

Vocational Training and Employment Services for Adults with Intellectual Disability: An Evaluation Study

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Table of Contents

SECTION	PAGE
Evaluating two programmes in St. Michael's House	3
Interviews with students - Prussia Street	7
Job Preference Survey - Prussia Street	14
Parent Interviews - Prussia Street	27
Staff Interviews - Prussia Street	39
Case Study: "Kevin" (composed by Claire Donohoe)	46
Mountjoy Square evaluation study	51
REFERENCES	60
LIST OF TABLES	
LIST OF APPENDICES	

VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT SERVICES:

AN EVALUATION STUDY OF TWO DUBLIN COMMUNITY-BASED PROGRAMMES

INTRODUCTION

Vocational training and employment services are the way forward for people with an intellectual disability if they are to achieve full social integration (ILSMH, 1990; Walsh, 1990). In recent years, St. Michael's House, a community-based service for about 1500 adults and children with intellectual disability in the Dublin area, has developed initiatives in vocational training. New elements have emerged and been tested: "supported employment"; job coaches; employment specialists; work-sampling; work experience; employer-based training. Each is likely to play a part in the mix of vocational services available to adults in this decade.

When introducing new elements to any service, it is important also to introduce some mechanism for evaluation, which may be defined (Patton, 1982) as

..." the systematic collection of information about the activities, characteristics and outcomes of programs, personnel and products in order for interested persons to make judgements about what these programs, personnel or products are doing or affecting."

Without doing so, there is no basis on which to answer tough

questions from funding bodies in Ireland or Europe, nor to demonstrate the benefits for individual consumers, nor to measure the impact of change.

THIS REPORT

This report presents the outcomes of an evaluation study carried out on two vocational training and employment programmes in Dublin, managed by St. Michael's House from 1991-92, one for persons in their Third Year of Level One vocational training, and the second for persons in the final phase of Level Two, using the categories currently applied in Ireland. The findings of these two studies are presented here.

Each programme is distinctive. However, they are linked by today's focus on offering to students a host of individualized vocational training experiences which are flexible and fulfilling as well as market-based.

METHOD

The Participants

Initially, there were 42 participants in total, 23 from the Foundation Skills course at Prussia Street and 19 from the Work Options course at Mountjoy Square. However, during the course of the programme, one student left Prussia Street. The characteristics of the remaining N=22 participants are presented in TABLE 1. Nearly all (92%) of the participants lived at home, and the remainder in a group home or hostel.

	PRUSSIA STREET N=22	MOUNTJOY SQUARE N=19
AGE	MEAN 22 RANGE 20-44	MEAN 26 RANGE 22-45
LEVEL OF HANDICAP	MILD 55% MODERATE 41% SEVERE 4%	MILD 79% BORDERLINE 10% MODERATE 10%
SEX	MALES 12 FEMALES 10	MALES 12 FEMALES 7
USE OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT	YES 77% NO 5% TRAINING 18%	YES 89% NO 5% TRAINING 5%

TABLE 1: CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS (N=41)
IN TWO VOCATIONAL TRAINING SERVICE PROGRAMMES

SOCIAL COMPETENCE DOMAIN (RANGE OF SCORES)	PRUSSIA STREET STUDENTS N=22	MOUNTJOY SQUARE GROUP N=19
EATING (1-5)	1.14	1.00
MOBILITY (1-5)	1.05	1.06
TOILETING (1-4)	1.05	1.00
UNDERSTAND LANGUAGE (1-5)	1.41	1.11
LANGUAGE USE (1-6)	1.64	1.11
VISION (1-3)	1.00	1.00
HEARING (1-3)	1.00	1.00
EPILEPSY (1-4)	1.36	1.22
PHYSICAL CARE (1-5)	1.27	1.06
NEED FOR SUPERVISION (1-3)	1.14	1.00

TABLE 2 : MEAN SCORES ON SOCIAL COMPETENCE DOMAINS
(LOWER SCORES= MORE INDEPENDENCE)

* INFORMATION WAS AVAILABLE FOR N=22 PERSONS AT PRUSSIA STREET

Materials

Information about the social competence and/or presence of additional handicaps of the participants was drawn from a client database established within a service agency in Dublin (Rafferty,

1989) and regularly updated (see: Walsh and Birkbeck, 1992). These ratings, for example - " Language use" or "Presence of epilepsy" (APPENDIX 1) were made by knowledgeable staff members. This data is protected by a Data Protection Officer (Guide to the Data Protection Act, 1988).

For the students attending the Foundation Skills Course at the Prussia Street Centre, a Job Survey Questionnaire was designed to test their knowledge of various everyday jobs (APPENDIX 2). Twenty seven colour photographs of people at work were used in conjunction with the questionnaire (St. Michael's House Research, 1990). The questionnaire looked at the students' experiences at work and at the centre as well as testing their vocational knowledge, for example, how they would go about looking for a job.

Procedures

A. Prussia Street

Information was gathered from the students in Prussia Street at three points:

1. In October 1991, the initial total group of 23 was interviewed for the Job Survey study (APPENDIX 2).

2. In April 1992, an evaluative interview schedule was administered to 21 students (APPENDIX 3).

3. In June of 1992, 20 of the 21 students took part in the second follow-up of the Job Survey study conducted in October. In addition, the parents of the students in the Foundation Skills Course in Prussia Street were interviewed in their homes using a questionnaire designed (APPENDIX 4) to investigate their opinions and feelings about the centre. Of these, 19 parents agreed to be interviewed. They were asked about the advantages and disadvantages of the course and the overall difference, if any, it had made for their son/daughter. The manager of the Vocational Training and Employment service had particularly asked for the responses of parents whose sons and daughters were embarking on the new community-based program.

Finally, the staff involved in the Prussia Street centre were asked to fill out a questionnaire (APPENDIX 5) designed to provide information about their feelings with regard to the move to the new centre. Four of the six members of staff did so. The questionnaire also dealt with their views on what would have been useful in planning and preparing for the move and what would be useful for the efficient running of the centre in the future.

B. Mountjoy Square

Information about the clients attending Mountjoy Square, the Work Options course, was gathered from their job coach. This covered all aspects of their work experiences, for example, where they worked and for how long, and current employment if any (APPENDIX 6).

PART ONE

RESULTS OF EVALUATIVE INTERVIEWS WITH PRUSSIA STREET STUDENTS

APRIL 1992

The results will be presented under the following headings:

THE EVALUATIVE QUESTIONNAIRE

The interviews with 21 students took place in April 1992 at the Prussia Street Centre: each student was interviewed individually.

A. The Centre

Most of the students (86%) reported that they liked the centre, while 9% said they did not and a further 5% said that it was "boring". Comments about the centre included "I like the staff" and "you are treated like an adult".

When the students were asked if there were any differences between the centre at Prussia Street and the centre at Ballymun, 65% of the students said that there was a difference between the two centres. The two major differences were the fact that they had more freedom and less supervision in Prussia Street and that they did different things there, for example gardening, that

they did not do at the training centre in Ballymun. Other comments referred to features of the Prussia Street Centre, such as having individual lockers.

The students were asked what they did at the centre everyday.

WHAT YOU DO AT THE CENTRE	HOW MANY SAID IT N=21
CATERING & CANTEEN	22%
ACADEMIC SUBJECTS	16%
ARTS & CARFTS	16%

TABLE 3 : THE THREE DAILY ACTIVITIES AT PRUSSIA STREET
MOST FREQUENTLY NAMED BY STUDENTS

The students mentioned a number of other daily activities, such as personal development, independent living skills, sex education, sport, gardening, work orientation, social and community skills and "Meals on Wheels" work. It was notable that students themselves often used the curriculum title, for example, "social and community skills".

The students were then asked about their favourite subjects: the most frequent response was "catering and canteen".

FAVOURITE ACTIVITY/ FEATURE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES: FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES
CATERING & CANTEEN	7
ACADEMIC SUBJECTS	6
ARTS AND CRAFTS	4
OUTINGS	2
STAFF MEMBER NAMED	2
MEALS ON WHEELS	1
LIKE EVERYTHING	1
GARDEN	1
COMING IN EVERYDAY	1

TABLE 4 : FAVOURITE ACTIVITIES/FEATURES:
STUDENTS' RESPONSES

It can be seen that the students' preferences are very similar to the subjects they mentioned in relation to what they did in did in the centre: hence, the students seemed to be familiar with what they liked.

The students named a number of reasons for liking a particular subject. These included:

- * aspects of the subject itself
- * the tutor
- * specific tasks
- * understanding and learning new things.

One student did mention that what he learned in Prussia St. would be useful in a work situation.

The students also described what they disliked in the centre. Only eight students did so: two disliked maths and two, arts

and crafts. One student disliked "Meals on Wheels", one catering, one outings and one personal development.

The reasons for the students' dislike included their appraisal that subjects were too hard or easy. One student simply did not like cooking.

B. The Staff

The students were asked could they do things for themselves at the centre. Some of them (29%) said they could not, 62% said they could, 5% said they need help sometimes and 5% did not reply. One third reported that the staff helped them "with everything" (TABLE 5).

HOW STAFF HELP STUDENTS	PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS (N=21) IDENTIFYING STAFF HELP
HELP WITH ALL ACTIVITIES	33%
HELP US UNDERSTAND THINGS	24%
HELP WITH SPECIFIC TASKS	14%
HELP WITH OUR REPORTS & INFO	10%
HELP ON OUTINGS	14%
HELP US GET JOBS	5%

TABLE 5 : HOW THE STAFF HELP STUDENTS

C. Activities outside the Centre

When asked what they did outside the centre the students named the following activities : going in to town, sport, typing, computers, "Meals on Wheels", gardening and going out in the

community. Most 67% said that they used public transport while 33% walked. Students varied in the level of support required to take on these activities. The majority carried out community-based activities (86%) independently and 14% said that they depended on help from either staff or student.

Most of the students (81%) liked activities based in the community. Those who did not said they had more fun at Prussia Street. One student said that he did not get along with another person who took part in an outside class and disliked the class for this reason.

D. Work Experience

During their year's programme, each of the students had an opportunity for at least one period of work experience. Work experience placements were secured in a number of local and city centre locations. The students' first three preferences for work experience were elicited at the start of the year, and at least one preferred job was offered. The students named the following work places:

- * Aras an Uachtarain
- * ESB Canteen
- * 98 FM Radio Station
- * Dublin Airport Canteen
- * Bewley's Cafe
- * Robert Chambers Hair Salon
- * Beaumont Hospital
- * SF Manufacturing - Packaging

- * FAS Training Centre
- * McDonald's Restaurant
- * Aer Rianta
- * Chadwick's
- * A city centre hotel

The extent of the placements varied: some students spent one or two days weekly in the workplace, while one gradually attained full-time placement. Most (17 of the 21) travelled to work on public transport, one got a lift and the other three were accompanied by a job coach at the time of the interview. According to the students' own comments, the range of tasks they encountered was wide (TABLE 6).

TASKS REPORTED BY STUDENTS ABOUT WORK EXPERIENCE	N=21
FOOD/CATERING/CLEAN	40%
PACK	28%
OFFICE	13%
PRICE/WEIGH	10%
PLANT FLOWERS	3%
HELP MAKE TAPES	3%
HAIRDRESSING	3%

TABLE 6 : TASKS WHICH STUDENTS ENCOUNTERED
DURING THEIR WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

Most students, according to their own descriptions, were involved in packing, cleaning and catering tasks in their work experiences.

The things the students liked about work included the work itself, the people, going there in the car and the uniform. What the some students (17%) did not like about work included specific tasks and "standing around doing nothing".

