of trends. It found that:

- A higher proportion of white young people are NEET than is seen among most ethnic minority groups.
- Young people who are NEET are more likely than their peers to have a disability or longer term health problem.
- Children in local authority care are much more likely than their peers to be NEET.
- 16/17 year olds who are NEET are more likely to have engaged in risky behaviours (smoking or vandalism, for example) by age of 13/14.
- Disadvantage in its many forms is a more common feature of early life for 16/17 year olds who are NEET.⁹

The research found many VCS organisations were delivering effective and integrated approaches to supporting young people into education, employment and training right across the South East and Eastern Region. It also ascertained that the VCS were particularly instrumental in engaging hard to reach young people, often from disadvantaged backgrounds.

The Prince's Trust provides a range of different support services nationally. It provides practical and financial support, developing key workplace skills such as confidence and motivation. It works with 14 to 30-year-olds who have struggled at school, have been in care, are long-term unemployed or have been in trouble with the law and supports people to get back into work, education or training.

⁸One in Ten – Key messages from policy, research and practice about young people who are NEET, by Jo Tunnard, with Time Barnes and Steve Flood.

⁹HC 316 – 1, 8 April 2010

This case study focuses on a programme of work that was delivered locally within the Eastern Region by the Princes Trust in partnership with Essex & Suffolk Water to get young people into employment. The organisations offered a three-week intensive programme aimed at young people between 16 and 25 years of age to learn the skills necessary to get into employment. As part of the programme, Essex & Suffolk Water were able to offer successful individuals a certificate in first aid training and the chance of employment. Posters were developed to promote the programme and these were distributed to partner agencies, such as the Leaving and After Care teams, Probation, YMCA, Connexions and Jobcentre Plus. Over the three weeks of the programme, participants were given on the job training and practical work experience in three key areas of the Water industry: Maintenance, Leakage and Meter Field Services. The practical side involved young people going out with individual crews and working alongside fully trained staff. The programme received 29 enquires from young people, leading to 21 applications. Eleven young people attended the taster day sessions and nine participated in the course. Of these, eight ended up being employed directly by Essex & Suffolk Water.

East Potential is a social and economic regeneration charity and a subsidiary of the East Thames Group. East Potential is largest provider of Foyer Accommodation. It works across East London and Essex to empower local people to create a brighter future for themselves and make a contribution to their communities.

This case study focuses on the Harlow Foyer in West Essex, working in conjunction with East Potential and the Time for Youth programme to support young people aged between 16–25 years, some of whom have a range of complex and challenging issues, including mental health and learning difficulties. Some young people may have been involved and/or been the victims of anti-social and offending behaviour. The scheme also resettles and supports young people coming out of custody. A range of support is provided to young people depending on their needs. The support planning process may involve working with the young person to maintain their tenancies and engaging them in a range of positive activities and short-term educational projects, including numeracy and literacy levels 1 & 2. Other support includes training on sexual health, safety and skills for life. Depending on the young person's support plan, they could be involved in training to become a volunteer and/or supported to enter further education, training or employment. A young person, who was well known to the Crime Forum for taking drugs and antisocial behaviour, was referred to Harlow Foyer. After working with the young person it became apparent that his parents were not supportive of him attending further education and placed little value on his educational development. The Support Worker encouraged and supported this young person into further education and he is now in his second year of college and doing very well. He has also turned his life around and is not hanging out with his previous peer group. The young person stated it was the first time he had received support and encouragement to further his education.

Motiv8, operates in Portsmouth and has worked with Connexions in the delivery of an Entry to Employment programme. This programme included weekly group sessions and outdoor activities as well as the offer of one to one support.

A young man, Jack, was referred to Motiv8 by a personal adviser at Connexions because he was not in Education, Employment or Training. After an initial meeting Jack agreed to take part in the Motiv8 Entry To Employment (ETE) programme. On first meeting Jack he was quiet, extremely self-conscious and had little confidence and found it difficult to form friendships. Jack admitted that his confidence was so low that he'd always approached job interviews convinced that he'd be unsuccessful. Jack got involved with the more frequent activities offered by Motiv8 in holiday periods. Here he found himself a much respected and popular member of the group and quickly gained in confidence. Jack continued with the Motiv8 ETE programme where he was always punctual, helpful

and often encouraging and motivating others on the day to try new things. Through this regular contact Jack accepted the offer of weekly one-to-one support where he completed a personal plan to explore his issues and set clear goals for the future. Over a three months period Jack completed his first personal plan and managed to gain full-time employment and is reported to be saving money so he can secure his own accommodation. Jack is still in regular contact with Motiv8 and has also been put forward as a candidate for Motiv8's Young Leaders programme.

