



2003

PRIME MINISTER

Following your meeting on 7 July with Dr Alec Dickson, the Director of Community Service Volunteers, and his colleagues, I have considered further the ideas CSV put forward for their own programmes and their more general ideas. Since that meeting Lord Gowrie and Mr Lester have seen Mrs Hoodless and my officials have also met her.

WHAT CSV DO NOWYOP

First by way of background it must be emphasised that CSV is already one of the major voluntary organisations in the Youth Opportunities Programme and is primarily concerned with the schemes run under the community service element of this programme which is for the unemployed in the 16-18 age group. Like other parts of the programme this is designed to aid unemployed young persons' personal development and so improve their chances of obtaining permanent employment. CSV under YOP operates through small teams on projects, or placements with host organisations (eg, hospitals, nurseries, old peoples' homes etc). They also sponsor schemes in STEP (for long term unemployed over 18s), and a scheme designed to provide work experience in Community Service through placements for young people away from their home areas.

VOLUNTEER PROGRAMMES

Secondly they run a number of volunteer programmes, under which young people, not necessarily unemployed and not restricted to a particular age group are placed in a variety of social work. The main volunteer programme is funded by the Voluntary Services Unit of the Home Office. There are also special programmes eg, the Borstal Scheme (supported by the Home Office), the Children in Care Scheme and Hospital Volunteers (DHSS).



All these schemes are relatively small in scale, eg, in Great Britain CSV provide only about 700 of the 9,000 places in YOP provided by the voluntary sector. Similarly the numbers in the volunteer services are small (2,430 in all).

It is important to appreciate that there are differences in the financial arrangements. Those in YOP are paid the same allowance (£23.50 at present) as all YOP trainees. The volunteers funded by VSU are paid board and lodging, and/or pocket money, by the organisations which they assist. The Home Office - or other Government Department - pays administrative expenses.

CSV's PROPOSALS

CSV have divided their proposals into the feasible and the possible. If I might start with the former, it seems clear from the further discussions which Ministers and officials have had with Mrs Hoodless that CSV are primarily interested in expanding their own volunteer programme. They have supplied preliminary estimates for two stages of expansion each providing an additional 1,000 volunteers a year (500 places in each stage). The estimates would need refining before any decisions could be taken, but CSV would want proportionately more assistance for administrative costs for the first stage, whereas particularly in the second stage they would not be confident that sufficient volunteers could be placed without the Government financing the £10 pocket money, and even the board and lodging of the volunteers. If the Government met all these costs this would make the scheme much more comparable to YOP in conception and cost and possibly more expensive per place. Moreover CSV have not hitherto targetted their scheme to the unemployed, though no doubt many of their volunteers would be receiving supplementary or unemployment benefit if they had not found volunteer jobs. It would change its open character if they did, although they could well increase the unemployed element in their scheme by concentrating on particular areas.



The expansion of CSV's schemes in the Youth Opportunities Programme is certainly something the MSC is very willing to consider in the context of an enlarged YOP. The future of YOP is something my colleagues and I are now discussing with the MSC and it is indeed likely that more opportunities will be needed in view of the recent rises in youth unemployment. I think therefore that when the size of the programme is settled we will be able to react positively to CSV's suggestions for enlarged springboard and service away from home schemes. Our discussions with MSC also embrace the establishment of centres where vacancies in voluntary work and information about other voluntary authorities can be sought. These might be based in Jobcentres or in an enlarged network of the existing volunteer bureaux.

For the present, however, and particularly with regard to the main volunteer programme, I do not think there would be merit in making available in the immediate future additional Government funds to CSV, because the numbers involved are likely to be small in relation to current increases in the numbers of unemployed. It is however for further consideration whether if we decide to do anything more generally about facilitating the use of volunteers it would be compatible to say we are prepared to finance stage I of the CSV proposal on condition that we are satisfied that the administrative costs are strictly necessary, and that sponsors pay pocket money and board and lodging. In that case the Secretary of State for Social Services would be ready to consider whether some funds could be made available to enable organisations to take on volunteers. It is doubtful however whether there is a case for expanding the CSV's Main Volunteer Programme in isolation (under the terms mentioned in para 5) and there would be a problem of financing, since the Voluntary Services Unit of the Home Office (which at present funds the CSV Main Volunteer Programme) is unable significantly to increase its grant.