5. The future

The students were asked about their future plans: most (62%) wished to "work" and/or "earn money" (TABLE 7).

WHAT THE STUDENTS WANT TO DO NEXT	N=21
WORK/EARN MONEY	52%
"WORK OPTIONS" (MOUNTJOY SQUARE)	19%
DON'T KNOW	24%
POTTERY	5%

TABLE 7: WHAT STUDENTS WILL DO NEXT

When asked about leaving the centre, 10% of the students said they would miss their friends, 14% felt good about having to go and work, and 44% were sad and apprehensive about what they would be doing next: "I feel terrible, I don't know where I'll be going or what I'll be doing".

RESULTS OF JOB PREFERENCE SURVEYS WITH PRUSSIA STREET STUDENTS

OCTOBER 1991 AND JUNE 1992

INTRODUCTION

As noted ("Procedure" Section above), students were interviewed at two times and asked about their knowledge of a range of jobs, about the skills involved and about their own preferences. A questionnaire accompanied by colour photographs was administered to each student in the centre individually.

A. Leaving the centre

First of all the students were asked about how they would feel when they left the centre. Generally, feelings were mixed.

LEAVING THE CENTRE	OCTOBER 1991 N=23	JUNE 1992 N=20
FEEL GLAD	6 (27%)	5 (25%)
FEEL SORRY	9 (39%)	12 (60%)
NOT SURE/BOTH GLAD AND SORRY	7 (30%)	3 (15%)
NO REPLY	1 (4%)	-

TABLE 8: HOW THE STUDENTS FELT ABOUT LEAVING THE CENTRE

Many of the students who were glad to leave the centre in October said that they wanted to work, and thus leaving the centre would give them "chance to look for a job" as one student put it.

By June, over half (60%) of the students were sure that they would be sorry to leave the centre in June. Those who said they would be glad to leave were glad because it gave them a chance to go to work as well as a chance for "a break". Also one student felt she had done "enough training".

The students who were sorry to leave had varied reasons. In October several of the students said they would miss the centre because of the staff and the other students, "I would miss my friends" and a few said they would miss the work involved, "I like the work they talk about". Others said that they would miss doing things and learning: "there is more to do here than anywhere before". One of the students was unsure about how he felt: "if I had a full time job I would not be sorry or glad to leave".

In June some of those who said they were sorry to leave said they would miss aspects of the place when they left: "I am a bit disappointed (to leave), I do like it, I am going to miss it". Another said "I like it here, miss J.J., Carmel and Nuala" (staff). Some students said that they simply liked the place and one student was worried about his future : "when I leave I'll have nothing to do".

B. Looking for a job

"I'm able to work".

The students were asked in October and again in June if they thought it would be hard or easy to get a job: at both times, the majority believed this would be hard (TABLE 9).

FINDING A JOB	OCTOBER 1991 N=23	JUNE 1992 N=20
HARD	74%	75%
EASY	22%	25%
DON'T KNOW	4%	0%

TABLE 9 : STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF JOB HUNTING

The students who thought job hunting would be easy in the first set of interviews in October 1991 were asked why they thought this was so. None gave a reason, although one student suggested "looking in town".

In June 1992, the students who thought finding a job would be easy suggested that training would help them as well as looking at a notice board. One student said that there might be jobs in Prussia Street and one student said "I am able to work".

....."no more jobs any more in Dublin".

In October, three-quarters of the students thought finding a job would be hard, and were asked why this might be so. Most students referred to the unemployment situation in Ireland as their reason : "people leaving Ireland because they can't get jobs". One student expressed concern that he wouldn't be able to find a job that he liked and another thought it would be hard to learn how to get a job.

In June, the percentage of students who thought finding a job would be hard was more or less the same. Again, they showed a keen awareness of national employment trends. Nine students referred to the unemployment situation in Ireland, saying "over 400,000-odd looking for a job"; "hard to look for a job, too much unemployment;" and "hard these days, no jobs really around". One student said you had be intelligent and tell them (the employers) things and one student said she would "get tired looking for a job".

Finally, the students were asked how they would go about finding a job.

HOW TO FIND A JOB	OCTOBER N=23	JUNE N=20
MEDIA	30%	25%
ASK-LOOK AROUND	13%	30%
TRAIN-INTERVIEW	5%	10%
FAS MANPOWER	22%	10%
C.V. BOSS PHONE	0%	5%
DON'T KNOW	30%	20%

TABLE 10: HOW TO FIND A JOB

It is notable that the number of students who had no idea how to go about finding a job had decreased by the end of the year. They still relied on other people and the media in order to help them in June. Further, a number of new job-related vocabulary words had appeared in the interviews by June: for example, students were aware of the course offered in Mountjoy Square; of the "interview" procedure when job-seeking; and of the need to prepare a "C.V.".

B. What further help and training are required?

The students were asked if they thought they needed any further help or training to do the job of their choice.

NEED HELP IN JOB	OCTOBER N=23	JUNE N=20
YES	70%	55%
NO	21%	45%
DON'T KNOW	9%	0%

TABLE 11: NEED FOR FURTHER TRAINING

The suggestions for further training included:

- * Mountjoy Square (the "Work Options" course)
- * the help of a friend
- * work experience
- * some help "until I got used to it"

Thus by the end of the year the number of students who felt they needed further help to do a job had decreased. This suggests that the training the students received throughout the year gave them enough confidence to go and work with less assistance.

C. Future choices

The students were asked if they would prefer a job or attend a St. Michael's House long-term training centre (workshop) when they leave the Prussia Street centre.

PREFERENCE	OCTOBER 1991 N=23	JUNE 1992 N=20
JOB	69%	50%
WORKSHOP	26%	45%
NO REPLY	5%	5%

TABLE 12: STUDENT PREFERENCES WHEN THEY LEAVE

The students who said they preferred a workshop in October said they would like to work in a workshop and that a job might be harder than the workshop. By contrast, those students preferred a job in October did so because they thought it would be fun:

..."job is not as boring".

"job is not as boring" and they would get money. Other reasons for preferring a job included the fact that you got more experience working and that you would be more independent: "be independent do things for myself". Finally some of the clients had a specific job in mind that they would like to do.

In June, more students declared that they wanted to go to a workshop. However, it should be mentioned that decisions were being made about the students' futures when they were interviewed in June and their awareness of the pressures may have affected their replies to this question. The students who said they preferred a workshop in June said so because they thought they

might get tired in a job and they might not be kept in one. One student said that he/she would like a job as well as a workshop and one student said that the workshop was a nice place and would "be handier".

In June one student said that he would prefer to go on to further vocational training, in the Work Options course at Mountjoy Square as he had friends there.

"I want to get away from the workshop".

The students who preferred a job in June did so because they thought a job was better than a workshop "I think a job is better to have". Other reasons in the students words included "I'm capable of working" and "I want to get away from the workshop".

D. Work experience and job preferences

"I'm starting on computers now".

"The staff were good - I enjoyed the work".

During the year 1991-92, all students had an opportunity for at least one placement of work experience in a number of different locations in Dublin (See Section on the "Evaluative Questionnaire" in this Part of the report).

The students were also asked would they like to do the job they had experienced again. In October 59% said they would like to do the work experience again and 41% said no. In June 80% said they would like to do the job experienced again, and 15% said they would not like to do so: one student did not reply. In June the majority of students were quite happy to continue with their work experiences. This could have been because they had become more confident at work or because they preferred the work experience they were involved in by June.

There was some evidence for consistency among preferences for jobs which the students said they would like: over half (57%) named the same job at both times, October and June.

The students' work experience seemed to have some influence on stated preferences. One third of the students (33%) preferred the same job at both times and this choice was also the area in which they had been placed for work experience.

When the students were asked what job they would like to do in June, half (52%) mentioned a job in which they had some work experience in.

E. Students' knowledge of everyday jobs

In October and again in June the students were asked general questions about the world of work. They were also shown photographs of people in jobs and asked to identify what job the person was doing.

First of all the students were shown seven photographs of jobs which were available in Dublin.

JOBS NAMED	OCTOBER N=23	JUNE N=20
POLICEMAN	95%	90%
POSTMAN	91%	100%
PAINTER	48%	95%
BUSDRIVER	83%	95%
NEWSPAPER SALES	87%	100%
BUTCHER	87%	90%
METALWORK	82%	90%

TABLE 13: STUDENTS KNOWLEDGE OF JOBS

From the Table (13) it is clear that the students' information about these seven jobs increased as well as their ability to communicate this information. With the exception of one job - "policeman" - more students could correctly identify the jobs in June 1992. During the June interviews, it seemed that more students noted an ambulance in the background of the photograph and this distracted from the uniformed garda.

The students were also shown a second set of ten photographs of

various jobs and asked specific questions about them. First of all the students had to identify the job. Students improved in their ability to identify all of these ten jobs between October 1991 and June 1992 (TABLE 14), by which time all students had had

JOB'S PRESENTED	OCTOBER N=23	JUNE N=20
SUPERMARKET	74%	90%
RESTAURANT	78%	95%
CAR/GARAGE	83%	85%
CLEANING	74%	95%
PRODUCTION	83%	90%
OFFICE	83%	100%
GARDEN	96%	100%
SHOP	96%	100%
DELIVERY	74%	100%
CONSTRUCTION	91%	100%

TABLE 14: PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS CORRECTLY IDENTIFYING TEN JOBS IN OCTOBER 1991 AND JUNE 1992

at least one opportunity for work experience.

ABLE TO DO JOB	OCTOBER N=23	JUNE N=20
SUPERMARKET	77%	75%
RESTAURANT	70%	75%
CAR/GARAGE	56%	70%
CLEANING	70%	80%
PRODUCTION	61%	70%
OFFICE	61%	LIVING
GARDEN	70%	70%
SHOP	74%	60%
DELIVERY	65%	60%
CONSTRUCTION	61%	35%

TABLE 15: PERCEIVED ABILITY TO DO JOBS

The students were also asked could they do the jobs in the photographs. Their perceptions varied over time, with some increases in the percentages who felt they could do jobs in the "Cleaning", "Production" , "Restaurant", "Garage" and "Office" areas - all available in work experience placements. It was notable that the percentage of students who felt they could do a job in "Construction" decreased over time, and that this was an area in which no students had had work experience. It could be said that the students were being more realistic about their abilities in June as these jobs are sometimes not always the most practical for them.

Finally the students were asked about specific job-related tasks involved in each of the ten jobs. The mean number of tasks named for each job was calculated (TABLE 16), ranging from 1-5 tasks. Information about each job increased between October 1991 and June 1992. By June the students were able to identify more tasks for each job, suggesting their knowledge about these jobs had increased as well as their ability to communicate this information. This held also for all jobs, whether or not any students had had work experience during the year.

MEAN NUMBER OF TASKS NAMED	OCTOBER N=23	JUNE N=20
SUPERMARKET	1.6	2.1
RESTAURENT	1.7	2.4
CAR/GARAGE	1.8	2.2
CLEANING	1.2	1.7
PRODUCTION	1.3	1.8
OFFICE	1.9	2.7
GARDEN	1.7	2.4
SHOP	1.3	2
DELIVERY	1.1	1.9
CONSTRUCTION	1.7	1.9

TABLE 16: THE MEAN NUMBER OF TASKS IDENTIFIED FOR SPECIFIC JOBS

It can be seen from Table (16) that the students' grasp of the tasks involved in a set of typical jobs improved during the course. They identified between 1.1 and 1.9 tasks for each of the jobs named in October. By June, they were more knowledgeable: the mean number of job-related tasks had increased, and they identified between 1.7 and 2.7 tasks for the same jobs.

