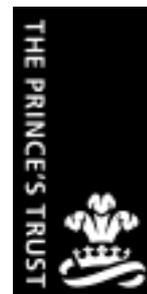


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New youth initiative points way to success

A major new initiative to help Yorkshire's 14-25 year olds get their lives on track - and keep them there - is launched today (Friday 9 August, 2002) by **The Prince's Trust**, the UK's leading youth charity, and **The Royal Bank of Scotland Group**.

The initiative, Route 14-25, aims to support the 'hardest to reach' young people in Yorkshire. It provides a clear route for the future, helping disadvantaged 14-25 year olds turn their lives around by giving them a tailor-made package of support - including education, training, business support and self-development to match individuals' needs and help them find long-term employment.

Yorkshire has been chosen as the fourth pilot area for Route 14-25 following recent research* by The Trust, which helped to identify a number of regional 'hotspots' where it will be beneficial. Sheffield, Calderdale and Kirklees were highlighted as having pockets of severe deprivation where previous initiatives aimed at addressing issues of disadvantage were limited. These three areas will form the pilots in Yorkshire, and then, after evaluation, the initiative will be rolled out across the rest of Yorkshire and the Humber region from 2004.

Lee Barker, Yorkshire and the Humber regional director of The Prince's Trust, says: "**Route 14-25 offers a fantastic opportunity for young people in Yorkshire. The pilot areas have been carefully selected to cover both inner city and town/rural environments. Hopefully young people in Yorkshire will reap the benefits for many years to come.**"

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Allan Watt, Head of Public Affairs and Community Investment at The Royal Bank of Scotland Group, says: **"We are delighted that our support is getting to young people who need it in Yorkshire. The Royal Bank of Scotland Group's long-term partnership with The Prince's Trust means hundreds more disadvantaged 14-25 year olds will benefit from this brand new way of helping young people to help themselves."**

Route 14-25 also aims to ensure that young people need never be turned away from getting help. Building upon The Trust's existing programmes - by concentrating on the individual needs of every young person who comes to The Trust for support - the initiative will work closely with other youth networks, such as the government's Connexions Service, to reduce duplication of services and create a system for tracking young people's progress.

Anne Weinstock, chief executive of Connexions Service National Unit, adds: **"Connexions supports The Prince's Trust's Route 14-25 and shares their total commitment to a 'joined-up' approach to the provision of youth services. We are delighted to be working with Route 14-25, to contribute to producing a seamless, quality, support service for young people who need help most."**

Attending Friday's launch is Mark Davis, who became a Prince's Trust Real Life Ambassador for Yorkshire and the Humber last year following his outstanding contributions to his local community. Prior to coming to The Trust, Mark had been unemployed for over three years. He applied for a Business Start-up loan and now owns a successful business, which has been trading for seven years, and has recently started Open University studying for an HND in sociology.

Mark comments: **'I'd been unemployed for so long, done all my training but no one would give me a chance. I knew what I wanted to do but just needed the backing to do it. I was determined to make a success of my life and am grateful to The Prince's Trust for opening so many doors.'**

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Notes to editors

- The Prince's Trust, the UK's leading charity for young people, helps 14-30 year olds build confidence, gain skills, get into work or start a new business. The Prince's Trust has helped over 450,000 young people in just over 25 years.
- The Prince's Trust, across all its programmes, specifically aims to reach young people within the following groups: the unemployed; educational underachievers; ex-offenders/serving prisoners and those at risk of offending; and those in or leaving care.
- For more information on The Prince's Trust visit www.princes-trust.org.uk or call freephone on 0800 842 842.
- The Prince's Trust's £10m partnership with The Royal Bank of Scotland Group is one of the biggest ever partnerships between a business and a voluntary sector organisation. The funds will help to fund some of The Trust's core activities, particularly: **The Business Awards**, which recognise Trust-supported businesses that have achieved success in identified categories; **Employee Involvement** - a compact 20-day version of The Trust's Volunteers personal development course that helps RBS employees and associates of The Trust develop new skills; and **Route 14-25**.
- Route 14-25 initiative is launched at Sheffield Wednesday FC on Friday 9 August from 12-2pm. Speakers include Lee Barker, regional director of The Prince's Trust Yorkshire and the Humber; Allan Watt, Head of Public Affairs & Community Investment at The Royal Bank of Scotland Group; and young people from Yorkshire who have been supported by The Prince's Trust will be present at the launch to tell their stories.

For further information or to attend the launch, please contact:

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