

Youth unemployment a terrible betrayal of next generation



LAST week, with the excellent support of the Association of Chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations (ACEVO), the Association of North East Councils (ANEC) and the Customs House, I hosted a jobs summit in South Shields, looking at the crisis of youth unemployment across the North East.

Youth unemployment is a huge social and economic problem, and there are solutions.

We are not willing to wait around for the Government to ride to the rescue of the North East – we're going to make change ourselves.

The summit was about mobilising private, public and third sector resources to tackle this terrible betrayal of the next generation.

We have collected some really innovative and implementable ideas, and I look forward to these ideas becoming reality and changing people's lives in the coming weeks and months.

And we will keep the Gazette up to date with our progress.

On a separate jobs issue, this week Labour launched its Veterans' Interview Programme (V.I.P.), a

new scheme to get former members of the Armed Forces back to work by guaranteeing them an interview with the growing number of employers who have joined the scheme.

National companies, including O2, Greggs, Centrica and John Lewis, have already signed up, but it's open to local companies and charities too.

As set out in the Government's Army 2020 plans this week, many UK Armed Forces are being made redundant and in difficult economic circumstances there will be an increasing number looking for employment.

We believe we must all do more to provide additional support to help former Service personnel find employment.

It is wrong that someone who has served in Afghanistan is expected to join the back of the queue at the local job centre.

The wide range of experiences and skills they have gained from service don't always tick the standard boxes necessary to get through an interview door.

This is not about special treatment, but about providing a level playing field for service people who have done so much for us.

So, if you want to help some very talented and skilled people, and show your respect and gratitude towards the service community, find out more about our campaign at the Labour Friends of the Forces website – www.labourfriendsoftheforces.org.uk.

David Miligand - Gazette