Finally, the current status (December 1992) of the students at Prussia Street may be seen in TABLE 17 : 8 have been admitted to the Mountjoy Square programme and 7 have obtained full- or part-time employment. Thus the majority have achieved an outcome which reflects the employment focus of the Prussia Street course.

ID	1 WORK EXPERIENCE	2 WORK EXPERIENCE	3 WORK EXPERIENCE	CURRENT STATUS
1	Gardening	Retail	-	Gardening PT
2	Retail	-	-	Mountjoy Square
3	Industry	-	-	Other agency
4	Factory	-	-	At home
5	Catering	-	-	Catering PT (20.)
6	Media	-	-	Mountjoy Square
7	Catering	-	-	Catering FT (30.)
8	Industry	-	-	Industry PT (30.)
9	Retail	Office	-	Retail PT Office PT (30.)
10	Retail	-	-	No information
11	Industry	Office	Office	LTTC
12	Catering	Factory	Groundsman	Mountjoy Square
13	Catering	-	-	Mountjoy Square
14	Office	Industry	Retail	Office (30.)
15	Retail	-	-	LTTC
16	Hair-dressing	-	-	Mountjoy Square
17	Catering	-	-	Mountjoy Square
18	Retail	-	-	Retail PT (30.)
19	Catering	-	-	Other agency
20	Retail	-	-	LTTC
21	Catering	Retail	Industry	Mountjoy Square
22	Catering	Factory	-	Mountjoy Square

TABLE 17: WORK EXPERIENCE AND CURRENT STATUS OF STUDENTS IN PRUSSIA STREET (DECEMBER 1992)



RESULTS OF INTERVIEWS WITH PARENTS OF THE STUDENTS
ATTENDING PRUSSIA STREET

MAY-JUNE 1992

Introduction

As noted in the "Procedure" Section (above), the parents of N=19 students were interviewed in the early summer of 1992 as the Prussia Street programme was concluding. The questionnaire covered areas such as the parents' views and attitudes to the move from the Ballymun clinic to the Prussia Street centre and also their opinion of the course content. Parents were interviewed individually in their homes.

A. The move to Prussia Street

All parents seemed to be very impressed with the centre in Prussia Street: 58% said 'it was brilliant,' 'a fantastic move', and 16% said it was a positive move and it helped a lot. A further 10% said it was a good idea for the student not to be labelled or categorised. The remaining 16% said it was 'okay' or 'grand'.

All of the parents said that the move to Prussia Street was advantageous for the students involved. Firstly, in examining the advantages, 32% replied that it made their son/daughter much more independent in relation to public transport, 21% said that because they did more practical things that it prepared them for

the outside world. Another 16% were pleased that their children were no longer in a 'school-like' atmosphere. Many felt that their son/daughter improved greatly over the year as they were under less pressure (11%). Prussia Street was a great outlet for self esteem (5%).

However, about half (53%) of the parents also felt that there were disadvantages with the move. Some mentioned difficulties in getting to Prussia Street as it often meant two buses (26%). while 11% felt that their son/daughter did not have enough work experience. Along similar lines, one parent felt that they did not get enough feedback from the work placement and felt that this would be a good idea. One parent was worried as the student concerned had epileptic fits, and another parent felt that the course was not long enough.

More than half (58%) of the parents reported that they had been well-informed about the changes to the vocational training programme and the accompanying move to the Prussia Street centre. One parent commented that more information is always welcome. About one quarter of the parents (21%) said that were not informed enough and 2 parents (11%) found the information provided a bit vague and insufficient. (One parent had missed the meeting arranged to inform parents and could not comment).

B. Changes in the students perceived by parents

Parents were asked about the changes they perceived for their sons and daughters as a consequence of attending the Prussia Street Centre. Four main areas were identified: independence, general behaviour; personal satisfaction; and opportunities.

In relation to independence, 90% of the parents felt that their son/daughter was much more independent and had improved greatly and the remainder said that the level of independence was the same. Extra comments offered by some parents (53%) are along the following lines:

One parent said that work experience had improved that particular student's level of independence. Others said that increased independence was very much due to the fact that students were in a more community-based setting. One parent, said that the student was more independent because he/she enjoyed the course a lot more now.

Some changes in the students' behaviour were also noted by parents. Most (63%) found a positive difference in their son/daughters behaviour and the remainder said it was the same. Some (58%) also offered further comments about the behaviour changes: 26% of these respondents felt that their son/daughter was much more "grown-up". Another 11% said that they were now much more outgoing and "mixed better" with others. One parent said that it was "hard to know exactly", but agreed that there

were positive changes. A further 11% felt that their child had improved a bit but was still quite "childish". One parent felt that their child was much calmer now and had fewer temper tantrums.

Most (90%) found a marked difference in their son/daughters personal satisfaction. Of these, 63% had the following comments to make: 22% said that it was due to the fact that they were now working and 11% said it was because that they were not with others who had a mental handicap. A further 22% said that their son/daughter had much more self-esteem, were proud of themselves and were more fulfilled with their life. One parent said that the student was more satisfied because he/she was in a new place and one said it was because they had much more interest in things.

Most parents (74%) believed that students now had improved opportunities, and 21% said that they were the same. One parent said that the opportunities were not so good, but this was not a reflection of the course, but more a reflection of the current employment situation in this country and the high level of unemployment. Three-quarters of the parents offered further comments: 21% said that the students now had many opportunities open to them as a result of their work experiences; 42% said that they "do a lot more activities" and have "a lot more to occupy themselves with". One parent said it was because they had a job coach available and another said they their son/daughter now had more experience of travel on public transport, and that this

would open up alot of opportunities for them.

Other comments in relation to any "Other improvements" they had seen in their son/daughter were also made by most parents (79%). Some (11%) felt that their child was much more independent in travelling , although initially some parents were concerned over the fact that their son/daughter would need two buses to get to Prussia Street. One parent felt that her child was not so easily annoyed now and another; 11% said that their child had much more pride in him/herself; 16% said that the students concerned had much better chances of 'getting on' in life; 21% felt that their children now had many more activities to pursue - for example, academic subjects, sports, gardening. One parent said that the son/daughter had improved greatly in terms of speech competence.

C. What parents knew about the course

Parents were then asked what they knew about the course. Over a third (37%) felt that they knew very little. One parent did not really know anything at all, another considered it just to be "a trial run." Some parents (26%) said that they knew a lot about the course as they were very much involved in it. and others (21%) listed or named some aspect of the type of activities that went on in Prussia Street. They named several activities - "job preparation"; " how to be self-sufficient and cook"; " independence in relation to travel and going into town". Parents also identified also a cultural awareness in relation to our heritage (museums etc.).

Most (71%) parents said that the Prussia Street course differed from that available in Ballymun clinic, and 11% said that there was no difference. One parent said that they did not know. The parents were then asked, more specifically, in what way was it different from Ballymun, and 89% replied. Of these, 32% said that it is "much more practical than school"; and that it was much more "work-orientated" - a parent commented that Prussia Street "educated them towards wanting to work". One parent said that their child had "outgrown Ballymun" and 16% said that there were much more activities and courses. A further 16% said that the students "were more like adults and were mixing with ordinary people". Another 11% said that the clients in question were much more independent and could see a marked improvement in them overall. One parent was pleased that it was a small group, while another felt that parents got more information than they did from Ballymun.

Asked what they thought of the foundation course in Ballymun, 42% said that it was good for the student initially, and one said that it was "a place to go". One parent actually preferred Ballymun. The remainder felt that Prussia Street treated the clients more like adults and that they were in a "higher ability group" in Prussia Street.

D. Work experience

We asked the parents about the work experience, if any, which their son/daughter received. All of the parents interviewed said that their child had received some form of work experience. Some parents identified several placements: by contrast, one parent did not know what their child's work experience actually entailed. A comparison of parents' reports and those of the students themselves suggests that there was overall agreement on what sorts of work experience had been made available, although there was some mismatch between the two sets of reports.

Parents named the following areas of work experience:

- 25% RETAIL WORK
- 25% INDUSTRY
- 5% CHILD MINDING
- 8% CATERING
- 18% OFFICE WORK
- 5% GARDENING
- 5% MEALS ON WHEELS

The remainder mentioned media (2.5%), hairdressing (2.5%), or groundsman at football grounds (2.5%).

Parents were also asked if they knew the actual number of placements that their son/daughter actually had. One parent did not reply, 32% reported that they had one placement, 21% mentioned two placements, 32% mentioned three placements, and 11% mentioned more than three placements.

E. Parents' contact with staff

In relation to contact with the staff, nearly half of the parents (47%) felt that they now had more contact with the staff, 37% felt that the amount of contact was the same, while only 16% felt it was less. Reasons for more contact are as follows (37% did not reply) : 11% simply felt that the staff can be contacted if needed; one parent felt more inclined to check up on their child; 10% felt that they had previously had more contact because they lived nearer to Ballymun. Forms of contact varied: 63% telephoned the centre; one simply went to Prussia Street; and the remaining 32% either telephoned or went there directly.

F. Parents perceptions of the future

Parents were asked if they felt that their son/daughter would be able to work after they had completed the course. One parent did not reply, and another said that their child would not be able for work, while 16% were not sure or were indecisive. But the majority (74%) felt that their son/daughter would be able for work after the course.

However with regard to what they saw their son/daughter doing in the future, fewer (63%) saw their son/daughter actually employed full time or in their present job and coping adequately. Some (16%) wanted their child to go on to some further training either the Work Options in Mountjoy Square or to go to a workshop

(Long-term training centre). One parent said that it was hard to know if her child would get a job; one wanted her child to be with 'ordinary people', and another was concerned with a residential placement as well as work.

What then would the students be able to do in the future? Of the parents who replied, 11% reported that they would need a structured environment. One parent replied that their child could do a packing job, while another again mentioned the need for further training, specifically in Mountjoy Square. Another felt that their son/daughter was limited by their physique and therefore could only do certain jobs.

How then could these priorities for the future be achieved? Parents suggested a number of interventions:

1. extra funding
2. aid from employment specialists
3. improve student's communication skills
4. determine whether the employers are satisfied and happy with the clients performance.

Others were "not sure".

Asked what their child still needed to learn in order to be able to cope in an ordinary everyday job, whether full or part-time. The parents' replies were extremely varied. (Only one parent did not reply):

- * better understanding of money
- * answer phone
- * who is the boss (interactions at work)
- * backup work experience
- * not just learning/needs work itself
- * honesty
- * speech training
- * to be kept at same pace
- * personal grooming/dress quick
- * reading & writing skills
- * mature/independence
- * social activities

G. Other comments

Further comments made by the parents were varied.

A main theme reflected their hopes for continued services. To reiterate what was said before, some parents felt that their son/daughter should stay on at Prussia Street as one year was not enough, or else they would need another course or further training in Mountjoy Square or somewhere similar. Interviews with parents left the impression that they now believed that, since their sons and daughters had now experienced a stimulating, community-based course aimed at work placement, that a sudden cessation would not be in the students' best interests. They strongly endorsed the continuation of programmes of this kind, now that parents had been made aware of the opportunities available and also of what their sons or daughters could achieve.

In relation to work experience many felt that the training and employment services programme was very good and that the teachers were excellent. However, many wanted to know if the work experience would last or at least to have feedback on their son or daughter's performance in the placement.

Many reported that the student had certainly improved as a person and they were integrated into the community a lot more. One parent replied that they thought too much was expected of the student. Yet independence training was still considered necessary especially in the area of money management. Social activities and events were also deemed essential. Only a few parents still viewed travel as a problem (more had done so when the centre opened) , and this could possibly be a reason for preferring Ballymun, as it was more accessible. One parent saw Ballymun better for the "less-advanced" student. A few parents reported that not all the promises made in relation to work experience opportunities were actually kept, leading to disappointment for the students involved.