Open Door in Thurrock is delivering a Mentoring Service that provides young people in care or leaving care with one to one support.

Open Door has reported having a positive and significant impact on the young people engaged in its programmes. The project provides young people in care or leaving care with one to one support throughout their transition period. The main focus of the scheme is to enable young people to develop independence, confidence and acquire transferable skills. The service has also now been extended to young offenders or those at risk of offending. The support offered provides the young person concerned with the opportunity to seek employment, education and their participation in social and community activities. Mentors meet regularly with the young person to assist them in working towards their own identified goals and outcomes.

3.1.2 Addressing Some of the Root Causes that May Prevent Achieving Economic Well-Being.

It is recognised that young people's needs are broader than just their employment or education status. VCS service delivery takes this into consideration and supports young people to develop their personal and social skills that has a direct impact on their progress as they become adults. Some young people are often confronted with a complex range of barriers to success, many of which begin well before they reach their teens, and it is often very difficult to recover from this poor start if life.

The VCS, working alongside statutory sector partners are instrumental to supporting young people address some of the underlying and root causes that may prevent them from achieving economic well-being.

East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service (ESDAS) works with partner agencies such as Social services and Children Adolescent Mental Health to deliver a 'wrap around' support service to young people who have suffered through domestic abuse. ESDAS have provided consistent emotional support to a young person who was traumatised through domestic abuse which led to her being taken into Foster Care, receiving hospital treatment and intensive therapeutic support. She was unfortunately unable to attend mainstream education and complete her GCSE's. Over a period of time the young person accessed a computer training course gaining an NVQ3 qualification and was accepted on a paid apprenticeship scheme. ESDAS has supported this young person consistently throughout her recovery, working alongside partner agencies, all of whom have helped this young person on her path to success.

The Rainbow Trust children's charity operates nationally and is an established organisation in the South East. It provides a range of support to families who have children with life threatening or terminal illness or may be bereaved following the loss of their child.

This case study evidences how support has been provided, and prevented a family getting into further difficulties. A family whose child who had been diagnosed with Acute Lymphoblastic leukaemia and other health issues was referred to Rainbow Trust. The family was particularly vulnerable as the mother was suffering from mental health issues and found it difficult to take her child out of the house. The father, who was attending job training in the evenings and working during the days, had

no alternative but to give up work and take care of their child. These circumstances made the family incredibly vulnerable, not just financially. Through the support of the Rainbow Trust Family support worker, the father has been able to return to his training and job, feeling that his family were safe. Knowing that his wife had support during the day, with someone to talk to and share her worries with and who could help his wife deal with any issues that may occur whilst he was not at home.

3.1.3 Tackling Homelessness

In 2006-7, 6390 young people were accepted as homeless (young people are 16-17 year olds or 18-20 year old care leavers). This was down from 8350 in 2005-6. At the end of December 2008, around 530 16 and 17 year olds were placed in bed and breakfast by housing authorities, down from around 1000 in September 2006.¹⁰

The Government's homelessness strategy *Sustainable Communities: settled homes; changing lives* was published in March 2005. It recognised that young people can become homeless for a wide range of often complex reasons. The former Government was committed to reducing homelessness amongst all groups, including young people. Communities and Local Government have been working with local authorities and voluntary sector partners to:

- prevent vulnerable young people becoming homeless, through early identification and intervention;
- support homeless young people and those living in temporary accommodation to ensure their housing and wider support needs are met;
- manage the transition of young people between temporary and settled accommodation to ensure continued access to the services they need.

Open Door was commissioned by Supporting People which has enabled Open Door to extend its housing advice and support services (HASS) to include prevention and homelessness support via mediation to 16-17 year olds. Open Door reports that this service has been successful in achieving many positive outcomes. By working closely with young people and their families the service has enabled individuals to continue to live within their family home with ongoing support from a mediation worker. This has prevented family breakdowns and evictions.

