



CF. to note

EH  
cc D/M

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

11 August 1980

Dear Mr. Bratts,

Thank you for your letter of 29 July asking for clarification of reports that the Government is considering a scheme under which employers could be paid a sum equal to unemployment benefit if they take on young people who are registered unemployed.

May I say, first of all, that your willingness to participate in a scheme to help young unemployed is much appreciated. Mr Prior and his colleagues at the Department of Employment are indeed considering what more can be done to help these young people, but I am afraid that no announcement is likely before the autumn. I am sure you will understand that there is a great deal of work to be done. Options need to be considered not least in terms of what they offer young participants in basic vocational skills that will be useful to them when they re-enter the world of permanent employment.

I appreciate that this reply leaves you with the problem you describe in your letter. But if your firm is able to provide unemployed young people with a variety of work experience that will stand them in good stead later, then there is no need to wait for the announcement of any new schemes. The current Youth Opportunities Programme, which is run by the Manpower Services Commission, provides unemployed young people with a variety of work experience and training courses designed to give them basic vocational skills and the self confidence necessary to help them into work. This year the Government expanded the programme to provide over a quarter of a million training opportunities. One of the elements in YOP is work experience on employers' premises, where the sponsor firm finds the

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trainee a variety of jobs to do and the MSC pays his/her allowance of £23.50 a week.

From your letter, it may be that your firm could take on 4 or 5 such trainees right away. I enclose a booklet about the Youth Opportunities Programme and suggest that if you feel you can help, you get in touch with the MSC Special Programmes Area Manager, Mr A J Brown, Coventry Area Office, Bankfield House, 163 New Union Street, Coventry CV1 2QQ, who will be able to advise you further.

MSC relies heavily on the sponsorship of employers like yourself, and I am sure you will be able to help them help the young unemployed. Many thanks for your good wishes.

Yours sincerely  
Raymond D. White

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John Brabbs, Esq