The future and what it holds is still a big concern for one parent, who needs a long-term plan for residential placement.

The general feedback from the parents about the centre in Prussia Street was very positive especially since it was the first year of the course and this feeling can be summed up in the following statement from one parent:

....."the rest of St. Michael's House should be like
Prussia Street."

RESULTS OF THE STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

Questionnaires were distributed to six staff members from St. Michaels House who were directly involved in the Prussia St. centre. Two of the staff were tutors at the centre and the remainder were supervisors, managers or clinicians responsible for the students attending the centre who were based at Ballymun clinic. Four of the questionnaires were returned, and these responses are presented in this section.

THE PLANNING STAGE

Staff reported that they had learned of the new centre at different times. Two of the staff members were involved in the planning of the centre from the start, one was not involved in stages and the fourth staff member heard about the proposed move from the manager of the Foundation Skills Course.

One staff member felt they had received enough information about the move at the start while the rest felt that there was a lack of information and that no firm decision had been made to start the project on a given date. All of the staff members except one felt they had taken part in planning the move to Prussia Street. It was mentioned that the staff themselves had been almost totally responsible in planning the move.

They suggested other preparations that might have helped the move

at the time:

- (a) full inclusion of clinic staff at all levels of the programme;
- (b) more attention paid to the fact that there was a three year programme;
- (c) more people to have looked for premises;
- (d) more information to have given about a budget;
- (e) premises should have been ready for occupation
- (f) training programmes to have been made available;
- (g) more time to have made connections in the community before the students arrived at the centre.

THE MOVE

The staff were asked if they had been adequately prepared for the move. In general it was felt that the staff involved in planning the move had been prepared, while others had only two weeks to prepare. It was suggested that more time for programme planning might have helped. Also it was felt that the staff involved did an excellent job with limited resources. They also said that the students should have had time to become familiar with the new centre and that more work with the parents of the students would have made the move easier for them.

FEATURES OF THE NEW CENTRE:

The staff were asked to rate certain aspects of the Prussia Street centre. All the staff agreed that the centre's small size,

location and autonomy were positive features. Two staff members rated the fact that the centre had a clear focus in what it aims to do as between agreement and disagreement, while the third strongly agreed. There were varied responses when asked to name potential difficulties. Some felt isolation was a risk, and all felt that extra support for staff was advisable. Specific staff training was proposed.

THE STUDENTS

The staff were asked about the benefits the centre had for the students. All the staff thought there had been a positive change in the students with regard to their independence, behaviour and personal satisfaction. The new centre had also increased the opportunities available to the students. The staff also felt that the students had also changed in other domains including initiative and the ability to relate to other adults as adults. All agreed that the students on the whole had learned more in the new centre. The examples they gave of what the students learned included: independence, use of initiative and how to intergrate with the community. The staff felt that the students had become accustomed to dealing with others and meeting new people.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

The staff were asked about the differences in the curriculum offered to the students in Prussia St. as opposed to the curriculum offered in Ballymun. The differences in the curriculum

according to the staff included independent activities, adult education and activities such as working in a canteen, dealing with the public and voluntary work. They also emphasized the opportunities the curriculum offered with regard to encouraging self-directed learning and a chance to learn in the real environment. The curriculum was also described as being subject to change depending on the preceived success or failure of certain parts of it.

The staff were asked who was involved in designing the curriculum. They mentioned the staff themselves as being responsible as well as a keyworker, course designer and training manager. They said all this took place in the form of meetings, talking and getting ideas from others. They mentioned the importance of recognising the students' needs with regard to Year Three (the year the students spent in Prussia Street) being a transition year and designing programmes to fit these needs as well as making the greatest use of the facilities at Prussia St.

With regard to the materials they used for teaching and training they said they devolped their own as well as modifying existing materials that were available. However, staff believed that the resources required to acquire or modify Teaching and Training materials were too limited. Most of the staff felt that the curriculum had definite benefits for the students in terms of gaining employment and linking with employers although it was suggested that this had been reduced due to lack of funding. All of the staff felt the training objectives were being met and it

was suggested that the training objectives being met were linked to having an employment specialist on the programme. It was also mentioned that the training objectives were often met outside structured classroom training.

RESOURCES

Most of the staff felt that the staff/student ratio was inadequate. Suggested changes included, a third full time staff member, a keyworker and part-time staff as well as access to resources. The need for an employment specialist was also mentioned.

Three of the staff members rated external training and having tutors from Dublin Corporation as useful. All of the staff thought VEC classes were very useful. Other training resources such as voluntary work and work in the Prussia St. centre itself were also seen to be very useful.

The staff were asked how much time they spent on various activities. This varied in relation to their actual job. Those directly involved in the centre appeared to spend about 33% to 50% of their time in direct training. All of the staff seemed to spend about 25% to 25% of their time on administration. Most of the staff spent about 12% to 15% of their time planning. The clinicians appeared to spend about 50% of their time interviewing and counselling.

With regard to contingencies the staff said they preferred to

have the students deal with them, but in the case of absent staff or resources they improvised. Staff absence due to illness could be covered for but this was not always easy at short notice.

PARENTS

All of the staff had contact with the parents when they were in the training centre in Ballymun. Most felt that contact with the parents had increased since the move to Prussia Street, except for one staff member who felt the amount of contact was about the same. The staff generally made contact by phone or letter or else they saw the parents at meetings.

All the staff felt the parents mostly support the new centre at Prussia Street as they had received positive feedback and comments from them. Also the parents were involved in the early stages and were encouraged to maintain contact. According to the staff a small minority never make contact.

STAFF TRAINING

All of the staff considered staff training to work with employers to be very important and one staff member felt it was essential. Other areas of staff training nominated by the respondents were:

- * management training;
- * administration training;
- * curriculum development;
- * curriculum delivery;
- * training staff to work with parents;

- * training staff to make community contacts
- * need to encourage staff to mix roles.

Finally some of the staff felt that the Prussia Street centre is a model of service that could be expanded to other areas, as it had huge potential within vocational training and services elsewhere.

CONCLUSION

The staff involved directly with the Prussia Street centre positively endorsed the placement of a centre in the community and they all agreed that the new centre had benefited the students. However they expressed the need for more staff, training and resources in order to make maximum use of the centre, as well as a more effective preparation period. The centre seemed to have the approval of the parents and the staff appeared to have regular contact with them.

KEVIN: A CASE STUDY

Kevin's story typifies those of students who attended the training centre in Prussia Street from October 1991 to July 1992. He is 20 years of age and is considered to be in the mild mental handicap range (intellectual disability).

Kevin has been availing of the services of St. Michaels House from his childhood. When he was twenty years of age his parents decided that the three year Foundation Course at the training centre in Ballymun offered Kevin the best chance to lead a normal life. They felt this course would provide him with invaluable training and experience as well as giving him the opportunity of getting involved in activities outside the home.

Kevin began attending the training centre in Ballymun in 1989. He seemed to settle in and enjoy the course. Travelling was no problem as he lived close to the centre on Dublin's North side. Kevin was learning things such as daily living skills, work orientation and job hunting skills as well as improving his reading and writing. There was also the prospect of work experience in a local firm.

By the second year of the course Kevin was progressing well. His communication was improving, he was making friends and he seemed to be more confident in carrying out everyday tasks. At the end of Kevin's second year of vocational training his parents received a letter explaining that the students were to be moved

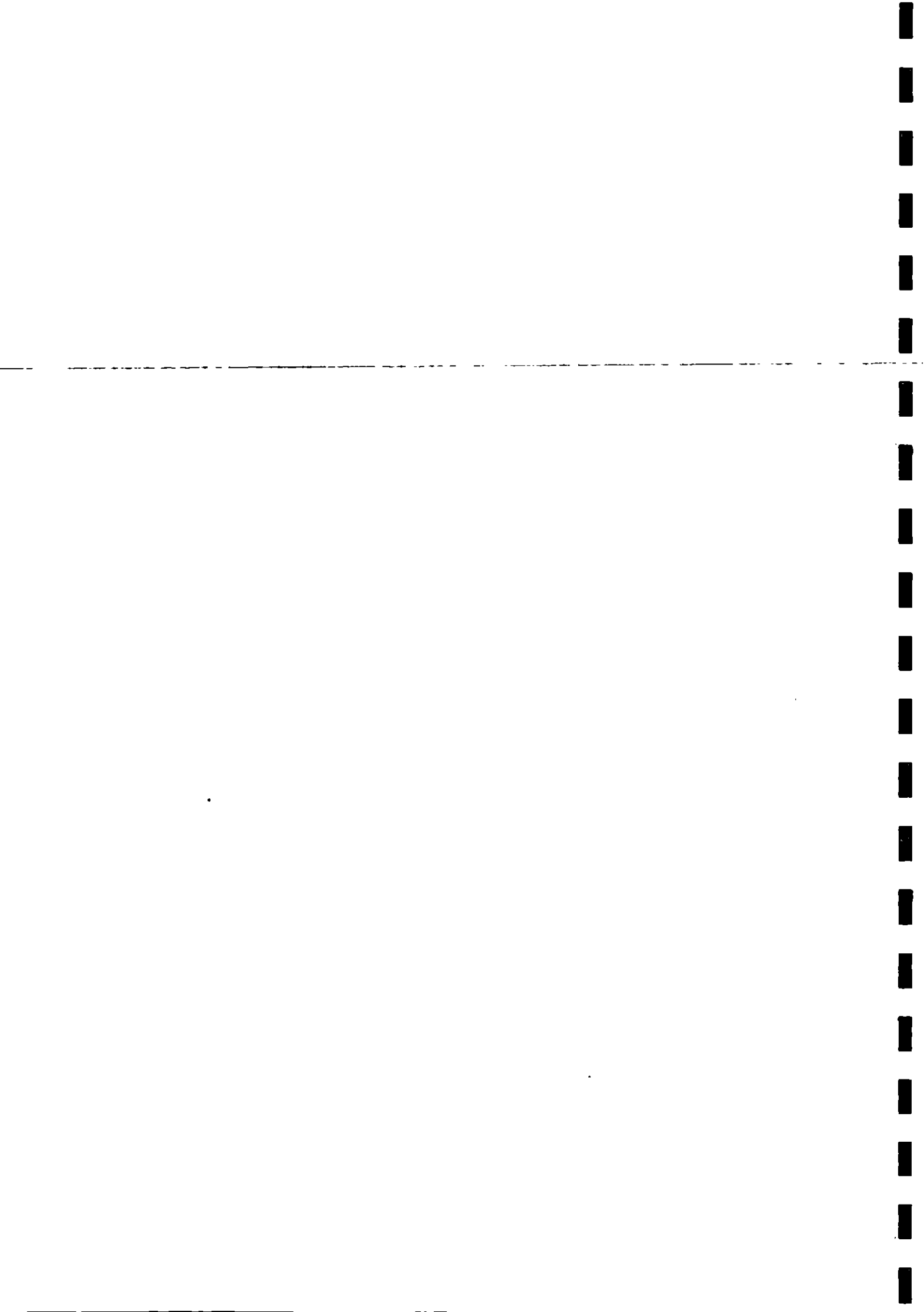
from the training centre in Ballymun to a newly-acquired parish centre on Prussia Street in Stoneybatter. They were to spend four days a week at the training centre except when they were on work experience. Friday was the day they returned to the training centre in Ballymun.