The Social Exclusion Unit's report *Transitions: Young Adults with Complex Needs* (2005) noted that a young person applying for housing assistance were rarely assessed holistically and few housing departments saw it as part of their role to signpost young people onto other help they may need that does not seem to relate directly to their housing need.¹¹

The VCS, working alongside their partners have put effective measures in place to develop more integrated practises. One example is Harlow Foyer, in West Essex, who works very closely with the Careers Support service, Connexions, other VCS organisations, Social Services, Local PCTs, YOT and the Police. All parties work together to deliver a one-stop shop in the Harlow Foyer building, so the proximity to one another is really conducive to integrated working. In addition to the one-stop shop, Harlow Foyer co-ordinates and chairs a Housing Joint Referral Panel. This panel is held fortnightly to address the housing and support needs of young people. The panel has excellent representation from all key partners including the Probation Service and a number of VCS organisations and the Local Authority.

¹⁰(Source: Commons written answer 21 May 2008).

¹¹Tackling Youth Homelessness, Policy Briefing 18, Dept. of communities and Local government: London (March 2007)

3.1.4 Providing Access to Information, Advice and Guidance

Young people who are NEET often face a number of barriers to participation and need to access support from a variety of sources. The co-location of services such as healthcare, housing support, access to benefits and financial support and careers advice and guidance in a joined-up approach could help young people to access more easily the help they require.

YMCA Central Herts working in partnership with 29 other organisations set up Space Youth and Community Centre in Welwyn Garden City Hertfordshire, which operates as a 'Living room on the high street'. The centre is open to everyone within the community and a wide range of programmes are delivered for all age groups including young people. Some of the local partners involved in the project include Citizen's Advice Bureau, Hert Savers Credit Union, a Teenage Pregnancy Worker from the PCT, Substance Misuse Specialists from Future Hope, the local police, Welwyn Hatfield District Children's Trust, Hertfordshire County Council, Youth Connexions service. Young people who attend Space are able to access a range of support services and are signposted to more specific services, such as Information Advice and Guidance services, substance misuse referrals, and special targeted support for young people who are not in employment, education or training.

Sussex Central YMCA, in Brighton, deliver their 'Safe + Sorted' Youth Advice Centre. It offers information, advice, support and guidance to young people age 13-25 years on health, sexual healthy, substance misuse, homeless, training and employment which is free and confidential. Workers are on hand to offer a safe and private space to talk, and specialist support is accessible on certain days if needed. The training and employment support helps young people seeking a Job and accessing training courses, completing their CV's and applications, learning new skills and help with preparing for interviews and claiming benefits.

3.1.5 Young Enterprising Activities

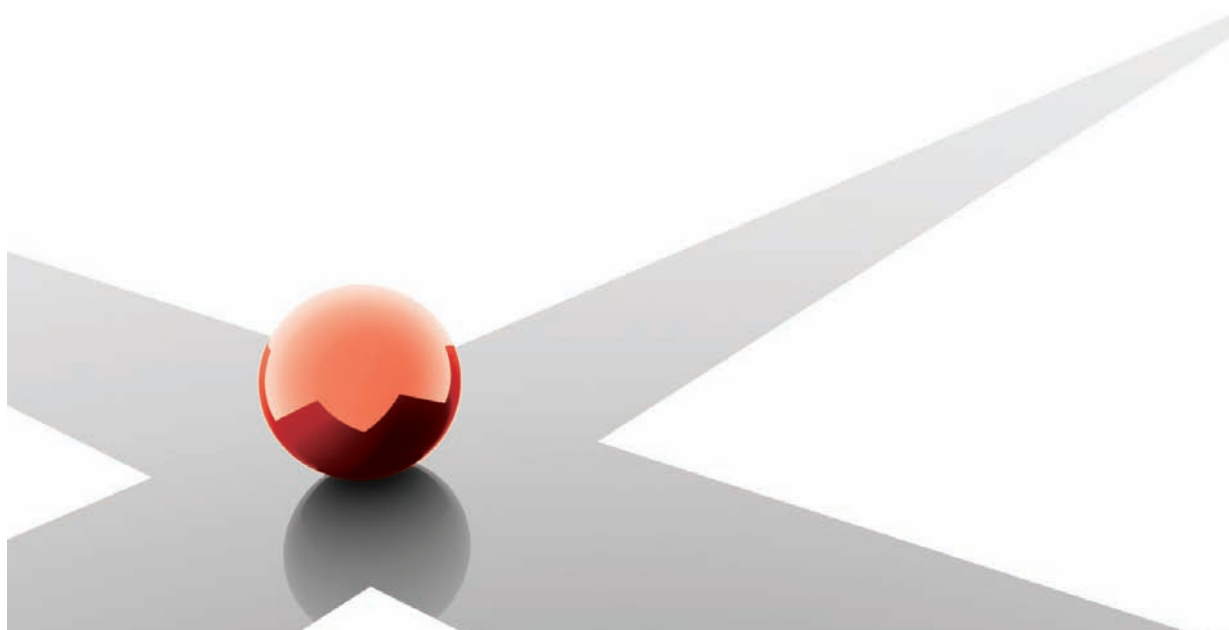
Encouraging enterprising behaviours is one of the key ECM aims for achieving the Making a Positive Contribution outcome, which has overlaps with the Economic Well-being outcome. It was not evident in many of the CYPP's of enterprising activities being a prioritised objective, however there were examples of the VCS delivering programmes in support of this, such as Southend YMCA.