NEW APPROACHES

Turning to CSV's possible developments you will appreciate that I very much wish that the voluntary approach should be made use of in our plans for dealing with the unemployed. But to work on all the lines proposed by CSV may not be the most effective approach. In addition I think it important that we gain as wide-spread support for proposals for helping the unemployed as possible. Moreover we need to carry with us the major voluntary organisations (many of whom already help the unemployed in substantial ways through YOP) which means that there are limitations on what we can say to CSV alone. Something of their ideas is already informing our thinking. The idea of a major drive on urban dereliction and the use of the young unemployed on home insulation work are both under consideration and in the case of home insulation, proposals for a new, though small scale, MSC scheme are in train. The YOP already counts among its sponsors bodies active in conservation work and there would be scope for expansion in an enlarged programme. On the global approach underlying the ideas of a universal year of service, there has already been considerable debate both in the House, and in meetings and correspondence between myself and colleagues, and proponents of universal voluntary service ideas. Generally our view has been that the present programmes, which work well, are founded on an individual and voluntary approach which would be lost in this kind of "solution en masse".

Patrick Jenkin, in a letter to me, has commented that it would not be sensible to set up a mechanism separate from the normal allocation arrangements for health authorities for finding volunteers, although there may be some scope for increasing financial help to voluntary bodies like CSV that provide health service placements. On the question of "competitive tendering" by local authorities for the provision of meals on wheels, residential and day care services, authorities are at present free to make whatever arrangements they consider appropriate and these include the use of volunteers. He sees no case for encouraging them to displace existing and stable volunteer forces.

Generally, I think it is essential to see the picture in the round



rather than proceed piecemeal or attempt at this stage to give definitive judgements on each of CSV's possible developments. Also, of course, since additional expenditure could be involved, it is particularly important so to do. Consequently I consider that our approach to the voluntary sector needs to be looked at in the context of plans for the future of YOP and for other measures of assistance. I have therefore asked my officials to conduct a wide ranging review of special employment measures looking particularly but not exclusively at those for young people with a view to producing proposals for me in the early autumn. Our ideas are necessarily at a preliminary stage of consideration and I do not think it will help to go public on them at this stage. I need to consider the priorities which would be assigned to possible new schemes in terms of their relative cost effectiveness. We will need to keep in mind the possibility of assisting CSV as part of our more general approach.

Apart from CSV's volunteer programme CSV is one of many volunteer organisations which takes part in YOP, and I do not think it would be appropriate for their Springboard and other YOP activities to be separately financed. The YOP programme is based on the need to ensure that local needs are met, through the local initiatives and enterprises, supervised by Areas Boards on which the voluntary organisations have a place.

I attach a draft letter which you might send to Dr Dickson.

I am sending copies of this minute to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Lord President, the Home Secretary, the Secretary of State for Health and Social Security, Education and Science, Defence, Industry, Environment, Scotland and Wales and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "J P".

J P

5 August 1980

DRAFT LETTER FROM PRIME MINISTER TO DR DICKSON CSV

Together with Jim Prior and Keith Joseph I was delighted to see you and your colleagues on 7 July and to have the opportunity to discuss with you the whole problem of youth unemployment and the potential role for voluntary organisations like CSV in helping to deal with it.

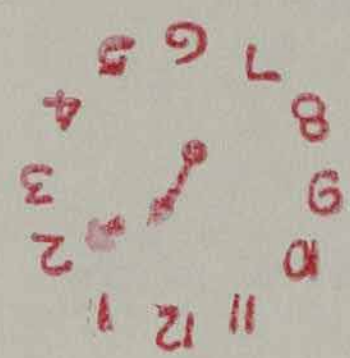
Jim Prior wants to involve voluntary organisations as much as possible in alleviating the problems of the unemployed. He is now looking at some of the ideas which you put forward at your meeting with me. Insofar as the Youth Opportunities Programme is concerned I know that the MSC will want to discuss with you the scale of CSV provision under that programme, notably the very successful Springboard schemes. I know that the MSC are interested in the Service Away From Home scheme and want to see it succeed but they will want to see the results of the current evaluation before deciding whether or not to continue to fund it in its present form.

Generally, however, as I am sure you will appreciate it is too early at this point to comment on the various proposals CSV has put forward other than to say that they are certainly informing our thinking on how the voluntary sector can play a greater part in helping the young unemployed. I think this point was made by Jim Lester and Lord Gowrie at their meeting with Mrs Hoodless and other from CSV on 17 July.

I am writing here mainly about your general proposals. A number of individual government departments clearly contribute to specific CSV projects relevant to their responsibilities. If you have, in the current context, proposals for further work specifically directed at fields of interest to individual departments, you can, of course, approach them direct.

CONFIDENTIAL

I am most grateful for the interest you have shown and for your constructive suggestions. It is particularly helpful, that you should have come forward with these now since, as I have said, the Government is in the process of examining these issues and will be able to take your views fully into account.



- 5 AUG 1980