Both his parents were concerned about the move, as travelling to the new centre would mean that Kevin would have to get two buses. This was something he had never done before. They had been happy with the situation in Ballymun and they did not want anything to change. However, they could see the advantages the new centre had to offer with regard to integrating the students into the community.

In September 1991 Kevin began attending the new centre in Prussia Street. It was the third year of the Foundation Course. He managed the bus situation with no problem, changing buses in town and getting the No. 10 bus out to Stoneybatter.

St. Michaels House has the use of two classrooms and an office in the centre. They also have access to a small garden at the back of the building. The centre has a coffee shop and other rooms used by local people.

Kevin found the parish centre at Prussia Street to be a totally different experience from the training centre at Ballymun. He enjoyed the journey there. He felt important having to change buses in town. When he got to the centre he chatted to the



people who were using the centre that day as well as to the people in the office downstairs whom he was getting to know very well. The other students would soon arrive and classes would begin.

There were three teachers at the centre. In Prussia St. Kevin attended classes such as daily living skills, work orientation, arts and crafts, catering as well as academic subjects. Kevin preferred the academic subjects such as writing and English to the more practical subjects, as he felt they were more of a challenge. The students often went to the local sports centre to go bowling or to play football, which Kevin really enjoyed.

At lunch Kevin and the other students were free to go to the shops or to the chip shop. This helped Kevin to become more familiar with using money. After the lunch break sometimes the students went on a trip with one of the teachers. They went to places of interest in town or to events that the students would enjoy.

Kevin had work experience in the beginning for one day a week. Work experience was tough for him in the beginning as Kevin was not used to a typical working day. However he soon adjusted.

Later on during the year he spent two days weekly in work experience placements. He had two different kinds of work experience altogether, retail and industry, both of which he enjoyed. Kevin got on very well with his co-workers and he was

popular where he worked.

By Christmas Kevin had settled into the new centre. Because there were only twenty-two other students there they all got to know each other every well. They also had got to know various people around the area. Kevin felt much more grown up in Prussia Street as he had more freedom and had more responsibility within the centre and at work. The work experience he was getting was also helping him to feel more confident about himself and his abilities. He also did some work in the coffee shop which he thought was fun. Also Kevin helped out with Meals on Wheels delivering food to the people who needed it.

When the good weather arrived Kevin and the other students did some gardening at the back of the centre as well as painting a mural on the wall that surrounded the garden. His work experience continued right through to the end of the course.

Towards the end of the year at Prussia Street, Kevins' parents began to become increasingly concerned about his future. He had become so confident and outgoing as a result of the year he had spent in a community setting and they were afraid this would be wasted if he to be put into a situation which he did not find stimulating. They did not want him to end up in a workshop, or long-term training centre, as they felt he had too much potential for that. There was a possibility that the place where Kevin had done his work experience might take him on for two or three days a week. There was the chance that he might get on to

the Work Options course in Mountjoy Square also.

Kevin was going to have to do an interview to get on this course which offered further vocational training as well as work experience in specific areas. His parents approved of the centre in Prussia Street and wished it could continue for Kevin as the thought of him ending up at home with nothing to do worried them.

Kevin himself was worried. He had enjoyed all the new experiences that Prussia Street had opened up for him and he knew he was going to miss his friends when he left. Kevin did the interview for Work Options, a two year vocational training and employment programme, and to his parents delight he was accepted. He was glad to think that many of his old friends would be going to Mountjoy Square also.

Kevin left Prussia Street in July 1992 having completed the third year of the Foundation Course. After the summer he began attending Work Options in Mountjoy Square. His progress continues but his parents now worry about Kevin's future when he completes the course in Mountjoy Square.

PART TWO:

RESULTS OF THE EVALUATIVE STUDY OF THE MOUNTJOY SQUARE "WORK OPTIONS" PROGRAMME 1991-1992

INTRODUCTION

This study was carried out on the initiative of management staff within St. Michael's House Vocational and Training Services in order to profile students in its "Work Options" course and compare them with students in other programmes; and to measure the impact of the course, particularly the work experience module, on employment outcomes.

The rationale for the study is the utility of examining the factors which surround the students' work experiences, as this information may prove helpful to those planning further programmes in work experience and vocational training and employment services generally. This study was undertaken in the light of (a) the innovative nature of such courses of study and training; (b) the current development of fresh and varied models of employment for persons with intellectual disability in Ireland and elsewhere; and (c) current trends which promote the full integration of persons with intellectual disability.

A. The students

The characteristics of the N=19 men and women who were enrolled in the Mountjoy Square "Work Options" programme from 1991=1992 have already been described (TABLES 1 & 2). Their social competence scores were computed on the basis of ratings made on the client database protocol (APPENDIX 1). The students were slightly older than those in Prussia Street (TABLE 1). A series of t-tests were calculated to see if the levels of social competence of the two groups of students, (a) Prussia Street and (b) Mountjoy Square were significantly different.

Results indicated that there was a significant difference between the two groups on Level of handicap ($t=2.94$, $p<.005$) with the students in Prussia Street showing a higher degree of handicap. There was no difference between the two groups in terms of mobility or their use of public transport. The two groups differed significantly in language comprehension ($t=2.17$, $p<.05$) and language use ($t=2.14$, $p<.05$). The only other area, which was approaching significance was the amount of physical care needed ($t=2.14$, $p=.06$). The students in Prussia Street needed more care.

B. Work Experience

The number of work experience placements ranged from one to four, however only one client had four placements. These were in five main areas (1) Catering, (2) Industry, (3) Retail, (4) Career

Development I and (5) Career Development II. Some placements lasted just a day, usually the career development placements, while some were quite long, up to a year in one case. There were 38 work placements in all to be divided among the 19 clients who were in their final year in the Work Options course in Mountjoy Square.

WORK PLACEMENT AREA	PERCENTAGE OF PLACEMENTS IN EACH AREA
Industry	34%
Retail	24%
Career Development II	21%
Career Development I	11%
Catering	11%

TABLE 18: WORK PLACEMENTS BY AREA

The Career Development courses typically covered the following areas: media, hairdressing and office work. The aim of these courses was to give the students a broad range of experience in many different areas of employment. As can be seen from TABLE 18, most placements were in general industry followed by retail work.

Most of the students were involved in work experience for 1 day (25%) or two days (64%) each week.

DURATION OF WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENT	NUMBER OF STUDENTS *	PERCENTAGE
Two weeks	3	9%
Three weeks	4	12%
One month	6	18%
Two months	15	45%
Four months	2	6%
One year	1	3%
Ongoing	1	3%

TABLE 19: DURATION OF WORK EXPERIENCE PLACEMENTS

* SOME STUDENTS HAD MORE THAN ONE PLACEMENT

As may be seen, nearly half (45%) of the students availed of a work placement for a two month-period.

Work experience placements were arranged after each student had been assessed by an employment specialist, a member of the programme's staff.

The placements arranged within the Career Development I and II included areas such as car valeting; visiting Garda Station; Golf Club; library; hairdressing; fruit farm; garage; St. Michael's House Long-term Training Centre; gardening; Radio Dublin; Fine Arts Studio; nursing home; Hotel; CIE; riding school; hospital; Fire Department; freight company.

C. Students' job preferences

	NUMBER OF PREFERENCES NAMED *	PERCENTAGE OF PREFERENCES
Industry	7	33%
Retail	5	24%
Office	3	14%
Agriculture- Horticulture	2	9.5%
Media/theatre	2	9.5%
Cars/Automotive	1	5%
Catering	1	5%

TABLE 20: PREFERENCES ABOUT JOBS STATED BY STUDENTS
IN MOUNTJOY SQUARE (N=19)

* SOME STUDENTS NAMED MORE THAN ONE PREFERENCE

D. Current work placements

Next, the current (as of November 1992) work placements of students who were involved in the Work Options programme 1991-1992 are presented:

CODE	WORK EXPERIENCE 1	WORK EXPERIENCE 2	WORK EXPERIENCE 3	CURRENT JOB (SALARY)
1	Retail	Retail	-	Retail (30.)
2	Industry	-	-	Interview pending
3	CD I	CDI	Retail	-
4	Retail	Retail	Catering	Catering (30.)
5	CD II	CD I	CD I	Catering (30.)
6	CD II	CD II	-	Handyman (30.)
7	Retail	Retail	-	Gardening (30.)
8	Industry	-	-	Cleaner (30.)
9	Industry	Industry	-	Retail (30.)
10	CD II	CD II	-	Interview pending (in LTTC)
11	Retail	Retail	Retail	
12	Retail	Retail	Retail	Retail (30.)
13	Catering	Catering	Catering	Catering (30.)
14	CD II	-	-	Interview pending
15	CD II	-	-	-
16	Industry	Catering	-	Industry (30.)
17	Industry	Industry	Industry (x2)	-
18	Industry	-	-	Industry (30.)
19	CD II	-	-	Gardening (30.)

TABLE 21: WORK EXPERIENCE AND CURRENT EMPLOYMENT (WEEKLY WAGES)
OF MOUNTJOY SQUARE "WORK OPTIONS" GROUP

As may be seen, a total of 12 persons (63%) were in paid employment in November 1992. Of these, at least six were employed in areas which were directly related to their previous work experiences and three persons had been placed within the Career Development area and were also in paid employment.

Summary

This short-term study considered (a) a profile of the students undertaking a "Work Options" course within a vocational training and employment service; and (b) the impact of their work experiences on ultimate employment.

Its findings highlight some issues which are of immediate relevance to service programme planners and providers.

(1) Evaluation.

The information gathered helped to measure one outcome of the programme, the ultimate employment of students four months after the programme concluded. Other elements of a comprehensive evaluation include:

- * process - does the service operate according to the best standards of practice?
- * coverage - is the service available to all who need it?
- * satisfaction - are the consumers of the service satisfied with it?

(Evans, Felce and Hobbs, 1991).

Further evaluation of the "Work Options" programme might usefully include interviews with consumers such as students themselves and their parents, and also with staff members and employers/co-workers which in order to obtain measures of satisfaction. Exploring the relationship between service costs (process) and outcomes - that is, does the service achieve client goals? - would provide indicators of the programme's cost-effectiveness.

2. Comparisons

The social competence scores of the two groups at Prussia Street and Mountjoy Square have been described and a comparison between the two groups showed that Mountjoy Square students were generally more independent in the areas measured. Students in both areas had work experience opportunities which were matched to individual preferences as much as possible. However, a detailed analysis of the curricula and staffing inputs of each course would help to compare them more comprehensively.

3. Comments made by staff during the preparation of this study

referred to the as-yet unresolved difficulties in the system which sets a limit on weekly income for recipients of DPMA. Most suggested that a more flexible and coordinated system should be developed.

4. Only one set of parents were interviewed for this study. However, the information gathered and the comments made by parents of the Prussia Street students indicate forcibly that doing so is valuable to planners and evaluators, and also gives the parents - who join their sons and daughters as consumers of services - an opportunity to state their levels of satisfaction with the services available and their visions of how things might change. A key finding here was that parents were able to state that, although their initial responses to a new service were more hesitant, most were now very positive about it.

"Extremely useful, brilliant idea - fulfilled
its function and went beyond it."