Southend YMCA supported a group of young people set up a temporary concept store called 'ETC'. The idea was to give young people aged between 16 and 25 years hands-on experiences of all areas of business, including retail, customer services, marketing, design, promotion, customer care and stocktaking. It aimed to nurture and facilitate entrepreneurialism and creativity in young people to help equip them for employment and increase their self confidence. This was a successful short term pilot project and in July 2010 the entrepreneurial part of the ETC project will also be encompassed into a new project that Southend YMCA is working on called ECO HUB. It is being funded through the East of England Development Agency. Southend YMCA has transformed an old stable block into 6 eco-friendly units plus a training/teaching room and reception. These units will be offered to young entrepreneurs aged 18 to 30 years. Local research has shown that it is particularly difficult for people in this age bracket to start a business. Southend YMCA will help them to kick-start their business in offering the units at reduced rentals, offering business development, funding, publicity, marketing and networking support. Young entrepreneurs will be provided with advice and support to help them develop eco-efficient and ethically aware enterprises.

Section Four - Other Findings from the Research

4.1 Other Key Findings and Messages for Moving Forward

- Young people who are NEET often face a number of barriers to participation and need to access support from a variety of sources. The co-location of services such as healthcare, housing support, access to benefits and financial support and careers advice and guidance in a joined-up approach could help young people to access more easily the help they require.
- There are good examples of integrated working across the VCS sector and their statutory sector partners in delivering holistic support to young people however it is also recognised that future solutions to reduce the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training will have to be more cost-effective and will require efficient, joined-up working at a local level. To this end the piloting of the Total Place programme could be a means to achieving this objective of “whole area” approach to public services.
- One community sector organisation reported that in certain circumstances, NEET funding is based on achieving contractual performance targets which can be problematic e.g. working with NEET young people is slightly more difficult in the sense that there are a number of no shows on training courses being delivered. This may be due to a number of valid reasons such as personal difficulties. As a result this reflects poorly on performance targets. NEET funding can be short term and for specific courses and periods of time. Young people who may have initially signed up for one course - but were no shows when the course was run, return a few weeks later seeking to get on the course again but funding is no longer available to support them. The monitoring of NEET programmes and funding schemes should allow for more flexibility to take account of the needs of these young people and their circumstances.



Appendix 1

Acknowledgements

Below is a list of all the VCS who kindly contributed to informing the Every Contribution Matters research:

No.	VCS Organisation and Statutory Agencies (*)	Contact Name	Location
1.	Motiv8 (South)	Charlie Adie	Portsmouth / South East Hampshire
2.	Rainbow Trust Children's Charity	Margaret Storey	South East Region (based in Southampton)
3.	East Surrey Domestic Abuse Service	Family Worker	East Surrey
4.	Open Door	Mike Kelly	Thurrock
5.	Southend YMCA	Syrie Cox	Southend
6.	YMCA Central Herts	Andrew Ginn	Hertfordshire
7.	Sussex Central YMCA	Niki Eldridge	Brighton and Hove
8.	East Potential – Harlow Foyer	Judith Lathey	West Essex
9.	Princes Trust	Andrew Cawthorpe	Eastern Region





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