- Prussia Street parent, June 1992

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APPENDICES

- 1 Protocol from St. Michael's House client database
- 2 Job Preferences Survey for students
- 3 Evaluation Questionnaire for students
- 4 Parents' Questionnaire - Prussia Street
- 5 Staff Questionnaire - Prussia Street
- 6 Mountjoy Square evaluation form
- 7 Reprinted article from FRONTLINE Magazine

TABLES

- 1 Comparison of students in two courses in St. Michael's House
- 2 Social competence scores of students in two courses
- 3 Daily activities at the centre
- 4 Favourite activities of students
- 5 How staff help students
- 6 Tasks reported by students
- 7 Future plans
- 8 Leaving the centre
- 9 Job-finding - is it hard or easy?
- 10 Finding a job
- 11 Need for help in doing a job
- 12 Preferences
- 13 Knowledge of jobs
- 14 Current status
- 15 Students' abilities to do a job
- 16 Job-related tasks named in October, June
- 17 Current work status - Prussia Street students
- 18 Work placement areas - Mountjoy Square
- 19 Duration of work experience
- 20 Job preferences
- 21 Current work status - Mountjoy Square

CONFIDENTIAL

TRAINEE ID: _____

AGE: _____

SEX (please tick): Male: _____

Female: _____

WHAT COURSE IS THE TRAINEE TAKING? _____

WHEN DID THE TRAINEE START? _____

TYPE OF DISABILITY: Please tick all that apply:

Mental handicap/learning disability	
Physical handicap (including visual/hearing problem)	
Psychiatric disability	
Other disability (please specify).....	

LEVEL OF IQ FUNCTIONING

Please score: _____

(This concerns learning disability or mental handicap. If the trainee does not have learning disability or mental handicap, please score 9=normal IQ).

2=Borderline mental handicap or above
4=Moderate mental handicap
6=Profound mental handicap
8=IQ level not ascertainable

3=Mild mental handicap
5=Severe mental handicap
7=IQ not ascertained
9=Normal IQ

PUBLIC TRANSPORT UNACCOMPANIED

Please score: _____

(Can the trainee travel unaccompanied by public transport?)

Y=yes, B=being trained, N=no.

SKILLS AND NEEDS

For the following sections, enter the number (one only) of the sentence which describes this trainee most closely. Choose the sentence which describes the usual behaviour or skills of the trainee.

EATING

Please score: ____

- 1=Feeds self and can manage all activities at table with no problem
- 2=Feeds self with some help (eg cutting meat or scraping bowl)
- 3=Feeds self with verbal prompt or encouragement
- 4=Feeds self with physical prompt
- 5=Cannot feed self, needs to be fed

MOBILITY

Please score: ____

- 1=Able to walk, run and climb stairs with little or no difficulty
- 2=Able to walk alone, but has difficulty with running and/or stairs
- 3=Walks with support or alone for short distances
- 4=Uses wheelchair, self propelled
- 5=Cannot walk, needs wheelchair or buggy

TOILETING

Please score: ____

- | | |
|---------------|-------------------|
| 1=Independent | 2=Needs reminding |
| 3=Needs help | 4=Dependent |

UNDERSTANDING

Please score: ____

- 1=Understands detailed instructions, eg shopping list or directions
- 2=Understands simple instructions (words and/or signs)
- 3=Understands simple sentences in context (words and/or signs)
- 4=Understands single words and/or signs
- 5=Shows no understanding of words or signs/gestures

LANGUAGE USE

Please score: ____

- 1=Uses full sentences and is easily understood
- 2=Uses full sentences but is not easily understood
- 3=Uses short (3-5 word) sentences using words and/or signs
- 4=Uses 2 word sentences (words/signs)
- 5=Uses only single words or signs
- 6=Does not use words or signs consistently and meaningfully

VISION

Please score: ____

- 1=Normal vision, with or without glasses
- 2=Partial sight, minor effect on daily living
- 3=Blind for all practical purposes
(Score 1 as if this could be true, eg for someone who refuses to wear glasses)

HEARING

Please score: ____

- 1=Normal hearing
- 2=Partial hearing (needs to wear a hearing aid) or has intermittent hearing loss
- 3=Continuous severe or profound hearing loss

EPILEPSY

Please score: ____

- 1=No fits, no medication
- 2=Has or had fits, takes medication, not a problem
- 3=Has fits once a month or more often. Taking medication.
- 4=Has fits once a week or more often. Taking medication.

PHYSICAL CARE

Please score: ____

- 1=Does not need any continuous medical care or intervention
- 2=Needs regular minimal care or intervention (eg supervision of medication)
- 3=Needs significant non-invasive care or intervention under clinical supervision (eg physiotherapy including percussion and/or repositioning)
- 4=Needs significant regular care or intervention (eg tube feeding, catheter, insulin, dressings)
- 5=Needs full time nursing care

NEEDS FOR SUPERVISION

Please score: ____

- 1=Can engage in appropriate activities as a member of a group without needing extra personal supervision
- 2=Needs extra personal supervision to engage in appropriate activity within a group or in a particular setting (eg works well in class but runs away or hides outside the structured setting)
- 3=Always needs a high level of staff supervision to ensure safety

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR TIME



QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS
FINAL YEAR-FOUNDATION

NAME: _____ YEAR: _____ CASEID: _____

DOB: _____ SEX: _____ LIVING: _____

ADDRESS: _____

(INTERVIEWER STARTS HERE:)

I know that you will be leaving the training centre, and I would like to ask you about what kinds of jobs you know about. I'd like to then ask you about what kinds of jobs you think you'd like to do when you leave.

1. How do you feel about leaving the training centre: do you feel sorry or glad?

Sorry _____ Glad _____ Not sure _____

1b. Why? _____

2. What kinds of classes did you do when you are here? _____

3. Which ones did you like? _____

4. What courses did you not like so much? _____

5. Do you have any work experience (IF NO, GO TO Q 9), maybe in a shop or factory?

YES _____ NO _____

6. Where do you have the work experience? _____

7. What do you like about it? _____

8. Was there anything you do not like so much? _____

9. Would you like to work there, or do that job again? _____

YES _____ NO _____

9b. Why? _____

10. Would you prefer to come to a training workshop or to find a job when you leave?

WORKSHOP _____ JOB _____

10b. Why? _____

11. Does anyone in your family have a job (prompt: father, mother, sister)?

Person, relationship	Job
a. _____	_____
b. _____	_____
c. _____	_____

12. I'd like to ask you about any other jobs you know something about. What jobs do you know about?

A. _____ Do you think you could do this?

YES _____ NO _____ NOT SURE _____
What do you think you need to do in this job? _____

Is this a man's job? YES _____ NO _____
Is this a woman's job? YES _____ NO _____

B. _____ Do you think you could do this?

YES _____ NO _____ NOT SURE _____
What do you think you need to do in this job? _____

Is this a man's job? YES _____ NO _____
Is this a woman's job? YES _____ NO _____

13. I'm going to show you some photographs of people working at jobs: can you tell me what kind of jobs they are doing?

GARDA SIOCHANA

POSTMAN

PAINTER

BUS DRIVER

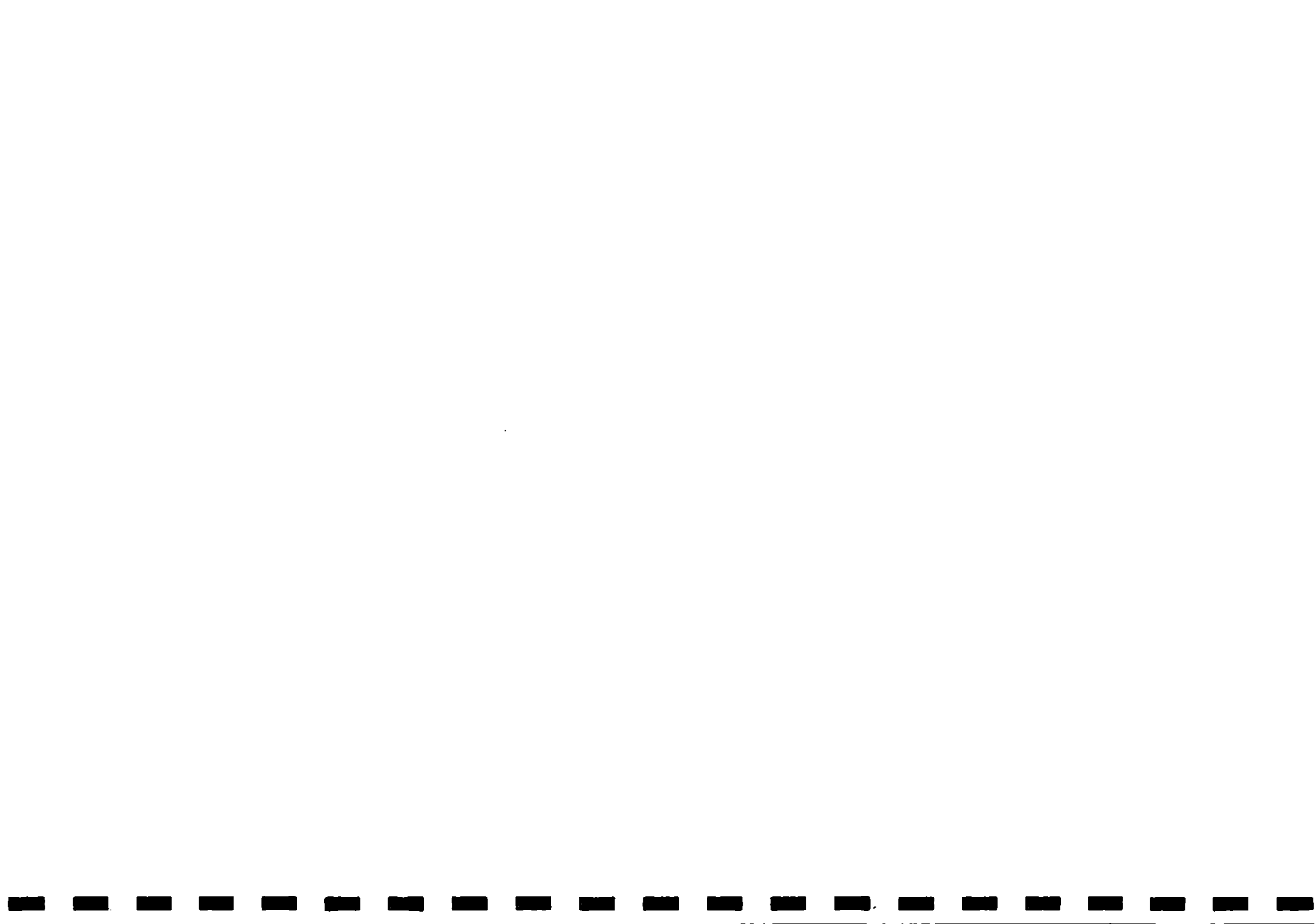
NEWSPAPER SALES

BUTCHER

METALWORK

THE PHOTOGRAPHS I HAVE HERE SHOW SOME MEN AND WOMEN DOING THEIR WORK. I'M GOING TO ASK YOU IF YOU
 THINK YOU COULD DO ANY OF THE JOBS HERE (1=YES 2= NO 3+ NOT SURE, DON'T KNOW.

PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	COULD DO			MAN		WOMAN		WHAT YOU HAVE TO DO
		1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	
1.	SUPERMARKET _____	1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	_____
2.	RESTAURANT _____	1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	_____
3.	CAR _____	1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	_____
4.	CLEANING _____	1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	_____
5.	PRODUCTION _____	1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	_____
6.	OFFICE _____	1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	_____
7.	GARDEN _____	1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	_____
8.	SHOP _____	1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	_____
9.	DELIVERY _____	1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	_____
10.	CONSTRUCTION _____	1	2	3	Y	N	Y	N	_____



15.If you could do any job at all, what would it be?

15b. Why? _____

16. Would you need any training or help to do this job? _____

17. If you want to find a job for yourself, how would you do it?

a. FAS/MANPOWER _____

b. newspaper _____

c. Employment specialist _____

d. parent _____

e. friend _____

f. radio _____

g. don't really know _____

h. other (Please specify) _____

18. Do you think it would be hard or easy to get a job? _____

WHY? _____

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS COMPLETING YEAR 3

NAME OF STUDENT:----- DATE:-----

DOB:-----

You've been here in Prussia Street since September. I'd like to talk to you today about what you've been doing here. PROMPT: I'd like you to tell me what's on your timetable.

1. Could you tell me what you think of the centre here in Prussia Street?

2. What have you been doing here?

3. What did you like?

4. Why was that?

5. What did you not like so much?

6. Why was that?-----

7. Are things here the same or are they different from the way they were in Ballymun?

8. (IF DIFFERENT) How are they different?-----

9. Do you do things for yourself here?-----

10. How would you say the staff here help you to do things?

11. What kind of things , like classes, do you do outside the centre?

12. How do you get there? PROMPT: Do you walk, or do you take the bus?

13. Does anyone help you to get there? -----

14. What do you like about the (NAME) class?-----

15. What do you not like so much?-----

16. Can you tell me a little about the place you went to for work experience? Where was it?

17. How did you get there?-----

18. What did you do there?-----

19. What did you like the most?-----

20. Why was that? -----

21. Was there anything about working you did not like so much?

22. Why was that?-----

23. You'll be leaving the Prussia Street Centre soon now. What will you be doing next?

24. How do you feel about that? -----

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENT
OF STUDENTS IN THE PRUSSIA STREET CENTRE 1991-92

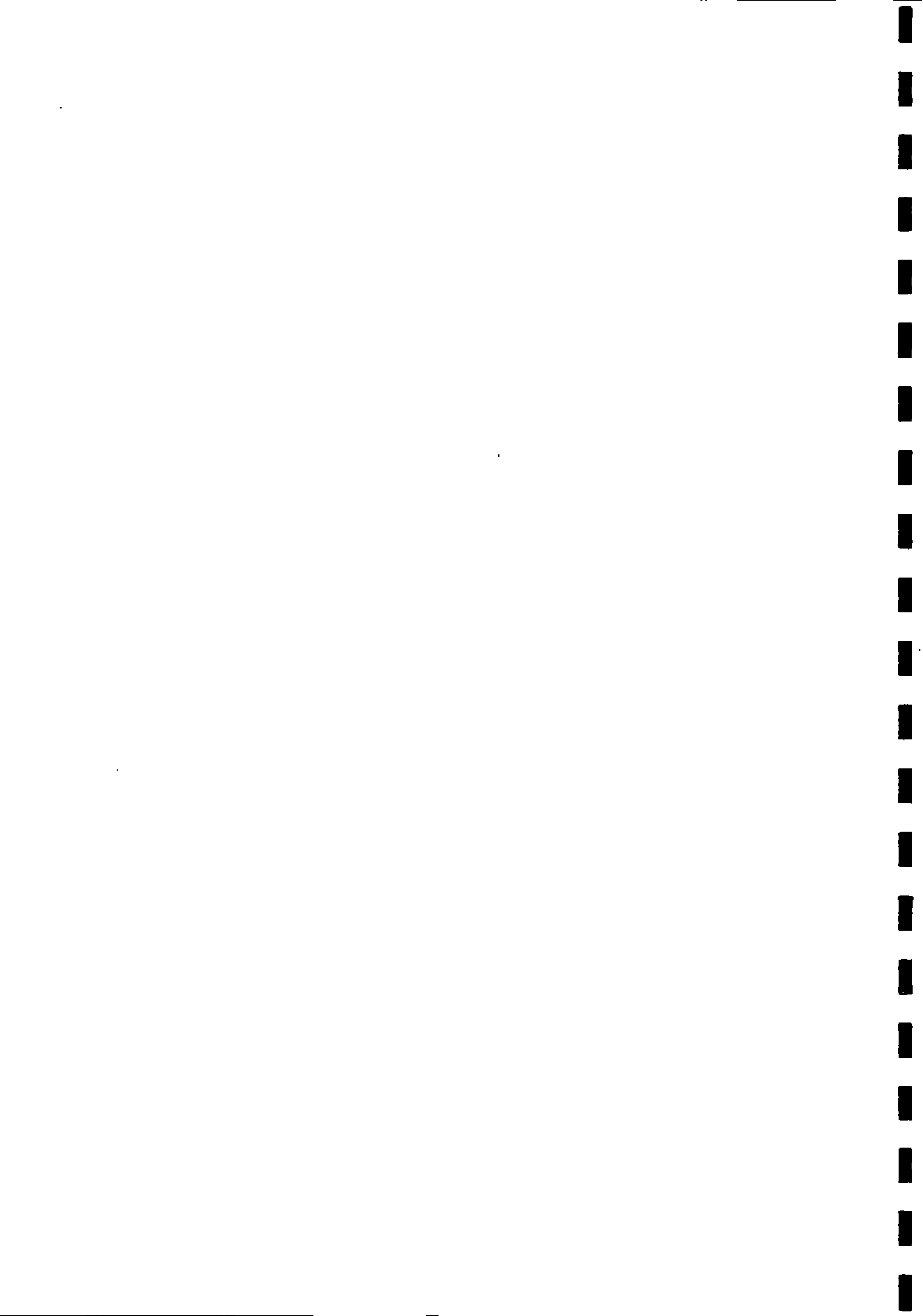
Your son/daughter is now in the final year of training. We'd like you to tell us something about your views on the new centre in Prussia Street which your son/daughter has attended this year. What you tell us will be very helpful in planning next year's training programme. Of course anything you may tell us will be strictly confidential.

1. What do you think about the new centre?
2. Do you think there are advantages in the move? YES/NO
3. If yes, what are they?
4. Are there any disadvantages? YES/NO
5. If yes, what are they?
6. Did you see any advantages when the move was first discussed? YES/NO
7. If yes:
8. Did you see any disadvantages when the move was first discussed? YES/NO
9. If yes:
10. Did you get (a) enough information (b) not enough information when the move to Prussia Street took place?
11. Thinking about any differences for your son/daughter in the new centre, would you say there has been any overall difference in:

YES SAME NOT SO GOOD

 - a. independence
 - b. behaviour
 - c. personal satisfaction
 - d. opportunities
 - e. other:
12. What do you know about the training course for the students in Prussia Street?
13. Is this any different from the Ballymun course? YES/NO

14. If yes (to Q 13), how is it different?
15. What about the work experience offered to students: did your son/daughter have this opportunity? YES/NO/NOT SURE
16. If yes (to Q 13), what experience did he/she have?
17. Do you feel you have (1) the same (2) more (3) less contact with the staff at the new centre?
18. If (2) or (3) in Q 17, why is this so?
19. How would you usually contact the staff there?
20. As you know, a five-day service will stop after July of this year. Do you feel your son/daughter is ready for 2-3 days of employment weekly? YES/NO
21. If NO, what do you feel your son/daughter is able to do?
22. What do you think he/she needs to learn now?
23. What would you like to see him/her doing in the future?
24. How do you think this could be achieved?
25. Looking back on the two-year foundation course in Ballymun, what do you now think of it?
26. Do you have any other comment on your son/daughter/s training or employment?



PROPOSALS FOR EVALUATION OF PRUSSIA STREET SERVICES 1992

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THOSE WORKING AS SUPERVISORS, TRAINERS, MANAGERS AND CLINICIANS FOR STUDENTS IN PRUSSIA STREET 1991-92

Thank you for taking time to help us gather information on your experiences working with the students in Prussia Street this year. Your comments will be very helpful to us in reviewing the training programme and planning for next year. All of your responses will be treated with strict confidence.

PLANNING STAGE

1. How did you find out about the proposed move to Prussia Street?
2. Did you feel you had enough information at that time?
YES/NO
If not, why?
3. Did you feel that you took part in planning the move?
YES/NO
If not, why?
4. What other preparation would have been helpful?

THE MOVE

5. Were members of staff adequately prepared for the move?
If not, what else might have helped?
6. Were the students adequately prepared for the move? If not, what else might have helped?
7. What do you think of being in the smaller centre?
On the positive side, how would you rate:

- a. the Prussia Street centre can stand alone 1 2 3 4 5
- b. the centre is in the community 1 2 3 4 5
- c. the centre is small in size 1 2 3 4 5
- d. the centre has a clear focus in what it aims to do 1 2 3 4 5

8. As for difficulties, how would you rate:

- a. there is some risk of isolation 1 2 3 4 5
- b. staff may need more support to balance any stress 1 2 3 4 5
- c. staff require special training 1 2 3 4 5

THE STUDENTS

9. Thinking about any benefits for the students, would you say that there are any overall differences in:

- | | YES | SAME | NOT SO GOOD |
|--------------------------|-----|------|-------------|
| a. independence | | | |
| b. behaviour | | | |
| c. personal satisfaction | | | |
| d. opportunities | | | |
| e. other domain | | | |

10. Have the students, on the whole, learned more in this centre?

YES NO

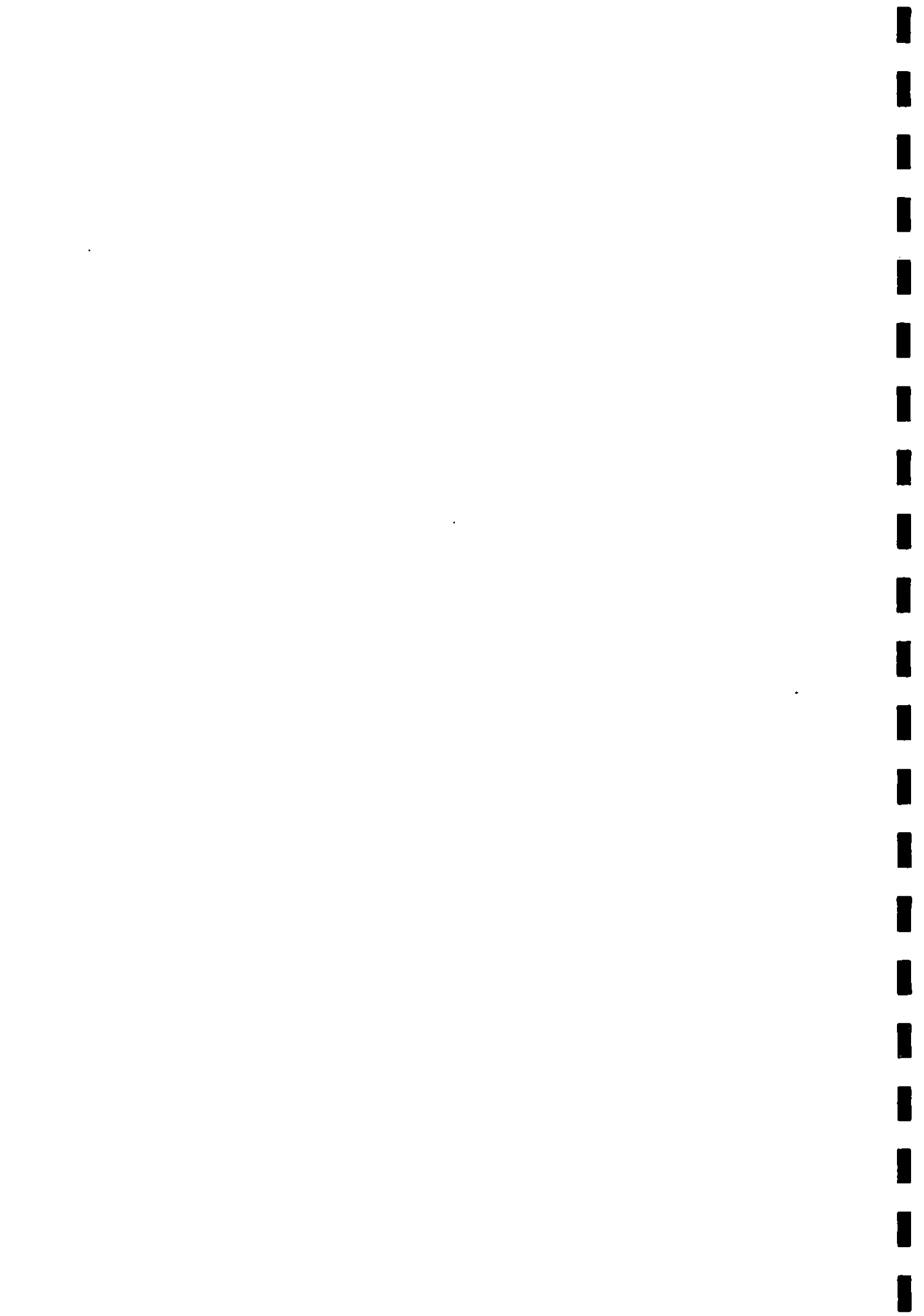
(EXAMPLE)

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

11. Are there any differences in the curriculum offered to students here? YES NO

If yes, what are these?

12. Who is involved in designing the curriculum?



13. How does this take place?

14. What about the materials for teaching and training:

- a. ready-made and available
- b. we develop our own
- c. there are enough to hand
- d. we have plans to modify and develop them
- e. other:

15. Does the curriculum here benefit the students in terms
of: YES SOMEWHAT NO

- a. gaining employment
- b. linking with employers
- c. other:

16. In your view, are training objectives being met? YES/NO

If not, why is this?
What might help?

RESOURCES

17. Is the staff/student ratio adequate? YES/NOW

18. What changes would you make?

19. How would you rate additional training resources such as
VERY USEFUL USEFUL NOT SO USEFUL

- a. external training
- b. tutors from Dublin Corporation
- c. VEC classes
- d. other:

20. How much time do you think you spend in:

- a. direct training
- b. administration
- c. planning
- d. interviews/counselling

21. What plans are made to deal with contingencies?

PARENTS

22. Did you have contact with students' parents when you were in Ballymun? YES NO

23. Would you say that your contact with parents of students in Prussia Street is: MORE LESS ABOUT THE SAME?

24. How do you generally make contact with parents?

25. In general, do you feel that parents

(a) MOSTLY SUPPORT (b) GIVE SOME SUPPORT TO (c) DO NOT SUPPORT the new course in Prussia Street?

26. What makes you say this?

STAFF TRAINING

27. Looking back now, what are your views on priorities for staff training? Are the following (1) VERY IMPORTANT (2) IMPORTANT (3) NOT SO IMPORTANT?

- a. working with employers
- b. management
- c. administration
- d. curriculum development
- e. curriculum delivery
- f. working with parents
- g. making community contacts

h. other:

28. Have you any other comments about your experiences in the Prussia Street Centre?

EVALUATION STUDY

LEVEL 1 _____ LEVEL 2 _____

CASE ID _____

DATE OF BIRTH _____

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS:

LEVEL OF IQ _____

PUBLIC TRANSPORT _____

EATING _____

MOBILITY _____

TOILETING _____

UNDERSTANDING _____

LANGUAGE USE _____

VISION _____

HEARING _____

EPILEPSY _____

PHYSICAL CARE _____

SUPERVISION _____

NATURE OF WORK EXPERIENCE:

CATERING _____

CHILDCARE _____

INDUSTRY _____

RETAIL SALES _____

DURATION OF WORK EXPERIENCE:

HOURS / WEEKS OF EXPERIENCE

1-3 DAYS _____

1-2 WEEKS _____

MONTH _____

ONGOING _____

OTHER _____

JOB PREFERENCES

ASSESSMENT BY EMPLOYMENT SPECIALIST:

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER EMPLOYMENT:

HOURS OF EMPLOYMENT FROM SEPTEMBER 1992



The Prussia Street experience

J.J. McCarron, Kathy O'Toole and Carmel Nugent tutors in Ballymun Training Centre describe how the third and final year's training takes place in Prussia Street—a world away from the training centre.

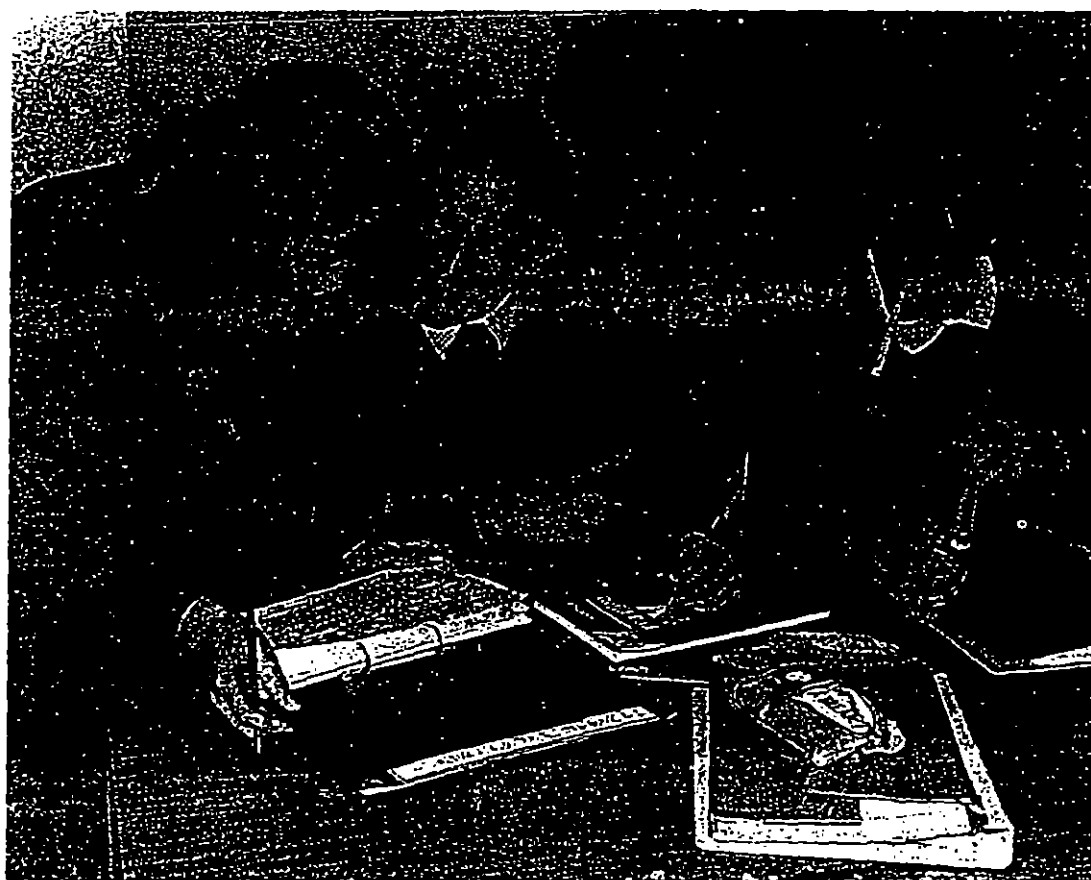


PHOTO YVONNE CLANCY

STONEBATTER, one of the oldest communities in Dublin, is playing host to the latest development from St. Michael's House Vocational Training and Employment Services. Having arrived at Aughrim Street Parish Centre in September 1991, the Prussia Street project as it has come to be known, has

quickly established itself as a vibrant part of the local community.

Altogether there are 23 students, mostly from the northside of Dublin, and three full-time trainers involved in Prussia Street for four days each week. One day each week we spend at Ballymun training centre, the base for

the Foundation Skills course of which we are the third year. The basic skills acquired on this course in the previous two years have enabled students to progress to the stage where they can begin to make choices about their futures in work and in society.

The course of training in Prussia

Street is designed to enable students to experience and test these choices in the real world. Aughrim Street Parish Centre is as real as the world can get - a locally built and run community resource centre which offers employment, adult education, leisure and other support services to the residents of this city centre parish. In the space of six months the Prussia Street project has managed to integrate itself widely into this local community.

THE THEORY

Maximum integration was the first crucial factor that determined the establishment of the 3rd year of the Foundation Skills course. Using the Warnock report (1978) as a guideline, Prussia Street meets these criteria fully in terms of

- ◆ *Locational integration* — the course is set in an ordinary setting.
- ◆ *Social integration* — students attend the course and share canteen and social facilities with other adults, and also share extracurricular activities such as recreational and cultural events.
- ◆ *Functional integration* — involves joint participation in vocational education and training activities, whereby our students, with special learning needs attend mainstream courses and where they make a full contribution to the life of the college or training centre.

The second principle guiding our structure, reflecting what students actually do, is self-empowerment. As defined by Hobson and Scally (1985):

'Self-empowerment is a process of taking increasingly greater charge of yourself and your life. By our definition it is not an end-state...it is a process of becoming in which you behave in a more or less empowered way'.

This process in Prussia Street involves students in becoming more able to experience and make choices for their employment and education; more able to increase their independence and initiative and more able to become responsible for their own lives.

SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Hobson, B. and Scally
Lifeskills Teaching Programme, No. 3.
Lifeskills Associates, 1985

Special Education Needs: Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the Education of Handicapped Children.

THE PRACTICE

At the end of their year, it is envisaged that all the students on the course will be employed or will have gone on to further training, such as the Work Options course, also available from St. Michael's House Vocational Training and Employment Services. In order to facilitate this, students receive training which is designed to equip them with the basic skills necessary to get and keep employment, using the Skillbase curriculum guidelines. The students are

'What I like about Prussia Street is that you're allowed to do what you want, and be more responsible.'

motivated to look for work and will also spend some time on work experience placements. These placements will help students find out what it is like to actually have a job, try out their choices of career in the real world and refine the skills they will need to get and maintain employment.

Woven around this vocational training is a programme of independent activities from which each individual student selects his/her choices. These activities — joining adult education classes — learning hobby, sport and leisure pursuits, and working with community and voluntary groups — encourage students to make increasing use of their independence and initiative. In organising and carrying out their choices students will gain valuable experience in taking responsibility for their own lives. They also become more aware of activities and opportunities outside their

training course and in their own communities.

Some of the students have availed themselves of a national youth development scheme, the President's Award (Gaisce), as an aid and incentive to their progress. As part of this scheme participants receive an award for successful completion of a required amount of training and development.

The President's Award, with 4,000 participants, is increasingly being recognised by employers around the country as an indication of initiative and ability (Murphy, 1992). Combining the two elements of vocational training and independent activities results in a programme that is fulfilling to the students here and now, and provides a sound preparation for adult existence.

THE EXPERIENCE

Rose is one of these students involved in Prussia Street. On a weekly basis she attends in-centre training covering the areas of vocational life and social skills. She also spends two days on paid work placement in a restaurant, one morning helping out with Meals-on-Wheels, and is involved in a typing course twice a week at Ballymun Comprehensive School. During the course of a recent conversation, Rose had this to say about her experience:

'It was difficult at the start, when I started at Prussia Street. There seemed to be no classes, no teachers checking. It was a new project. Now we can run things ourselves. And you get more experience of things.'

When I started at my first education class it was nerve-racking, and then it was easy. You get to know a lot of new people. I enjoyed that. You're more of a grown-up — your own free person.'

What I like about Prussia Street is that you're allowed to do what you want, and be more responsible. You can be trusted to do things ... to mind your own things. And you learn a lot more things ... you're involved more'.

These aspects of Prussia Street, the theory and the practice, are realised in the real experience of twenty-three students.

